

Chapter -I

THE CLAIMS OF THE CONTEXT

1.0 Introduction:

English is recognized as one of the major languages of the world in today's market dominated age. One could write extensively on the importance of English in the modern world. English has almost become one of the most common languages of a world civilization, a most valuable vehicle of knowledge. Therefore, it is desirable that each citizen of the world and specially 'each Indian' should have at least a practical knowledge of the English language, as English is associated with modernity, development, prosperity, science, literature, library, prestige, easy jobs in the scenario of globalization.

Keeping in view this growing importance of English in the world, the Government of Maharashtra along with several other state governments in India, has consolidated the place of the English language in school curriculum as a compulsory second language. The constitution of India adopted in 1950 gave a lease of 50 years to English as the official language of the country. It is continuing now in the 21st century also. The school curriculum aims at providing a student with minimum knowledge and skills of communicative English within the period of six years (Std. V to X) at secondary

school level. Some of the states like Maharashtra have introduced English from early stage (std. Ist).

1.1 Purpose of study :

The Government of Maharashtra (Vilasrao Deshmukh Government) took a major decision of introducing English as one of the subjects at the primary level i.e. from std. I to IV in all non-English medium schools from June 2000 (Circular Government of Maharashtra शांलेय शिक्षण विभाग, शासन निर्णय क्र. सुप्रास / १०९९ : १८० / ९९ / प्रा.शि. : 5 Date December 30,1999). The decision was received with controversy of opinions. Various Views and opinions are recorded on political, social, educational ground Generally there are three groups- a group which welcomed and approved the decision of introduction at the primary level. We call this Group I. Another group opposed and criticized Government's policy about English. It is Group II. The third group welcomed the decision but is suspicious about its implementation. We call this Group III.

1.1.1. Group I (In Favour Of Decision):

Number of people welcomed the decision of Maharashtra Government about introduction of English at primary level. They supported the decision on psychological, social, educational and philosophical ground. There are many intellectuals, Educationists , Politicians who are in favour of the decision. It includes Education Minister Ramkrishna More (Smaranika , 2000), Intellectuals like Hari Narke , A.H.Salunkhe and others (Daily Sakal June 2000). They interpreted necessity of English at this level. These intellectuals and educationists explained the need and importance of English for the reasons given below :

- i) English should not be opposed as the language of the imperialists.
- ii) The thinkers like Agarkar, Chiplunkar and Tilak welcomed British Government for introduction of English in Indian Schools during the period of Dependence. At the same time they enriched their mother tongue, Marathi. Thus , Study of English does not mean showing down Marathi or lowering the standards of Marathi. (Daily Sakal, June, 6 ,2000)

- iii) Just like ,a growing child needs extra food with mothers milk, in the same way students language development needs more languages to be studied (Daily Sakal , June 6, 2000)
- iv) The child between 6 to 10 years of age possesses 90 % cognitive development. At this stage, if more than one languages are taught, they can learn them easily.
- v) Government schools create an opportunity for the economically low standard children to learn English (Daily Sakal, March,2000)
- vi) As English is the supreme language in the world, it should be learned. (Daily Sakal March 10,2000)

1.1.2 Group II (The Other View) :

The decision of Government of Maharashtra about launching English at the primary level has been criticized and opposed on various level. English should not be introduced at the early stage. There are many dangers according to them Some of them are -

- i) Psychological process of second language learning is very complex. At the young age, learning of two languages may create confusion in the child's mind.

- ii) There are two ways of language learning – formal and informal. Language learnt in an informal situation at a young age has better results. A Child learns mother tongue informally. If we provide second language learning in the formal school situation, it creates lots of problems for the learners.
- iii) It is an extra burden on students as well as teachers.
- iv) The basic phonology, syntax, vocabulary of Marathi and English are different. Similarly there are many differences between the two languages regarding script, pronunciation. The introduction of the different languages at the same time create problems in language acquisition.
- v) S.S.C. results ~~about~~ⁱⁿ English are shockingly poor as many students fail in this subject. In such a condition if we introduce English at the primary level, it will add more to the problem of failures already existing. (Dastane 2000)
- vi) We should not relate only English with social prestige, personality development and self-confidence. (Sakal -- Jan,26,2000)
- vii) Second language should be introduced only when students get perfection in the first language (Sakal, Jan 26, 2000)

- viii) Only increasing the span of language learning does not mean acquiring more proficiency in that language. Three years are sufficient for learning any language.

1.1.3 Group III (Problem Raising Group)

This group consists of persons who welcomed Government's decision but raised the question about the difficulty of its implementation and Government's policies about it. Several Head Masters, eminent educationists like V.N.Dandekar were among the others of this group. . According to them the difficulties are -

- i) Primary Schools are not equipped with teaching aids and support materials for English. (Jan.2000 (Sakal))
- ii) There is lack of English atmosphere in and outside school. ('Sakal', April, 2000)
- iii) Whether the D.Ed. teachers, who have studied English only for 6-8 academic years, can teach English is a matter of research.('Pudhari', December,11,1999).
- iv) Whether it will be an extra burden on students as well as teachers. Teachers are already engaged with extra duties like

electron family planning, food distribution and working for census.

- v) Whether the introduction of foreign language at the early stage is tolerable.
- vi) Whether it will affect the status of Marathi.

Taking into consideration all the views and opinions about the decision of introduction of English at the primary level, it has positive as well as negative sides. Though it is true that students will get an opportunity to learn a new language, at the same time it may create many problems. Already, the government of Maharashtra has introduced study of English at std. V. Though, the students learn English for 6-8 years, S.S.C. and H.S.C. results in English are shocking. Nearly 50% students fail in English. (Dastane,2000). We can't neglect this fact. Only increasing academic years of language study hardly develops proficiency in that language. Another noteworthy point is that government school are very poorly equipped with audio-visual and teaching materials specially for English. Students hardly get opportunity for application of English language in school and outside in the community. It should be mentioned specifically that there is no such compulsory ^{Paper in the} methodology for English

teaching at D.Ed. training. The teachers who cannot get jobs at college or high school level, tend to select the job of primary teacher. They themselves are not much proficient in English and yet they are expected to impart instruction in English and lay foundations for the future acquisition / learning of English. Thus like a popular proverb "If there is nothing in well, how can it come in the pail". In short, there are many problems in teaching English at the primary level.

The present study intends to study teaching of English at the primary level. It was decided to obtain measures of teachers' proficiency in English, teaching learning process, use of crash courses. Such a study, we hope, may raise consciousness about the actual modalities of the situation at the grass root level, and may also come up with suggestions for the teaching of English language at the primary level. Many research projects and studies which have been undertaken previously have generally concentrated on the urban and developed regions of Maharashtra but our study deals with the situation in a semi-urban and in some sense a more agrarian set up as data from such places is hard to get else where in other studies.

In order to place our study in the ongoing tradition of the English language teaching and keeping the limitations of research

discipline and limitations of scope in view, our study entitled, "A study of teaching of English at primary level in some Marathi Medium schools in Shirol Taluka" was undertaken."

For the selection of our sample and to obtain homogeneity in it we have selected one Taluka- Shirol in Kolhapur district.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study:

The study aims at testing the following hypotheses :

- i) The primary teachers may not be proficient in teaching English language .
- ii) Study of English will be an extra-extra burden on the students.
- iii) Primary teachers will be using ^{only} Marathi as a medium of instruction continuously in the English classroom.
- iv) Teachers will be satisfied with only textbooks and rely on them rather than developing their own materials..
- v) Teachers do not improve their knowledge of English.
- vi) There will be experience-wise differences in primary teachers' competence, interest and ability of English.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

The study proposes :

- A) To study the changes brought about by the new policy of the Maharashtra Government, to introduce English at the Primary Level in terms of actual pedagogical practices : That is to say -
- i) To observe the teaching methods used by the teachers in teaching of English at the elementary level of instruction.
 - ii) To study student-teacher interaction in the classroom.
 - iii) To observe whether the mother tongue Marathi is used in teaching of English and to what extent.
- B) To study teachers' perception of ^{the} English language.
- C) To collect data regarding the usefulness of the crash courses and training programs arranged for the primary teachers by SCERT.
- D) To obtain measures of teachers' proficiency in English.

1.4 Research Work Carried Out in the Area : A Brief Review

With a view to placing our study in the ongoing tradition of research in ELT, the researcher has gone through the following studies.

- i) The IIIrd Indian year Book of Education-Educational Research,
NCERT, New Delhi.
- ii) A survey of Research in Education edited by Dr. M.B.Buch,
center of Advanced Study in Education, M.S. University
Baroda.
- iii) Educational Investigations in Indian Universities (1939-1961)
NCERT New Delhi.
- iv) Educational Investigations in Universities in Maharashtra 1939-
1970), State Institute of Education Pune-30.
- v) Second survey of Research in Education (1972-78) Dr. M.B.
Buch, Society for Educational Research and Development
Baraoda.
- vi) Third survey of Research in Education (1978-1982)
Dr. M.B.Buch. National Council of Educational Research and
Training, New Delhi-1987.
- vii) Educational research in Universities in Maharashtra Dr.
N.K.Patole Platinum Jubilee year commemoration. Volume-
1982 S.T. College, Bombay.



Review of Related Research Literature :

- I) Shastri S.V., "The Teaching of English as a second language in Bombay with special reference to structural approach at work", Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Mumbai univ. 1972.

The purpose of the study ^{was} ~~were~~ I) to ascertain the existing Position of teaching English as a foreign Language ii) to detect and locate the areas of students weaknesses with regard to their knowledge of certain structures and vocabulary iii) to provide a basis for teaching English to the first year college students.

The major findings of the study were : I) the performance of the students on the vocabulary test had a significant correlation with their performance at the S.S.C. examination ii) a closer analysis of several random scripts revealed a variety of errors which the students had committed. iii) over half of the vocabulary was known ^{only} by 40 % of the students.

- ii) Dewal O.S. "A study of Difficulties in Teaching English and Effectiveness of Programmed Teaching", Ph. D. thesis submitted to the M S University, Baroda 1974.

The study revealed that i) the difficulties hampering effective teaching and learning of English were due to

the shortage of trained teachers, lack of subject competence in teachers, dearth of good teaching - learning material, lack of individual attention and poor socio- economic back ground, ii) Programmed teaching overcome some of the felt difficulties of the teachers and helped students to perform significantly better than those who were taught by conventional method and iii) the strategy proved useful in a situation where teachers were under qualified and untrained in teaching English.

iii) C.D. Indapurkar made a linguistic study of errors in English of middle school pupils of Chandrapur district in 1968.

The conclusions of his study are i) The lexical errors were not frequent in any standard as revealed in oral test ii) There were errors of pronouns, articles etc. iii) There were errors regarding nominal phrase, Structure, verbal phrase structure and prepositional phrase structure.

iv) Rajgopalan S. made a critical study of the English curriculum. "English at the primary and secondary stages of Education in Tamil Nadu", 1972.

The main purpose of the study was to examine and identify inadequacies in respect of objectives of teaching

English , Present English syllabus, text-books used, audio-visual aids available, methods of instruction followed the evaluation procedure etc.

The findings are –

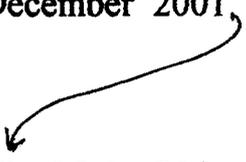
- i) nearly 29.3 % English teachers are untrained.
- ii) Majority of the teachers, supervisors and parents supported English to be compulsory at school stage,
- iii) Use of Translation Method, poor knowledge of English on the part of the teachers have caused the fall in standard of learning English.
- iv) Inadequate syllabus, unsuitable text-books and very poor methods of instruction are some of the most potential in deteriorating the learning situation.
- v) Shri Kumar Bhimrao Hingane made a study of “A Critical study of teaching English at the Secondary stage (Marathi Medium) in Tasgaon Tehsil. May 1993.

The main aim of the research was to study critically the teaching of English at the secondary stage end to find out the difficulties if any in the teaching of English so as to improve upon them to realize the objectives of teaching English.

Main findings are i) More than 80 % of teachers agreed that the objectives of teaching English as stated in the syllabus of stds. VIII to X of secondary schools are achieved to the various extent ii) 87.30% of teachers said that lack of English atmosphere was one of the reasons for not achieving the objective ^{methods like} iii) About 80 % teachers agreed that 'question – answer', 'reading aloud', 'giving ample oral drills' were used in teaching English pronunciation iv) Cent – Percent teachers (100%) were of the opinion that inservice training was necessary for teaching of English language more effectively.

vi) Shri. Kumbhar A.D. made a comparative study on “ A Comparative study of proficiency in English of students from some English and Marathi medium schools in Kolhapur District.”

December 2001,



The Main Objectives of the Research Were:

To test linguistic and communicative proficiency of EM and MM secondary school students in Kolhapur district.

- i) To obtain statistical measures of the performance, of EM and MM students on the proficiency test.

- ii) To attempt error analysis of the responses of EM and MM students in PT and throw light on the quality and degree of proficiency of EM and MM students.

The main findings are –

- i) The EMP group which represents more than 60% student population in EM schools seems seriously deformed in their L2.
- ii) The overall standard of English is found to be quite unsatisfactory in both English and Marathi Medium Schools but the MM Schools are worse.
- iii) The performances of EM and MM students on PT (Proficiency Test) are highly unsatisfactory.

As can be seen from this very brief review, most of these studies have taken the urban situation into account. Most of them agree that the proficiency levels in English are quite low. Now if that is the case in urban areas, which are more advanced and comparatively more developed, it would be interesting to see what happens in the agrarian, rural set up in the more remote places such as Shirol, for example, which we have chosen for our study. It must be noted in this context that the craze for English is very

strong in these areas. English medium schools have mushroomed almost everywhere. Many people from the rural areas have been demanding that upper class, upper caste and urban people get more English than rural schools. The demand for more English from the primary level also was most warmly welcomed by such regions as it is believed that a knowledge of English is a passport for better quality life, better opportunities etc. In the light of these observations, then, it was decided to undertake a study of teaching of English at primary level in some Marathi medium schools in an agrarian place like Shirol Taluka in Kolhapur district in Maharashtra.

1.4) The Research Methodology Evolved for this Study :

To observe and study the pedagogical practices in the primary schools the following research tools are used. These research tools are ^{discussed} ~~selected~~ because these are the primary source of the present study.

1.5.1 Research Tools Used:

i) Questionnaire for Teachers :-

A questionnaire may be regarded as a form of interview on paper. The questionnaire was prepared to get the information from primary teachers. It attempts to test:

- 1) General information ^{about} of the teacher
- 2) Methods used by the teacher in teaching English language (TEL here after) .
- 3) Use of mother tongue in TEL.
- 4) Teacher's proficiency in English.
- 5) Need of training Modules.
- 6) ~~Teaching~~ Improvement of English.

The questionnaire is constructed into two languages : Marathi and English for the better understanding. It is divided into two sections. Section 'A' consists of 24 multiple choice questions and section 'B' includes 8 open answer questions.

(The Analysis and responses of ^{the} questionnaire are presented in Chapter IV of ^{the} thesis)

ii) Classroom Observation :

Classroom observation is one of the techniques which offer a bountiful source of information on actual teaching learning procedure adopted by teachers in the classroom. The recent research in the ethnography of the classroom has made us aware of the need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom culture. Since the classroom is the actual testing ground for innovative attempts to improve ELT situation in our country, we wanted to actually observe the classroom pedagogical practices. We had given a questionnaire to the teachers and the actual classroom observations we felt would throw light on the teachers' attitudes, attempts and approach. Our intention was to also observe ^{the} use of teaching aids, procedures or methods followed by teachers and overall behavior of students. (The data collected from the classroom observation are analyzed and interpreted in Chapter V of the thesis)

iii) Visit Schedule :-

A visit schedule was prepared and used in order to know the availability of books, teaching aids and support materials. Those schools were visited which offered a chance to see teaching aids, use of audio-visual aids, to discuss about teaching practices and difficulties etc.

iv) Official Data :

The official data were collected from Education Department, Branch District Office (Panchayat Samitee) Shirol. The data incorporated information regarding total number of Schools, teachers, strength of student, educational and Socio-economic Scenario of the Shirol Taluka. (The data collected from office records are analyzed and interpreted in chapter IV of the thesis).

All the research tools mentioned above are given in the appendices of the thesis.

1.5.2 Sample Design :

The objective of the study was to study teaching of English at The primary level in some Marathi Medium Schools in Shirol Taluka.

50 primary teachers are selected for the questionnaire analysis, from schools in Shirol Taluka. There are 862 primary teachers working in Shirol Taluka at the primary schools authorized by Zillah Parishad. Out of 128 Marathi Medium primary Schools, 15 were chosen for classroom observation record. (Map of sample Schools is given in Chapter No. IV).

1.5.3 Criteria for Selection of Sample:

It was intended to select 50 ~~percent~~ sample schools from semi-urban and rural area respectively. But due to heterogeneous ratio of semi-urban and rural area 43 teachers from rural, 7 from semi-urban area are selected as sample teachers. 15 teachers were selected for classroom observation. 3 lessons of std. I, 4 lessons each for std. II, III & IV are selected as a sample.

1.5.4 METHOD OF ANALYSIS OF DATA :

As the data collected through four research tools were significantly distinct in nature, the analysis and interpretation of data collected through official records were purely statistical where as the

data collected for classroom observations were mostly descriptive. Naturally the data collected were analyzed and interpreted in different ways as given below.

- i) **Statistical Analysis of Data –**
The data here includes frequencies of primary teachers (PTS Hereafter), use of Translation Method, Perception and other opinions.
- ii) **Questionwise statistical details and comparison of the scores.**
- iii) **Descriptive analysis and tabulation ~~analysis~~**
- iv) **The data obtained through classroom observation was analyzed where necessary.**
- v) **The data sought through official records were tabulated under various heads, described and interpreted accordingly.**
- vi) **The aims and objectives of curriculum and textbooks for std. I to IV have also been analyzed critically,**

1.6 CHAPTER SCHEME

The sequential organization of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to the study. The chapter deals with hypothesis, methodology adopted, research tools used,

sample design, method of analysis of data and chapter scheme of the thesis.

Chapter II examines from a historical perspective the teaching of English in India and Maharashtra. Issues such as the introduction of English language in Indian schools ELT policies during the pre and post independence period.

Chapter III presents a critical survey of aims and objectives, curriculum provided and textbooks prescribed at the primary level.

Chapter IV presents analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire provided for teachers in a tabular form. It also focuses ^{on the} nature ^{the} of questionnaire, the location, population. Educational and socio-economic situation of Shirol -Taluka.

Chapter V deals with descriptive analysis and tabulation of classroom observation schedule.

Chapter VI presents conclusion of the study and puts forth suggestions. It also deals with recommendations for further research.