

PAPER 8

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ENGLISH IS TAUGHT IN INDIA

English is taught in India under the conditions which are far from being satisfactory.

English is still playing a prominent role in our country as a national link language besides Hindi, as an international language in the world and an easy medium for science and technology.

But it is a fact that despite studying English in schools and colleges for about 6-8 years, students, especially coming from rural background, do not understand English. Even in some areas where students use regional language as L1 besides Hindi and in such areas English becomes L3, in some cases students in such areas lack all the four linguistic skills - comprehension, reading, writing and speaking.

Since language learning is a skill, it should be approached in that light. Our method of teaching has not yielded the desired objective. So measures have to be taken to bring out a change for improvement of English but prior to it the conditions under which English is taught need to be mentioned:

1. Lack of clear cut policy.
2. Little understanding of aims }
3. Incompetent teachers } report of the study group on teachers of English.
4. The defective method:
 - (a) Translation method being adopted.
 - (b) Oral work neglected.
 - (c) Auro-oral approach/structural approach should be followed.
5. Sub-standard books:
 - (a) No attention is paid to the selection and grading of structures.
 - (b) Teaching of language not given emphasis.
6. Inadequate material facility:
 - (a) Audio-visual aids like flash cards, charts, pictures, models, filmstrips, gramophone records, tape recorders lack in our schools which help in language learning.
7. The faulty examination system:
 - (a) Prescribed text-book need not be studied.
 - (b) Due to oral test, spoken English has a low standard.
8. Large classes.
9. Reduction of the number of periods:
 - (a) English introduced at later stage.
10. Lack of supervision:
 - (a) No trained specialist engaged in such task.

IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH

1. Place of English should be properly defined:
 - (a) Objectives of teaching English at various stages.
2. Well trained and well equipped teachers with latest techniques of teaching with a knowledge of phonetics should be engaged in such tasks.
3. Translation method should be replaced by audio-visual method.

4. Text books should be written in accordance with structural method containing appropriate pictures and exercises. Readers and text books prescribed by CIEFL, Hyderabad may be introduced.
5. Teachers should be equipped with proper audio-visual materials.
6. Examination in English should be oriented to teaching.
7. The teachers should follow techniques that are especially suitable for teaching large classes such as choral drills, group methods.
8. The use of mother tongues in classrooms should be reduced so that people may have more practice of listening English.
9. Effective supervision should be provided for an on the spot guidance.

Apart from the above mentioned suggestions for the improvement of English in India, linguists in a recent seminar organized to discuss the techniques of improvement in English have suggested the following points which should be accepted while teaching English language.

A. 1. Proper motivation for the learning of English:

(a) Teachers must motivate and inspire:

"A poor teacher teaches, an average teacher explains, a good teacher demonstrates, and an excellent teacher inspires."

2. Sincere effort (a) Crash refresher in grammar.
3. Atmosphere
4. Proficiency skills
5. Devotion of teachers
6. Language laboratory - film projector, film based on grammar, etc.
7. Reformation of examination system:
 - (a) Question papers should be so framed that students can not use standard English.
 - (b) Marks should be awarded for language along with the material contained in the answer.
8. Non methodical requirements - physical facilities such as adequate classrooms, limited number of students and uniformly grouped students and tuned syllables and other factors.
9. Sense of humor: Slight sense of humor may be permitted during the class.
10. Freedom from prejudice: One should not be prejudiced against English for the sake of one's regional language.

B.1. Shift should be from literature to language:

- (a) seminar/symposium
- (b) Specialized training in language teaching.
- (c) debates, essay competition, lectures by scholars.
- (d) précis and eulomaged.

2. The use of L1 should be reduced - (a) In Eastern Europe English is taught through L1.
3. Teaching should be tutorial oriented, not lecture oriented. Tutorial comprising small groups varying from 15 to 20 students will be ideal.
4. Periodical tests and internal examinations should be carried out.
5. Since the students lack all the form basic linguistic skills, C.K.Ogden's "Basic English" containing only 850 words together with minimum of rules for their use may be applied.

6. Basic rudiments of phonetics should be taught at the school level and gradually developed.
7. Use of L1 words which have been accepted in English should be encouraged both in writing and speech.
8. Co-ordination between elementary, secondary and under-graduate teaching of English is essential.