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"Language is everywhere. It permeates our thoughts, mediates our relations with others, and even creeps into our dreams. The overwhelming bulk of human knowledge is stored and transmitted in language. Language is so ubiquitous that we take it for granted, but without it, society as we now know, it would be impossible."  

1.1 Introduction

There are a number of reasons why an accurate appreciation of language is worth-acquiring. Insights about language are of immense intellectual significance with direct and indirect relevance to other disciplines. Philosophers, for example, are greatly concerned with language. It is important for our view of man to know whether language is entirely a learned entity or whether it is largely innate. Language, in other words, could be one of the testing grounds on which to settle a long-standing debate between rationalists and empiricists.

The rationalists claim is that people are born with innate ideas, that much of psychological organisation is

'wired' into the organism and genetically transmitted. Empiricists on the other hand, claim that a person is born, psychologically speaking, as a blank slate and that psychological organisation is determined almost entirely by experience, not genetically transmitted.

Philosophers are also curious about language as an instrument of philosophical analysis.

Language is relevant to psychology in a number of ways. In fact since language is largely a mental phenomenon, its study may be considered a branch of psychology. Language is of central importance because so many of our thoughts assume linguistic form. Languages are highly structured and can be learned to identify and describe their structures in considerable detail. Any theory of psychological organisation, therefore must adequately accommodate the kinds of structures we know to be characteristic of human language. The other social sciences may also benefit to some extent from knowledge about language and the descriptive techniques suited to it.

In fact fundamental insights about language should certainly prove valuable to any one studying or teaching a language.

Since language permeates virtually all human affairs and is central to so many of them, an appreciation of language can hardly be considered peripheral. A person wishing to know and understand himself must in some measure
to understand the character of the linguistic system that plays such a fundamental role in his mental and social life.

The history of development of human language, ever since the first man learnt to utter meaningful sounds till the present century when man possesses a vast repertory of a number of languages to convey the subtlest of thoughts and most intricate concepts, is indeed an inexhaustible field for study. However man did not have either time or know how for centuries to examine his own language, let alone those of others.

This did not prevent him from contributing to the growth of his language. Consequently languages have continued to grow, to change and to develop newer features to meet man's demand for communication in the context of a specific cultural environment.

"Language, any language is discrete and selected. It dictates the ways in which we select and group elements of our experience. A particular language we speak provides us with a kind of 'grid' through which we perceive the world. The universe surrounding us is dissected along lines laid down by the various sub-structures of our language.... In learning another language we have to recognise and acquire a new 'grid'."  

Language has rightly been considered 'priceless possession of civilized man because it has provided him with a tool not only to articulate his feelings, desires and aspirations but also to build up his culture and enrich and refine his cultural heritage through effective communication with his fellow-men. This is why, perhaps, the human race has been referred to as 'homo-loquans' (man capable of speech), in addition to his being 'homo-sapiens' (man capable of wisdom).

In the context of the progress made by man ever since he acquired language in the remotest past, it is obviously impossible to conceive of wisdom sans language or vice versa.

1.2 Process of Language-Learning

"Learning of languages involves proper functioning of the memory of the learner, his ability to retain learning and to recall the appropriate items whenever needed. In order that the human brain can acquire and store bits of language in a large number and retrieve them at will, it needs to be helped with a systematic organisation of the stock of knowledge. In the case of teaching second language, this can be done by controlling the points of contrasts that it has, with the structures of the first language and by sequencing them in a graded way."³

"Since much of our time and energy is spent listening, reading and writing, it is not surprising that we become interested in language and in our own use of it, than that, the linguistic behaviour of our human beings provides clues not only to many other aspects of their own biological, social or individual nature but also to more abstract fields of inquiry such as philosophy and logic. This is why people engaged in a wide range of different subjects of study use language as part of the material of their speech."4

Language is a human activity. Different ideas may be produced through this vehicle. Some treat this as (1) wholly physical or as (1) largely mental, former being 'The Mechanist View' and the latter being 'The Mentalist View'.

William Francis Mackey gives a detailed description of the above two views in his book 'Language Teaching Analysis' (pp. 5 & 6).

Let us examine them according to him:

The Mechanist View

This view considers the mind of a human being as an extension of the body, the activity of which is very subtle and more difficult to observe.

All human activity, including language, is a chain of material cause-effect sequences, if one knew the entire history of a person's nervous system one would know what he would say in any given circumstances.

This chain of sequences may be studied from evidence supplied by physical experiments, mostly of the stimulus-response type such as those performed on animals.

But since so much of the stimulus and so many of the causes, the meanings expressed in speech happen to be in the mind and therefore unseen; they are understandably neglected in the mechanist theories in the favour of the physical manifestations of language in its spoken and written forms.

Language descriptions and language-teaching based on such theories tend therefore to present the language mainly as a system of forms rather than as a collection of meanings. One outstanding example of the theory based on this mechanist view of language is that of Bloomfield and his school.

The Mentalist View

In opposition to the mechanist view, the mentalist view maintains the traditional distinction between mental and physical. Acts of language are mainly mental acts and, although they may very well be correlated with the physical acts of speech, they are acts of different type. The difference is not only one of degree; it is essentially a difference of kind. Linguistic activity cannot therefore be classed as physical activity.
Language descriptions and language teaching methods based on a mentalist view are likely to give a great deal of importance to meanings, the mental part of language, and not exclusively to the physical form. The best known example of a language theory worked out from a mentalist point of view is that of Saussure and his school.

The validity of language theory depends on the type of knowledge it represents - knowledge obtained through the senses or knowledge acquired through scientific intuition.

A theory may require (1) that languages be described through observation and classification of facts (the inductive approach), or (2) through the intuition and construction of a model from which all possible facts may be deduced (the deductive approach).

1.3 Importance of English in World-wide Historical Perspective

English belongs to the largest and most important language family namely the Indo-European. The ten commonly recognised sub-families of Indo-European Family are: Albanian, Armenian, Baltoslavie, Baltic, Germanic, Hellenic, Hittite, Indo-Iranian, Italic and Tocharian. The Germanic sub-family has three groups namely: English-Frisian, Dutch, German-Scandinavian. The first includes English and Frisian. The latter is spoken by a relatively small population along the coast in the Netherlands and Germany.
English entered England as the language of invaders. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes who conquered the island were the dialects of a general Germanic tongue shared by all. There is, however, no written record of the said dialects. The period from Germanic invasions to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 A.D. witnessed the development of Old English which had many resemblances with the structure of German. Like German it had strong verbs that indicate changes in tense by internal vowel-change. During this period English was also influenced.

The period from 1100 to 1400 A.D. is known as the Middle-English period during which the old English declensions decreased and the English sentences gradually acquired the structure of word-order. The language was influenced extensively by French in respect of vocabulary. Many Chaucerian passages are an evidence of this. However, it was during this period that English had reached legal majority and it was no longer a subject-dialect.

From 1400 to 1650 A.D., the period known as the Early Modern English Period. During this period more and more verbs were shifted to the weak conjugation from those still retaining the internal vowel change. The auxiliaries viz 'do' and 'be' came in vogue and so the Middle English Question: "What say you" began to give place to: "What do you say?".
The Seventeenth Century saw the rise of classicism which brought in its wake the influence of Latin once again. The grammarians of this period set down fixed rules for the behaviour of pronouns and verbs. The legislators of grammar appealed to Latin for authority. For example, the Latin rule about nominative cases as predicates after a finite form of 'be' decreed "It is I" as correct and "It is me" as incorrect, despite a strong native tendency to say the latter. However the French revolution of 1789 A.D. and the expansion of British empire in the world, the English language began to be free from the hegemony of Latin-rules. The last two centuries and a half have contributed to the development of present-day internationally correct standard English.

Modern Standard English is not tied to any particular country. It is this language that is used by the educated people everywhere. Of course the 'Modern Standard' English is such a varied and vast language in respect of all its levels that it is very difficult to get a near complete description of any of its levels even to-day.

Barbara Strang has rightly pointed out: "The circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no discernible circumstances. It is in this vast circumference that we find the sprawling lexicon and the rich variety of the grammatical structures of Modern Standard English".  

With the increase in trade and commerce among various countries of the world, during the last two centuries, teaching of foreign languages came to assume greater importance. Of course it was mostly the 'rulers' language' that came to be taught to the natives. And the motives behind doing so ranged from political to pragmatic.

Lord Macaulay (1835) through his minutes stated: "We want a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions in morals and in intellect".

Thus in Asian and African countries foreign languages gradually became an integral part of the system of education, and the life of the elite who constituted the most articulated section of the community.

The present century, particularly after the second world war, has been characterized by greater international cooperation, explosion of knowledge and phenomenal advancement of science and technology. Hence the demand for foreign languages particularly English in India has increased beyond imagination. This subsequently reflected, one way or the other, in the school-curricula.

1.4 **Position of English Language in India during Post Independence Era**

While putting emphasis regarding the place of English in Secondary School Curriculum of India the first Commission on Education emphatically stated:
"English must continue to be studied. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge ... English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. Our students who are undergoing training at schools; which will admit them either to a university or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge. 6

Towards the realisation of the above goal, India has directed her educational endeavour and has deliberately provided for the teaching of English in her thousands of schools, understanding the fact that the real peaceful revolution can only come through education itself.

The national policy on education enunciated in 1968 also stated:

"Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English ... World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth but should also make her own significant contributions to it. For this purpose study of English deserves to be specially strengthened. 7

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Gujarat, about half of whose territory was under the British rule and the rest under about three hundred native rulers in 1947, had a variegated system of education, but it shared the common trait of having English as a compulsory subject from Std. V onwards.

The British system began with the so-called 'English-schools' in Bombay Presidency. Their primary object was to teach English in order to spread some knowledge of western science and literature. As a result of the report of the 'Indian Education Commission of 1882 the 'English Schools' came to be known as 'Secondary Schools'. They used to prepare the students from Matriculation examination conducted by universities of India.

English was the medium of instruction in those days for all the classes from IV to VII. In classes I to III of Secondary Schools English was compulsory as a subject devoting one third of the total time devoted to classroom instruction.

In the thirties of the present century the Bombay University, permitted the use of the regional language for answering question-papers in certain subjects at the Matriculation examination.
English was no longer a compulsory medium of instruction at the secondary stage. After independence the various states of India were merged with the erst-while British territory. In the Bombay Province English was retained as a second language only in classes IV to VII.

1.6 Shift in Emphasis

After 1950 'education' became state-subject according to our constitution. English continued to be taught as second language from classes VIII to XI (redesignated classes from IV to VII) under the new structure of eleven years schooling.

Even at the S.S.C.E. level English was made an optional subject. As a result it was felt by all concerned that four year's exposure to English was not enough to achieve language skills as compared to other states where the duration of teaching English was comparatively longer (The students of 'Bombay' could not fare well in competitive examinations for newer recruitment at central services only because of their less comprehending skill at books written in English).

There was hue and cry from corners of society to introduce English from Std. V (i.e. old Std. I). The integration committee for primary and secondary education recommended to introduce the subject of English at an early stage. The State Government introduced the subject at the same stage (i.e. Std. V) but as an optional subject.
When the bilingual state of Bombay was bifurcated in 1960, Gujarat Government continued (a) to pursue the four-year teaching scheme keeping the subject, as an optional one at S.S.C.E. level, (b) to give provision to teach the subject as an optional subject in Std. V to VII after school hours.

This policy could not give satisfaction to the public at large. The people, not satisfied with the new policy of Government of Gujarat still continued their movement. In 1967 the State Government of Gujarat announced that English would be allowed to be taught in Std. V to Std. VII as an optional subject within the school hours.

In the pursuance of the new policy government had to frame new syllabus as well as the text-books based on the prescribed syllabus.

Later Gujarat Government did take some steps to strengthen the teaching of English in Stds. VIII, IX and X. In the academic year 1960-61 the number of periods assigned to English was raised upto twelve periods per week (calling it intensive teaching of English).

The Government appointed a committee in 1960 to re-examine the syllabus of English, to redefine the objectives of teaching English and thereby to suggest a curricular programme to intensify the teaching of the subject.
According to the committee, "The main task of the schools was to provide adequate learning experiences to the pupils so as to enable them to build up, gradually in the course of four-years, a very broad-based and precise understanding of the common and essential usage and vocabulary of the English language". 8

The Committee took cognisance of the policy of the Government of India to make Hindi, the principal official language, and to give English the third place (an important place as a library language to be studied obligatorily at the lower secondary stage consisting of classes VIII, IX and X). Mother tongue of the pupil was indisputably given the first place among the three.

The Committee while dealing with the course in details found a wide gap between the main objectives of teaching English as laid down in the syllabus and the actual achievement of the pupils.

The Committee observed:

"Apart from the text most of the pupils hardly read even an extra story-book, a magazine or a newspaper. Very few pupils are confident of comprehending a simple unseen passage ....

Most of our pupils are unable to enjoy their reading of English lessons and they fail to cultivate the habits of and tastes for reading English ... quite frequently pupils fail to satisfy the examiners with their answers to questions on composition, textbook and grammar."

To remedy this problem, the committee restated the objectives of teaching English for the duration of four-year course explaining the importance of laying down objectives and delineating their nature. It stated:

"In order to serve as a beacon to our teachers, it is essential that the objectives should be formulated in full detail and with great precision .... The objectives are categorised under two headings, viz., for comprehension and for expression. Sound comprehension is a condition precedent to good expression. Our endeavour, therefore should be to develop sound comprehension first along with it, or incidental to it, an ability to expression".

Now to achieve this committee prescribed teaching points for each class, for both active use and passive assimilation of language.

9. Ibid. pp. 11-12.
It also prescribed a three-level design of text-book providing material for (1) intensive reading, (2) extensive reading and (3) language work, known as Section I, II and III respectively. There was also a provision for functional grammar in the text-book itself to do away with the separate grammar-book, which had sometimes no relation to the reading material of the textbook. It also suggested the adoption of an integrated multi-skill teaching programme.

As to the selection and sequencing of the structures that constitute the nucleus of the entire scheme, the committee stated:

"The outline of scheme of work presents the linguistic items in a logical order". Whereas in the detailed plan of work for Std. VIII, the committee has, while grading these items, attempted to keep the psychological approach and so we suggest that the text-book writers and teachers should not generally deviate from the order in which structures or teaching points have been arranged in the plan. As for the other standards the committee has not arranged the language items in a definite sequence because it is not felt necessary at this stage to prescribe any uniform order of work as in the case of beginners. The authors will be free to pick up from their lessons details from different groups according to their needs and plans.11

11. Ibid. p. 19.
Whatever the merits and demerits of the language material chosen be, the syllabus had been in force since June, 1962. The first two batches that studied English under this scheme have graduated from universities and joined the world of work.

New text-books written on the basis of the said syllabus were prepared year-wise and had been in use. Later, the Government of Gujarat revised the courses of study of various subjects and decided to implement them from June, 1973 without changing the syllabus of English.

The Gujarat Government established 'The Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks', which was a landmark in curriculum-planning and textbook preparation. With a view to preparing and publishing textbooks of quality and making them available to pupils at a reasonable price it drew up a phased programme for all subjects from Std. I to XI.

As a consequence in 1976 a textbook in English for Std. VIII was available.

As per the information given in the 'Introduction' of the textbook, the authors mentioned the following main points:

"This Reader has been prepared according to the requirements of the New Syllabus in English prescribed by the Government of Gujarat for Std. VIII."
The 45 teaching points included in the syllabus are divided into 40 units.

In the first three weeks of the first term, the teaching will be mainly oral. During this period the teacher is expected to build up his own scheme of oral work on the basis of the first eight units. Side by side, the teacher should start developing elementary reading and writing skills.

From unit nine onwards, each unit is divided into four parts: Oral work, Language Practice, Reading Material and Exercise-work, for the integrated teaching of English.¹² (N.B. It would be discussed in the subsequent chapter).

1.7 Importance of English Language

As stated earlier, English did not have its place as a medium of instruction. Yet during post-independence era, the controversial problem, regarding the place of English language, has captured our attention. This problem involved educationists, administrators, politicians, teachers, students and their guardians.

It is now clear that English cannot retain the same important status as it did during the British rule in India. After three and a half decade of post-independence period we find that the desires, needs and requirements of the people have changed.

¹² English Reader Std. VIII (Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks, Ahmedabad, 1976), Introduction.
Many educationists now feel that under no circumstances should we sacrifice the advantages that we gained by the study of English language. We are sure of the fact English will for a long time to come, continue to be a library-language in the field of higher education in general and in the field of technical education in specific. For this it is found essential that a sound foundation will have to be laid at high school level regarding the knowledge of English.

According to Prof. T.K.N. Menon and Dr. M.S. Patel:

"There can be no denying that English is a beautiful language. It is flexible vehicle of thoughts. Its literature is wide, varied as life itself, giving the student power to reason and judge with critical balance and equity. Knowledge of English has become essential today for establishing intellectual, cultural, economic, commercial and political relations. It is also necessary for higher, legal, technical and scientific education and research."13

Emphasizing the importance of English language, the Indian University Education Commission has said that English must continue to be studied. There should not be any sentimentalism against English as such. If we reject it in a spur of moment our standards of scholarship would fast

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deteriorate and our participation in the world-movement of thoughts would become negligible. It is the only powerful means of preventing our isolation from the world outside, so far as communication is concerned.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) devised out a three language formula in 1956. According to it three languages should be taught in Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi-speaking areas. This created some ambiguity.

Then the Chief-Ministers' Conference of 1961 simplified and approved of the three language formula (to be accepted at the middle and high school stages).

(A) The regional language or the mother tongue when the latter is different from the regional language.

(B) Hindi or any other Indian language in Hindi-speaking area.

(C) English or any modern European language. 14

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