



**Epitome : International Journal
of Multidisciplinary Research**

ISSN : 2395-6968

The Problems in the Teaching & Learning of English



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ABSTRACT

Since the inception of the British rule in India, the Indians are accustomed to English. It is a language rich in literature. After 150 years the British rule ended in India, but the Indian Freedom Fighters did not drive out English language because the great Indians at that time knew the importance of learning English. Nehru said "English is the window on the world." They had their education in English. That knowledge changed their thoughts based on Indian traditions and conventions.

English made a great change in their views thoughts, minds and also in the outlook on life. It broadened their minds and enriched their personalities. Since that time English has been taught in India. The Indian Government made the learning of English compulsory along with other languages.

RESEARCH PAPER

There are English medium and Marathi medium schools. In the Marathi medium schools English is taught from the fifth standard. English being a foreign language, at first the minds of the small children are filled with fear that English is difficult learn. In these primary schools, English is taught by translating method. Teachers only translate into the mother tongue.

After passing tenth standard examination the most of the student who have got good percentage of marks join the Science stream. Some of them join the Commerce stream. The remaining who have got the poor marks at X standard exam, and so are unable to get the admission in the Science or Commerce stream, finally get themselves admitted into the Arts stream. There are the few students who join the Arts stream because of their special interest in the Arts faculty. So specially most of the candidates in the Arts faculty do not even know how to read a lesson or write an essay. So the students have to face many difficulties. Myself, being a student from the Arts stream, I am going to narrate here some of the difficulties in learning English, that I have to face during my Junior College education. In Marathi medium schools, English is taught by only translating into the Mother tongue. And at Junior College level mostly English is also taught by this same method. Most of the lecturers at the Junior College level English using this method. At first, when the student appears in the XI of XII standard I have heard some of the lecturers ask the students whether they would like to study English by Marathi translation or by completely in English. As the students are well acquainted with the English Marathi translation method in school life they loudly request the teacher to teach them by translation. A few students who wish to study English through English suffer because of this. And then the lecturers teach by this method. Most of the lecturers presume that the students in Junior College, mostly from Arts stream, do not understand their complete English lectures. So they implement this translation method. At first a lecturer reads a sentence or a paragraph and tells the meaning of the words in English meaning from English to Marathi. Then the lecturer summarizes the paragraph in Marathi and because of this method students understand only the summary in their mother tongue, but they do not understand it in English. Secondly, some of the lecturer dictate students summary of the lesson or the poem. After teaching it they tell them only to read that summary. The do not give any type of home works to the students and at the XI standard they take it easy, being the home examination. They only teach English by this method give them summaries of the lectures, as the lecturers frame the question paper. they do not teach the complete text book also. A teach only those lessons and poems on which they are going to ask the questions at the examination. In this way importance is given to passing the exam, rather than the teaching of the students.

I think this method is not good. According to my little knowledge I know that they are making the students miss something. Speaking, reading, writing, and listening are lost due to this method. We learn a language by listening to it frequently; I acknowledge that at first the

students in the junior colleges do not understand complete English to English lectures but if a lecturer uses a simple method. Students will be prepared to understand English by constant listening. But at first we should drive away the fear about this language from students' minds that it is difficult to learn. The second important thing to learn any language is to read literature in that language. We should read some books in that language. But at the junior college level only one text book is taught for a whole year and at the XI std. half of the book remains untaught. English is not our mother tongue. It is foreign language. We learn it by listening and reading. Even we do not know our mother tongue well in childhood. We learn it by imitation, constant listening, reading, writing and using it daily. This same method may be followed in learning English. If we read English, we come across know new phrases, idioms and new words in that language. Technique of expressing the thoughts is also learnt in this way. At the junior college level our reading should be faultless. We should not falter in reading. But more than 50% of the students cannot read English correctly and faultlessly. I know that this method cannot be implemented totally in the class rooms, but in the XI std. in the beginning it should be followed. Student should be asked to read loudly so that their pronunciation will become faultless. Interest in the reading English books should be created; at least retold literature should be made available in the library; but I found lack of such books in our library.

The third important thing while learning is writing. Bacon, a famous English writer says that writing makes an exact man. After teaching a lesson or poem the student should be given homework to know if he has understood it or not. Most of the lecturers after teaching a lesson or a poem dictate only a summary of it. The students only read it and not the text and pass the exam by learning the summary by heart.

They should be given the home-work and they may find it difficult to write it in the beginning. If English is taught through English they will understand and will find it possible to write such home-work. I am not here to criticize the translating method but in the view of developing the students I am of the opinion that English should be taught in English. Because of the translation on method the students are not able to translate their thoughts in English. I thing after constant listening they will be able to write their own thoughts in English. The fourth problem in fearing English is that of Grammar. Most of the students who appear in the junior colleges do not know the basic grammar of English. Elementary things like tenses, framing of sentences, transformation of sentences, and other things in grammar are not known to him. I found that mostly lectures teach grammar by tabular method. They give rules and tables to teach grammar. They use only a few sentences to explain the rules. Grammar should not be taught using this method. They should give more and more examples to explain the rules of grammar. In this way of students will surely understand grammar. Generally, grammar is taught with the view of preparing the student for the exam. It should be taught with the view of teaching the language skills to the student. I have witnessed some of the lecturer teach grammar portion which is relevant only for the examination. They teach very hurriedly by giving a few and insufficient examples on each pattern. This way the basis of English remains infirm and the edifice collapses.

The most important problem is the English Speech. English being not our mother tongue is not used often. Students get no chance of speaking in the society. They are in contact with English only for forty five minutes. So, most of the students are afraid of speaking English. At first this fear should be banished from the minds of the students. I think by conversation in the class room the students will be prepared to speak English. Lecturers should ask questions to the students while teaching. They should encourage the students to speak English. Especially grammar should be taught by this conversational method. So, I think that the honorable lecturers will surely try to solve these problems. At last I again request them to do so.

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