



PLACE AND OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

The place of English language in primary education is very important factor to be discussed. It has been teaching form standard IIIrd . The textbooks were prepared based on language functions and communicative approach has been applied. The classroom practices of English language teaching involves making students learn through participatory activities and various learning activities. Here in this article the place of English language in primary education is discussed and presented with proper details.

KEY WORDS: - English language, primary education, textbooks of English.

INTRODUCTION:

Primary education is the base of language learning. In this phase of education, a child learns language and other subjects. So far as English language is concerned, it has been teaching from standard III since 2014. The textbooks of English of standard IIIrd & IVth were framed based on communicative approach. Both the textbooks consist of various activities based on language functions. Primary teachers are teaching their students as they have learnt the way of teaching in their school and in certified course for becoming a teacher in lower primary section i.e. PTC. They are not familiar with communicative approach and how they make students able to learn English with the help of participatory activities. So the aim of framing textbooks based on communicative approach and way of using proper techniques for English language teaching remains far from developing language skills of students. Another problem for language learning kept in mind is PRAGNA project. In this learning by activities project, teachers remain busy in paper work and filling information in textbooks. They keep textbooks of English language aside and teach students alphabets, names of animals, professionals etc. without using textbooks of English. They even do not use teacher edition in order to make their teaching better. This is the real picture of English language at primary level.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN GUJARAT

Primary education in Gujarat state is free and compulsory for children belong to 6 to 14 years of age. Primary schools run by district education committee of Gujarat state. Primary section contains standard 1st to 8th. There are two types of schools running in Gujarat. One is self-financed and other is government schools. When we talk about government schools, there are two levels –one is lower primary level (standard 1st to 5th) and second is Higher primary level (standard 6th to 8th).The textbooks were published by GCERT(Gujarat council for Education Research and Training).

The Government of Gujarat has been trying to uplift education process through implementing new trends of education in primary level. Nowadays PRAGNA approach has been implemented in lower primary level with a view to impart education in a meaningful way. Children learn through activities is the motto of this project. Before implementing PRAGNA approach, Minimum Level Of Learning concept was working in primary. Textbooks were designed on the basis of competencies and teachers had to try to make students

competent in acquiring basic objectives of subjects. So far as teaching of English language is concerned, it was taught from standard 5 but due to the emerging need of learning English from lower primary and expansion of English medium schools Government of Gujarat decided to teach English as a language from standard 3. Textbooks and teachers navigators for standard 3rd and 4th were designed on the basis of communicative approach. This is a noticeable change had been taken place in primary education in comparison to English medium schools. It is a direct shift of applying communicative approach in place of structural method. It was need of that hour to introduce communicative approach to make students learn English language through various learning activities. 'Scope' was one such endeavor of Government of Gujarat introduced for teaching of English language in a fruitful way.

PLACE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE

As we go through our history Britishers made immense change in education, law and administration of our country. The best example of it is English language was introduced to our natives. The intimate contact of 150 years with Britishers, our countrymen received British language i.e. English as a part and parcel of administrative field as well as system of education with a clear cut view of using English language as the workforce to govern our country.

Britishers had definite purposes for introducing English Language such as –

- I. Produce Indian Babus (Indian workers/clerks) for their administrative purpose and
- II. Make their ways easy for governing our country.

The real truth was at that time that it was difficult for them to learn our languages so they wanted to attract our countrymen for administrative purpose. Our countrymen were not learning English language for getting knowledge but for getting opportunities for jobs. As above stated purposes Britishers introduced teaching of English at various levels of Education.

In the words of Macaulay

“The problem in India is that we have to educate people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language...”

Such view indicate selfish purpose of the British Government. Macaulay's efforts for introducing English Language in our nation had been supported by Lord Bentinck and Lord Hardings. The best example of it is in 1884; Lord Hardings declared that for the services in the company, preference would be given to those who were educated in English schools. This declaration made provision of number of schools teaching English Literature and Science. As a result of it our countrymen were ready to take education in such schools and colleges.

In British rule, English became the official language in all administrative fields in India therefore English Language became popular as a means of communication. Thus English in pre-independence occupied a privileged place in India. It was the language of administration, a compulsory subject at school and as a medium of instruction used at colleges and university level.

PLACE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN POST – INDEPENDENCE

In post-independence time learning English language or making English language our first language or second language became an issue of controversy. We all know the reason behind it. As above discussed English as a main source of learning during British government but after independence on the basis of our population and its needs of learning English language and coping with major issues of recruitment, medium of instructions in schools and colleges, deciding English language's stand in free India etc. Many educationalists and national leaders came to the conclusions the English should be replaced by one Indian language but however due to its worldwide importance we did not ignore it at all. Let us see national leaders' views-

Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that mother tongue should be taught as the medium of instruction. He did not want to exclude English language but he was in favour of learning it as a subject but not as the first language. He remarked-

“Of all the superstitions that India has, none is as great as that knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought.”

In the words of our first Prime Minister **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru-**

“Indian languages have suffered psychologically and otherwise because of English, yet they have gained a great deal too from contacts with the wider world.”

Having such views of such great national leaders, after independence English Language was accepted as a second or third language. Let’s have an example of it. Although having worldwide importance English is not at all our constitutional language and Hindi promoted as our national language. But the fact is English is one of the languages taught almost at all levels of school and colleges.

Kothari Commission (1966) presented three language formulas –

For English medium	For Gujarati medium
L1 International language- English	L1 Mother Tongue-Gujarati
L2 National language- Hindi	L2 National Language-Hindi
L3 Mother Tongue-Gujarati	L3 International Language- English

So this commission was of the opinion that English is used as a medium of instruction in English medium school whereas it is used as an international language in Gujarati medium school. It means first language is our mother tongue, second one is national language i.e. Hindi and third is International language –English. First language depends on state language. If we have a glance towards recent education system English medium are becoming more popular in comparison with schools having Gujarati as the medium of instruction. Many international schools and English medium schools have been becoming most desirable part for enriching education.

Nowadays English is teaching as a medium of instruction in many English medium schools and international schools. People have a great attachment towards English language because it is widely used in every field. This is the reason behind low enrollment in Gujarati medium schools where as English medium schools are full of students. If we talk about primary education then in state government schools where in Gujarati is as the medium of instruction but English language is teaching as a subject from standard iii however this type of schools are suffering from low enrollment at primary level. In international or English medium schools English exists as medium of instruction and as a basic source of knowledge then how can we ignore English language?

PLACE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN GUJARAT

In post-independence after having a great controversy over English Language whether it is taught as a first language or second language, the status of English language as a medium of instruction or as a subject. It was stated in the constitution of India that Hindi is to be consider as our national language AND English is taught as a subject. During this period, Hindi was replaced English as an official language. The secondary Education commission in 1953 argued English to be continued for having the national unity in political and other spheres of activity. But Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956 had another view to share. According to committee Three language Formula was exposed with a great force where in –

First language- Mother tongue

Second language- National language

Third language- International language

It was depend on language or mother tongue of any state of India. Thus after independence, in formal education the place of English had a change. Its importance as a national and international link language and as a library language was fully accepted by our thinkers. But English did not occupy the same place as in British rule in our school curriculum.

In recent era, there are two types of schools. First is state government schools and the second one is English medium schools. The state government schools run by state government where in mother tongue is the medium of instruction because the primary goal of the education at very grass-root level is to cater the need of rural India. On the other side English medium schools run by private management affiliated to respected boards where in English is the medium of instruction. They cater education in English due to usage of English language in present eras an international language, link language or as a library language. They are of the opinion that without English language we cannot have good deal in every aspects including business, education, recruitment, international dealing with foreign countries, getting knowledge from every source. In English medium schools the curriculum transaction is in English only.

In state government school, English has been teaching as a second language. After independence, it has been taught from standard V but nowadays primary education underwent a great change. Now English language has been taught from standard III. For enriching students' interest or keeping them attached with English language learning activities, tasks, language games and other innovations like use of Computer aided Laboratory through which students feel importance of learning English language, showing them lessons of every subject on BISAG, In-service teacher training with the help of which teachers are made familiar with content, language learning and about new trends in education we can see in primary education.

The gist of having such innovations in primary school in India show importance of learning English language and cope up with needs of present hour of making everybody efficient enough for learning English. It does not mean that students should learn only one language i.e. English but owing to have great importance of English at national and international level students would be enable for using English language for communication and building rapport with needs of hour.

INNOVATIONS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BRIEF

Primary education in Gujarat State has been a place of change for quality education. If we go through history of Primary education we could jot down implementation like Universal retention up to 14 years of age, Operation Black Board and Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), SCOPE, Virtual classroom through BISAG, PRAGNA approach etc.

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH AT LOWER PRIMARY LEVEL

As time passed noticeable changes have been occurred in the field of teaching English as a language at lower primary level. Textbooks were designed on the basis of communicative approach. It is a major shift from structural approach to the communicative approach. The change is occurred keeping in mind the need of teaching English from standard 3 for making children able to learn English language. The emergence of English medium schools in Gujarat changes the mind set of parents for learning English from 1st standard. In order to cope up with the requirement of learning English Government of Gujarat implemented English textbooks from 3rd standard. New textbooks were framed with a purpose of making students learn through various activities based on language functions. The objectives of teaching English in lower primary level are as under:

- To enable students to learn the basics of the English language that would form the foundation for its mastery in the future.
- To enable the students to learn core vocabulary assigned for this stage.
- To enable the students to listen to and understand simple English.
- To enable the students to speak English.

- To enable the students to express themselves orally using simple English.
- To enable the students to read and understand simple written English.
- To enable the students to write simple guided sentences in English.
- To enable the students to develop interest in English.

Textbooks of English of standard 3rd and 4th were designed to provide maximum listening and speaking practices to students. These textbooks helped students in making familiar with Basic English. They provide a platform for learning English which can be helpful to students in future also.

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Classroom practices refer to all activities of the teacher. A teacher undertakes all learning activities in a classroom with the objective of transmitting curricular content to students. The particular research was delimited to standard 3rd and 4th. It is a lower primary level in which PRAGNA, an activity-based learning approach was implemented wherein a teacher remain busy with the implementation of learning activities based on four subject i.e. Gujarati, Mathematics, Hindi and environment. So English has been taught with less attention and the limitation of lower primary level teachers is they are not familiar with communicative approach. Their basic qualification is D.P.Ed (P.T.C) or graduation. The textbooks of English were framed on the basis of communicative approach that is why teachers belong to lower primary level teach students alphabets, some rhymes or tell stories. Due to having such classroom practices English has been taught with less exposure and practice to students. Teachers have been concentrating on PRGNA approach because the evaluation of students done on the basis of limestone that defined in this approach. The researcher is working in higher primary level since 2010. He has been observing the status of English and how lower primary teacher have been teaching to students. So he has decided to do research in this field by making teachers competent and able to use textbooks of English in their classrooms so that students would have wide and interesting exposure of learning English effectively.

CONCLUSION

Primary education in Gujarat state is free and compulsory for children belong to 6 to 14 years of age. Primary schools run by District Education Committee of Gujarat state. Primary section contains standard 1st to 8th. There are two types of schools running in Gujarat. One is self-financed and other is government schools. When we talk about government schools, there are two levels –one is lower primary level (standard 1st to 5th) and second is Higher primary level (standard 6th to 8th). English has been teaching from standard IIIrd. This is the place of English language in primary education.

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