

# **LANGUAGE IN INDIA**

**Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow**

**Volume 12 : 11 November 2012**

**ISSN 1930-2940**

**Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.**

**Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.**

**Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.**

**B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.**

**A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.**

**Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.**

**Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.**

**S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.**

**G. Baskaran, Ph.D.**

**L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.**

**Assistant Managing Editor: Swarna Thirumalai, M.A.**

## **The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

**Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.**

---

### **Aim of English Language Teaching and English Language Learning**

The ultimate aim of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. Development of communication skills is the most urgent requirement of the students today. Schools, which give emphasis to English speaking and writing, are considered better. In higher education it is still a prestigious language, all the good books are found in English. At the undergraduate level the disinterest of the student in classroom lectures is visible.

Communicative language learning can prepare the students for the future and they may find their language classes more interesting. Unfortunately, the curricula at the undergraduate level in our Universities the stress is more on reading and writing. With the changing times and the changing requirements, the task of teaching English in India is definitely going to be more challenging and rewarding.

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Out of the four basic communication skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking and listening, it is the latter two which are neglected the most in our classrooms. But the irony is that these are the two most frequently required and applied skills in this real and practical world. ‘Fast-food restaurants, coffee shops, large departmental stores and telemarketing firms as delivery boys and sales staff are hiring even plain graduates’ (Malani Gopal,30-42). It is not just in the retail market, these skills also enable services in BPOs, KPOs, and Call Centers. Unfortunately in our courses there is no stress given to improving these two skills.

### **The Ups and Downs of English Teaching in Madhya Pradesh**

Madhya Pradesh is in the Hindi-speaking belt. We find number of other languages being used here, yet, Hindi remains the main link language. Hindi is the official language of M.P. English, as known is the associate official language of India and the most preferred and dominant language of the country. Schools in which English is the medium of instruction are a ‘growth industry’. In Madhya Pradesh English has always been there, whether optional or compulsory; it has remained in the curriculum in school and in college. The Three Language Formula was enunciated in the National Policy Resolution of 1968 and reiterated in the National Policy on Education in 1986. Linguistic competence is directly related to the quality of education and it should be considered most important.

The then state government led by Mr. D. P. Mishra took the decision not to implement the national Three Language Formula and declared English as an optional language after 1966 in schools and colleges, and very few opted for the language as I was told by Mr. Hemant Sharma, ELTI, Bhopal. He further said- “children found it easy to pass their exams without English. The students had started passing their Higher Secondary School Examination without English. In 1972, it was given the place of second language starting from class VI in government schools, but the private schools had English from class I.”

In 1998-1999, the State Government felt the importance of the language at the national and international level and took the decision to introduce English language from class III. The introduction of English from class III facilitated the formation of new strategic methodology for ESL pedagogy and curriculum (Sharma, Personal Interview). The visit of the chairman of the Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

software giant Microsoft made the Madhya Pradesh government announce plans to modernize both the infrastructure and the methodology of English teaching in MP to better reflect the current socio-economic requirements. The government then took the decision of implementing English from class I in 2000.

In 1955 when the State came into being there were only two universities. Late Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, as an education minister in 1958, opened colleges in every district and made higher education reach even the remote areas of this backward State. The extensive use of English as a medium of instruction in the earlier days made the students competent enough to use English in everyday life, but did not make them good writers or even good readers.

The very first suicidal attack on language was made when our state said no to the Three Language Formula. In 1967 Mr.D. P. Mishra, the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, made English optional in schools and colleges; whatever English was left was wiped out and the result was devastating. The quality of education declined as good books in most of the subjects were in English. In the 1980s English was made compulsory, but different books were followed by different universities, for example, ‘*A Design for Reading*’ an Anthology of Prose or a book of *Short stories*. Some universities had an abridged form of some novel. A separate book of grammar was always there like W.S. Allen’s *Living English Structure*. In mid-eighties again when the importance of English grew with time, the dismal situation alarmed the government.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), provided grants to introduce a package of foundation courses in which English language formed the most important part. Quaiser Zoha Alam in his book ‘English Language Teaching in India: Problems and Issues’ talks about the courses before 1950 and their shift according to the demands of the users of English Language in the country. The emphasis accordingly shifted from subject content to language content. The syllabus was designed to improve the skills of reading, writing and speaking.

### **Changes in 1990’s**

The beginning of the nineties brought a change in the syllabus once again; the courses changed again and the three formula foundation courses merged and formed two papers of

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

English and Hindi. The third paper of General Awareness saw its way into the two languages. This book had a special section of speech skills; content of the general awareness paper merged into the language paper and made it more difficult and uninteresting for the students especially for those who come from a background of little English.

Thanks to the IT call center-BPO boom, an ‘anglophone’ tide has swept India; and the ‘Speak English’ centers are mushrooming all over in M.P. also. The students are not able to perform well in the campus interviews if they are not able to communicate in English. Multinationals are called by the placement officers of various institutions and they want candidates with good communication skills apart from their professional knowledge. Bhoj Open University introduced courses like ‘Diploma in Communicative English’, ‘Certificate course in communicative English’ and ‘Advanced Certificate in Communicative English’. Autonomous colleges all over the state have their own short courses and programmes on spoken or communicative or functional English. An institute to teach English at CRISP, Shyamla Hills for graduates who would like to go in for jobs to call centers was set up in 2000.

### **Clamour for English Grows**

Places like Indore, Gwalior, and Bhopal are coming up with multiplexes and jobs in retailing and sales. Our students need to develop increasingly sophisticated abilities to be able to make their future in national and international companies. ‘Educational Qualifications alone sometimes doesn’t guarantee a job. For example, call centers look for fluency in ‘spoken English’ ( Tadanki, India Today). The increasing demand for English made the British Council organize Business English Certificate training in Bhopal between 1996 and 2000. Tata Holset and Tata International in Dewas, the OTG group, Airtel in Indore, called the British Council people to have classes in English communication skills for their employees. M.P. Wind Farms, M.P. Nagar, even M.P. Warehousing Corporation, Procter and Gamble, and Mandideep are a few names who have organized such classes for their employees. It confirms the fact that these organizations also want to train their employees in this universal language.

Employment was much easier earlier and was limited to one’s own town or state. Now, with the increase in population there is a lot of competition in seeking jobs, and one has to

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

develop himself in a manner to fit into this competitive world anywhere, said Dr. Jayantilal Bhandari, the then director of Swami Vivekanand Career Guidance Scheme, while addressing students in a gathering of M.P. government school students.(HT, Indore Live,p.2)

### **What is Required by Students Today?**

Teaching English language has changed tremendously, and it is evident that people require language for different purposes; therefore, we as educators should try to establish optimal environmental and psychological climates that foster learning of this global language by providing the students with what is required most today. Students after graduation should have the ability to not only apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use the sentences to express and understand different functions.

### **Findings from a Survey**

I had made a survey and found interesting things which the students had to say about their needs, about teachers as facilitators of learning and employees of various organizations as former students using their acquired knowledge in real situations. I analyzed the survey data and arrived at certain conclusions based on the face value of the responses obtained from all the informants, i.e., the employees of business organizations. The survey yielded the workplace requirements of the language, target situation needs of the language, and the required qualifications of the teachers teaching in colleges as facilitators and the students who would go after their degrees for jobs. The aim was to assess the present situation and bridge the gap between the achievement and the need/skill required.

The employees of business organizations surveyed in the 'Malwa' region gave very clear answers. The employees who are professionally qualified say that all the language skills, i.e., writing, reading, listening and speaking are equally important in their work place. Some of them lack the required language skills, and expressed their desire to want to learn as soon as possible. Right from writing bio-data/CV to meetings, seminars, negotiations in business dealings, writing

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

reports, giving presentations, etc., all require adequate knowledge of language skills to be used in any business organization or industry.

### **Demand for Oral Skills**

It was found the most required skill in business as shown by many was oral skills, thereby showing the priority of oral communication, not only when holding a post, but even before getting the job, that is, during the interviews which are the means of selection. Written communication for business purposes brought 100% results; this is another important skill to be mastered. Importance of the new technologies in communication through fax or e-mail or the Internet is clearly seen in the survey. The employees feel the knowledge of English language skills which they received in schools and colleges did not help them much. Perhaps a lot of informants had Hindi as their medium of instruction in school and hence did not get the opportunity to learn English.

### **Important Sub-skills**

The two groups, the students and English teachers, perceive a number of sub skills important for the future. They perceived the English language as one thing very important for academic purposes, i.e., higher studies and for this they give importance to activities including reading text books, magazines, solving text based exercises, grammar exercises, speaking at seminars, etc. Thereafter for jobs and advancement in career, writing bio-data/CV, giving presentations and seminars, listening and speaking on the telephone were also considered important by both groups. Students failed to communicate effectively, and lacked confidence in writing, reading and listening. The most difficult for most of the students was oral communication, and they were weak in vocabulary and solving grammar exercises. Reading English newspapers, reading text in English, conversations, making sentences, proper pronunciation, translations from English and to English were all considered important for the students by both groups. They realized they should learn all the above by the end of their graduation, for their future careers.

### **Findings of Needs Analysis**

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The needs analysis revealed that we have to prepare our students to be able to communicate in English to be capable of international communication without facing textual or contextual ambiguities. Efficient language skills had been considered advantageous by all, i.e., the employees, the students - the future job seekers, the teachers of language. True communicative competence makes future job seekers more marketable.

The data helped to take into account the target situation needs of the language to be used by the employees, the present situation needs of the students and their preferences along with the views of the teachers running parallel to it. The results revealed that the requirements of the students and the needs of the employees of various business organizations and industries are almost the same. And the English courses undertaken at the university level lay the ground work for the later practical application of acquired language skills, thereby contextualizing how teaching and learning of English language should take place and increase the likelihood that the English courses are perceived as relevant and practical.

### **Opinions of Those Already in Jobs**

The survey gave an insight into the use of the language for the people already in jobs. There seems little doubt that the respondents investigated required communication skills, and realized that they would be at a disadvantage in the job opportunities or in their workplaces if they lack in these skills.

### **Opinions of Teachers and Students**

The issues which become important for the undergraduate English language courses emerging from the responses given by the teachers are that the students require experience and instruction in all the language skills to face the competitive world and hence those should be emphasized.

By the end of their school education students are quite familiar with at least this much of English, so that now, in college, they can continue with language courses integrating occupational and social skills in order to prepare themselves for work and life.

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh,  
India

## Conclusion

Thus, it can be like introducing students to the kind of English they will meet in real situations in their future professions, or need for their further education. In this way, teaching and learning can become an important step towards the development of learner autonomy which should help the students to transfer the knowledge ‘from study to work’.

Considering the extent of changes going on in the world today, it is not surprising that changes should also be brought in teaching; the needs of the students are becoming more pressing in the light of globalization, diminishing resources and the increasing trend towards competitiveness. We therefore need to become a better, more informed, more interested person, so that we come in touch with our students’ real needs and concerns. The challenge of improving communication in the workplace is worth taking up so as to help lay the groundwork for future professions or studies.

Language is easier to learn when it is real and natural, when it is whole, sensible and relevant. It is easier when it belongs to the learner and he/she has a purpose to use it. The analysis brought forth a learner and learning-centered approach, emphasis on developing language skills and strategies, better preparation for study or work, intensive use of modern language in the classrooms to develop language awareness, use of information technology, e-mail, etc.

From the results it was deduced that students after their graduation are ready for work, but are not so prepared to apply their knowledge of English in their workplace; evidently that is more specific and such a situation should be avoided as far as possible. As a consequence, we need to prepare our students to communicate; starting from the students’ previous knowledge and experience it would be easier to transmit the basic language skills. Students at all levels must be prepared to employ their language skills for purposes of immediate and lifelong value.

=====

## REFERENCES

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

12 : 11 November 2012

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.

The Global Changing Economy and English Language Teaching in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India



1. Alam, Quaiser Zoha. English Language Teaching in India: Problems and Issues. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.1991.
2. Bhandari, Jayantilal. “Career Guidance Camp”. Hindustan Times, Indore Live 3 Sept.2006,2.
3. Gopal, Malani. “Hot Jobs.” India Today 7 Mar. 2005:30-42.
4. Sharma, Hemant. *Personal Interview*. ELTI M.P. 2-3 June 2006.
5. Tadanki, Arun. “Out of College and still Jobless.” India Today 27 Feb. 2006:40

=====

Jyoti Taneja, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
SABV Government Arts and Commerce College  
Indore 452001  
Madhya Pradesh  
India  
[jyoti28\\_taneja@yahoo.co.in](mailto:jyoti28_taneja@yahoo.co.in)