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### STUDY OF THE PRIMARY TEACHERS' ORIENTATION REGARDING COMPETENCY BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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#### INTRODUCTION:-

#### ENGLISH IN MAHARASHTRA :

Until 1960s in Maharashtra, English was taught through classical approach with its emphasis in grammar and translation. The materials consisted of prose anthologies and Golden treasuries, often compiled by the English for the English children. The methods of teaching, in general were autocratic and paternalistic, and were dominated with procedures such as translation and explication of written texts, the reading aloud and a good deal of explicit grammar in the form of sentence analysis and pausing.

The first significant signs of change were noticed only during the sixties, when a structural syllabus was adopted. The changing social scene forced all those concerned to accept the new approach. The Study Group (1971) appointed by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, observed in its report, 'We have, of late witnessed a tremendous expansion in primary and secondary school education. Many more children now enter school and receive instruction at various levels and a very large percentage of them come from uneducated families. Their background does not provide them with any opportunities of using English outside the classroom.'<sup>6</sup> [PanditBansibihari, KuteMeena, Suryavanshi, Page No. 30]

Against this background, the structural mode became the officially endorsed approach to English language teaching in Maharashtra. Structuralist Model in India 'consisted essentially of the use of structurally and lexically graded syllabuses, situational presentation of all new teaching items, balanced attention to the four language skills and a great deal of controlled practice using techniques such as the substitution table and choral repetition.'<sup>7</sup> (Ibid, Page No. 30]

The revised syllabus in Maharashtra consisted of grammatical items (called "Teaching Points" not "Learning Points") and vocabulary lists. Although the objectives talked about the development of basic language skills, the reality was that English was taught as a sequence of items to be memorised and this was supported by the examinations. Success in these examinations depended primarily in being able to recall the items and passages from the course books. As a consequence, students seemed to learn the structural items and the vocabulary, but could not extend that knowledge beyond the text book frame. This model persisted for some 30 years. Although the structural syllabuses were adopted in Maharashtra, as in the rest of India,



there was some ambiguity about the content and examination of language learning. The text books were modelled on a literary canon, reflecting the educational background of the writers and traditions of English teaching. Such text books contained 'manufactured' or concocted texts and extracts from literature and had complex syntax and dense vocabulary. These materials reflected ambitions of teachers, rather than the needs of young language learners. The result was a structural syllabus taught in a grammar translation mode and examinations that tested whether the students had, by and large,

managed to memorize the texts and grammar examples covered. In short even with the adoption of structural syllabuses, the grammar translation method continued to dominate both teaching and testing and the literary canon continued to be reflected in materials.

The 1990s brought a new economic revolution to India. Globalization, especially the Union Governments' decision of making the Indian economy open to multinational companies, forced the Union Government to reconsider the needs of India in the 1990s. Moreover, developments in general education all over the world led to the adoption in 1986 by the Government of India of a new education policy recommending learner-centred education. Against this background, the Maharashtra State Board initiates a general review of the curriculum. Within which a review of English language teaching took place.

On the basis of the results of that review the Board evolved a new model which was a blending of structural and communicative approaches. That is, the syllabuses had the familiar structural base, but the materials and methodology would take a communicative / interactive form. The decision to be eclectic was taken mainly for two reasons -

- 1) The structural syllabuses were firmly established in the educational system and offered security and continuity.
- 2) The Board felt it necessary to take firm steps towards slow change and hence the communicative / interactive methodology. Verma S.K. (1996) writing about the indigenous model of teaching English says, 'The main focus must shift from teaching as a uni-directional, teacher centred, knowledge oriented activity involving sub activities like problem solving, group work, drawing inferences, making generalizations, participating in a variety of other activities with the help of L<sub>1</sub>, L<sub>2</sub>, L<sub>3</sub>.' [PanditBansibihari – page No. 32]

The ultimate objective of all these activities should be to develop human resources to enable teachers and learners to play their roles effectively, helping learners acquire not only context – restricted and syllabus bound competence in handling English but to attain that level of competence which will enable them to use it effectively according to the roles that they may have to play in a variety of situations.

The new curriculum of English in Maharashtra, therefore, indicates a gradual move, towards learner-centred education. Being aware of the constraints of the large class sizes and the paucity of teaching aids; the beliefs of teachers, the new curriculum makes only a modest, affordable and do-able proposal.

### 2.1.3 NEW POLICY OF MAHARASHTRA GOVT. FOR TEACHING ENGLISH :

The state of Maharashtra came into existence in 1960. Till then, the teaching of English at the school level was carried on according to the policies of each province and there was no uniformity in the way it was done (across the state). In 1968, a revised syllabus of primary education was prescribed for the entire state and in 1972, English was made compulsory from std. V to X throughout the state. The national policy on education was announced in 1986 following which a new syllabus for primary education was drawn up for Maharashtra. The teaching of languages other than the mother-tongue was expected to begin from Std. VI in the National Policy of Education. Maharashtra State, however, continued with its policy of introducing English from Std. V.

In December 1999, the Govt. of Maharashtra chalked out a new policy for the teaching of English in view of its importance as an international language as also the consequences of rapid advertisements in technology and liberal economic policies. The ever-growing craze for English medium schools was also taken into consideration while drawing up this policy. Without hampering the teaching of the mother tongue in any way, the Govt. of Maharashtra decided to provide for the teaching-learning of English along with the mother tongue from Std. I. It was decided to implement this decision from June 2000.

This new syllabus has been designed after considering the need for and the use of English in our society. The English language is not 'foreign' to us in a way French, German or Russian is. For more than the last hundred and fifty years, Marathi has been in close contact with English. Modern Marathi has acquired several English words. English words, English syntax and even the way of thinking that goes with English. The syllabus particularly takes into account this influence of English in Marathi and other regional languages. The

opposition of English arises mainly from the issue of cultural invasion. This syllabus acknowledges the issue of going first priority to Indian and Marathi culture. Linguistic aspect not directly related with culture find the second place. Linguistic aspects particular to the Western Culture have been included only where absolutely necessary. Such aspects that support and complement the teaching of the mother tongue have also been highlighted in order to ensure that the teaching of English does not adversely affect the teaching of mother tongue. At the same time English has certain characteristics of its own. These also have been included in the syllabus to give the students a firm grip over the English language.

The syllabus has been designated with the objectives of enhancing the students' level of achievement in English at the school level.

Maharashtra is the first state in the country to have successfully introduced English at I to IV level. It is well-known fact that Government of Maharashtra has been providing the teaching-learning of English from standard I since the academic year 2000-2001. When English was introduced successfully at I to IV level, it was expected from the teachers that they have to care for this sapling, it will become into a beautiful strong tree with their efforts alone.

The revised syllabus of English for standard V to VIII (Upper primary level) has been introduced in the academic year 2004-05. The syllabus of English is skill oriented. The syllabus is designed to increase the students' level of achievement in English at the school level. So it is very easy to handle English adequately in life and satisfy the needs of better communication in society.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF SYLLABUS COMMITTEE :-

The syllabus committee has made some recommendations about the text-books. The Government of Maharashtra has accepted the recommendations and constructed attractive and interesting text-books relevant to the age group of students. The various institutions, agencies and MSCERT (Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training, Pune) connected with school education have been trying to acquaint the classroom teachers with the objectives of teaching English under changed circumstances. MSCERT is conducting SMART-PT training programme at different levels. The ambitious programme aimed at a revolutionary transformation in the strategies of teaching and the fundamental approach with a view to ensure better learning outcome. It was through this programme that a reasonable level of success has been witnessed in Maharashtra. The same programme was contemplated for the standards V to VIII so that there could be harmony with the earlier educational strategies which were decided upon after much thought and deliberation.

**About 'Let's Teach.'** : Utmost care and planned efforts have gone into the preparation of training module, which provided adequate assistance to the resource persons at different levels. The main intention of training module is to disseminate the proper message to all the teachers and prevent any percolation loss. Attention to every detail regarding the fundamental logic behind each activity was ensured the success of the new communicative approach in English language teaching.

**About 'ShikshakMargadarshika'** : Every teacher of English and resource persons were also provided the 'ShikshakMargadarshika' book. This is a very much useful book to the teachers to solve the difficulties which occur in daily teaching-learning process, clear the doubts, guide the teachers about teaching English in present situation. This book is always useful for teachers of English as a reference book also.

There are different articles of experts regarding curriculum structure, teaching-learning problems, how to conduct different activities, preparation and use of audio-visual aids and evaluation tools. These articles are too much helpful to the teachers of English. It is necessary that the teachers must read these articles again and again to keep their teaching at expected level. After the SMART-PT programme 'ShikshakMargadarshika' played an important role. This book boosted the confidence of the teachers.

**About Audio-cassettes of Balachitravani, Pune** : Balachitravani, Pune has provided audio cassettes of every text book of English for every standard. For each standard there are two cassettes. In these cassettes the content matters in the text-books are recorded. These cassettes are the best models for developing LSRW skills in English language.

**SarvaShikshaAbhiyan :** Through SarvaShikshaAbhiyan number of facilities are provided to schools. Every teacher in the school is given 500/- per year for making the audio-visual aids required for teaching-learning process. Through this abhiyan so many school are benefitted with computers, T.V. etc. Even funds for purchasing different materials required are provided. Every English teacher is given training for teaching English before implementing the text-books from the academic years. Throughout the year, 21 days' training is also given to teachers for the enrichment of teaching-learning. Through Operation Black board also primary schools got TVs. Through SarvaShikshaAbhiyan there is a Group Resource Centre built in the campus of cluster school. Recently LEP (Learning Enhancement Programme) was started and through that audio-visual aids are provided to schools.

There are different resource centres at different levels. Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) in every cluster school, BRC (Block Resource Centre) at taluka level and DRG (District Resource Group) at District Level. In these resource centres there are different resource persons for different subjects to help in solving the difficulties and problems of teachers in their teaching-learning process. Even some required teaching aids are prepared and supplied by the resource centres also.

The purpose of the study is to find out whether the teachers of English are seeking assistance from these resource centres to enrich the teaching learning process of English.

Several English language teaching centres and regional institutes of English have been set up in order to train teachers of English in methods and techniques of teaching English. There are different extension service centres attached to colleges of Education to keep pace with knowledge explosion to encourage research in education.

Junior colleges of Education and senior colleges of Education organize workshops, symposium, discussion in different subjects. These centres guide the needy teachers in respect of state level essay competitions, use and creativity in audio-visual aids, good handwriting and so on.

#### **2.1.4 IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE NEW SYLLABUS :**

- 1) It is skill based. All the four skills of language learning have been emphasized (LSRW). With the acquisition of these skills, the learner is expected to learn to use English.
- 2) The syllabus has been developed in order to ensure a co-ordinated development of various language skills.
- 3) The syllabus seeks to link the teaching / learning of English with that of other subjects.
- 4) The teaching / learning of English is expected to be useful and relevant to the present time and context.
- 5) Considering the situation in which the teaching / learning will take place, the syllabus does not limit itself to any particular theory of language teaching / learning. Adopting an eclectic approach the syllabus recommends the use of varied teaching methods and techniques which lead to joyful and effective learning.
- 6) The syllabus is learner centred. The learner is at the centre of the whole process. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator.
- 7) Since the learner's active participation in the teaching / learning process is of prime importance, the syllabus provides for a variety of tasks for the learner. It is activity-oriented.
- 8) The syllabus gives scope for self-learning and also for the overall development of the learner's personality.
- 9) The syllabus recommends a continuous and comprehensive evaluation frame work, that will help both the teacher and the student to monitor and improve their performance. Since the syllabus is skill-based, all the four skills will be tested.

#### **2.1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS O THE SYLLABUS COMMITTEE :**

The syllabus has been evolved reflecting the interdependence of all the following components :

- Aims and objectives
- Syllabus and materials

- Methods and techniques
- Testing and evaluation framework.

The committee makes the following recommendations for the effective implementation the syllabus.

### 1) Aims and Objectives of teaching / learning English (Std. V to VIII)

#### Aims : The student :-

- 1) enjoys learning English
- 2) learns to use English with the confidence.
- 3) learns to co-relate English with his/her context / environment.
- 4) understands the importance of learning English for his/her own development.
- 5) understands the importance of English in his/her general education.
- 6) becomes gradually independent in his/her use of English.

#### Objectives : To enable student to :-

- 1) consolidate and extend his/her use of English.
- 2) build upon English learnt in the previous classes (Std. I to IV).
- 3) understand English spoken in and outside the classroom.
- 4) act/do things as per oral instructions.
- 5) listen for enjoyment.
- 6) follow simple narrations or descriptions.
- 7) listen with attention for a reasonable length of time.
- 8) speak intelligibly with confidence and fluency.
- 9) speak with proper pronunciation.
- 10) learn to speak English appropriately in and outside the classroom.
- 11) converse in familiar social situations.
- 12) read with comprehension.
- 13) develop correct reading habit.
- 14) grasp meaning of words and sentences from the context.
- 15) read for pleasure and for information.
- 16) read aloud meaningfully with acceptable pronunciation.
- 17) read silently and independently.
- 18) write in a neat legible hand with correct spellings and punctuation marks.
- 19) write with ease and confidence.
- 20) write with appropriate structure and idiom.
- 21) learn and use different forms of writing (letters, stories, reports etc.)
- 22) learn to write independently.
- 23) learn to develop his/her own style of writing.
- 24) develop his/her vocabulary.
- 25) develop an implicit understanding of English syntax and grammar.
- 26) learn to interact with teachers and his/her classmates in English.
- 27) use reference materials such as dictionaries, directories and so on.

**Materials :** The committee recommends the use of variety of materials for teaching and learning English at this level.

- 1) **Print Materials :**
  - The text book for teacher and student.
  - The teacher's handbook.
  - The student's work book.

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- Supplementary readers.
  - Reference books.
  - Dictionaries, directories, grammar books etc.
  - 2) **Non-print materials :** Audio/video tapes / cassettes/VCDs etc.
  - 3) **Teacher made materials :** Flash cards, word/sentence strips, posters, pictures, models, objects etc.

#### 4) **Realia (Real objects) :-**

**Supplementary Books, Readers etc. :** In order to systematically develop the students' reading skill, the committee recommends the development and regular use of class/school library. The library should include children's books, comics, children's magazines, children's newspapers etc. The focus should be on books written in contemporary English. Children's classics or their simplified versions could also be considered.

The committee feels that children learn not only from the teacher and the text book, but also from a variety of other sources. Supplementary materials are one such source.

**Non-print Materials :** Audio tapes, video tapes, VCDs be officially prepared with the help of experts in the field. These materials should include good models of reading aloud, singing or reading of songs and poems and good model of conversation. The materials should be user-friendly and easily accessible.

**Teacher-made materials :** Teachers need to be motivated and guided to prepare their own materials taking into consideration their own contexts. Flash cards, pictures, posters, models, objects etc. should be developed or collected by teachers with the help of their colleagues and students.

**Realia :** Actual objects / items brought into the classroom can enliven classroom instruction to a great extent. Teachers can use toys, tools, kitchen objects, potted plants and several other things as effective aids to their teaching.

**Methods and Techniques :** The methods and techniques have been selected on the basis of students' age group, their linguistic background and the total situation in which they learn English. This syllabus does not insist upon a strict adherence to a single theory of learning. Adopting an eclectic approach, several methods and techniques associated with different theories of learning have been considered. It is expected that the textbooks, teacher's handbooks and other materials too will be flexible in their approach. However the following criteria must be considered while choosing a particular teaching/learning item or a particular method or technique.

- 1) The student being at the centre of the teaching/learning process, student's needs should be the prime consideration. The following three aspects can be used to determine student's needs.
  - a) **Interest :** It is necessary to make every learning experience 'interesting' for the students. Learning items and methods which attract students' attention and hold their interest prove more effective than others.
  - b) **Practical value :** Students should be able to apply their learning outside the classroom. It is expected that learning items and methods should prove useful to the students in their future career or occupation.
  - c) **Educational value :** The learning items and methods should also be useful to the students in their daily and future studies.
- 2) In the initial years, confidence and fluency should receive more emphasis than accuracy. Rather than correcting the students every now and then, it is better to present models of good idiomatic English for the students to emulate. Every method and technique in the language classroom should be chosen to promote the student's confidence and creativity. Efforts should be made to achieve accuracy mainly through exposure to good English.

#### **Testing and Evaluation :**

Since a good test can have a positive effect on teaching/learning, the committee recommends a continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

The other recommendations are :



- 1) Memory based testing should be avoided.
- 2) An effort should be made to test the acquisition of all the four skills in the class/unit tests. Oral tests should be regular activity in the classroom.
- 3) Each teacher should devise his/her tests for their classroom. However, the terminal or final exam question papers could be set collectively by teachers, for their respective schools.
- 4) The use of readymade question paper should be avoided.
- 5) Students need to be provided a periodic feedback on their performance in a systematic way.
- 6) Self evaluation should be encouraged.
- 7) Evaluation should be an integral part of teaching/learning process.
- 8) The process of evaluation should be encouraging rather than demotivating.

### Sample

*Teacher sample* :Ten teachers from 5 zones in Solapurcity were selected at random as teacher sample.

*Student sample*: Students of respective sample teachers, a set for each class (from class 1 to 5) was selected for the study.

### Duration of the program

A total of two months in which the training of the teachers was followed by implementation in their classrooms.

### Research Phases

In order to realize the objective, the investigator had proceeded the research in the following manner.

*Phase 1*:Developing a tool to find out the present level of English language teaching competencies among primary teachers in SolapurCity.

*Phase 2*:Designing an instructional programme where the preparation of TLM would be based on psycho/techno/pedagogic principles - "Orienting the teachers on learner's English language competencies and train them to design instructional language programmes along with the preparation of TLM".

**Planning for a Training programme**: The investigator assessed the training requirements of the teachers based on the data collected through a set need assessment tool. The one on TLM preparation was collected during an in-service training programme on TLM preparation. And the other on , "an assessment on English language teaching competency" was given to the primary teachers. From the responses, the investigator inferred that teachers need to:

- \*Have awareness on strategic planning and devising appropriate methods of instruction;
- \*Know that the preparation of instructional materials and devices must be in accordance with the nature of the learner and the principles behind learning;
- \*Possess the essential language competencies for facilitating the students to acquire the expected competencies;
- \*Understand the psychological/technological/pedagogical principles to be adopted in the instructional design; and
- \*Have the ability to identify the appropriate TLM requirements for development of the stated language competencies.

The investigator reviewed related literature for identification of instructional strategies, cognitive, metacognitive, psycholinguistic principles and literature to establish research grounds. The psycholinguistic principles for language teaching were gathered. Experts were consulted, regarding the principles behind preparation of TLM materials. The scientific principles behind selection, preparation and use of TLM were understood. Then Romiszowski's(1974) guidelines for using Media Taxonomies were selected. The theories

of learning were consolidated and the pedagogical principles were listed down. The investigator referred technology books and studied the applications of technology towards education. In the perspective of TLM preparation, he identified certain factors like Task factor, Student factor, Physical attributes, Economic factor, and Media factor, essential to be taken care of. Then the important component playing in human learning i.e., psychological principles were attended. The psychological principles were sketched under four frames, viz. Motivation, Attention, Perception and Cognition for concept formation. Thus the skeleton for preparation of TLM was set ready. Through the need assessment, the investigator realized the necessary inputs to be incorporated in the training program. The necessity for teachers to comprehend the objectives of English Language Teaching at primary level, the structure and the design of the text book, the enlisted English Language competencies, and the teacher requirements for developing the competencies among students were sensitized. Since the teacher trainees need theory inputs, the investigator arranged for expert lectures. While learning theories, practical sessions are essential for hands on experiences. Consequently, a schedule for preparation of TLM, using Pedagogical, Technological and psychological principles was interwoven in the program time frame. The program was planned in such a way that through brainstorming their expectations were elicited and their requirements were incorporated. The first two days of the program, the necessary theory inputs on English language teaching, familiarization of language competencies, conceptualization on TLM preparation and utilization, theory on language components were given. The other three days were exclusively for hands on experience on TLM preparation. The investigator gave a model Instructional design, with a demonstration class. The participants were ten in number and they were divided into five different groups. Each group was given one textbook thereby all the classes (1-5) textbooks were analyzed. Orientation on Instructional Designing was given. Here the teachers' perception on looking at the content was directed towards taking them as a tool for developing the expected competencies. The teacher was to see the relevance and the sufficiency of the given input for the prescribed competencies for students, with that deficiency identification, keeping the pedagogical and technological principles on the main frame, designed an instructional program. This instructional program has TLM and students' participation. Each group has a demonstration class followed by a feedback. The feedback carried corrective measures and it had been attended in the following session. The last session focused on consolidation, presentation and validation. The investigator realized the importance of portfolio writing for every individual to reflect on one's own growth and development in the program. Everyday, before the session calls it a day, they recorded the things they had learnt, and the areas of inquiry. The investigator collected their portfolios and did attend their enquiry in the following day. The last day they voiced out their experience in that program. Thus the investigator designed a training program where the primary teacher was tuned to develop Teaching Learning Materials using pedagogical, technological, and psychological principles. The developed instructional packages were consolidated and arranged in a module form.

*Phase 3:* The investigator wanted to assess the effectiveness of the training on teacher language competencies and hence administered the same pretest tool as post test tool. The research design of the training program is pretest-training posttest design.. The scores of both the tests were collected. Teacher portfolios were also collected.

*Phase 4:* The training input, i.e., designing an instructional program where the preparation and utilization of TLM are based on pedagogical, technological and psychological principles was taken to the classrooms by the trainee teachers. The teachers assessed the language competencies of the students' using the instructional design that they developed in the training program, to their real class. It was followed by the administration of a post test tool similar to the pretest tool. The content validity of the tools was established by experts. The reliability of the tools was established by KR 20 method. The scores of both the tests were collected. This has been uniformly carried over by all the trainee teachers in their schools.

*Phase 5: Scheme of Data analysis:* The pretest and post scores on English language teaching competency of the trainee teachers were tabulated and the mean and standard deviation were computed. The scores of the competencies were computed and tabulated. In order to find out the significant mean difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores on ELT competency, the 't' test for correlated



small group was applied. Hence 'r' value between the pretest and posttest scores of language competencies were computed separately. Omega square analysis was attempted. The pretest and posttest scores on English language performance of all the experimental group students performance were tabulated and the mean and SD were computed. In order to find out the significant mean difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores on English language performance, the 't' test for correlated sample was applied. Hence 'r' value between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental groups was computed separately. Omega square Analysis was attempted to see the effect of the instructional design treatment in their performance in English language. In order to see the overall effectiveness of the treatment the weighted arithmetic mean of the entire students sample was found out to see the overall effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis proved that there is change in English language teaching and assessing language in a way that encourages a positive working atmosphere, where students make mistakes and learn from them. The reflections of trainee teachers speak that there is shift in their perception of the text book. Moreover there is prevalence of confidence and hope in attaining the objectives of English language teaching at primary levels.

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