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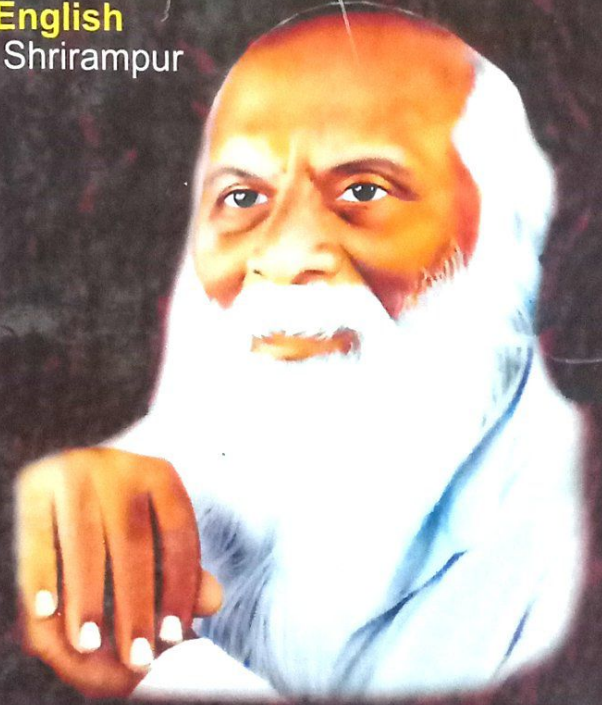
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EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Vijay Khade

22 - 24

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Changdev Kharat

25 - 27

THE WORLD OF FINANCE: BANKING ON ENGLISH

Shaila Kurian

28 - 31

✓ USE OF ENGLISH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS WITH REFERENCE TO THE RURAL AREA

Chandrakant R. Mandlik

32 - 35

EMPOWERING READING AND CRITICAL THINKING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH THE HELP OF MULTIMEDIA, IMAGE AND PICTURES

S. J. Mishra

36 - 39

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: ITS MEANING, IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES IN PRESENT INDIAN SCENARIO

Swati N. Pawar

40 - 42

TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN ENVIRONMENT

Sambaji Rao & S. Pavan Kumar

43 - 49

HOW MUCH ENGLISH DOES A (LITERATURE) STUDENT NEED?
ESP COURSE FOR LITERATURE STUDENTS: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Pranavkumar Ulhas Ratnaparkhi

50 - 54

DEVELOPING ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH ESSENTIAL ACTIVATOR

Raju Salve

55 - 56

USE OF ICT FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Jyoti S. Shinde

57 - 59

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USE OF ENGLISH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS WITH REFERENCE TO THE RURAL AREA

Chandrakant R. Mandlik

Introduction:

England with Supreme military power, money, and technology rooted her feet in India for about hundred and a half century. India gave wealth and empire to England and of many things she received in return, the most significant is English language. After the achievement of independence, English flourished in India as perhaps never before. With the growth of trade and commerce, it has spread far outside England. By the seventeenth century, England became the mistress of the seas and the centre of world trade with the help of Navy and English. The industrial revolution and scientific progress helped in the process of its extension English, one may underline, is the window of the world because it embraces many branches of knowledge like science, technology, medicine, law, politics, economics and commerce. It is spoken nearly all over Europe and most other advanced countries. Learning and teaching of English shall therefore, be useful for us to establish contact with neighboring countries easily and quickly.

Status of English in Maharashtra:

Today English in India stands at the cross-roads. English is used differently by different people in different states and so in Maharashtra. We find paradox in the perspectives of people from Maharashtra towards English. People from urban area especially from corporate sector are fascinated and obsessed to the use of English in their day to day life. But people from rural area are having phobia resulting in a negative attitude towards English. They find it difficult to understand and do not like it.

In villages, we find that the villagers have negative attitude towards English. So, it is obvious that in restaurants located in the rural areas, Marathi is used. Even, in urban area Marathi and Hindi are used to receive orders. However, the situation in grand hotels is different in which English is used by waiters. We find use of Marathi in offices such as ration shops, post offices, MSEB board, railway booking counter etc. Exceptionally, English is used at some of the railway booking counters, telephone exchange offices in big cities like Mumbai. When people meet from other states, they use Hindi and occasionally, in English when they meet people from southern states as they prefer English. In advertisement, English is generally used. But the use of Marathi and Hindi is also preferred due to two main reasons. The first is that government of Maharashtra forced to use Marathi as it is mother tongue. And the second is ignorance of people from remote area. The same variety we find about the popularity of TV. programmes in rural to the urban areas. Hindi and Marathi channels are very popular because most of the people do not understand Spoken English. The youngsters from cities like Mumbai, Pune who can understand English, "V" channel is quite popular. The auto rickshaw drivers or shop keepers or other common people use English rarely in their communication. They find English language difficult to understand and to speak. But the case is different in big cities where these people from different culture, different states, different countries and different Social strata. In such situation the auto rickshaw drivers, shop keepers and even

Chandrakant R. Mandlik: SSC College, Junnar, Pune (MS) India.

common people able to express themselves in English. Such people try to improve their speaking skills in English as it is going to help them in their daily transaction.

[Nowadays, people are aware of importance of English. It is widely used at different places to fulfill educational purposes such as in public schools and educational institutes, at conference, meetings, at formal functions meeting in private offices and big hotels. The result of this awareness is that the English medium schools are popular in Towns and most of the people want to enroll their children in convent school to give them exposure to English. Now it is supposed that English is must to grab opportunities in life. People are getting aware of functional and formal significance of English language. It is a language of Market and considering the importance of English as a global language, the Government has started English from first standard in Marathi medium schools. As per the resolution of the Government of Maharashtra, English is taught from the 1st standard form year 2000. But Government's allocation of budget is not up to the mark. As a result, the preference of the parents for these schools has badly affected regional medium schools. In the words of Christina Decoursey "the answer to this problem cannot come from educators, who can do little about government decision-making or economies" (2013: xi).]

objectives In this scenario, life of the pupils in the coming decades is likely to bring new tensions together with unprecedented opportunities. [To enable them to benefit in the new environment will require English. The coming generation should have ability to exchange and internalize new ideas constantly and creatively. They have to be imbibed with strong commitment to learn English. All this implies their future best.]

Problems Faced by Students and Teachers:

Problem Investigated In all the corners of schools, everybody keeps his eye on effective teaching of English. [But it is a fact that all of us have to accept that students are weak particularly in the rural area in the use of English despite of spending more time in learning English. Even the teachers of English face many problems in the teaching learning process of a language. It is necessary to focus on some of the prominent causes for students lagging behind in effective use of English language and problems encountered by teachers.]

Problems: Students in the rural area do not attend the schools regularly. Reason is that, most of the stream coming to the schools is from farmers families and they have to help their parents in getting work done on the fields. Lessons and poems, included in a text book are beyond

the capacity of understanding because pupils are not well acquainted with the setting, theme and events.

English subject is compulsory in schools and colleges but because of compulsion the strength of the class becomes very big which creates difficulty in practicing four basic skills of language e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing. The strength of the class is uncountable it is near about 250 or more than that. So, the teaching and learning process becomes more theoretical instead of being practical. In public schools, there is a focus on teaching prescriptive grammar. That's why students find language learning difficult and tiresome. So, the condition of public schools is very bad. But in convent schools the focus is on the functional use of English which helps to improve the language learning process. So such schools are becoming popular among people.

Colleges cannot provide every student with a text book, or they are not in a mood to purchase it. To speak truth it is and an adventure to teach English in compulsory English classes where students stare at the teachers without books. In fact it is a challenge to educationist. They buy readymade notes or guides to get through examination. This creates the problem of lack of creativity among students.

Students in the rural area study English in the classes where sky over their heads is cloudless of competitions. Hence their aim is of passing only and not scoring good marks. That puts the teacher of English in miserable condition. To make it more miserable, 'some of the teachers hang on to their favourite techniques, because of success stories (99% pass etc.), but remember that in the long run they are not helping their learners to become independent and autonomous if they focus entirely on examinations' (Eapen: 2007: 14). The faulty examination system is also responsible for this in which results play significant role than acquisition of language skills. Accordingly, teachers teach only those aspects which are important for the examination. Most of the questions are having theoretical base. As a result students simply have to memorize the answers of such questions.

Students in rural area study English in classes, but find it difficult to converse fluently. Their study of English is confined to the vocabulary and grammar. They can write answers of questions correctly but they do not speak well. Learning vocabulary and grammar alone will not make them speak good English. For that they will have to acquire proper listening and speaking skills and it can only be possible through practice in language laboratory.

Emphasis is laid on writing in the schools of rural area at expense of listening and speaking. The students are used to sit in the rows of butterflies, listen what the teacher speaks and take down what he dictates. The result is that the pupils who can write correct English are fumbling for words when they talk to someone in English. They tend to use inappropriate expressions.

Example- What is time? Instead of 'What is the time'?

Worse still, we usually find pupils, unable to find suitable expressions twisting their neighbor's arm and looking at his watch.

If they have not properly heard what a teacher was saying, how will they ask him to repeat it? E.g. 'what'? It is rude and impolite expression. The way of asking would be:

I am sorry I didn't hear that properly. Or
Could you say that again, please?

The problem of 'Time' is another important barrier faced by teachers. They are in lack of time for conducting activities in class such as role playing, group discussion, and dramatization. They have to cover portion before examination. This problem is also an outcome of overcrowded class. The ratio of students in relation to teachers is not proportional. Because of that, it becomes difficult to pay attention to individual student.

In spite of all these odds the meritorious candidates are from rural area and that is the silver line in this atmosphere of darkness. On the part of teachers if they develop more positive attitude towards problems, it is possible to overcome some of the difficulties.

Some Steps to Improve Teaching and Learning of English:

A huge size of the class must be reduced to the minimum number near about 40 students. It will make the teacher of English to pay proper attention to each student and to realize the objective of teaching English language. Short but interesting stories, one act plays, poems if, are included in the text books with spoken exercises students will be tempted to listen to the teachers and speak English with their friends.

The teachers have to communicate with the students about day-to-day things in simple language. For instance, sometimes students displease others by using the inappropriate expression. When we meet a friend we may say: 'Hi!' 'Hello!' But we cannot use them to talk to our official superior. We greet him, by saying 'Good morning, Sir.' It is necessary to make them to learn and use the expression appropriate to

each situation. It is a need to give a variety of expressions on each text while studying it. The practice of questions and answers in the form of dialogues given are meant to be spoken and not just read. In order to bring this in action join one or more than two students and stimulate them to speak.

We should be able to create English atmosphere in the class and outside. Even to control the problem of time, the teachers should not waste their time in explaining the text in mother tongue. They should understand that English class is the only place where most of the students get exposure to listen and speak English. Environment must be created in the schools where students feel comfortable in speaking English. For that group discussion, workshops, various contests such as essay and elocution must be organized in the school during the academic year to develop communicative skills. By doing so pupils as they grow will be able to make use of English effectively and naturally.

The situational English should be taught to them through different dialogues. The dialogues either between two persons or between two groups should form their topics, for making requests, expressing gratitude, obligation, making suggestions, asking for information and expressing surprise. As far as pronunciation is concerned, there is a standardized pronunciation recognized throughout the world. It is called Received Pronunciation as ornament of English language. To serve the purpose of effective pronunciation and communication modern teaching aids like internet, C.D. Player, V.C.D., tape-recorders must be used in the classes it will also enable the students to join a process of interaction. In this way, the language teachers can motivate and encourage learners to express themselves.

Conclusion:

Teachers have to play a very significant role in day today educational scenario. He is the catalytic agent for realizing the desired objectives and for translating the dreams into realities. The teacher should be proficient in the language. In the Indian way of thinking young generation is a positive asset and precious national resource which needs to be cherished, and developed with tenderness and care, coupled usages of English at different levels. The positive action of teaching and learning English needs to be planned and executed with great sensitivity. For that teachers should have sensible practical attitude towards problems.

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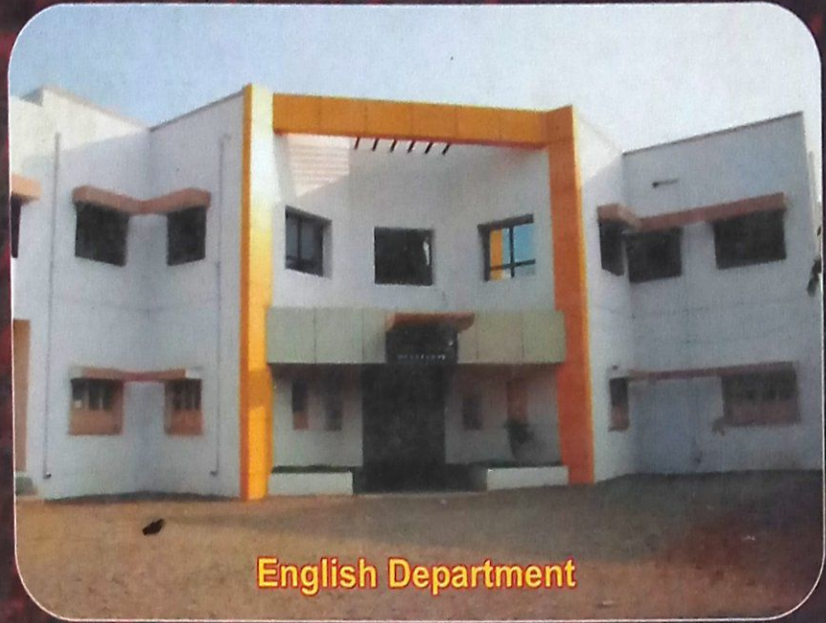
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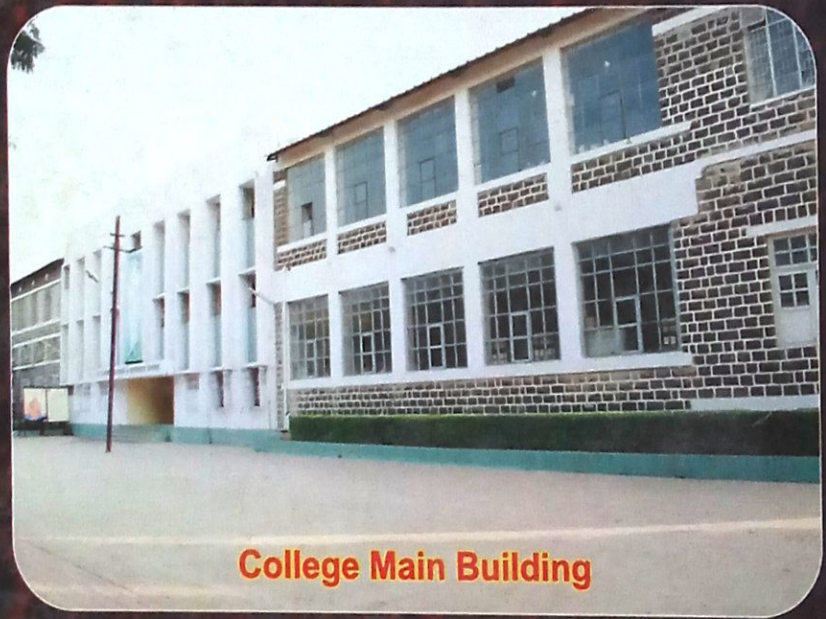
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