Chapter II

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE
During the last 40 years a number of experimental studies have been conducted at different places in India and abroad pertaining to error analysis and teaching-learning problems in English. Some of them are as follows:

1. **Ghosh. A** "Study of Backwardness in English in the secondary schools of West Bengal, Kalyani University "(1977)"

The objectives of the study were:

2. To carry out a survey of the attainment of pupil in English.

3. To diagnose the backwardness in specific area of English.

The findings of the study were:

1. Thirty to forty-four percent of children of West Bengal school were backward in English.

2. Backwardness in different aspects of English taken in order of their intensity were, use of capital letter and punctuation, comprehension, usage, spelling, vocabulary and sentence construction.
3. Causes of backwardness were: unscientific curriculum, lack of attention at home, unsuitable teaching method, poverty, maladjustment, want of necessary books, lack of proper place for the study, poor health and substandard attainment in English at primary stage.


This study was an attempt to guide Delhi teachers through the preplexing problems of English language teaching.

The study was undertaken with the following hypotheses:

1. Inspite of adverse political propaganda and contrary educational policy of the government the attitude of the students towards English has not been adverse. On account of so many obvious reasons English is even now very much wanted by the parents and students alike.
2. The deteriorating standards of English call for a 
rethinking and reconsidering, commonly accepted 
psychological principles of foreign language 
teaching.

3. In view of the newly postulated aims of teaching 
English to Delhi students and the targets to be 
achieved by them with minimum possible resources 
in shortest possible time. The urgency of the need 
for a radical change in the teaching method can 
never be undermined.

4. The newly evolved method is to be more sound from 
the standpoint of psychology of foreign language 
teaching. It is to be more purposeful and thus 
more effective.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. No. steps were taken to help students to develop 
proper attitude towards English.

2. By far the majority of the teachers were found 
dissatisfied with the existing methodology of 
teaching English.

3. Oral instructions were found to be essentially 
important and the teacher had to be an active 
model in English class.
4. The results of the experiment also indicated the effectiveness and superiority of the evolved methodology.

3. **SHASTRI S.V.** "The teaching of English as a second language in Bombay with special reference to structural approach at work" : Bombay University"(1972)\(^3\)

The purpose of the study was:

1. To ascertain the existing position of teaching English as a foreign language in secondary schools in Bombay.

2. To detect and locate the areas of student's weaknesses with regard to their Knowledge of certain structures and vocabulary at the secondary school level.

3. To provide a basis for teaching English to the first year college students.

The major findings of the study were:

1. The performance of the students on the vocabulary tests had a significant correlation with their performance at the S.S.C. Examination.
2. The average vocabulary of the students was 1800 assuming the first 1300 untested words, the range of vocabulary was from 1000 to 2000.

4. **SHARMA R. K:** "A Study of the problems of teaching English in Bihar Bhagatpur university" (1986)  

The main aim of the research was to study the position of English in India and the problem of its teaching/learning in the schools.

Some of the major conclusions were:

1. During the past three decades there had been a gradual lowering of the standard of English due to various reasons like socio-political problems of teaching English

2. Efficient teaching of English was lacking. There was a shortage of trained and qualified teachers. Traditional method and conservative basis of teaching were incommensurate with language needs of learners.
3. Misconceptions regarding English language teaching, faulty teaching methods, unpalatable textbooks and their mishandling etc. were the main problems at middle and high schools.

5 PAL A from CIEFL worked on, "Developing a Reading Oriented E.L.T. Strategy: A Psycholinguistic Study" (1978)

The objectives of the investigation were to study:

1. The relationship between reading ability in English and intelligence, motivation and selected environmental variables of schools and college students in ELT classrooms.

2. Basic differences in the requirements for an adequate programme of reading instruction in English in our schools.

3. The possibility to synthesise a reading oriented ELT strategy for the school.

The findings of the study were as follows:
1) Reading oriented ELT strategy for the school students in schools was generally dependent on their variable intelligence and language proficiency.

2) The reading instruction strategy combining the perceptual and conceptual skills could lead to significant improvement in reading comprehension levels of school students; irrespective of their verbal intelligence and initial reading ability.


The purpose of this study was to develop effective remedial and preventive techniques for spelling mistakes committed by pupils and which could easily be applied by average teachers in Indian conditions.

The study revealed the following specific reasons responsible for a large number of errors in fundamentals of written English.
1) Pupils were drilled too soon into the use of the pattern, the significance of which they did not understand.

2) The teachers were not aware of the point of difference between the foreign language they were teaching and the native language of the pupils.

3) Pupils were constantly influenced by the familiar patterns of their native language, which caused mistakes in the use of the foreign language.

7. WALIA, A: “An evaluative study of English at the secondary level in Rajasthan” (Rajasthan University 1981)\(^7\)

The objectives of the study were:

1. To find out how the reading material used in the classroom reflected the professed aims of syllabus of English.

2. To find out how teacher works through this materials in the actual teaching situations.

3. To find out if the teacher had the basic academic qualifications necessary to teach English.

4. To find out if the teachers are trained to use the new techniques effectively.
Findings of the study were:

1. Teachers felt that the size of the class and the quantum of workload affected the choice of the mode of teaching.

2. There was a conscious attempt to define the range of active and passive vocabulary among the new items presented in the textbook. The researchers found that the teaching of English as knowledge aspect, ignorance of objectives and improper method of teaching the subject, lack of school libraries and teaching aids were some of the major drawbacks in this respect.

8. JOSHI, V. G.: A study of Error in English among the pupils of standard V to VIII; AE society's college of education (Ahmednagar 1975)

The main objectives of the study were:

i. To find out the typical error committed by pupils in written English.

ii. To diagnose the causes of these typical error and
iii. To formulate remedial measures for preventing the
typical error.

The study was confined to pupils studying in
Marathi medium schools in Ahmednagar district. The
written work scrutinized was limited to answer scripts
of the annual examination. The sample of schools
selected included both girls and boys schools.

The major findings of the study were:

(a) Error concerning speech, number and spellings
were committed by 90%, 48% and 45% pupils
respectively.

(b) Error of conjunction and case were committed by
2% and 6% pupils respectively.

(c) The 3 categories of error having the highest
frequency were those of spelling, tense and
numbers.

(d) Out of the 4 types into which the error categories
'spelling' was divided, error of emission and
replacement were most frequent.
(e) Among the error of tense almost all were caused by irregular verbs.

(f) Error regarding number gradually decreased as the pupil progressed from standard V to VIII.

(g) Among the error related to the use of preposition, 86% were due to the non-use of preposition.


This book is a classic text on teaching basic writing. Developed from 10 years of experience teaching basic writing, it introduces the nature of the ‘basic writing’, it provides a foundation from what would come to be called “the study of error”, and provides concrete advice to the teacher of basic writing.


Building on Shaughnessys’ careful approach to error in basic writing, Bartholomae argues that
teachers who analyze error for what it tells them positively about the writers struggle with the form of SWE will be able to help their students more effectively.


Farr and Janda report a case study of basic writing student who was also a speaker of vernacular black English (VBE). Their analysis suggests that his dialect cannot account for his writing deference and that efforts to improve his writing by focusing on his delicate features misguided.

12. **HILLOCKS. G (1986)**: Research on written composition:
New directions for teaching urban, IL: National conference on research in English and EIRC, clearinghouse on reading and communication skills.
Hillocks meta-analysis of research into efficacy of various approaches to writing instructions found that one of the new negative instructional approaches led to a decline in writing abilities, the use of decontextualized drills in grammar and usage designed to remedial students writing error.


Britton et al's study surveys the uses of writing in a British secondary school. Concluding that transactional writing for a teacher-examiner dominate the curriculum. Alternative models are discussed and assessed with direct implications for writing across the curriculum.

**14. FLOWER. L (1979)**: Writer based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. College English 41. (1) 19 – 37

Flowers' article distinguishes between "writer based prose", a type of writing where the writer has
gotten out what is in the head, on to the paper, and "reader based prose", the purposeful design of text to appeal to the need of the reader. Writing based prose might be a necessary step in the writing process. Particularly for novice writer. Students must be helped to anticipate their reader's background and interest and to make strategies decision based on that knowledge.

15. BEREITER. C. and SEARDMALAI . (1978) 15:
This very useful review of research in composition indicates that children in the upper elementary school years begin to develop abstract notions of text representations routinely using terms like "Supporting examples" to describe their planning of expository pieces.
Much work has been done on grammar items like articles, prepositions, spellings etc.

Articles

Jacob and Rosanbaum\textsuperscript{16} talk of these as well as this, that and those as demonstrative articles. They are also called determiners.

Strang\textsuperscript{17} has discussed ‘some’ as non-definite article in the plural form (e.g. some books) It would be interesting to distinguish between the stressed ‘some’/SAM/ as definite and the unstressed /s m / or /

/spm / as non-definite given to Noun phrase initiators is the name given to pre articles.

Jespersen’s\textsuperscript{18} statement about the definite article deserves notice, as ‘the’ is phonetically a weaker sound, that, its meaning also is weakened: instead of pointing out it serves to designate or single out. This is generally called the definite article, better name would be the defining or determining article.

Thomas\textsuperscript{19} has placed ‘any’ \textit{every} and ‘some’ under article. He draws our attention to the fact that the predetermines are invariably separated from the regular determiners by the word ‘of’. Thomas considers
'of', in this case to be a special morpheme Strang\textsuperscript{20} has mentioned two more articles 'negative' articles and 'genitive' articles, Strang goes on to point out that the forms 'my', 'our', 'you', 'her', 'their' and marginally 'his', 'its' pattern like determines and more specifically like articles.

Sanderson\textsuperscript{21} has observed 'article' is a word with the noun or a form of the noun and is used to indicate singularity, vagueness, and definiteness. Infact articles are important determiners since they are markers of the following noun: It shows the very nonuse of its headword.

Thomas\textsuperscript{22} gives a rule which says that every noun in English in preceded by a regular determiners of some sort certain nouns are generally preceded by the zero article.

Boulton and Crystal\textsuperscript{23} are of the opinion that any part of speech may be made into a noun simply by prefixing an article or adjective.

As Sweet\textsuperscript{24} asserted that though the articles had an unmistakable but somewhat vague meaning of their own the two syllables (a and the) would convey no meaning if pronounced alone. He has also
compared the meaninglessness of the English articles. They amount practically to nothing more than prefixes for forming Nouns, with the definite articles in French and German and feels that there is a greater lexical emptiness in the latter.

According to Bloomfield\textsuperscript{25} a free form could be recognized by its ability to stand as a complete utterance. But these articles can make complete statements only in a context of language, not of life.

Burgess\textsuperscript{26} was of the view that we must regard the article as bound forms incapable of acting on their own—that is to say not as words at all. He suggests that we allow the morpheme in its two forms—the morpheme which merely helps to modify meaning or create larger structure to rest as our scientific unit.

Barber\textsuperscript{27} remarks that it is also possible that changes are taking place in the use of the definite article; it is very often omitted in positions where it would formerly have been normal.

Krishnaswamy\textsuperscript{28} in "Grammar Old and New" NIE Journal January 71 says that the use of the definite articles is more sparing in English than in many other
languages where as the use of the indefinite article is less restricted.

Thomas remarks some speakers for whom English is a second language have considerable difficulty with the English determiner system particularly when their own language lacks article. Reason for such mistakes is that students go in for a translation of the thought in literal style. Articles are however devoid of any meaning and this meaninglessness also perhaps, causes these mistakes.

**Preposition:** He also draws our attention towards the difficulty in the sphere of preposition and has noted that a detailed analysis of English preposition does not exits.

Pittman observers about prepositions, that these small words, so small that it is easy to overlook them all have many, many meanings of has 63 meanings listed in the Oxford English Dictionary and other prepositions have almost as many meanings. "Early in our English course the teaching of the common prepositions of, to, from on, at, in, into, for, with, by, will provide plenty of brightness in our lessons, for these words are easy to teach in their common
writing, listening and speaking that one gets a clear idea of the correct use of prepositions”.

Pittman is right when he says that though prepositions are easy to teach at elementary level they are perhaps the most difficult to teach at advanced level.

Spellings

English language is a language of infinite difference in the matter of spellings. English spelling is called a monument of traditionalism.

Spellings has been quite a problem to Indian learners of English and significantly the problem has manifested itself in all its diversities. The notorious difficulty of English spellings baffles and over burdens the students who are poor spellers.

Harold Palmer\textsuperscript{31} has pointed out that divergences (in English) from the actual language are so numerous and so great that it may be said to possess two distinct languages; the spoken and the written. The English spelling is not always a correct guide to the sounds the latter stands for. Some of the letters in the English alphabet are superfluous.

Halliday, Mcintosh and Striven\textsuperscript{32} talk of the fierce resistance in Britain to any suggestion for
spelling reforms so strong is the feeling against it. That it seems unlikely at present that any orthographic revision of English will be undertaken for a long time.

It is quite evident from the previous research literature that the Indian students, especially at the +2 level are very weak in the use of English language. They make glaring mistakes in the use of grammatical items such as punctuation, spelling, sentence construction, articles, prepositions etc. Hence it is high time that these error should be attended to and suitable remedies be suggested for the error committed. This research project undertakes to do this work. It will enable the students to rectify the error as well as help the teachers to work with a proper perspective.
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