

*The
Teaching of English
In
India*



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING
NEW DELHI

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The Teaching of English in India

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS

Delhi, April 15 to 20, 1963



DIRECTORATE OF EXTENSION PROGRAMMES
FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING
NEW DELHI

51—D—1

Published by

Publication Unit

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

114, SUNDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-11

First published, October 1963—2,000 copies

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PRINTED AT NAVIN PRESS, 6, FAIZ BAZAR, DELHI-6

A WORD TO THE READER

The Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education organised a conference on the Teaching of English in April, 1963. The conference addressed itself to vital issues which await urgent and practical solution in the Teaching of English today. The participants felt that a report on the proceedings of the conference would make stimulating reading. As I happened to be the Chairman of this conference, I have been requested to address a word to the reader regarding the report.

It is not possible to furnish in a report the accent and conviction of eager argument and counter-argument that mark the proceedings of a conference. A report can only be an accurate account of the conclusions arrived at and of some of the thinking that went to the shaping of these conclusions. Even so this report is bound to be of considerable interest to teachers and students of English who are already familiar with problems of teaching English, especially at the secondary stage. The report seeks to convey to a larger fraternity at least some measure of the impact that the conference had on the participants themselves.

There are some teachers who think even today that the structural approach to the teaching of English has complicated the problems of teaching English in its own way, as much as the direct method did in the past. The reader of this report will probably realise that the situation is too complex to be simplified in this way. All that the structural approach is trying to do is to step into the vacuum created by the gradual fading out of the grammar and translation method and the failure of the direct method. The method of teaching English in our schools today is nothing other than a mere 'reading and translation' method. Grammar is taught neither theoretically as in the past nor functionally as it is expected to be taught

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through the structural approach. That is why our students are unable to write even a correct sentence in English. The only remedy seems to be to train all the teachers of English in the techniques of the structural approach. The fact that many states in the country are now organising their own institutes of English for training secondary teachers bears ample testimony to the confidence reposed in this measure of reform.

The Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education deserves our warmest thanks for the earnestness and enthusiasm with which they have rendered this significant service to the cause of teaching English in our country. We are also deeply indebted to Shri Raja Roy Singh, Joint Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training for his valuable contributions to our discussions on various occasions.

Hyderabad
September 10, 1963

V. K. GOKAK
Director
Central Institute of English

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Under the auspices of the Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education a conference on the Teaching of English was held at Delhi from April 15 to 20, 1963. The purpose of this conference was to review the position and the problems of the teaching of English in Indian schools and to suggest suitable measures for its improvement.

The task of the conference was

1. to examine the position of English as a subject in the secondary school curriculum since 1947 and the status that it now enjoys ;
2. to review current practices in the teaching of English with special reference to the methods employed in such teaching, the materials available and the training of teachers ;
3. to recommend future lines of action ; and
4. to suggest priorities for a programme of research and investigation in the field of English teaching.

The group consisted of experienced Indian Educationists in the field of English teaching from universities and Institutes of English in the country, from teacher training colleges and from schools. The list of participants is appended at the end of this Report.

The participants were requested to send in brief notes on specific areas in the field of English teaching, clarifying the background, raising issues for consideration and suggesting positive programmes for action. Abstracts from these are included under 'Some Points of View' in the pages that follow.

The conference was inaugurated by Prof. T.K.N. Menon, Director, D.E.P.S.E. on the morning of April 15, 1963. Prof. Menon said that the conference would enable experts from different parts of the country to meet in

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order to clarify the aims, methods, procedures and other issues relating to the teaching of English. The report on the proceedings of the conference, he felt, would be helpful to workers in the field—teachers, educators, evaluators, administrators and policy makers.

The following were designated to the various offices of the conference :

<i>Chairman</i>	—	Shri V.K. Gokak
<i>Secretary</i>	—	Km. A. Chari
<i>Recorders</i>	—	Shri W. V. Bhave Smt. P.V. Mehrotra.

Shri Gokak presented a critical review of the current position of English teaching in the country. This talk served as the starting point for the discussions. A list of problems based on the various working papers submitted by the participants was presented to the group and, with minor modifications, was accepted as the basis for discussion. The rest of the conference was devoted to a consideration of these problems.

The Deliberations

The major areas from which problems were taken up for deliberation by the group were :

- Aims and Objectives
- Age and Span for Second Language Learning
- Syllabuses
- Texts and Teaching Materials
- Teaching Methods
- Teaching Aids
- The Training of Teachers
- English in the School Final Year
- Evaluation
- Organizational Features
- Research Projects
- English in English Medium and Public Schools.

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Some Points of View

1. 'The teaching of English in our schools will have to be determined by the need for English in our universities, government offices and business organisations. Though a few universities have accepted the regional medium for arts courses, the science courses continue to be taught in English. We have, therefore, to attach equal importance to expression and comprehension in the teaching of English for some years to come.

'The present requirements are that a matriculate should have an active command of a vocabulary of about 3,000 words and the more important structures of English. The Nagpur list of words and structures can form a working basis for this purpose, but it needs revision. A knowledge of spoken English is also essential. We have to define what a minimum knowledge of spoken English implies at this stage and formulate the ways in which it can be imparted.'

— *V. K. Gokak*

2. 'In India all who go to secondary schools are eager to learn English and it is difficult or impossible to deny it to them because of the great utilitarian value and the opportunities opened up by a knowledge of English.

.....'Here is an obvious case for variability in and limitation of objectives for different groups. It is one thing to want to carry on higher education and the country's administration in a language that has no affinity with the

Indian languages. It is another thing to aim at sufficient reading ability to obtain information for specific purposes without an attempt to achieve a high degree of correct and idiomatic expression in speech and writing. Attention needs to be given to this matter of English courses with different purposes and different levels of achievement.'

—M. Choksi

Points Discussed

1. *What should be our objectives in teaching English to children in schools where English is not the medium of instruction ?*
2. *What should be the minimum requirements for those entering the University ?*
3. *What should be the level of achievement in English of pupils who intend to take up post-matriculation courses in science and technology ?*
4. *What should be the relative importance of speaking, reading and writing in our teaching programme ?*
5. *Should English be taught to **all** pupils ?*

There was considerable discussion on how the objectives should be defined. Some members were of the view that the most precise way of defining them was to do so in terms of structures* and vocabulary. It was agreed, however, that the objectives should be defined in more general terms.

1. We should expect pupils at the school leaving stage to be able to

- (a) read books in simple English,
- (b) converse intelligibly in familiar situations of every day life,
- (c) write correct, simple English, and

* Structure here and throughout the Report refers to a *sentence pattern*.

(d) comprehended the English necessary for taking up technical and professional courses.

2. No higher targets in English would be necessary for university entrants if English was not the medium of instruction at the university stage. But in cases where English is the medium of instruction and examination, comprehension and expression would both be important and should be equally emphasized at school. To determine the suitability of entrants to university courses, the university may consider adopting either of the following measures :

(a) Require a higher level of attainment in terms of percentage of marks secured at the school leaving examination.

(b) Require a higher level of attainment judged through an optional advanced section included in the final school leaving examination paper in English.

3. For courses in science and technology, students need technical vocabulary in addition to the basic skills in the use of the English language ; but this vocabulary has to be imparted in the course of teaching the specific subjects themselves. At the matriculation course, therefore, skills should be emphasized rather than specific content vocabulary.

4. While reading and writing should claim our primary attention at school in our educational context, spoken English should receive necessary emphasis, partly because recent thinking in the field of second language teaching advocates teaching through the spoken form, and also because good pronunciation is important in itself.

5. English is offered by a very large majority of students even in states where it is not a compulsory subject at school. This is because today, many avenues of employment are closed to those who are not conversant with English. Therefore, in the present national context, English may be made a compulsory subject at school.

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AGE AND SPAN

Some Points of View

1. 'There have been rapid changes in the thinking about the proper age level for the teaching of English in schools. Quite a few states have changed over to introducing English from class III onwards. Gujarat has changed over to class VIII. Our objection to these changes is not based on the thinking that they are impracticable. A course can be devised which serves the purpose at any of these levels. But it would really be hazardous to change over to another arrangement without properly trained teachers, a well defined syllabus and planned text materials. It is certainly not desirable to implement the change and then cast about for the ways and means of making it effective.'

—V.K. Gokak

2. 'Considering the special place of English in India, the time required for teaching it at the school stage might be uniformly seven years in all the states of the Indian Union, beginning at the age of eleven.

'Is there anything to be gained by beginning still earlier? There may be a case for introducing a foreign language early to children who hear their own language correctly at home. It is quite another matter when the children have to be taught correct speech habits in their own language. The intellectual effort and energy that have to be expended make it difficult for the little ones to learn a foreign language at the same time. If the new language

is basically different in structures and sounds from the child's mother-tongue (as is the case with English in India), there is quite a possibility of hindering attainment in the mother-tongue as well as in other subjects of the curriculum. This is the strongest argument in the case for the late introduction of English.'

—*M. Choksi*

3. 'I feel very strongly that the age for learning a second language is not the problem at all. Whether we start at the age of 5 or 10 our major concern should be to procure the best teachers so that the language learning process is begun properly and it becomes a pleasure for the pupils to learn the language as well as possible.'

—*A. Jacob*

4. 'The trend to start teaching English in class III is welcome because I feel that if a subject is to be taught, it should be taught well and it should start at the right age. Linguists and those who have studied the mental development of children *vis-a-vis* language habit formation, maintain that the earlier a language is introduced to a child the better his hold over it. If English, therefore, is to be taught, it should start at the elementary level.'

—*R.P. Sharma*

Points Discussed

1. *What is the most appropriate age at which to start teaching English ?*
2. *For how many years should we teach English in the schools where the regional language is the medium and how many periods a week should we devote to it ?*

The group took note of the current position of English in the school curricula of various states, of the growing trend towards starting English from the third class in many states and of the adherence of Gujarat to the teaching of English from

class VIII. Some felt that in accordance with the facts of neuro-physiology it was a good thing to start teaching a second language from the elementary classes. Postponing it till the eighth class was definitely undesirable. Some others looked at the problem of deciding the age level for English from a practical point of view. They felt that starting English from the third class was good, especially because it gave about five years for English study even to those who did not go on to the secondary school. But they also pointed out that the problems of finding suitable teachers in sufficient numbers as well as of the provision of teaching materials would be acute. They remarked that the practice of teaching English from the eighth class appeared to solve some problems—that of teacher shortage, and that of the wastage involved in teaching English to pupils who did not study beyond the elementary or middle school stage. The question of the work-load of pupils at different stages was also considered. The group agreed on the following, after considerable discussion :

1. It is not advisable to start teaching English from class III,
 - (a) unless we make sure that the pupils have reached a satisfactory level of attainment in the mother tongue, and
 - (b) until properly trained teachers and the requisite teaching materials are available.
2. The practice of teaching English from the class VIII is uncommon. A full report of the experience in Gujarat should, however, be awaited.
3. A span of six or seven years of English starting from class V or VI, depending on the structure of the educational organization prevalent in different states, should be provided.
4. About eight periods of forty minutes' duration each should be allotted for a six or seven-year course of study.

THE SYLLABUS

Some Points of View

1. 'Several States have now syllabuses developed on structural lines. The grading of teaching items is no doubt a sound procedure.'

—*V. K. Gokak*

2. 'It would certainly be useful for the English teacher to have before him the most essential structural items arranged in a reasonable and practicable sort of teaching sequence. But the first difficulty is to choose a number of items to be arranged over a period of several years of teaching, which would be acceptable to all...

Secondly, the teaching sequence of these chosen items should neither be rigid nor arbitrary.'

—*S. C. Sarkar*

3. 'If English is to be taught for six years at school from classes VI to XI, which is the general pattern, then almost the first requisite would be to view the problem as one integrated whole, each stage a unit in itself but dovetailed into the next. And yet, for various reasons, English in the middle school classes has little or no connection with the requirements of the high school, which again do not take into consideration the needs either of university studies or of further education of any kind, or even of employment prospects. Result : truncated syllabuses and learning in patches.'

—*A. Chari*

Points Discussed

1. *What are our views on the structural syllabuses that are now commonly accepted ?*
2. *The typical structural syllabus advocates grading step by step. Should we consider the introduction of block units ?*
3. *Need the structural syllabus be necessarily linked to oral methods of teaching ?*
4. *How shall we ensure continuity in the syllabus for English, throughout the school course ? Is the prescription of an integrated series of text-books essential for a proper articulation of the syllabus ?*
5. *On what principles of selection should the vocabulary to be taught be based ?*
6. *Should the syllabus include a course in English grammar, and if so, at what stage and of what kind ?*
7. *What should be the place of reference skills, of translation, and of precis-writing in the English course ?*
8. *What should be the place of verse or poetry in the English course ?*

It was observed that a majority of states had adopted structural syllabuses* for English during recent years. But the experience of many states had been far from satisfactory, and a number of objections to the structural syllabus had been raised, the main being that :

- (a) it appears to demand a rigid methodology based on mechanical drilling of isolated language items,
- (b) it lays down a rigid order for the teaching of the items and leaves no freedom to the teachers to accommodate

*These syllabuses set out a graded list of language items to be taught to each class and prescribe the texts that will go with them.

their teaching of a living language to their individual preferences or to classroom situations,

- (c) the teachers who are not specially trained in handling it fail to grasp and put through a sophisticated syllabus of this type, and
- (d) the text-books written to the prescribed list of structures are frequently dull and uninteresting.

The group discussed these reactions at some length. It found that the objections were not baseless. The manner in which the structural syllabus has been worked out in most states has given rise to many real problems. The group, however, felt that the fault lay not with the structural syllabus as such but with the way in which it had been commonly approached and interpreted. The members agreed unanimously that an English syllabus framed in terms of definite items, both lexical and syntactical, in a well-graded order, represented the most precise and exact mode of setting forth the language material to be taught.

1. So far as the emphasis on repetition and drilling of language items goes, it would be a misconception to interpret it as a wholly mechanical activity. It is possible and necessary to impart variety to this activity and to keep up the interest of the pupils.

2. Proper sequence in the structures taught is vital to the implementation of a structural syllabus but it should not be taken to imply a rigid and mechanical adherence to the prescribed order of structures. Teachers and text book writers with imagination can modify the order for specific purposes. Moreover, teachers and text book writers could, in presenting their reading material, manipulate the prescribed list of structures in the form of block units— i.e., in units providing for a systematic revision of earlier structures, proper presentation and practice of new structures and for preparing the ground for the structures that were to follow. Such block units, however, need not be specified in the syllabus, lest they should lead to greater rigidity.

3. The course book designed for a structural syllabus, especially in the initial stages, has primarily to contain reading material oriented to the purpose of teaching structural items. There is no reason why it should not be interesting at the same time. In any case interesting supplementary readers should be provided from the second year of English onwards.

4. The question of proper articulation and continuity in the syllabus for a six or seven-year course of English was taken up for discussion. It was noted that the majority of current syllabuses lacked continuity. The syllabuses for the first three or four years of English are usually formed on the structural pattern but those of the later years are still traditional and bear no relation to the former. It was agreed that the syllabus for the first three or four years of English should cover the fundamental structures (some 200 of them) of the English language, and a specified vocabulary. The syllabus in English for the higher classes (*i.e.* the last two or three years of English, depending on the duration of the course), need not be arranged in terms of graded structures but it should be laid down that

- (a) the reading material prescribed must not be beyond the linguistic attainment of pupils ;
- (b) the reading material should provide for a consolidation of the language items learnt in the earlier classes as well as for an extension of vocabulary and a reinforcement of some of the more difficult structures learnt ;
- (c) literary extracts included for reading should be suitably adapted and simplified ;
- (d) a planned programme of oral and written composition should be prescribed to consolidate the language learnt ; and
- (e) books for different grades should be prescribed from the same series all through the course to ensure integrated language learning.

5. The group discussed the question of the vocabulary to be prescribed for the English course and considered how much could really be covered. The members differed a little in their estimates but they agreed that it was possible to cover approximately 2,500 words to form the active and some 500 more words to form the recognition vocabulary of pupils in a six or seven-year course of English. The group pointed out that

- (a) the general Service list of words and the Nagpur list are useful sources to depend on for a selection of the vocabulary to be prescribed ;
- (b) the principles of frequency, utility, teachability and productivity should be kept in mind while selecting vocabulary items ; and
- (c) authors of text-books should be free to choose 20% of the vocabulary used, from outside the prescribed list.

6. On the point of including grammar as a part of the syllabus there was difference of opinion. Some felt that since more knowledge of grammar did not really help in establishing language mastery, it would be better to keep all formal grammar out of the syllabus. It was feared that even the inclusion of some formal grammar exercises would turn the balance and encourage teachers to engage pupils in parsing, sentence analysis etc. There were others, however, who considered it useful to teach some grammar at the higher stage. Some even proposed that a booklet on elementary English grammar could be prepared (perhaps in the regional language) and put into the hands of pupils in the two upper classes, while others could not see any point in it. After a good deal of discussion the group agreed that

- (a) the essentials of elementary grammar should be taught in the last two years of the English course ; and that
- (b) the regional language may have to be occasionally used for explaining grammatical concepts in the classroom.

7. The group discussed the place of translation, precis-writing and other useful skills, in the school syllabus for English.

It was agreed that the cultivation of translation as a separate skill need not find a place in the syllabus for English at the school stage. Translation could be used as an occasional testing device ; and as an exercise in comprehension, it could be introduced in the last year of the course.

Precis-writing being a difficult exercise, involving comprehension, selection and concise expression, the majority of the members were of the opinion that the skills involved could be better cultivated in the mother tongue at the school stage and that precis-writing in English could be postponed to the university classes. Some, however, were of the view that easy exercises in precis-writing could be included in the last year of the English course.

Reference skills need to be cultivated by pupils at the high school stage. Pupils should be encouraged to make independent use of such material as dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

As for skill in written expression, it was recommended that only guided composition should be prescribed during the first three years of English. Various types of free composition would be desirable at a later stage.

8. On the question of including poetry in the school syllabus for English it was agreed that in the first three years of teaching English, poetry in the form of simple rhymes and verse, was desirable as it would provide variety and enjoyment, and have a certain mnemonic value. Simple narrative, descriptive and lyrical verse could be prescribed at a later stage. Proper selection of suitable poems was considered important. No separate weekly periods were felt to be necessary for recitation or poetry teaching, during the first three years. It was agreed that there was no need for any testing in poetry, except from the point of view of general comprehension.

TEXTS AND TEACHING MATERIAL

Some Points of View

1. 'In the absence of any other instructional material the text-book becomes a potent tool in the hands of the teacher, to teach the skills of a language, and the more so of a foreign language. The more planned the text-book, the easier the task of the teacher in making his pupils learn the language..... In view of the elimination of grammar books, the text-book assumes greater significance.'

—*R.S. Trivedi*

2. 'To suit the changing curricula and syllabuses in English during the past decade, there has been an unprecedented amount of activity in the area of English text-book production.....

'There is a good deal of variety in the text-books produced for the upper primary or middle school classes in several states..... A significant trend in the present-day text-books of English is the move towards a system in which structural selection and grading figures paramount.'

—*P.V. Mehrotra*

3. 'It is essential that prescription of text-books should be more systematic, careful and controlled. A single graded series of Readers should be prescribed from the primary class to the higher secondary classes so that pupils are put through a well-organized course in English. Either because of the distribution of patronage or because

of fear of charges of favouritism, a Reader which is an organic part of one series is prescribed for a certain standard and it is followed by a Reader from another series. This makes it impossible for a student to have a well-organized course in English in the higher class, particularly classes X and XI. Books of selections are prescribed which bears no relevance to the needs of pupils at that stage. All this has to be changed.....

‘No series of Readers should be prescribed which is not accompanied by teachers’ hand-books and work-books. Graded exercises for each year in all the skills should be devised to go with these books. These books should also give proper place to graded language games and group activity.’

—V.K. Gokak

Points Discussed

1. *What are the defects in some current text-books ?*
2. *The need for proper spacing and repetition of the new words and structures introduced in the text is considered essential. How could we ensure that some of these basic principles were adhered to by writers ?*
3. *Could the inclusion of a glossary of content words with translation be viewed with favour ?*
4. *Pupil work-books with plenty of exercises are essential and should go with the texts. How could these be prepared ?*
5. *What should be the themes and situations in the text-book ? wholly regional ? or also national and foreign ?*
6. *Exhaustive hand-books for teachers are essential. Could they be written in the regional languages ?*
7. *What suggestion could we make for the preparation of suitable supplementary readers ?*

Current trends in English text-books were discussed with regard to their production as well as their physical and linguistic features. It was found that owing to some reason or the other,

1. the text-books prescribed are frequently found to be inadequate in linguistic gradation and content ;
2. books are prescribed with no teachers' hand-books or pupils' work-books.

During the discussion it was pointed out that

1. the density index of new words introduced in the texts is sometimes as high as 1 to 4, whereas it should be somewhere around 1 to 20 ;
2. new words are not repeated in the book frequently enough to ensure proper consolidation.

Some among the group felt that the introduction and repetition of new words according to the above-mentioned principles would add to the length and monotony of the text material. However, all agreed that a proper balance must be kept between the repetition of the old and the introduction of the new material (both structure and vocabulary) having in mind the need for short and interesting as well as scientifically suitable material for learning the language well.

Regarding the current practice of using certain devices for drawing the pupils' attention to the new words, it was stated that

1. the practice of printing new words and structures in bold type in the body of the text was not sound ;
2. a list of new words, however, could be given in the beginning or end of a lesson with advantage.

Regarding the question of work-books to go with the prescribed text-books it was agreed that

1. it was desirable to have work-books with every series of English text-books ;

2. the authors of text-books should produce work-books too ; they may, in the writing of these, seek the co-operation of competent agencies, wherever possible ;
3. exercises should find a place in the text-books, preferably at the end of the book instead of at the end of every lesson. Teachers' hand-books should give additional exercises.

On the suggestion of providing a glossary of new words with translation at the end of the text-book, the group was divided. Some members feared that this method of reinforcing the pupil's knowledge of the vocabulary learnt was fraught with danger and might affect teaching methods adversely. There were others, however, who felt that such a device would be a legitimate learning aid to the pupils.

Regarding the content of text-books, it was agreed that it should be regional and national as well as international, the proportion depending upon the capacity of pupils at various levels to assimilate the subject-matter.

A text-book writer needs to have creative imagination, skill and experience in teaching and knowledge of the techniques involved in the construction of text materials. To ensure that those who write text-books are properly qualified for the task, it was suggested that

1. a short term course be planned and organized for training prospective writers in the preparation of text-books with the help of the C.I.E., Hyderabad, the English Language Teaching, Institute, Allahabad and the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi ; and
2. a directory of writers of text-books in English be prepared on an all-India basis.

It was unanimously agreed that where text-books were nationalised it was necessary to get a few alternative series of text-books prepared and recommended rather than only

one. This would give the schools the necessary freedom of choice.

Regarding teachers' hand-books, it was agreed that

1. Exhaustive hand-books with detailed lessonwise instructions, full exposition, exercises, oral drills etc., should be prepared and published to accompany the text-books.
2. Teachers should be trained to use such hand-books effectively.
3. It would be a good plan to have the hand-books written in English as well as in the regional language.

Supplementary reading should start from the end of the second year of English. Supplementary readers should enable the pupils to revise the vocabulary already learnt as well as enlarge their recognition vocabulary by the introduction of new words. Writers of supplementary readers should be free to use words of their own choice in such books, up to a limit of twenty percent.

A wide variety of good supplementary readers is being produced by private publishers, who may be expected to continue the production of such books on the lines laid down by experts. Approved lists of suitable supplementary readers should be furnished for the guidance of schools.

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TEACHING METHODS

Some Points of View

1. 'The usual technique employed in most schools is still translation and the teaching of formal grammar. In the class-room emphasis is on word-meaning, explanations.....'

—R. P. Sharma

2. 'Neither teachers nor pupils can become familiar with spoken English except through experience of spoken English. Even if detailed dialogues are given in teachers' hand-books, teachers cannot be expected to make effective use of them without proper training. At the same time it is better to teach a second language in its oral form to begin with.....Where the oral approach is not possible, the structural syllabus will have to be followed in the traditional way.....'

'The grammar and translation method is outmoded. There is no justification for drilling a student in rules of grammar from the very beginning.....If an oral approach to a limited teaching material in the first two years is possible for the teacher, pupils will be all the better for it.'

—V. K. Gokak

3. 'The structural approach, *misconceived*, can have a disastrous effect on the teaching of English in our schools. Too often do we see the drilling of 'structures', the dry bones of the language, substituted for

the presentation of the living thing. The role of language as an instrument of living communication is hardly realized by teacher or pupil.'

—A. E. Subramaniam

Points Discussed

1. *Must all teaching be oral during the first year?—What emphasis should be laid on the various skills?*
2. *What is the place of formal drills, of games and group work? What difficulties do teachers face in using them?*
3. *To what extent is the use of the mother-tongue permissible?*
4. *At what stage and how should reading and writing be introduced?*
5. *How could we promote good handwriting?*
6. *What recommendations could we make with regard to proper techniques of correction-work?*
7. *How should teaching time be distributed over the various skills to be taught?*

The problem of methods was discussed from various angles. The oral approach was defined as the practice of teaching the second language through conversation and oral drills, with the minimum use of the mother-tongue, if at all, six to eight weeks of exclusive oral work in the beginning, and oral preparation for reading new items and their oral drilling.

The question as to whether the oral approach was indispensable for second language learning was discussed. It was pointed out that the experience of teachers all over the world indicated that the oral approach was the most effective method of teaching a second language.

It was also noted that a large majority of the teachers of English in our country use methods which do not conform to this approach. This surely was an anomalous situation.

The group agreed on the following analysis of the present situation :

English as a second language used to be taught in schools in India through the grammar and translation method, till about thirty years ago, and it was effective in its own way. There was a well-established tradition of grammar learning among the teachers of English in this country. Besides, a factor which helped the proper learning of English during former years was the use of English as the medium of instruction in secondary schools.

Two fundamental changes overtook the teaching of English several years ago. English ceased to be the medium of instruction at school, with the result that whatever English was learnt was learnt only in the English class. Nor were the effects of the change off-set by any increase in the hours devoted to the teaching of English.

When the direct method of teaching English was introduced in our schools, it put an end to the teaching of grammar. The oral drills recommended by the direct method could have ensured grammatical correctness in the language mastered by pupils. Unfortunately, however, no systematic attempt was made to train the teachers of English in the new method, the implementation of which was, consequently, ineffective. Nor were grammar books prescribed any longer for study by pupils.

We thus found ourselves in a situation in which grammar was not taught to pupils as part of the course in English ; and at the same time, the oral drills which were devised to replace the teaching of formal grammar and to habituate the learner to correct usage through actual practice were not widely adopted. The achievement of the pupils in our

schools in English thus deteriorated because of the omission of instruction in English grammar and the non-adoption of the oral approach, one or the other of which is a *sine qua non* of language learning. The result is that we have today in use in our schools, neither the grammar and translation method of old nor the oral approach promoted by the direct method. What we do have is only reading and translation of the text-book prescribed, which is no method at all of teaching a second language.

As things stand today, a programme of reform of English teaching will have to centre round either the restoration of the grammar and translation method or the proper implementation of the structural syllabus by means of the oral approach. A revival of the grammar and translation method is no easy matter either. The new generation of teachers of English, almost in its entirety, will have to be trained in formal grammar, the tradition of grammar learning having practically disappeared from our midst. Text-books too will have to be specially prepared and published, to go with the adoption of this method. Finally, it is for consideration whether all this effort should be made in the service of a concept of grammar which has been superseded by descriptive linguistics. This method, therefore, cannot be revived.

The alternative is to implement the structural syllabus by means of the oral approach in the best and quickest manner possible. In schools in which this approach has been properly implemented it has yielded tangible results. For the approach to be effective, however, teachers of English should be properly trained in it and helped to a clear understanding of its implications.

The introduction of reading and writing was then discussed. The group felt that though it might be ideal to devote a certain number of weeks at the beginning exclusively to oral work, there would be no harm in introducing reading and

writing from the very beginning. All skills could be cultivated together and a variety in classroom activity could be thus achieved.

The group listened with interest to what Shri R. R. Singh had to say about the current position of teaching English in Russia, its place in the curriculum, the teaching methods adopted and standards achieved.

The group stressed the importance of good handwriting and the need for pupils cultivating it from the very beginning. It was recommended that a type of print script which could easily lead to the cursive hand should be adopted in the first year of English.

The problem of correction work was discussed at some length and it was observed that correction work at present was done perfunctorily mainly because of the heavy work-load of the English teachers.

1. It was suggested that self-correcting exercises and group correction might be tried and practised to solve the problem to some extent.
2. The practice of employing special correction masters to help the teachers in correction work was disapproved by the majority of the group.
3. The quantum of correction work that the English teacher has to do should be taken into account in the number of periods of teaching work per week, allotted to him.
4. The teacher need not correct *all* the mistakes found in *every* written exercise ; he may concentrate on the most glaring errors in an exercise. It would be necessary for him to draw up a systematic plan of correction work so as to cover *all types* of errors.
5. The practice of assigning marks for every exercise was considered to be psychologically detrimental to improve-

ment. Judicious use of commendation would encourage the pupil to improve himself.

6. Oral preparation of every exercise would reduce the number of mistakes committed.
7. On-the-spot correction, while pupils are writing their exercise, would be an effective correction device.
8. The use of symbols to indicate the types of the mistakes committed would be helpful, provided the symbols are few in number and easily understood.

It was considered desirable to divide a period of forty minutes' duration, during the first year of teaching English thus :

1. Oral work including drills, conversation and rhymes —20 minutes.
2. Reading—10 minutes.
3. Writing, mostly transcription—10 minutes.

A somewhat similar distribution of every teaching period was advocated for the next two years also, but with this difference, that the time given to reading and writing should be gradually increased.

In the higher classes also, there was no need to have separate periods for prose, poetry and grammar lessons. It was found difficult to lay down any set pattern for the distribution of time but it was recommended that every teacher should plan how to include regular oral work, reading and writing, in his weekly programme. For written work the provision of a block of two consecutive periods every week was suggested. Grammar, it was felt, should not be taught by itself but incidentally as arising out of the text.

It was recommended that at the lower stages, reading should be mainly oral and at the higher, mainly silent. Supplementary reading should be initiated in the class and should be mostly silent. A large part of it must, however, be done at home. Questions requiring brief answers might be set to ensure reading and comprehension.

On the question of how to teach poetry, it was felt that while in the lower classes simple verses and rhymes could be just recited for enjoyment, without entering into language expositions, a similar treatment would not be suitable for the higher classes, especially when the piece chosen was not too simple and easy. It was fruitless to attempt the appreciation of poetry in a foreign language unless linguistic barriers were first removed, for there could be hardly any appreciation of that which was not understood. Unfortunately, most of the books on the methodology of teaching English which were used in this country made no distinction between the methods of teaching poetry to English-speaking children and those that should be used in teaching poetry to children who were learning English as a second language. For the latter category of pupils, explanation for ensuring comprehension was a necessary step to proper appreciation and instead of destroying the spirit and magic of the poem it would add to its charm and appeal. Such language work on a poem, however, should never take the form of language drills ; nor should it enter into the subtleties of words and phrases.

In teaching a poem in a foreign language although the artistic language and heightened expression should not go unnoticed, the emphasis should be on appreciation of the poem as a whole. It would be desirable to make the pupils learn the poems by heart. All were agreed of the need for a careful selection of poems to be taught. It would be of great advantage to publish a carefully made collection of about a hundred English poems suitable for teaching in Indian schools. Text-book writers and teachers could select from it the poems suitable for various classes.

It was felt that there should be no testing in poetry except in the higher classes. Even there the questions asked should relate to comprehension and the general points of appreciation presented to the pupils.

On the question of teaching pronunciation, it was agreed that the teachers' hand-books should include instructions on the following :

1. right stress
2. phonetic transcription
3. difficult words, *i.e.*, words most commonly mispronounced owing to regional language habits
4. devices for teaching pronunciation and for correcting errors

It was recommended that a contrastive analysis of English and the various regional languages should be undertaken for finding out the difficult areas which need special attention.

6

TEACHING AIDS

Some Points of View

1. 'There should be a big blackboard in each class and chalk sticks of two or three colours. Wall pictures should also be made available to each teacher of English. The teacher can have his own collection of cuttings from newspapers and periodicals. This is what we can start with.'

'The great teaching media are yet to be employed in our country for the purpose of second language learning. Linguaphone records, filmstrips and tape-recorded material can be used with great advantage when our schools are progressive enough to profit by their use. The All-India Radio can broadcast lessons, exercises and tests and can develop into a powerful aid to the teaching of English in classrooms.'

—V.K. Gokak

2. 'I would consider the preparation of a complete kit for the teacher giving him suitable aids to teaching as today's prime need. In such a kit should be included a manual giving detailed help for individual lessons, guide notes on the improvisation and use of easily available aids, examples of exercises and tests, references for further reading and other useful hints that can help the teacher with his day-to-day work.'

—A. Chari

Points Discussed

1. *What is the place of audio-visual and other aids in classroom teaching? How many of these are readily*

available? What help can be given to the teacher in procuring or making them?

2. *Other aids such as the radio, the School Broadcasts of A.I.R., films and filmstrips, recorded materials and the television are being used in a few schools. Could aids be exploited more systematically?*

The group agreed that audio-visual aids like filmstrips and tape-recorders could make an English lesson interesting and effective, provided they were properly used. However, mechanical aids like the radio, television and gramophone records should not be deemed indispensable for effective teaching. It is important that proper use should be made of

1. the blackboard (for sketching and writing),
2. flash cards (as reinforcing aids and for silent and fast reading), and
3. wall pictures (for composition and connected speech).

Where mechanical aids are available, it is important to train teachers to use them effectively. Such training should form part of the training college programme. It was suggested that hand-books should be prepared on

1. the production and use of inexpensive teaching aids—e.g., the English teachers' 'Teaching Kit'; and
2. the use and maintenance of various audio-visual aids useful for the teaching of English.

7

THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Some Points of View

1. 'Our teachers are a splendid band of people. There is nothing really wrong with them. The fault is ours in not making available to them certain basic tools essential for proper teaching. If we accept this proposition it involves

(a) an overhauling of the English methods curricula in teacher training institutions with the object of making them more practical and useful, and

(b) the development of extensive programmes of in-service education of a practical nature to meet the growing needs of such teachers.'

—A. Chari

2. 'The syllabus that prevails today in the training colleges in English methods is an out-moded one. It stresses theoretical knowledge rather than practical training.....

'We should explore the possibility of training all our teachers in rural schools, in the pronunciation and grammar of the limited material which they have to teach in the first or second year of English.

'Graduates who are going to be teachers of English in the schools should study a course in Modern English Usage and not merely the history of the English Language. It is high time that the universities developed such a course of study and made it a compulsory paper for students of Special English.'

—V.K. Gokak

3. 'Preparing teachers is of the utmost importance to meet today's needs of good teachers of the English language. It is therefore necessary for us to examine the curriculum of a training college to see whether we are meeting the various needs of a teacher who goes in to train herself to be equipped as a good language teacher at the secondary level. If the structural approach to the teaching of English comes to stay, there should be a definite three months in-service training course for all teachers who need such help.'

—*A. Jacob*

4. 'That the training programmes are mostly theoretical, that they do not have real touch with the existing problems in schools, that schools for that reason do not have faith in the utility of the methods advocated in training colleges—these are problems that demand serious attention.....'

'It is unfortunate that even graduates of universities are unable to speak and write English with accuracy. If the training colleges were to take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching the language as well, that would be a tremendous task, though I believe that the training college syllabuses can be improved by crossing out some of the superfluous theoretical aspects and by including an effective course on spoken English and Modern English Usage. If universities can also improve their syllabuses and examination system, that should be a great relief to teacher-training institutions.'

—*R.P. Sharma*

5. 'The training of subject-teachers has hitherto consisted of a course in theoretical knowledge of methods and some practice-teaching. This was perhaps adequate in the past, when the prospective teachers coming into training schools and colleges, had in most cases, the requisite mastery of subject-matter. But 'methods' alone can scarcely be adequate outfit for present-day trainees. This

is particularly true of prospective teachers of English. With them, the crux is not teaching them the techniques—there is no great difficulty in this—but giving them the necessary language outfit. They are at present unable to deliver the goods, for the reason that they do not have the goods to deliver. How shall we give them these ?’

—A.E. Subramaniam

Points Discussed

1. *What broad recommendations could be made for the revision of the syllabuses in training colleges ?*
2. *What should be the nature of in-service courses ? Should these include content courses for the improvement of the teachers' equipment in English ? If so, what should be the nature of these courses ?*
3. *What should be the role of the various agencies—the national and the regional institutes and the training colleges—in the training of English teachers ?*

The group discussed various aspects of the problems of teacher training. The magnitude of the problem, the gigantic dimensions of the task of training the overwhelming majority of our English teachers who have had no training whatsoever in the modern methods of teaching the language, was pointed out. The training colleges hold out very little hope of a quick solution. The efforts of special institutes too cannot go very far immediately. Campaigns of the Madras English Language Teaching type are necessary and useful, but their scope is inevitably limited. The best syllabuses and text-books cannot succeed until our English teachers are given a proper orientation in the new methods of teaching English. The group agreed that the situation is extremely distressing and the policy of drift that is in evidence in vast numbers of our schools should not be allowed to continue.

Considerable discussion took place over the proposal that the traditional grammar and translation method be used by the teachers who were not trained in the modern methods. But the difficulties were easily realised. Children would find it difficult to cope with the abstract concepts of formal grammar, unless they were taught by teachers who were well-grounded in grammar. But (as pointed out earlier) this method of teaching English has been out of use in this country for so long now that few teachers would be found who could successfully employ it. Therefore, the attempt to revive this method would create the very problem of paucity of trained teachers which we are seeking to solve. Moreover, it would be frustrating to go back to a long discarded method as a desperate measure of expediency.

It was thus felt that we could not go back to the old grammar and translation approach. At the same time we could not shut our eyes to the fact that large numbers of teachers were doing little more than reading and translating the text-books written on the basis of the new structural syllabuses, just because they had not been trained to do any better. It was felt that some steps should be taken to assist them to improve their teaching by providing them with some kind of method. The group felt that the matter was worth investigating. It, therefore, appointed a committee to explore the possibility of producing an interim hand-book for the untrained teacher who might otherwise have to wait indefinitely before he got the opportunity to be trained.

The group made the following further recommendations :

1. The type of teacher training campaign organized in Madras recently should be organized in other states also.
2. Training college syllabuses for English should be so revised that the practical techniques of language teaching receive greater emphasis than mere theory. It was also necessary to include in the training pro-

gramme a content course in English so designed as to strengthen the trainee's equipment in the language at least to the extent needed for his effectively fulfilling the task of teaching it at school.

3. It is high time that English teaching was recognized as a specialized job needing special training. Training colleges should require the English teacher trainees to be trained in teaching English alone, and in schools such teachers should, as far as possible, be responsible for teaching English and no other subject.
4. Extensive in-service training programmes should be undertaken by the training colleges whether or not they have Extension Service Departments.
5. Universities should introduce as part of their English literature courses for the B.A. and M.A., a study of
 - (a) Modern English Usage,
 - (b) applied linguistics with special reference to the teaching of English as a foreign language,
 - (c) spoken English, and
 - (d) oral tests in spoken English.

Universities might also start English Language Departments which would offer courses in English Language parallel to the English literature courses.

It was observed that the areas covered by in-service courses for English teachers could be :

1. Methods of teaching English as a second language
2. The phonetics of English
3. Modern English Usage
4. Literary interpretation in relation to the teaching of English.

In the in-service training courses organized for primary school teachers of English, there should be a content course consisting of (a) oral and written exercises in the language

material that the teacher will be called upon to teach ; (b) a study of supplementary readers written in simplified English with precis-writing and brief oral reviews based on the books read ; and (c) the grammar and pronunciation of the language material they have to teach at school.

It was noted that the ex-trainees from the C.I.E., Hyderabad, as well as the Extension Centres of the Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education have been organizing a number of useful refresher courses in different parts of the country during recent years. But it was proposed that some way should be found out by which local and regional field services on an **extended** scale could be organized.

There was unanimous approval of the following suggestions :

1. Content courses for improving the teachers' equipment in English are as important as methods courses. This is even more so in the case of teachers in rural areas or in elementary schools.
2. Demonstration lessons given by resource personnel from training colleges or schools are very effective means of improving class-room practices.
3. English teachers should form associations and take the initiative in organizing courses to solve their own problems. The Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education might render the necessary help, including financial, to such associations of secondary or elementary school teachers of English.
4. More regional and state institutes for the training of English teachers should be set up to cover as wide an area as possible.
5. Heads of schools and inspectors should be helped to realise the value of the new approach and the need for making a success of it.

The conference suggested the following division of functions among the various agencies engaged in the field of teacher-training :

1. *Training Colleges*
pre-service training and, where possible, seminars and refresher courses for teachers in service.
2. *Extension Departments*
in-service training of teachers, heads of schools and inspectors.
3. *The Central Institute of English, Hyderabad*
the training of training college personnel, college lecturers and others engaged in teaching English in professional training centres, researches and studies.
4. *The Regional and State Institutes of English*
the training of secondary school teachers of English and the production of teaching and reading materials.

Universities and training colleges might usefully organize short-term advanced courses for teachers of English in

- (a) phonetics of English,
- (b) applied Linguistics with reference to English, and
- (c) general Linguistics with reference to English.

ENGLISH IN THE SCHOOL FINAL YEAR

Some Points of View

'The emphasis at this stage may be on independent study. There should be a rapid expansion of vocabulary—passive as well as active. Most students—perhaps all—need training in

- (1) taking notes from
 - (a) written material
 - (b) spoken material
- (2) Summarising
 - (a) written material
 - (b) spoken material
- (3) making reports
 - (a) oral
 - (b) written

The pre-university and high school students, if they are to profit from a university course of study, must improve their ability to read and thus increase their range of vocabulary, grammar and comprehension.'

—M. Tarinayya

Points Discussed

1. *What should be the nature of the English course for the school-final year ?*
2. *What special help do teachers of the school-final year need ?*

The group discussed the needs of students at this stage.

By 'English in the school-final year' was meant the course in English for the last two or three years of the secondary school. It should be assumed that the essential structures laid down in the syllabus would have been taught by the middle school stage. What was envisaged at the post-middle school stage, was not the drilling of structures, but the consolidation of the structures and the vocabulary already taught. Secondly, there should be an extension of the essential vocabulary of the pupils so as to cover the list of 3000 essential words prescribed for the entire school course. Thirdly, the emphasis should be on extending the comprehension skills of the pupil in the field of good English writing. Fourthly, pupils at this stage should be put through systematic exercises in free but simple composition—letter writing, story narration, writing of paragraphs, essays, etc., to enable them to learn to write simple and correct English.

For supplementary reading it was suggested that

1. the books prepared for supplementary reading at this stage should be written in simplified English and should be such as can be read by pupils without difficulty of comprehension.
2. A variety of supplementary reading material should be available to pupils at this stage—not fiction alone, but travel, biography, and books of general knowledge.
3. Books on other school subjects, written in simple English, may also be used by the high school pupils as supplementary reading material. For the production of such books, the help of university professors and other suitable personnel could be sought.
4. An English Journal of the type of *Understanding Science* or *Knowledge* would be useful as supplementary reading material and could be brought out and popularised in schools.

The group agreed that the teachers of English at the school final stage need to be conversant with literature in modern English. Universities and training colleges should cooperate in organizing short courses on English language and literature for teachers of English. They should keep in mind the teacher's needs and introduce him to modern literature of the kind that will widen his horizon and give him a taste for reading.

9

EVALUATION

Some Points of View

1. 'School examinations are no sure test of pupil achievement today. They have to be made more realistic. The syllabus has to specify the areas in all the language skills (vocabulary, usage, spelling and punctuation, comprehension, composition and spoken English), and the school has to devise a test which will be a valid assessment of pupil achievement in all these areas.

'A central pool of tests in English for each year of second language learning should be devised and made available to all schools. The Examination Units under each State Department of Education can undertake this work.'

—*V. K. Gokak*

2. 'It is time that a certain percentage of marks is allowed for internal assessment.'

—*A. Jacob*

3. 'It is common knowledge that the requirements of the school leaving examination determine not only the content of the syllabus in English but the methods used in teaching. Hence an examination of the question papers for the school final year is called for. Any revision of these papers must take into account the specific skills that are being tested. Then only will it be possible to emphasise the teaching of the skills of the language all down the line.'

—*A. Chari*

Points Discussed

1. *What are the appropriate means of testing attainment? How much weightage should we give to tests and to records maintained by teachers?*
2. *How could we improve the form and content of the school-final examination?*
3. *Is an oral test in English necessary and feasible?*

The group discussed various aspects of the problems of evaluating achievement in English. The patterns of examination papers prevalent in certain states were outlined. It was felt that the question papers had not changed their form or content in keeping with the changed syllabuses and objectives of teaching English. It was agreed that

1. classroom exercises should be looked upon as practice exercises rather than tests ;
2. class tests should serve as the basis of diagnostic and remedial measures ;
3. sessional work should be regularly assessed and progress recorded. This record should get adequate weightage, along with the terminal and annual examination results, for the purpose of promotion ; and
4. the form and content of the school-final examination question papers should be changed so as to be an effective means of evaluating the main skills that are aimed at—*i.e.* comprehension and expression.

It is important that questions should be so framed as to discourage the mechanical reproduction of memorised material. The following suggestions were made :

1. Along with questions involving free composition, the new pattern should have questions in controlled composition, requiring expression along prescribed lines, so as to test specific points of usage.
2. To test comprehension, a number of short-answer questions should be framed on a given passage.

3. To test familiarity with the prescribed text, a series of excerpts might be given from the prescribed passages, to be matched with titles given.
4. Short questions should be asked on the passages given for 'reference to the context'.
5. Parsing and other formal grammar exercises should be eliminated.
6. Transformation exercises tend to be purely mechanical, and unrealistic from the point of view of teaching or testing actual usage. They should be made meaningful or given up altogether.
7. New type tests and essay-type tests serve different purposes and might be used in the same question paper.

On the question of oral testing at the school-final stage, the group felt that although it was essential to assess oral achievement, the systematic testing of spoken English at the school stage involved so many organizational problems that the difficulties in this direction seemed to be insurmountable. Some testing of oral achievement could, however, be done by the teachers internally.

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

Some Points of View

1. 'Since the deterioration has been so steady, drastic steps have to be taken to help teachers from now on. Planned lessons may be given to help teachers to know how to handle, for example, the teaching of a play or a poem or incidental grammar or precis-writing. A list of good English teachers who are actually on the job, should be available at the teachers' training colleges so that prospective teachers can observe their lessons and learn how to handle classes.'

—A. Jacob

2. 'It is very necessary that subject inspectors should be appointed in each state having control over the teaching of English in all schools in the state. These should be persons qualified in the teaching of English as a second language and they should have an up-to-date library on the subject. They should be aided in their work by a number of assistant subject inspectors. At the school level itself subject responsibility should be the concern of one of the teachers and all the teaching of English in school should be directly under his control.'

—V.K. Gokak

Points Discussed

1. *Should there be subject inspectors ?*
2. *How could subject responsibility be developed among teachers ?*

The group agreed that in every state the inspectorate should include a number of subject inspectors. The inspector in English should be a person qualified and experienced in the field. He should guide and supervise the teachers of English in their work instead of merely inspecting their classes. He should in fact be a 'Curriculum Consultant' in English who would spend several days with the English teachers of a school discussing with them specific problems in class-room procedure, methodology, testing etc. and giving them his advice. The possibility of the training college staff taking on an increasing role of curriculum consultants should be explored.

The idea of developing subject responsibility among the school teachers of English was approved. It was agreed that such responsibility should be developed at the school, local and state levels. In every school the most competent teacher of English should act as the coordinator and in consultation with the team of teachers in that school take on the responsibility of planning and executing an efficient programme of teaching.

In every area or zone the English teachers should form themselves into an association which would concern itself with the improvement in the standards of English teaching.

The planning and implementation of any educational programme connected with the teaching of English should be undertaken by State Departments of Education in consultation with training college personnel.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Some Points of View

1. 'It is incumbent upon us to have before us a clear picture of the researches needed and to plan them with due attention to the priorities that need to be given to them. While immediate requirements in the improvement of instruction must arrest our attention, long-term researches of a fundamental nature need also to be undertaken by University Departments of Education and special agencies with a view to strengthening, ultimately, the instruction that goes on in the class-room.'

—A. Chari

2. 'The teaching of English in Indian schools has to be examined from two angles. One is that of steps to be taken immediately. The other is that of planning for reform that can be effective in the near future.'

—V.K. Gokak

Points Discussed

1. *What are the essential research projects in the field of English teaching?*
2. *How could class-room teachers be helped to undertake action research?*

The group agreed that certain researches could be outlined that might be conducted by special institutes of English which have the necessary equipment. These researches will naturally be fundamental and long-term. A few samples of projects that

might be undertaken in that scheme are :

1. Contrastive analyses of regional languages and English at the levels of phonology, lexis and grammar.
2. An analysis of the English spoken by educated Indians.
3. The commencement of the teaching of English at different age levels and its impact on pupils.
4. A survey of researches already undertaken in the areas of English Teaching in India.
5. The compilation of a bibliography in various areas of English teaching.
6. A study of the various types of supplementary reading material in English and pupils' reading interests.
7. Case studies of the language development of children studying more than one language at school.

These Institutes will also have to pay attention to the production of material for teaching and testing. This is urgent and will demand immediate attention.

Some researches and investigations that are limited in scope and involve field work may be attempted by training colleges, Departments of Education and Research Bureaus. Examples of these are :

1. Researches designed to find out the value of different teaching techniques, *i.e.*, formal drills, language games, substitution tables, self-correcting exercises, the use of different types of teaching aids, etc.
2. Studies such as spelling mistakes, problems of teaching good hand-writing, ways of stimulating extensive reading, preparation and standardization of achievement and diagnostic tests in English, construction of graded comprehension exercises, etc.

These researches will naturally be limited in scope but, if planned well, training colleges can get their M. Ed. students and senior staff members to work on several small projects that need investigation.

Besides the above two, there are certain researches of the type of action research that can be taken up by individual teachers in the classroom. Teachers must develop an attitude of experimentation and maintain records of teaching and achievement in English. They can help in compiling mistakes made by pupils in their composition, oral and written ; they can help in maintaining records of the usefulness of different methods of teaching. Teachers can also serve as field workers for any researches undertaken by training colleges.

It was felt that it would be good if an All-India body could look into research plans and coordinate the researches undertaken in different parts of the country.

To enable and encourage teachers of English to carry out some action research projects to improve their teaching, it was agreed that (a) some training in systematic research should be imparted to teachers, and (b) if necessary, financial assistance should be given to schools for undertaking research projects.

12

ENGLISH IN ENGLISH MEDIUM AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Some Points of View

'The main reason why it is still customary to expect an unreasonably high standard of English from our school children is the presence and growing popularity among the privileged classes of English medium schools that teach English and all subjects through the medium of English from the earliest stage... These children who are situated in far easier circumstances than the majority of their counterparts, and who should therefore be capable of putting in more intellectual effort, really evade the three-language burden which the others are compelled, by force of circumstances, to accept. The attainments of children in English medium schools is not of a high standard in Hindi or mother-tongue or the regional language. Pupils in English medium schools should be required to do language papers of a high standard in Hindi and the mother-tongue... This would equalize the language burden for all students, and would decrease the entry into English medium schools as a means of escaping the Indian languages. It would also promote emotional and national integration.'

—M. Choksi

Points Discussed

1. *What is the present position with regard to the English course in such schools ?*
2. *What help do they need in maintaining/improving standards ?*

It was pointed out that not all English medium schools have maintained a good standard of English, and that some of them do not come up to expectations. Besides, they are quite often faulty in their curricula, syllabuses and methods of teaching in so far as they are unrelated to present-day realities. And yet they exist and are popular because :

1. there are, in India, a large number of children whose mother-tongue is English ;
2. many children have to study through the English medium because their parents' jobs involve transfers to different language regions ; and
3. many parents are anxious to put their children into these schools, for the sake of the standard of English obtaining in them.

It was proposed that considerations of attainment in English medium schools should not condition our aims of teaching English in the bulk of our schools.

The group recommended that

1. the content and language of text-books in English prescribed in English medium schools should be in accord with the needs of Indian children,
2. only adequately trained teachers should be employed for teaching English in these schools also, and
3. the position with regard to the teaching of Indian languages in such schools—how many, at what stage, with what success—should be studied.

13

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the six days' deliberations on various aspects and issues of teaching English in India, the group reached certain conclusions which are outlined below.

Aims, Objectives and Starting Age

1. So long as English remains the medium of instruction in our universities, both comprehension and expression have to be given equal emphasis.

2. All pupils at the school leaving stage should be expected to (a) converse intelligibly, (b) read books in simple English, (c) write correct and simple English, and (d) be in a position to learn the English necessary for pursuing special professions.

3. For admission to university classes where English is the medium of instruction, a higher level of attainment in English in terms of marks at the school leaving examination, may be considered.

4. The introduction of English at the primary stage can be accepted only if properly trained teachers and necessary texts and other materials are available. The effect of an early introduction of English on the child's achievement in the mother-tongue also requires investigation.

5. A period of 6 or 7 years of English teaching, from the class V or VI till the end of the secondary school stage, should be sufficient for the goals stated above.

Syllabuses and Text-Books

1. Structural syllabuses represent the best mode of setting forth the language material to be taught.

2. It is important to maintain a continuity in the syllabus through the 6 or 7 year course of English at school. The syllabus for the secondary school stage should grow out of the syllabus for the elementary or middle school stage and not change completely. The former need not be arranged in terms of graded structures, but such reading material should be prescribed as consolidates and extends the language items already learnt.

3. It is essential that the text-books prescribed should

- (a) incorporate the essential graded language material ;
- (b) maintain a proper density index of old and new vocabulary ;
- (c) present suitable themes for children ;
- (d) belong to the same well-planned, integrated series ;
and
- (e) for the upper classes of the secondary or higher secondary school be in part written specially for the purpose and in part contain extracts from standard authors in adapted and simplified form.

4. Where text-books are nationalized by State Governments, it would be desirable to have five or six different series rather than a single one from which schools could choose.

5. The production of supplementary readers had better be the responsibility of private enterprise even where text-books are nationalized. An approved list of a variety of graded supplementary readers should be furnished to schools.

Teaching Methods and Materials

1. As the matter stands today a large majority of English teachers can neither practise the oral approach and drilling required by the structural syllabuses, nor revert to the grammar-translation methods of the past.

2. Till such time as facilities for a thorough training in modern techniques of teaching English reach the majority of

unequipped teachers, an appropriate Interim Hand-book may be provided for their guidance.

3. The practice of dividing the periods allotted for teaching English into prose, poetry, composition and grammar periods is unsound. In every period of English there should be oral work, reading, writing and, on suitable occasions, group work and games, for creating variety and interest and ensuring proper emphasis on different skills.

4. The black-board (sketching, writing and reading), and flash cards, pictures and charts should be readily available for use by every teacher.

5. Expensive mechanical aids like tape-recorders and films, filmstrips and gramophone are neither easily available nor, perhaps, essential in the context of school resources at the present time.

6. Exhaustive hand-books giving detailed help to teachers must accompany the course books. Such hand-books might be prepared both in English and in the regional languages.

Training of Teachers

1. A re-oriented pre-service and in-service training is urgently needed.

2. Training colleges, special agencies and institutes, Teachers' Associations, University Departments of English, Boards of Secondary Education and Directorates of Education—all have to make a concerted effort to provide better trained teachers of English.

3. Training college syllabuses for English need urgent revision to include courses and a practical bias rather than mere theory. The would-be teachers of English need intensive training for the job and, therefore, should be required to teach English only.

4. Universities should institute English language courses (in modern usage, applied linguistics, phonetics etc.) at the

graduate and post-graduate levels to ensure better attainments in the English language among prospective teachers.

5. More regional and state institutes of English need to be set up.

6. Departments of Education in states should appoint curriculum consultants in English to provide systematic guidance to teachers in service.

7. In every school, the responsibility for planning and guiding the efficient teaching of the subject should be taken up by an experienced and competent teacher. Associations of English teachers should also take up the responsibility for the improvement of English teaching in the schools in their area.

Evaluation and the School Final Examination

1. Question papers and tests should be so modelled as to measure the skills aimed at – comprehension and expression.

2. In framing the questions on text-material as well as on general English, the aim should be to test language skills.

3. New type as well as essay type tests should be used.

4. Proper weightage must be given to sessional work and terminal tests in judging achievement and for annual promotions.

5. Oral tests to measure achievement in spoken English, though desirable, are not feasible in public examinations. They may be introduced by teachers in schools.

Researches and Investigations

1. The compilation of a bibliography of studies already undertaken in India and abroad, on the teaching of English as a second language, is important.

2. Fundamental researches, like those of the developmental patterns of second language learning and of the appropriate age for starting English, are necessary.

3. The need for practical researches like those on the effectiveness of different methods, materials and aids for teaching English is urgent.

4. Surveys of current methods, courses and aids used and of the attainment levels in English in various types of schools would be highly useful.

English Medium Schools

1. The language and content of the text-books prescribed in English medium schools should be in accord with the needs of our children.

2. The teaching of the national and regional languages should be strengthened in these schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conference recommended the establishment of the following **institutions and agencies** :

1. More regional institutes for the training of teachers of English.
2. Departments of Language parallel to Departments of Literature, in the Universities.
3. A central body to approve and co-ordinate researches in the field of English teaching.
4. A body of curriculum consultants in English at the state level for guiding the teachers of English.
5. Professional associations of English at the local, regional and national levels for sharing the responsibility for maintaining standards of English teaching in schools.

The Conference recommended the organization of the following **courses** :

1. Well-planned, short- and long-term courses for in-service teachers of English, incorporating content as well as method, to be organized by various agencies.
2. Courses for text-book writers of English sponsored by some central agency like the N.C.E.R.T., or the C.I.E., Hyderabad.
3. Courses for prospective writers of books on various school subjects in simple English.
4. Courses in modern English language and literature for high school teachers of English arranged by University Departments and training colleges.

The Conference suggested the following **publications** :

1. A symposium on the Teaching of English in India discussing important aspects and issues.
2. An Interim Hand-book for the large number of teachers of English who have had no training in modern techniques of teaching English.
3. A journal in simple English for general reading by pupils in Indian schools, bearing on various interesting topics.
4. Books in simple English on different school subjects.
5. Brochures on important factors that go to improve the quality of teaching English—*e.g.* on
 - (a) Speech work and speech correction,
 - (b) The preparation and use of inexpensive aids, and
 - (c) The use and maintenance of mechanical aids, where available.

The Conference appointed the following **committees** and **panels** for undertaking some immediate follow-up work.

1. A committee for finalising the report of the conference and for deciding details of the proposed publication of a symposium on the Teaching of English consisting of :
Shri V.K. Gokak, Shri C.S. Bhandari, Shri G.C. Bannerji, Shri A.E. Subramaniam, Kumari A. Chari, Smt. P.V. Mehrotra.
2. A panel for planning a hand-book for the untrained teachers of English.
3. A panel for planning the publication of a Journal for school pupils.

The group suggested that the National Council of Educational Research and Training may be requested to sponsor the meeting of the above committees.

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