Abstract

This thesis entitled "A Critical Evaluation of the Shift of Emphasis in ELT in India Since Independence" attempts a perspective of English Language Teaching in India since Independence. The status of English as a medium of international communication is universally recognised. In a multilingual country like India, English, the legacy of the British rule, played and still is playing a vital role. It acts as a unifying factor, fusing the different regions using different languages into a single united entity. English serves as a library language by opening large vistas of science and technology and as a link language by providing means of national communication. English is assigned the role of a second language as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, and it acquires the privileged position of an official language as most of the intra-national correspondence takes place through English. Thus, in every aspect of Indian life English plays a major role and has become a vital part of Indian social life.

Many methods have been evolved and implemented at different points of time to teach English to the Indian students. The shift of emphasis from time to time, in relation to methods of teaching English has been marked.
The present study is an attempt to analyse the nature of the changes in ELT in India and their effect on the teachers and the taught.

Many teachers are ignorant of the history of ELT in India and of the current trends in ELT in the country. In order to create an awareness among teachers of the several theories behind the many approaches in ELT in India and of the methodologies evolving from these approaches, a detailed study has been undertaken in the first three chapters of this thesis.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first half of the introductory chapter deals with English language teaching in India from its inception and sums up the reports of various committees on the need for the English language at that time; it also mentions the policies of governments regarding English education in India and the various projects undertaken in ELT in Tamil Nadu. The second half of the introductory chapter states the objectives of the study, lists the sources of information or data, specifies the limitations of the study and gives suggestions for further studies.

The second chapter deals with the first phase of ELT in India. It analyses the various aspects of the
Grammar-Translation Method, and the reasons for the shift from this method, to the Direct Method. It also gives a brief account of the experiment conducted by Dr. Robert Onstein, Prof, of Linguistics at California University, to teach Spanish to the P.G. students of GRI using the Direct Method.

The fourth chapter analyses the most recent venture in ELT—The Communicative Approach. It includes a resume of the demonstration of the Communicative Approach by Prof. Robert Bellarmine of the British Council Division, Madras, at GRI.

The fifth chapter makes a study of the grammar-based Matriculation Syllabus and of the skill-based Tamil Nadu Government syllabus.

Chapter six analyses various aspects of teacher education, particularly practice teaching. A lesson plan prepared by a teacher trainee is analysed to reveal a lack of insight into the present syllabus and its objectives.

The final chapter takes a brief look at English for specific purposes and English for technological purposes. It also gives a resume of this researcher's experiment with her students, using various techniques to make learning of English pleasurable and effective. Finally, the findings of the study are summarised.