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Chapter II
A BRIEF SURVEY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN KARNATAKA

2.0.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an account of the origin and growth of English education in India in general and in Karnataka in particular. The picture of growth of English education in the State has emerged from the information which has been gathered from various sources like books on the history of education in the country and in the State, official reports, statistical surveys, university calendars and handbooks, the State gazetteers, other documents in the State Department of Public Instruction of the State and from the critical study of the English syllabi, textbooks and question papers of various courses. The last section of this chapter is devoted for tracing the development of teaching of English at the secondary stage.

2.1.1 Origin and Growth of English Education in India

The origin of English on the Indian sub-continent is traced back to Dec. 31, 1600, when Queen Elizabeth granted a Charter to a few merchants of the city of London, giving them a monopoly of trade with India and the East. It is this act, which resulted in the formation of East India Company, a Company which later developed into political power and colonized India. Although East India Company was established as early as 1600, it undertook no serious educational activities in India for nearly two hundred years as it was mainly a trading concern in the beginning. It was only in 1813, with the passing of the Charter Act, that the Company accepted formal responsibility for education in India. Meantime, some of the Indians employed in offices and security forces started showing interest in learning some English for everyday purposes. By the end of the 18th century, schools where Indians could learn English were mushrooming. And in these schools a large number of learners studied English as a compulsory language and most of the school subjects were taught in English. English became so popular that until 1947, the year of Independence, the local people were demanding more English than the rulers who were willing to let them have. It is significant to note that the alien power never
forced its language on unwilling subjects. On the contrary, the Indians generally thought that not enough was being done to teach them English. Before the Company undertook the responsibility of educating the Indian masses officially, the missionaries from the Western countries had prepared the ground for the sowing of English education in India, of course, with the main thrust on propagating the gospel of Christ.

2.1.2 The New Charter Act of 1813 and the Medium of Instruction

It was in 1813 that a New Charter Act was passed authorizing the company to continue the educational activities and a little amount was set aside for this purpose. But there was no mention of the language medium which this regularized system of education was to use. Yet there was among the people an incessant demand for English teaching. This led to a problematic situation -- whether to educate the people through their own mother-tongue or through the language of their rulers. This controversy about the medium of instruction turned out to be the most violent one among the other controversies like the objects of the educational policy, agencies for organizing educational institutions, etc.

However, in 1817 some institutions were set up to impart both European and Asiatic languages and sciences, but with the place of pride given to English. Here the students seem to have gone into Western knowledge and the English language with a will. English was accepted as the normal vehicle of instruction. Thus the public demand for English education gathered momentum. The role of English in the conduct of public business soon became an important issue demanding Indians to be trained in and through English to take responsible positions in the administration. This certainly had an effect in attracting many towards the learning of English. As a result of learning English, many Indians assumed the responsibilities of high posts in government administration. There is no mention of the type of English intended to be taught by the British people. But the designers of the syllabus, administrators and teachers made use of English literature for teaching language. That really made a great impact on Indian masses and the educated Indians assimilated the very modes and diction of English literature.
2.1.3 Macaulay's Minute of 1835

The Minute of Macaulay dated 2nd February, 1835 is an important document of great historical importance. It put an end to the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy and paved the way for a new educational system. He strongly advocated English as the medium of instruction and insisted on English education both for immediate utilitarian purposes and also for long-range values. He tried to convince that English language was the best key to modern knowledge, the lingua franca for further development of trade in the East.

However, Macaulay was much criticised for the attitude of favouritism towards English at the cost of classical languages (Sanskrit and Arabic). His glib statement about the value of "oriental" literature compared with the literature of the West called down on his head the wrath of the ages. Nevertheless, "Macaulay's Minute" is the most important formative document on English in India.

2.1.4 A New Incentive for Pursuing English Education

In 1844, Lord Hardinge, the then Governor-General declared that for all government appointments preference would be given to people who knew English and even for the lowest posts to those who could read and write English. Consequently the incentive to learn the skills in English was greater than ever. This resulted in the establishment of several colleges by the Government in different parts of India. During this period, a moderately firm pattern of medium of instruction emerged -- primary schooling in the vernaculars and secondary schooling and college education in English. In the meantime, the neglect of vernacular studies was not tolerated and hence the British officers once again gave directions to uplift the vernacular languages.

2.1.5 Proposal for an Indian University by Dr. Mouat

Dr. F.T. Mouat, the then Secretary to the Council of Education, Government of India, proposed a plan and suggested that the government should start an Institute to be named
Presidency College, which could later expand itself into an Indian University. The courses he proposed made no provision for the study of Indian classical languages and once again the emphasis was on the study of English literature. The proposal was however accepted and made way for Charles Wood’s Educational Despatch of 1854.

2.1.6 Wood’s Despatch of 1854 and the Growth of University Education

“Wood’s Despatch” laid the foundation for a university depending heavily on the use of English, much of which survives today. The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came into existence in the year 1857. They insisted on a standard that was equivalent to the standard of universities in England. In the course of time, the university education spread widely in the provinces. An increasing number of students sought admission into the universities in subsequent years.

The following table shows the growth in the number of colleges from 1857 to 1882:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>No. of Colleges in 1857</th>
<th>No. of Colleges in 1882</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N.West Province</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Panjab</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Central Province</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: A Student’s History of Education in India[1800-1965], S.Nurullah and J.P.Naik, MacMillan and Co. Ltd.,1964 )

By the year 1902, the number of colleges in the British provinces reached 136. However, the academicians in India as well as the British officials concerned were worried about this
uncontrollable growth of university education with the inevitable consequences of the falling standards. In the meantime, people like J.S.Mill and others started questioning, “What use they put their English to after gaining mastery over the language?” Thus the whole system was proving to be defective and called for an urgent reform.

2.1.7 Lord Curzon’s Educational Reforms

When Lord Curzon came to India as the Viceroy, he studied the situation and decided to introduce qualitative reforms. He strongly held that the teaching of English was of primary importance but it should not be introduced before secondary stage. He also recommended in 1914 the compulsory study of English in the secondary phase, but directed that the course content should be more domestic than had hitherto been the practice.

Even with the complexities of the medium of instruction, English made a great impact on the Indian masses. The following statement of the publications in English in India and Indian languages during the 1920’s makes it clear that bilingualism was deeply rooted among the educated classes of India in the early decades of this century.

Table No. 2.2
Statement Showing the Number of Publications in Various Languages in 1928

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>No. of Publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarathi</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanarese</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidhi</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Languages</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other dialects*</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This statement does not include Bengali, Tamil, Telugu and other languages

It is to be noted that the period of 1930's and 40's was a period of transition. During this period the Indians started assessing everything from a national point of view. Nationalism crept into the education system also and so the need to reassess the place of English in Indian education was greatly felt. Moved by the influence of some leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, a general opinion was formed favouring the regional language as the medium of instruction at the school level. Regional languages became the medium of instruction in a majority of schools in the States.

But still English as a medium of instruction was not totally abandoned for several reasons; lack of adequate scientific vocabulary, lack of suitable textbooks and dearth of competent teachers in the regional languages, were the important ones. At the same time the young people seeking government jobs through competitive examinations desired to possess proficiency in English. This led to confused thinking about the role of English. Imposition of an immediate change -- from English to regional languages at all levels -- was quite impossible. And the people were not patient enough to wait for the process of gradual change-over. This characterised the English language teaching policy when India obtained Independence in 1947.

2.2.0 ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN KARNATAKA

When English education was introduced in this country in the early 19th century, Karnataka was not a homogeneous unit. The Kannada- speaking regions were scattered into five different parts and were under the control of four different political authorities.

The five different parts were:

i) Bombay Karnataka  
ii) Madras Karnataka  
iii) Hyderabad Karnataka  
iv) Old Mysore State, and  
v) Coorg 

The four different political authorities were:

i) the Marathas  
ii) the Muslims  
iii) the Native Princes, and  
iv) the British Rulers.
It was the State Reorganization Act of 1956, which brought together the Kannada-speaking people distributed in five neighbouring states and the new State of Mysore was formed. In 1973, the State was renamed as Karnataka (S.P.Gupta, 1994).1

A historical survey of English education in Karnataka has been presented in the proceeding sections. It clearly reveals that English education in Karnataka developed along the same lines as elsewhere in India and it had to pass through a number of phases before reaching the present stage.

2.2.1 Introduction of English Education in Karnataka and its Progress till 1854

The missionaries from the West were the first ones to lay foundation for English education in Karnataka. It was the Wesleyan Mission, which started spreading English education by establishing several schools in Old Mysore State during 1840-1854. The London Mission Society and the German Basel Mission opened several schools in the Bombay Karnataka area, around the same time. By 1833 there were a few schools in the Madras Karnataka region, too. Thus, the credit of doing pioneering work in introducing English education in several areas of old Mysore, Bombay Karnataka and Madras Karnataka goes to the Christian missionaries.

The first official attempts to educate the Indian masses on modern lines were made by Mount Stuart Elphinstone, who was the governor of Bombay from 1819-1827. During his regime attempts were made all over the province by several local bodies to open schools imparting English education. His famous Minute on Education dated 13th December, 1829 needs a special mention, in which he pleaded for the teaching of English at the school level and even having English as the medium for the teaching of popular branches of science. Accordingly, the first English school in the Bombay Karnataka region was the Benyon Smith School in Belguam. Basel Mission School in Dharwad is said to be the second in the Bombay Karnataka region (and the first in the Dharwad District) which made its humble beginning in 1838 and which became a full-fledged high school in 1863 (J.M.Jogula, 1987).2 It is interesting to note that though English was taught primarily, Rev.Dr. Kittel, Ziegler and other missionaries from Germany undertook an in-depth study of Kannada language and contributed significantly.

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to Kannada language and literature. Basel Mission High School also takes pride in great teachers like Rev. Channapa Uttangi, Prof. T.S. Venkannya, Kadapa and others, who did a lot for enriching Kannada literature (V.Huilgol, 1964). In both the pioneering schools English was taught primarily and other subjects were also taught in English. It is also said that during those years the school authorities, missionaries in particular, went from house to house and made special efforts to collect pupils for the schools as the Western type of education had not yet become popular.

In spite of all these efforts by different agencies, there was no systematic pattern of education as such in Karnataka till 1854. It was only after the Educational Despatch of 1854, that systematic efforts began to evolve in a definite pattern of education in the different regions of Karnataka.

2.2.2 Wood’s Despatch and English Education in Karnataka

As per the provisions of the Despatch of 1854, the Honorable Mr Devereux, Judicial Commissioner, drew up a scheme of education for Mysore and Coorg jointly. The proposed scheme received the sanction of the governor-general in council in 1857, and consequently there was an evident increase in the number of English schools. By the end of 1871-72, there were 11 District schools teaching up to the matriculation standard and 5 high schools teaching up to the B.A. level. The government established several “Hobli” (a key village that was next to a Taluka place) schools and a Normal School (a teacher-training institution) to train teachers to teach in hobli schools. The Maharaja School which was started in 1833, came to be called the Maharaja’s College and was affiliated to the Madras University. The Bangalore High School established in 1858 came to be called Central College from 1875 onwards and this was also affiliated to the Madras University. Due to the famine in 1877 and certain political changes, the growth of education was checked. However, between 1890-95 once again there was an evident progress in education. The Maharaja’s College and the Central College, both became first grade colleges. Two industrial schools were opened one in Hassan and another in Mysore. Encouragement was given to technical education. The Secondary School Leaving Certificate system came into existence in 1913. By passing the historic Bill to establish a university in Mysore in the Mysore Legislature Council in 1916, and by the approval and sanction by His
Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, the Mysore University came into existence. In this regard, the noble efforts of Sir M.V. Visweswarayya, the Diwan of Mysore cannot be ignored. This University was said to be the first university in the country founded outside the limits of British rule in India. With the establishment of this university, the two State Colleges which were affiliated to the Madras University for over 27 years, came to be affiliated to the Mysore University.

2.2.3 Progress of Higher Education in the Beginning of 20th Century till 1947

There was a persistent demand for college education in the Bombay Karnataka region during the early 20th century. Accordingly, the Government came forward to establish a college in Dharwad with a matching fund of Rs.2.00 lakh contributed by the public. Thus, Karnataka College made its humble beginning on 20th June, 1917 as an Intermediate College. Later it was upgraded and a few Honors Courses were introduced. And by 1949, there was a provision for post-graduate instruction in most of the Arts subjects and for doctoral studies in English and Sanskrit. By 1946-47, there were 5 colleges in the Bombay Karnataka region.

The Madras Karnataka region showed equal enthusiasm in favouring the institutions that imparted English education at the collegiate level. St. Aloysius College was started in 1880 in Mangalore and St. Agnes College in 1921 in Madras. In fact, in the Madras Presidency, Mangalore district had the highest percentage of literates in English, next only to the town of Madras. In 1901, there were only 5,346 literates in English; but in 1921 and 1931, the figures rose to 13,841 and 23,147 respectively (A.C.Devegowda, 1997). Comparatively the progress in Hyderabad Karnataka region was rather poor. It was in the year 1932, that the government of Hyderabad established a full-fledged college in Gulbarga.

Each region, wherein the colleges were affiliated to a particular university, had its own pattern of education. There was a great diversity in the courses offered, in the standards maintained, in the materials used, in the methods of teaching adopted and in the educational policies followed. However, this diversity continued to be a major feature of education in this part of the country even after Independence.
2.2.4 The Teaching of English in the Colleges of Karnataka upto 1947

Ever since the inception of collegiate education in Karnataka the English teaching programme at the college level followed two major trends — one in accordance with the English language teaching policy of the Bombay Province, and the other in accordance with the policy of the Old Mysore State. The following are some of the salient features of the teaching of English gathered from the English syllabi, textbooks and question papers of the Universities of Bombay and Mysore in the latter part of the 19th and the early part of the 20th century.

1) The Mysore University followed 2+3 pattern (a two-year Intermediate and a three-year Degree course)

2) An entrance examination was conducted for college entrants. They had two papers in English — i) Composition, and ii) Literature.

A careful study of the sample question papers reveals that not only was a thorough knowledge of the prescribed text expected, but also critical appreciation and interpretative skills were assessed through questions.

3) There was a common syllabus for B.A, B.Sc. and B.Com. classes
   i) for the I year, to quote the example of the syllabus for the year 1920, the English paper consisted of
      a) the History of Principles of Literature;
      b) Principles of Style and Elocution;
      c) Composition;
      d) three texts for detailed study;
         (Richard II, Gareth and Lynette Frederick the Great); and
      e) non-detailed study (Silas Marner)
   ii) for the second and third year degree students
      a) a number of texts representing various literary periods and trends were prescribed, and
      b) non-detailed study (A First Guide Towards the Study of War, The Living Past and Stories from World's Classics)

The degree course was quite ambitious in the sense that it demanded from students the ability to read extensively beyond the texts. The questions did test the ability to read "between
the lines” and “beyond the lines”. The same good standards were maintained even when the Mysore University reorganized its courses following the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission (1917).

Although the lecture method was the only method used widely at the college level, the classes were made lively and useful mainly owing to the personality and genius of some English teachers like Mr. Tait, Prof. Thakakhav and others.

However, by the 1930’s the condition had changed a lot, with the growing awareness of the importance of regional languages and the regional languages became the medium of instruction at school level. Naturally, the importance of English started going down. The utility of the English courses that were purely literary was being questioned. The teaching of English became a mechanical process. The pattern of the question papers with stereo-type questions was never changed, for many years. The increasing number of students opting for the mother-tongue as the medium at the high school level, lack of trained teachers, out-dated system of examination, unsuitable textbooks and unrealistic syllabi -- all these factors together were responsible for a rapid decline in the students’ standard of English at the college level in the 1940’s.

Thus, the teaching of English in India during British rule was not an even process, as it was continuously affected by the changing attitudes, needs and demands of the people. Though the immediate reaction of the people of Karnataka was that of enthusiasm, which was revealed through their establishing numerous new institutions imparting English education, the people of the State were not ready to sacrifice their mother-tongue in the educational system for the sake of English. In fact, the growth of national spirit, and keen political consciousness, were awakened in the people by English education and led them to give due place to their mother-tongue. There was no out right demand that English should not continue as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Some advocated an immediate changeover, while some wanted it to be a gradual process and cautioned against hastening. The teaching of English became a complex matter with no clear-cut policy as to what the future course of action should be. This was the position in general when India attained her Independence.

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When the British rulers left India, the position and the place of English was at stake. This was due to the lack of policy regarding the teaching of English in clear terms and due to over-enthusiasm on the part of the people about the regional languages. This uncertain position of English in the country in general and Karnataka in particular, resulted in reduction of English in the high school syllabi. The ultimate aim was, perhaps, to abolish English totally from the curriculum, in spite of the warning of some far-sighted educationists and national leaders that undue haste in such matters would harm the education system of the country.

However, some efforts were made to reinstate the position of English by the Government at the centre by appointing several Commissions, Committees and Study Groups during the Post-Independence era.

2.3.1 The Recommendations of the University Education Commission of 1949

In 1949, the Government of India appointed the University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan. The Commission strongly recommended the continuance of the study of English. It also advocated that the students of higher secondary as well as university stage should be made conversant with three languages viz., i) the Regional Language ii) the Federal Language (i.e., Hindi), and iii) English. The recommendations of the Commission shaped the education system of India to a large extent in the Post-Independence period.

It was around this time that statutory recognition to the demand of making Hindi as the official language of the union was first given by the Constitution (Part XVII; Article 343).

2.3.2 The Three-Language Formula and its Implementation

When Hindi was declared the official language, it created serious difficulties for schools
in non-Hindi areas. The Three-Language Formula seemed to be the best possible solution, because
a) it suited the requirements of Indian society characterized by linguistic multiplicity,

b) it satisfied the sentimental attachment of different ethnic groups to their mother-tongues, and

c) it guided the pedagogic problems.

So, the Indian Education Policy accepted that the students should study three languages at the school level — the national language -- Hindi, the associate official language -- English, and the regional official language -- which could be one of the 14 Indian languages. As this Policy created some problems, the Three-Language Formula was revised in 1956, which was approved by the Conference of Chief Ministers in 1961. According to this Revised Formula, at the middle school and high school stages the students were to study i) the regional language ii) Hindi or any other Indian language where Hindi was L₁, and c) English or any other modern European languages. The intention was to make students in Hindi-speaking areas choose a South Indian language. Nevertheless, in practice, what they chose was a related Indo-European language. So, the problem continued to be there.

Finally, the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended a graduated Three-Language Formula ---

“The pupils in the Hindi areas will study Hindi, English and modern language, which the vast majority of pupils in non-Hindi areas will learn the regional language, Hindi and English”

One obvious result was that English continued to be studied compulsorily as the second language in a majority of States, including Karnataka.

2.3.3 The Committees Appointed to Review Changing Roles of English in India

Then followed a series of Committees to review the position of English in the Indian educational system. In the year 1951-52, the Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L Mudaliar reiterated the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan
Commission — English should be given its due place in secondary education. The Committee under Dr. Kunzru in 1955 examined the problems connected with the medium of instruction. It also suggested that the aims of teaching English should be defined precisely and recommended that enough proficiency should be made compulsory for the entry in higher education and English should be the compulsory subject for all students at this level. These recommendations were reinforced by the Tarachand Committee of 1961. The English Review Committee headed by Prof. G.C. Banerjee examined the standards and methods of teaching and learning English language and literature at various levels of university education. It also stressed the need for English at the university level, as it was the only language, which could serve as "a window to the world knowledge".

As a result of the study and analysis of the situation by those various Commissions and Committees, it was realized that a multi-lingual country, such as ours, could not afford to do away with English for a long time to come.

2.3.4 Controversy about the Medium of Instruction at the University Level

English continued to be the medium of instruction at the university level though many political leaders and regionalists made a hue and cry to replace it by Hindi. In 1948, a Committee was appointed to consider the question of the medium of instruction at university level. It was gathered from the universities that teachers were not ready for the change as they had their education through English medium and they also held that Indian languages were yet to ripen with necessary scientific vocabulary and technical terminology. The question of the medium of instruction became a controversial issue as days passed by. Mr. Triguna Sen (the then Union Minister for Education) announced in the Parliament, the Government's decision to switch over to the regional languages as the media of education at all stages and in all subjects and this decision intensified the problem. The teachers, educationists and politicians criticized it vehemently. It was realized at this stage that there should be a planned programme for the changeover. During the 1960s the educationists seemed to have formed a balanced view on the teaching of English that "our educational goal should not be the banishment of English but making certain that Indian languages gain momentum by interaction with English". In general, the opinion of the majority of universities was in favour of continuing English as the medium of
instruction at the university level although on the political side there was a persistent urge for an immediate changeover to the regional language. This was very true of Karnataka, too.

2.3.5 The Education Commission of 1964-66

The Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Kothari was appointed to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects.

The major recommendations of the Commission regarding the medium of instruction and the teaching of English were:

i) regional language should be the media of instruction at the university level,

ii) but regionalization of the medium of instruction should not mean under-rating the importance of English, because English is an important "library" language and every student should have adequate proficiency in English at the college level,

iii) However, the teaching of English should be distinguished from the teaching of English literature as students would need English for different purposes, different courses in English should be devised to meet their respective needs. The Commission also suggested that special units of teaching English should be established in universities and colleges with the objective to give "a good working knowledge of English" to new entrants.

2.3.6 The Reports of the Two Study Groups on the Teaching of English

In 1964, the Government of India appointed a Study Group on the teaching of English at the school stage, under the chairmanship of Prof. V.K. Gokak. It suggested a number of reforms like -- training of teachers in the State Institutes in the modern methods of teaching of English as second language; producing good materials for teaching English; reforming the examination system; using mass communication media in teaching English; organizing Special Bridge-Intensive Courses; and establishing a Central Testing Service. The Group insisted on the functional study of the English language and stressed the importance of promoting the skill of "library-reading" in the students. It also suggested two types of courses at the degree level: lower level courses emphasizing comprehension and higher level courses emphasizing writing.
and spoken English.

The Second Study Group on the Teaching of English was appointed in 1969 to suggest "a practical programme of action for improving the teaching of English both at the school and the university stage." It also emphasized teachers' training, effective methods of teaching, planning and production of structurally and lexically graded syllabi, textbooks and other materials; and it also reiterated the role of English as a "source" language and as a "link" language. It recommended a diversification of courses in English to meet the special needs of students.

However, the concept of English as a "library" language was not interpreted properly. It was thought that all that the students required was only the ability to read and comprehend the necessary material in English. The skills of writing and speaking were neglected. English as a compulsory subject came to be taught mechanically. Consequently, in several universities in India the learning of English suffered greatly.

2.4.0 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY IN KARNATAKA SINCE 1947

Though there are no official documents or circulars specifying the English teaching policy in Karnataka, source materials like annual reports of the education departments, history of missionary activities, books on the history of education in the state and other archival records lead us to infer that due importance must have been given to English in the State, both at the secondary education and at the higher education stage in Karnataka. It appears that the State Government has been responding favourably to the reforms that have been suggested by the various Commissions and the Committees to the teaching of English. There have been sincere attempts to implement most of the recommendations of the Union Ministry of Education for the improvement of English courses from time to time. In the sixties, when the agitation to remove English entirely from the school and college curricula was gaining strong momentum elsewhere in the country, the question never arose in Karnataka although there was a strong urge to use Kannada for all official purposes in the State.

In 1956, when the States were reorganized on a linguistic basis, the long-cherished desire of the Kannada-speaking people scattered all over five different States of Mysore, Bombay,
Hyderabad, Madras and Coorg to come together under one State, was fulfilled. On the first of November 1956 the New Mysore State came into being and the same was named “Karnataka” on the first of November, 1973. It was only after the integration that efforts were made to bring uniformity and evolve a common pattern of education for the enlarged State of Karnataka.

2.4.1 The Structure of Educational System in Karnataka

As the framers of the Indian Constitution left education to stay in the State list, owing to the vast diversity of traditions and trends and varying systems of education, each State followed its own pattern of education system. The Kothari Commission examined this situation and found that in most of the States the pattern of education was either 10+1+3 or 11+1+3 or 12+1+3. So the Commission recommended a uniform pattern of 10+2+3 for all the States, which would help the Central Government to frame national policies of education. Accordingly, the State Advisory Board of Education of Karnataka resolved to adopt the 10+2+3 pattern form the year 1971-72.

2.4.2 Teaching of English at the Secondary Education Level in Karnataka

In the present set up English is being taught compulsorily in schools from class V to X. The main objective of teaching English at the secondary level is to enable the students to understand, read and write English within the range of their own experience. To be more specific, at the end of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Course the student should be able to

a) understand the passage read out to him from the prescribed materials or talk of the same linguistic level on a subject of general interest within his experience;
b) ask sensible questions and reply intelligibly to questions based on the above;
c) read silently and understand the main ideas in a passage of simple English within the linguistic range of the syllabus; and
d) express himself in writing and in speech with relevance and clarity on a subject of general interest within his experience or on a topic chosen from a subject within the curriculum (G.S. Mudambadithya).
The usual method followed at the turn of the 20th century was Grammar-translation Method. During this period formal grammar was mostly emphasised upon. Then followed the Direct Method. It was P.C. Wren who introduced this method in the Indian Schools. The Direct Method insisted on

"Oral work, suppression of mother-tongue, the acceptance of the sentence as the unit speech and inductive teaching of grammar."

This method did weaken the teaching of formal grammar to a large extent.

In the twenties and thirties vocabulary selection received a lot of attention all over the world. Micheal West brought to light the method of Bilingualism in 1926. However, the pioneering work done by Palmer and West in the fields of vocabulary selection and reading did not have much impact on the teaching of English in India. It was in the 1940’s that Structural Approach gained momentum, which embodied 1) structural grading 2) vocabulary control 3) oral and situational presentation, and 4) drill and practice. The structuralists, who based their linguistic insights from the Behaviourstic School of Psychology, believed that language was a network of structures. As a result, a structural syllabus contained nothing but a list of discrete structures to be taught at the beginning and difficult structures at a later stage. It is this pre-selection of language items and rigidity in grading them that caused all the problems because this acted against any attempt at communication in the classroom. It is obvious that communication is hardly possible when the structures are handed down to the communicators. In addition, they demanded too much from an average teacher. He had to keep a watch over his grammar for explaining of a situation in which he presented the language items. The ELT situation during the 1940’s had to encounter all such typical problems and finally had to give up this strenuous exercise.

Realizing the drawbacks of the structural approach, the ELT experts in India made several attempts to remove these pitfalls. In 1960, CIEFL, Hyderabad attempted to relax the rigidity in the selection of gradation of structures. The course material produced on the basis of this concept presented a reorganized structural syllabus. In the 1980’s two modified structural
syllabi came into existence one in Andhra Pradesh, the syllabus prepared by NCERT, and the other in West Bengal, the syllabus prepared by ELT Institute, Calcutta. These syllabi gave functional colour to the structural syllabi. However, the pre-selection of structures still remained, though attempts were made to relax rigidity in selection and gradation.

Prabhu’s Procedural Syllabus (1975) was an attempt to replace syllabus of structures with a syllabus of tasks. He gave a wide choice to the teachers to choose suitable tasks for his/her learners from the given inventory. This, according to him, was a better substitute to the list of structures because the tasks engage the learner’s mind and give room for the meaningful negotiation in the class-room. Further, the learner is motivated to take part in the negotiation and the process, deploys whatever language he has with him. Such a deployment, he opined, always resulted in gaining more and more language. With all these advantages, Procedural Syllabuses became more acceptable and were warmly welcomed by many regions including Karnataka. It is important to note that Karnataka never lagged behind in introducing the new methods and adapting new approaches as and when they came.

The Regional institute of English, Bangalore which was established in 1963, has been playing a vital role in bringing about many reforms at the secondary education level. This Institute is sponsored by the four Southern States of India — Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The British Council has placed at the disposal of this institute a Director of Studies, who is an expert in the methods of teaching English. The Institute offers -

1) four-month residential courses for high school teachers aiming at
   (a) giving the trainees an understanding of modern language teaching principles and practice and the ability to teach by modern methods, and
   (b) improvement of the trainees’ own English – spoken and written
2) workshops and seminars,
3) orientation courses of varying duration for establishments on request,
4) refresher courses for tutors of the English Language Teaching Centers in the four States, and
5) short summer courses for local teachers and for lecturers in junior colleges.
In addition to conducting training courses, the institute

1) advises State Governments on syllabi at the primary and secondary school levels and for training schools and training colleges;

2) prepares Teachers' Handbooks, Readers, and Workbooks for primary and secondary school levels;

3) advises on the organization and administration of mass re-training campaigns for teachers of English at primary and secondary levels;

4) conducts periodical orientations, seminars and workshops for subject inspectors, headmasters, school assistants and lecturers in the four States; and

5) gives demonstration lessons and talks on modern methods at all levels at the requests of local institutions.

Besides these functions, the Institute prepares sample test papers and undertakes evaluation of course materials and methodological procedures.

2.5.0 CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to survey the teaching of English in India in general and in Karnataka in particular in the first part of the chapter. In the course of discussion only important Commissions, Study-Groups, Committees are mentioned, which are responsible for formulating major trends of teaching of English. It is evident that English held an important position during the British rule. The importance of English has been lowered as the regional languages gained greater encouragement in the post-Independence period. However, the study clearly reveals the gradual movement from the teaching of formal English towards need-based English with more systematic and methodical ways. The remaining last part of the chapter is devoted for tracing of the development of teaching of English at the secondary stage in Karnataka from the beginning to the present time.

In the forth-coming chapter issues relating to the teaching of English at the plus-two stage and at the collegiate level will be dealt with.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


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