PREFACE

The importance of teaching English as a language skill in current Indian context is not very widely realized by Secondary Board of Education and what has been actually done so far is not very substantial. In the era of globalization, increasing trade, tour and travel, diplomatic and professional relationship has made it imperative to learn and use English language. The world over, whether as the mother tongue or the first language or the second language or as a foreign language, English is being used one way or another. This fact, more than any other make English merit the status of world language. Today the compulsions of learning English are no longer merely political, but scientific and technological.

India is one of those countries where English is taught on a massive scale. But, despite this, the situation of English in India is far from satisfactory. At present, except for very few schools and colleges in the metros and other big cities, the standard of English as taught is below average level. Grammar is seldom taught and few can write correct sentences in English. It is a harsh fact that even graduate and post graduate are not fluent in English, let alone developing the best communicating English.

The thesis provides information on a study which investigated some of the relevant issues hampering the process of learning English as a second language in Rajasthan, India. The study examined the curricula of the schools in Rajasthan. The extraneous factors which are suggested to be taken into account for students to learn a new language the fastest way, aside from full immersion, are discussed. Important changes towards the betterment of English teaching are also suggested.
The real challenges facing the Departments of English today is that thousands of students are equipped with very inadequate or with very little English, who need to be equipped quickly with different degrees of competence in the use of English. In terms of real national and individual requirements, not all the students need English to the same level of competence. It is important that we should be able to identify the English requirements of various groups of students precisely, and try to provide for each group the pattern of course that will be relevant to the needs of learners and help them reach different levels of skill in language performance. The ultimate objective of our programmes should be to help learner acquire not only context–governed and syllabus–bound competence in English but to attain that level of sociolinguistic competence which will enable them to use it with confidence. It is also important that special programmes are organized for students coming from tribal, rural, and other neglected sections of our society who, though gifted and intelligent, feel alienated and handicapped at institutions of higher learning because they have not had the opportunity of acquiring English as a second language and hence find themselves incapable of using English as a language of vertical, socio-economic mobility.

The present endeavor has been undertaken to discuss the various problems of English language teaching and learning at senior secondary level in Rajasthan. This study has been done with special reference to some schools affiliated to the Board of Senior Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer. The scope of the study is limited to the teaching of compulsory English in non-English medium schools. It aims at finding out various problems faced by the ESL teachers and learners at tertiary level. The views of students and teachers were also collected through separate questionnaires. A lot of field work had
been done to observe the actual teaching going on in several senior secondary schools. The academic and professional qualifications of teachers were one of the foci of the study. The difference in the competence of ELT–oriented and other teachers have also been highlighted to help to evaluate the ELT programmes in the state. The examination of question papers and the marked scripts was also done in detail. On the whole, this study tries to assess whether the aims and objectives professed in the syllabus are being realized in actual practice in the government schools of the state.

In view of the findings and the theories of language teaching and learning available today, the study ultimately results in giving vital suggestions for making the existing ELT situation practically relevant so as to make it learning oriented.

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