

USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN MARATHI MEDIUM SCHOOLS

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The Status of English In Maharashtra, Particularly In Marathwada: A General Survey

I am an inhabitant of Maharashtra State. Nanded, one of the cities in the state, is my native place. I have been living in this city for 33 years. Here English is mostly used as a second language at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. However, the use of English language varies from person to person and from place to place.

Geographically speaking, there are three types of area within the state. They are: (I) rural, (ii) urban, and (iii) cosmopolitan. In rural area, the language used for day-to-day conversation is the regional language Marathi. In urban area, both Marathi and Hindi are used for social intercourse. But in the cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur etc., majority of the educated people use English for day-to-day and intellectual communication.

The use of English is one of the most important problems in Marathwada. When the constitution was adopted in 1950, both English and Hindi had their claims to being recognised as an official language. But Hindi came to be unanimously adopted as an official language and English remained an associate official language for an indefinite period.

Approximately, 70% people, particularly, in rural area, read the regional language news papers, that is, Marathi while 30% people, particularly in urban area, are bilinguals and they prefer to read the news papers in both the languages: Marathi and English.

Most of the advertisements in regional language newspapers are in English. Now a days, they are given in Marathi also. The language used at the railway station, rationshops, post-office, and other public places is Marathi. However, instructions are usually written in English. The taxi-drivers and the auto-drivers prefer the use of Marathi and Hindi to that of English in their usual communication.

In the restaurants in rural area, people speak Marathi rather than English. In the hotels in urban area, generally speaking, all the three languages Marathi, Hindi and English are used. But in big cities, people frequently use English. Even the waiters receive orders in English without any difficulty. They are well-trained people equipped with their degrees and diplomas in catering and hotel management.

In the T.V. programmes, people are interested in Marathi and Hindi channels. The most popular channels are zee, sony, star plus, sahyadri, etc. In rural and even in some parts of urban area, people have difficulties in understanding programmes in English. However, the youngsters in the metropolitan cities like to see English movies and programmes. They are greatly interested in the programmes on B.B.C. channel.

In educational system of Maharashtra, English is used as a medium of instruction. In

Marathi medium schools and colleges, English is used as a second language. The students have English as just one subject. The medium of instruction is Marathi. Usually, so far as other subjects are concerned, they prefer to use Marathi as a medium for communication for academic and non-academic purposes. Most of the students are poor in English and hence are not in a position to follow the lecture in that language. A teacher has to explain the English text intermittently in Marathi. So, the method used here for teaching is translation-grammar method. These students avoid to actively participate in English debates, seminars, conferences, etc. Environment is largely responsible for all these limitations and drawbacks. However, the situation seems to change gradually and in the right direction. The government of Maharashtra has recently introduced English as a compulsory subject from the first standard itself. Various training-camps have been arranged and training is being imparted to the teachers and thus the students are being initially exposed to the spoken English.

But in English medium schools, students have their instruction in English. Marathi and Hindi are taught just as second languages. These students have adequate language competence in English. They always take a lot of interest in participating in debates and seminars conducted in English. The students' confidence is clearly noticeable in their performance both in written and spoken forms of English. The teaching method followed here is direct method.

The parents in the rural part prefer to send their children to Marathi medium schools. On the contrary, the parents in the urban areas always prefer sending their children to the English medium schools. So, the English medium schools are becoming more and more popular in towns and cities. People are now conscious of the fact that English is the language that offers them opportunities for bright prospects.

It is noticed that English language plays an important role as a library language. It is a key to the store-house of knowledge. Teachers should have the sufficient knowledge of English so that they can get the knowledge from English into Marathi. In offering the access to knowledge, the role of English has become more vital. A fund of reading material is available in English. People are now well aware of the critical situation. So, they started learning English for higher knowledge.

English has rightly been described as a window on the rapid progress in technological, agricultural, and educational fields. In the days of internet, one can keep a contact with the world at large by means of English. One cannot imagine what kind of world it will be in the absence of English and computer as well!

Now-a-days, Maharashtrians have realised that English can play an important role as a global language of international culture and communication. People's consciousness that east and west can share common thoughts and cultural heritage provides an optimistic view that the status of English in Maharashtra will be far better than can be imagined in the years to come.

The Method of Teaching English - Translation - Grammar Method

As mentioned above, majority of the schools and colleges in our state are Marathi medium ones. The method, used for teaching, is translation-grammar method. What follows here is a brief analysis of how this method is applied to the teaching of English. The unit of Teaching is a poem "The Eagle" by Tennyson at the higher secondary level.

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt, he falls.

The main objective of teaching English at the secondary and higher secondary level, is to train the students in such skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing and to enable them to understand and appreciate the delicacy of language.

The students of the XII standard are quite mature and they are familiar with the various types of figures of speech.

In order to create a suitable atmosphere for teaching and learning, I'll motivate the students by asking-them some questions.

i. Where is the first bird-sanctuary in Maharashtra?

Ans: The first bird-sanctuary in Maharashtra is at Karnala.

ii. Which birds are there usually in a sanctuary?

Ans: Usually, there are such birds as thrushes, peacocks, the racket-tailed drongoes, eagles, etc.

iii. What does a peacock symbolise?

Ans: A peacock symbolises beauty and pride.

iv. Which bird is considered the symbol of heroic efforts?

Ans: An eagle stands for heroic efforts.

After the proper motivation, I'll read the poem twice quite loudly with proper stress, rhythm, and intonation and explain the meaning of difficult words and phrases with their use illustrated by examples, e.g.,

- a. crag - high, step rock.
- b. crooked - not straight or level, curved.
- c. azure-world - bright blue world meaning the sky.
- d. wrinkled - having wrinkles or folds.
- e. thunderbolt - flash of lightening with a crash of thunder.

This explanation helps the students understand the meaning of the poem and arrive at the central idea. I'll read the poem line by line explaining the meaning first in English and then in Marathi. The students listen to it with rapt attention and try to understand the meaning. To evaluate whether the students have grasped the significance of the poem or not. I'll ask them questions and encourage them to give answers in English. The poem "The Eagle" comprises just six lines but it can be analysed in terms of a number of linguistic features. First, I'll explain them the figures of speech such as alliteration, inversion, personification, metaphor, simile by giving examples in English and in Marathi wherever possible.

a. Alliteration :

Repetition of the consonant sound when it occurs at the beginning of a stressed syllable. For example,

Money makes man mad. (Here,/m/sound is repeated.)

How high is honour

Holds his haughty head. (Here,/h/sound is repeated.)

m'k%dkyP;k lqxa/k "khry e`nqy ean okrk
 (Here,/l/sound is repeated.)
 fogkj dj ;s ijcx m/kGhr vouhoj vkrk
 (Here,/r/sound is repeated.)
 the two have been rhymed endings such as okrk and vkrk
 nsoh n;korh noMh"kh nklkph nq%[k nqnZ"kk nwj
 (/ d / sound is repeated here.)

b. Inversion :

Here, the order of the words is inverted. For example,
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance.
 - Wordsworth

The word-order SVO → OVS.
 The buds of next May
 I fold away.
 EgVya u~ rpyk eh]
 dsya u~ okVksG ek>a-

c. Metaphor

Metaphor implies complete identification of the objects in comparison. But the simile implies the partial identification.

Carbbed age and youth cannot live together.
 - Shakespeare

#id

>kadGquh tG xksM dkfGek iljh ykVkaoj
 lkk; Vkdquh tGkar clyk vlyk vkSnqacj-

igk ik[kjs pjksuh gksrh >kMkoj xksGk
 dqBs cqMkyk iyhdMhy rks lksU;kpk xksGk-

d. Simile

Direct comparison between two distinct objects in order to describe one of them.
 For example,

My love is like red, red rose.
 - Robert Burns

miek

lhrsps eq[k panzklkj[ks vkgs-

e. Personification

Treating non-human objects as human by attributing human qualities to them.
 For example,

Death, Thou shal't die!
 - Donne

psrukxq.kksDrh

e`R;q u Eg.ks gk cyk<;
 e`R;q u Eg.ks gk /kuk<;

e`R;q u Eg.ks gk vk<;
 loZ xq.ks

This illustration enables the students to locate the stylistic devices in the poem above. The students' responses, probably, would be as follows:

- i. /l / sound is repeated in the words such as 'lonely', 'lands'.
 /w/sound is repeated in the words such as 'watches', 'walls'.
 /k/sound is repeated in the words such as 'clasps', 'close'.
 /s/ sound is repeated in the words such as 'sun', 'stand'.
 The repetition of these sounds at the beginning of the words achieves the effect of what is known as alliteration and creates musicality,
- ii. The last words of the first three lines, that is, 'hands', 'lands', and 'stands' have the final cluster /-dz/.
 The last words of the next three lines, that is, 'crawls', 'walls', falls' have the final cluster /-lz/and
 the rhyme scheme of the poem goes thus:
 a - a - a - b - b - b.
- iii. Parallelism:
 See how the first three lines are paralleled by the next three.
- iv. The adjectival phrases underlined occur at the beginning of the line.
"Ringed with the azure world, he stands,"
"The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls:"
"And like a thunderbolt, he falls"
- v. The 'sea' is personified with human quality attributed to it in the line -
 "The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls."
- vi. In the line below, note the metaphorical use of language, which poeticizes it. "He watches from the mountain walls,"
 'Mountain' here is the noun-modifier of 'walls',
- vii. In the last line of the poem,
 "And like a thunderbolt, he falls.
 'the eagle' is compared with a 'thunderbolt.' Since the comparison indicates resemblance with the use of "like", the figure of speech is simile.
- viii. The use of the co-ordinating conjunction 'and' at the beginning of the last line maintains the continuity of action.
- ix. The epithets used in the poem are 'crooked', 'lonely', 'close', 'ringed', 'azure', 'wrinkled', etc.
- x. The present is conspicuous by its presence. Its dynamic aspect is brought out by such verbs of action as: 'clasps', 'stands', 'crawls', 'watches', and 'falls' .
- xi. The pictorial effect is vivid and, therefore, very impressive.

The Translation-Grammar Method:

(A) Merits:

- i. Majority of the schools and colleges are Marathi medium ones. So, the translation grammar method enjoys the widest popularity in Marathwada and Vidarbha.

- ii. The method is useful not only in the teaching of English but in the teaching of other classical languages also such as Sanskrit, Arabic, etc.
- iii. Through the translation process involving comparison of two language behaviours the SL and the TL the structure of English language can easily be acquired.
- iv. The judicious use of mother-tongue is advisable. It helps the students grasp and grapple with the meaning of abstract words properly.
- v. The method is psychologically sound as it is based on the principles of teaching. Proceed from the known to the unknown. Proceed from simple items to difficult items.
- vi. The use of mother-tongue helps in mastering foreign language vocabulary.
- vii. A strong memory bond is established as the student associates the foreign language vocabulary with that of his mother tongue.

(B) Limitations:

- i. The students are not the active participants in this method. Teacher goes on reading words after words, phrases after phrases, sentences after sentences translating them into mother tongue. The role of students is just that of passive listeners. Their doubts are not cleared. So, the language - learning process becomes dull and monotonous for them.
- ii. The structure of English language, if it is compared with that of the Marathi language, offers difficulty in word-to-word translation. For example the articles 'an', 'the' cannot be translated into Marathi.
- ii. Literal translation ruins the beauty of language. If proper attention is not given, there is always the risk of vernacularism. For example, we often hear sentences like "My head is eating circle" for "Mera sir cehakkar khane laga hai." This may happen by the way of fun but constant use of such constructions may result in habit-formation. There is the danger of mother-tongue interference.
- iv. This method fails to achieve the delicacy of language, local colours, and idiomatic expressions.
- v. A child learns any language by imitation. But this method hampers the process of learning by imitation.
- vi. One of the serious limitations of this method is that it does not give sufficient attention to the skill of speaking.
- vii. While introducing the language skills, the order followed is L-S-R-W, that is, listening - speaking - reading - writing. But this order gets disturbed for there is greater emphasis on listening and writing than on speaking and reading.
- vii. Words acquire greater prominence in the acquisition of language than phrases, clauses, and sentences.

It is observed that there are some serious limitations to the application of this method. But it seems, it is a suitable method for schools and colleges in a multi lingual situation like ours. Majority of English Teachers are ill-equipped ; the -class-rooms are over-crowded; the teachers and the taught are burdened with a heavy work-load of syllabus; there is hardly any scope for the audio-visual aids. A teacher from the multi-lingual situation area suffers from several handicaps of physical and mental.