CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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The present study deals with the study of the problems of teaching English Language in the Marathi Primary Schools in Kolhapur district with special reference to Ajara, Gadhinglaj and Chandgad tehsils. Kolhapur is one of the most developed districts in the state of Maharashtra and located at the borders of Karnataka and Goa states. It is an agricultural district with the higher yields of sugarcane. There are twelve tehsils in Kolhapur namely Kolhapur, Shahuwadi, Panhala, Radhanagari, Hatkangale, Shirol, Gaganbawada, Kagal, Bhudavgad, Ajara, Gadhinglaj and Chandgad.

The researcher intends to study the problems of English language teaching in Marathi medium primary schools in Kolhapur district. The English language is taught as the second and third language but mandatory at the primary level in the state of Maharashtra, even in the Marathi medium schools.

English as a language originated in India with the British businessman, who turned into the rulers later on. Britishers ruled this country for more than 150 years and left, but English remained in India forever and now it is not an alien language anymore. English turned into a language of communication, language of instruction in academics and even more than that the language of literary creation.

The discovery of sea-route to India by Vasco-da-Gama in 1498, made a way to Portuguese and Dutch to India long before the arrivals of British. Britishers came to India for the purpose of trade in the late 18th century; they had a lot of interest to visit India for the trade and commerce in early and mid sixteenth century. It was not possible for the British rulers to introduce their language and culture in the beginning. It took them many decades to consolidate their political position and then they attempted other conquests. The imposition of their language was therefore at a later date and not much time elapsed between such an event and the creative beginning in that language.

The advent of English education in India is reckoned as a strong foothold for the historical circumstances that created a cultural milieu it was not a smooth passage for the language. The introduction of English was necessitated by administrative and the dissemination
of religious education. Christian Missionaries started a sort of mixed educational machinery in the early stages for teaching the children of the employees of the East India Company. If in the first half of education started by the missionaries become popular in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. By the end of the century a number of private English schools were started in and around Calcutta, on the whole the enthusiasm for learning English was quite evident and no less a person than Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, the grandfather of Ravindranath Tagore was a product of such a private school. These schools also helped training men to seek jobs in the offices of East India Company. Some enthusiastic Englishmen strongly pledged for the government’s establishing English medium institutions to impart European knowledge to bring light and happiness to the decadent civilization of the Indians. The failure of foreign teachers to bring the justifiable impact of western science and thought in Indian languages in translation gave fillip to the teaching of English. It was one advantage both to the teacher and the learners.

The East India Company merely desired to manage its own machinery without disrupting the social and religious tradition of India. The company on the whole preferred to allow Indian to pursue their own oriental studies Warren Hastings, Sir William Jones, Jonathan Duncan, Sir Edward Hyde and Raja Ram Mohan Roy were instrumental in the starting of many centers of learning in Calcutta and Madras in India. These institutions introduced the western method of teaching and English as an additional discipline for there was a growing popularity of western pattern of education and English. Many Bengali entrepreneurs wanted to learn the language of the master merchants to better their prospects. The lure of the new pattern was so irresistible that was a temptation among the students to accept English as a medium of instruction. Fort William College established by Lord Wellesley was set to be another trend setting college in imparting English education and preparing text books.

Despite these moves, the East India Company was reluctant to take initiative in the field of education. Efforts and heartening results of English education started on unofficial levels. In 1813, the English Parliament authorized the East India Company to involve itself in public instruction. A sum of a lakh of Rupees was to be spent on the improvement of literature and the encouragement of learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences. The glamour of English education was not just a fashionable trend it was genuinely felt need of the people who were in search of new knowledge. In 1823 a committee of public instruction was appointed to ascertain and suggest from time to time the right for the
better instruction of people. The committee simply favoured a restructuring of the old educational method and curricula and established a Sanskrit college at Calcutta and two other oriental colleges at Delhi and Agra. The British government desired to get Indian men trained to take up service under them through the English education comprising of western arts and sciences was met with failure initially. The experimentation of teaching geometry in Sanskrit translation and Algebra in Arabic was bound to fail. The committee realized that the students were not interested in oriental studies and that scientific knowledge was better instructed in English. There were many instances of Indian students winning laurels in the English language.

The English rulers were not interested to encourage English education on large scale in India, for the fear of certain disaffection from the native Indian people. Though the government directed that the great end should not be teach either Hindu learning or the mohammadium learning but useful learning it was felt by even the eminent Englishman like James Mill.

Macaulay’s ‘Minute’ was one of the turning points which changed the mind of the natives and colonizers to accept the introduction of English language in Indian Education System. His ‘Minute’ on education was appreciated by number of people, in ‘Minute’ he praised the ancient Indian languages like Sanskrit and Arabic but he felt that these languages are incapable of aspiring for any intellectual distinction. In India also there was a small group of people, who were belonging to aristocratic families and were well educated through English language. Macaulay’s ‘Minute’ on education is a landmark in the history of English education in India. In his work, he expressed the cause of English and said, “We have to educate the people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language.” The main intention to bring the European language none other than English in India because English was spoken by the ruling class and high class native Indians. In his task, Macaulay was helped by the Christian missionaries to found the English language schools and publish books on grammar and dictionaries, by the English Mercantile Community and by the educated Indians and enlightened reformers.

Macaulay’s language policy got success because his recommendations were fully accepted by the government and in March 1835, it was decided that all the funds for education will be used for English education alone with the object of promoting western science and literature among the natives. During his period of office Macaulay tried his best to continue this
policy. His own zeal compelled with popular enthusiasm for the study of English language made this policy eminently successful.

Before Macaulay’s advent Raja Ram Mohan Roy of India was own man of destiny. In his letter to Lord Amherst, Governor General Ram Mohan Roy expressed his disappointment in the establishment of the Sanskrit College to spend the grant not by employing European gentleman of talents and education to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics. Natural philosophy, Chemistry and Anatomy and other useful sciences which the Nations of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitant of other parts of the world by employing Hindu Pandits to impart such knowledge as in already current in India. He pointed out the disadvantages the decadent oriental curriculum and the necessity of imparting the right instruction that would really improve the people, improvement being the main intention of the government.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy analyzed how to essential benefits could be derived by metaphysical speculations and meaningless ideas suggested by the Vedanta Meemansa and Natya Shastra. To appreciate his point on the uselessness of such an outmoded learning he requested the lordship to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon, with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote. The very fact that the Baconian philosophy was allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen evinces the interest of the British Nation to remove the old instructions which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. The same thing is now before the rulers. The Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness. As the improvement of the native population is the project of the government it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction. Raja Ram Mohan Roy hoped which may be accomplished with the sums proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus. He even suggested that more European educated person of characters should be encouraged to settle in India without restrictions, since there was a general apathy and restraint from the government in allowing the Englishmen to settle in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s plea for liberal education was supported by the public and by the aspiring young men of India. They pleaded for the opening of more English schools and
organized protest against the committee’s retrograde step. The work of the missionaries in establishing educational institutions came as a compliment to the efforts of the government.

To find out the controversy between the orientlists and the Anglicists which regard so much, it was thought fit to examine the issue on the basis of expert opinions. Except a negligible opposition the views based on the proficiency of the Indian in English in writing and debating on Arts and Letters and a genuine love for learning the language, favoured the English education.

Lord Macaulay was appointed Low Member of the Governor General’s Council in India to head the committee of Public Instruction; the entire file of the controversy was given to him. Macaulay clearly studied the earnest desire of the Indians to learn the language, the competency of the learned Indians in English the uselessness of imparting oriental studies and visualized how English education would be of immense benefit to the rulers and the ruled. His verdict, submitted in his famous ‘Minute’ of 1835, was pronounced in favour of the anglicist.

It is of particular interest to note in his minute, the high precise given to the English educated Indian, though he has an arrogance of the master who has not seen anything of worth in Indian culture and literature. So, it was on the basis of pure merit that the Indians deserved the kind of education they desired. Lord William Bentink wholly accepted Macaulay’s recommendations and declared that the entire fund would be employed to the imparting of knowledge of English literature all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.

The language that was not forced but sheltered with love necessarily produced far reaching results. The important aspects that concerns here is the growth and development of the use of English by the Indians with a felicity in all fields of activity, especially the creative activity. Tears of closeness and consolidation with the language helped the more talented people to the creative use of language. It must be noted that even before Macaulay’s ‘Minute’, some of the Indian had revealed their talent and scholarship in the English language. The student of Hindu College where known to proficient in matters of poetry history and politics through their studious command of English. News papers-reports and a number of government dispatches apart from Macaulay’s own testimony of the brilliance of the Indian scholarship in English language and literature bear witness to the conquest made by the Indian genius. The intelligentsia of the period used English to express their views on philosophy, literature, history and linguistics
with a natural felicity with the language that inspired some of them to use a language of creative imagination just as others used it to express their views on History and Economics.

The uses of a language depend upon the genius of the people as well. A section of educated Indian with sensitiveness towards the nuances of the language developed an inwardness of it, and coupled with the creative urge used the language for poetry and other creative forms of writing of course there were controversies on the use of a foreigner’s language. What really matters in creative work is the creative genius of the user and not just the nearness or distance with the language. It is unfair to doubt the bona-fides of the writers on more theoretical prepositions instead of examining and evaluating their work. The argument that no one should write in a language other than one’s mother tongue does not hold salt. It would be better to judge from literary standards and find out if such writing can stand the application of criticism or not.

The growth and development of English language in India took place in three phases, first the English studies in Indian universities opened new magic casement and gems of English writing charged the creative imagination of the sensitive Indians, secondly the creative work of the Englishmen in India using Indian themes brought new directions to the aspirations of the Indians who strove for self-expression thus starting the interaction of Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian writing and the third phase which is more pronounced was the growth of intellectual milieu from closer contacts with England.

The existence of English language all over the world is mainly a consequence of this process of colonization. The Britishers followed a peculiar policy of introducing English language in their colonies. They had twin objection in doing this. One clear objective was that they needed native personnel to work in lower administrative posts. Secondly they also wanted to Anglicise their colonies. Macaulay who introduced English curriculum in India had said that he wanted to create a generation of brown sahibs. He had also said that he had wanted to create an Indian who is only outwardly an Indian wearing Indian dress but inwardly a Britisher buying British goods.

Even after the end of colonization English has continued to stay all over the world due to many factors like the growing American Influence, the process of globalization of world market, the computerization and the internet which have converted the world into a global village. Due to these reasons English language is being given more and more importance in the post-colonial world scenario.
In addition to this, English continues to stay in India due to many more factors. In ancient India Sanskrit used to play the role of a link language. In the present circumstances English appears be best suited to perform the role of link language. Hence it is main language of law, judiciary, administrative and official correspondence in spite of the fact that the government is bent upon promoting Indian languages. English is the language used in most of the television discussion and debates. It is thus clear that English continues to play the role of a link language even in contemporary India.

When Macaulay introduced the English curriculum in India there were some people who fell in the trap laid by the Britishers and became Anglicists. However, fortunately, most of the Indians were able to see through this game. As a result, though they continued to learn English appropriating the benefits of the modern education introduced by the Britisher, they started using English for the purpose of their own. There were social reformers, nationalists, religious leaders, scholars, journalists, and academies like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Lokmanya Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Bankimchandra Chattopadhaya, Michael Madhusudan Datta to name a few who started using English language to express their ideas and opinions. Very soon it was discovered that the Indian users of English were using English language with an almost native like felicity.

In spite of this there was some initial resistance to the acknowledgement Indian English as an independent dialect of English language. However, Indian English is gradually getting the attention it deserves The Advanced Learners Dictionary published by the Oxford University Press in its 4th edition has included a special section on Indian English for the first time. Prior to this the reluctance to accept Indian English was ascribed to the fact that there is no speech community of speakers of English in India. In this manner the recognition that Indian English receives today can be as ascribed to the Indian writers in English as well as Indian speakers of English as a second language. There is significant body of creative writing being done in English in India. Although English is not the mother tongue of any of the writers here, they have decided to use it for creative writing in their own way. By its very nature English is not adopted to the Indian cultural scenario because it is not rooted in it. To make English reflect the Indian situation is therefore a challenge the Indian writers of English have to face. The tradition of Indian writing is English will simultaneously begin a process of decolononization of English in India.

Many languages are spoken in the World, but English has retained its prominent place among them. Some nations have developed their own native languages, but al global level they
are unable to give competent alternative to English. In today’s age of information technology need of English is growing. Now there is increasing demand for English all over the country. English is now spread throughout the world. English is a window to the world. In order to keep in touch with the outer world, the international contacts can be easily made with the English language. Therefore it is known as the international language. English being business and official language all over the world and all over the country needs to be studied well. The higher study like university education is mainly through English. Therefore for doing any kind of reference work perfect knowledge of its medium is very essential. Without the knowledge of English it would be difficult to gain more and more information and knowledge of the outside world. Considering all these points of observation the need is English in constantly felt. The government of Maharashtra made English mandatory subject in the school curriculum right from the very beginning of education. Teaching English language as a second or third language in Marathi medium primary schools is a challenging job. The researcher in the present work intends to study the problems of English language teaching at primary level in Marathi medium schools in Kolhapur district.

English occupies a very important place in the school curriculum. The basic problem is that:

1. Should English be retained in the curriculum?
2. At what stage or in which class should it be taught?
3. Should English be a compulsory subject in the school curriculum?
4. Should it be the medium of instruction in schools?

Different states and Union territories in India have introduced English at different stages and in different classes. In some states it is taught from the primary stage while in some other states its instruction begins from class VI onwards. The teaching of English has been recognized as essential in all the states and Union territories of India, but there is no uniformity in the duration and the intensity of the teaching of English in different states and Union territories.

There are arguments for and against making English a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. Some people argue that the majority of students fail in the HSC examination due to very low marks obtained in English. A majority of students who passed the HSC examination do not continue college education, for them the knowledge of English is not very essential.
Anything that is not essential should not be made compulsory. Just an elementary knowledge of English will serve the purpose. For this purpose it should be studied on optional basis.

A second argument is that majority of our teachers teaching English are not proficient in the art and science of teaching English. In most schools English is not taught in the way it should have been taught. Children should learn English in the same natural way they learn their mother tongue. But the learning environment is most schools is not conducive to any effective learning of English. The majority of parents are illiterate or not familiar with English. Thus they are not in a position to guide and help their children in the learning of English. This results in poor and substandard English which may cause humiliation in public life. English in the school curriculum could not be simply avoided on the basis of that our teachers are not proficient in English or that our schools do not have sophisticated technology. We should try to improve the competence of teachers through in-service education programmes. Moreover learning English does not primarily depend upon sophisticated technology.

The current scene in the country regarding English language teaching calls for special efforts to be made to remedy a number of deficiencies and to solve the essential problems of teaching the language. On the pedagogical side many of the problems that existed 20 years ago still continue to exist. Many of them appear to be insoluble. So much of time, thought and expertise have gone into these but the situation is still not what it should be. No matter what direction is taken, no matter what policy is adopted the results are not very good.

One reason why we have not made much progress is that language teaching is a very difficult task as it involves two aspects, the content element and the skill element. There are not enough competent teachers of English. The average teacher needs upgrading of his proficiency in English. This task of proficiency in English of the teachers at the primary school stage has added further dimensions to the problem. While there are specialist teachers in Science, Sanskrit, Hindi, Mathematics and Social Sciences, English is more often taught by non-specialist teachers whose own competence in English is questionable.

It is a surprise that grammar and composition still occupy an important place in the school curriculum. It is a waste of time especially when there is a pressure on the time available for teaching. Developments in language teaching methods which enable one to learn better in a shorter time with the help of aids must be taken note of.
Another problem is the variation in the English syllabi in different states in the country. This possibly causes variation in the expected levels of achievements at the end of board examination. One way of facing this problem is to design syllabi with clearly stated objection right from the level at which English begins to the level where English ceases to be a compulsory subject in the curriculum.

The methodology and the materials of learning create another problem. Although a large number of innovations in methods, approaches, techniques and materials of learning have come out, teachers are still preoccupied with the traditional methods, techniques and approaches. Strangely enough the same set of methods and materials are being used for all type of learners, whether rural or urban, disadvantaged or privileged. This results is a tremendous gap in the achievements of our pupils who belong to various socio-economic status.

The evaluation system in English language teaching poses another serious problem. The criteria for a pass in English in the public examinations are not enough help to motivate the learner. The marks awarded in English do not indicate clearly the level of achievement of the learner in relation to four language skills. Examinations in English are at present, knowledge oriented, not skill based. Examinations should be conducted for purposeful evaluation and not just to pass or fail a candidate. The results of annual or public examinations contain a lot of valuable feedback but no Board of Studies ever uses this information for the purpose of evaluating the syllabus, the materials, the examination schemes etc.

Examinations in English language are still preoccupied with writing. Speech has been ignored very considerably. Here it is reasonable to ask what has reduced our English language examinations to such a level. It was not so when English was the medium of instruction and all teachers and students spoke some English at school. Even today a merely written examination seems to be adequate in the English medium school, where daily life takes care of speech. But in the vast majority of schools where the mother tongue is the medium of instruction, English gets no chance to be used as a language and there are very few competent teachers who can speak it. In these schools English is learnt as a set of formula and charts which have to be learnt off by heart, thrown up on the examination paper and then forgotten.

There generally appears a considerable degree of mismatch between stated objectives, prescribed text material and the systems and techniques of evaluation. In most cases while
syllabi and textbooks have changed, examination have remained rigid and unrealistic, thus promoting rote learning at the expenses of the development of language skills.

In some schools English is taught through translation method. Such teachers think that once a student understands the meaning of English words or sentences he is assumed to have learnt English. Students have no or very little chance to speak in English. Even B. Ed./D. Ed. Students are instructed by the teachers of the schools to follow translation methods during their teaching practice.

Language laboratory is very essential for training of teachers of English. Since teachers are expected to teach correct pronunciation to students, their own pronunciation must be correct. Teacher training institution should, therefore, have language laboratory facilities. In some cases institutions have language laboratory just to meet the requirement of University affiliation, but it is not used for the purpose for which it is meant.

The three language formula broadly provides the framework for the teaching of languages including English of the national level. However there is little uniformity regarding English in the school curriculum from state to state, the stage at which it is introduced, the duration and the intensity of the programme of instruction and the expected level of attainment.

The results in terms of the levels of attainment in English have naturally not been uniform. The main reason for this seems to be lack of general agreement on the objectives of teaching English as a second-third language. While facilities for the learning of English are generally available for the privileged few mainly in cities and large towns, the disadvantaged section of the society are denied the opportunity to learn a language with a certain degree of proficiency. It is therefore necessary to improve the effectiveness of instruction in English particularly in rural schools for the benefit of backward section of the community competent teachers who generally prefer town schools, as many teachers do, should be given some incentives to teach English in rural schools and in disadvantaged areas.

The major impact of the recent developments in the teaching of foreign languages can be seen in terms of a learner centred, motivation based and activity-oriented approach to language teaching supported by television, radio and audio-visual aids. The objectives of teaching English have to be defined in terms of specific linguistic needs of both young and adult learners. The process of instruction should be viewed as oriented to imparting skill in the use of the language rather than knowledge about the language.
Pre-service and in-service programmes should be organized for teachers of English. The in-service training programmes mainly to improve the skills may not be quite effective unless it removes their hard spots and unless it is supplemented with appreciation courses at higher levels.

Lead schools can be identified and developed. Wherever there are good resource centres they should take care of the language teaching needs of the surrounding schools. A language cannot be learnt as a language when it is not heard and spoken. In the past English language was not learnt by hearing and speaking, because the means of doing this were not available. Now the means of exposing the learners to speech as well as provoking speech activity are available. Learning a spoken language no longer depends upon immediate contact with the native speakers. The electronic media can now bring real English to all the schools, however remote, it provided them with the channels of distribution. Students can learn real English in schools with much greater ease and eagerness through radio, TV, and other electronic devices if speech finds place in the examination.

There are relevance and need for re-orientation in our approach to the instructional strategies in the teaching of English in India. The term instructional strategies is referred for curricular materials, text books and other instructional materials. The syllabi should be designed with clearly stated objectives right from the level at which English begins to the level where English ceases to be a compulsory subject in the curriculum. English should be introduced in the same class in all the states and must be taught as a compulsory subject up to a particular class in all the states so that the achievements can be compared in relation to stated objectives.

In the present work the researcher has collected primary data from three stake holders of primary education in the area selected for study. Among these are teachers, parents and students. The researcher has prepared a questionnaire for the parents and teacher separately to study the problems of teaching English to the Marathi medium primary schools in Kolhapur district. The collected data will be tabulized, analyzed and interpreted for the observation and conclusions of the study

1.2 References


