

A STUDY OF THE PRESENT STATUS
AND PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH
AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL LEVEL IN
WEST GARO HILLS DISTRICT, MEGHALAYA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

BY

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Profile of West Garo Hills District

The year 1976 marks the division of West Garo Hills district with its headquarters at Tura and East Garo Hills district with its headquarters at Williamnagar. It lies between $25^{\circ}9'$ and $26^{\circ}1'$ north latitude and $89^{\circ}4'$ and $91^{\circ}2'$ east longitude. It is bounded on the east by the Khasi Hills; on the south by the Mymensingh district of Bangladesh, and on the west and north by a part of Mymensingh and Goalpara district of Assam. It covers an area of 8164 sq. km. accounting for about 36.28 per cent of the total area of Meghalaya and a population of 405,615 souls¹.

Garo Hills has two physical divisions, the hills and plains. The latter stands between the hills and the Brahmaputra valley. As regards the physical features, the district forms the western extremes of the Shillong plateau. The principle hills ranges are known as the Tura and the Arbella hills which run parallel to one another from east to west. The Tura range runs almost through the centre of the district due east and west, until it joins the Khasi mountain ranges. The greater height of the Tura range is about 4500 feet, which is reached by two peaks, one called Nokrek, is near Tura and another called Chikmang or Bhim Tura or Manrai. These ranges take the form of a series of

1. Kar, P.C. : "Glimpses of the Garos", Garo Hills Book Emporium, Tura, West Garo Hills, Meghalay, p. 26.

long even ridges with deep valleys between, occasionally diversified by peaks or towering masses of rocks².

On the central spur of the Tura range is situated the station of Tura. That spur is shaped something like a crescent, and is situated from 2000 to 2200 feet below the summit of Tura mountain i.e., Tura peak. At the town of Tura the range practically terminates, and towards the west breaks off into a series of low hills, gradually decreasing in height until they end entirely on the bank of the Brahmaputra³.

The people of Garo Hills district are called Garos. But they call themselves 'A Chik Mande' meaning hillman⁴. The Garos have a strong belief that they have come from Tibet and after wandering so much in West Bengal and Assam, they have at last reached and found for themselves what we now called 'Garo Hills'⁵. The Garos a matrilineal tribe of North-Eastern India, live predominantly in the districts of East and West Garo Hills of Meghalaya⁶.

After reaching this land they settled permanently here. The Garos, were great head hunters before the arrival of

2. Ibid. : pp. 26-27.

3. Ibid. : p. 27.

4. Majumdar, D.N. : "The Garos", Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati, Assam, p. 3.

5. Playfair, M.A. : "The Garos", United Publishers, Guwahati, p.7.

6. Kar, P.C. : op cit., p. 1.

Christianity and the Britishers. Brave men were honoured and respected in the Garo society. For many centuries they were looked upon as cruel and blood thirsty savages. But with the coming of Christianity and education, the Garos have turned from head hunters to peace loving people. At present, crime and immoral acts are not accepted in the society and there are lots of law and order laid before the people. A great change in all aspects of life is seen because of education and Christianity⁷.

The Garo Hills is the abode not only of the Garos but also the Koches, Rabhas, Hajongs, Banais and others. But the Garos got themselves settled in the Hills as a compact group⁸. The Garos have many divisions among them like the Ambengs, the Rugas, the Atongs, the Chisaks, the Matabenga, the Matchis, the A'was, the Duals, the Chiboks, the Garos and the Meganes. Each division have its own area and each group speak their own language. Also their culture differ slightly from one group to another. Besides, this great division in the community, the Garos have five major clans - Sangma, Marak, Momin, Shira and Areng. Again these clans have many other sub-clans as A. gitok, Sinthang, Gabil and so on⁹.

The staple food of the Garos is rice and besides these they eat millet, maize, tapioca, yams, and many fruits and roots.

7. Playfair, M.A. : "The Garos", op cit., p. 25.

8. Kar, P.C. : op cit., p. 3.

9. Playfair, M.A. : "The Garos" op cit., p. 28.

WEST GARO HILLS DISTRICT

GOALPARA DISTRICT

RESUBELPARA

DADENGIRI

SELSELLA

TURAK

BETASING

ZIKZAK

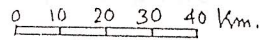
DALU

BANGLADESH

SOUTH GARO HILLS DISTRICT

EAST GARO HILLS DISTRICT

DHUBRI DISTRICT



Most of the
and chillies
curries which
every day
even till
social is
important play
The
their dress
musical
ever than
petuating
respective
regu
Sangha

Most of their food are boiled and they are fond of meat, dry fish and chillies. They also use 'katchi' or 'soda' for cooking their curries which is kind of potash. The Garo people use liquor in every day life and this is prevalent among the non-Christians even till today. Every sort of festivals whether religious or social is accompanied by drinks. Therefore, liquor has an important place in the society¹⁰.

The garos have a rich culture which is indicated by their dress, utensils, ornaments, household articles, weapons and musical instruments. They have so much likes for ornaments that both man and woman wear different types of ornaments on their ears, wrist, neck, and elbow. However, they give more importance to silver than to gold¹¹.

In the garo society, marriage establishes a perpetuating relation and is customary contract between the respective clans called Machong of the husband and the wife¹².

The traditional garo society has developed certain norms of behaviour in their intra-familial relations based on the matrilineal kin groups, and these are followed by implicit regularity. A garo always observes a code of conduct that abhors

10. Sangma, Milton : "History and Culture of the Garos" Books Today (Oriental Publishers), New Delhi, pp. 156-158.

11. Ibid. : pp. 160-161.

12. Kar, P.C. : "The Glimpses of the Garos", op cit., p. 5.

all acts that may injure the feelings of any person, and honours those that maintain or restore peace therein. "Unlawful acts are felt to be wrong not because they violate or infringe on a moral precept but because these hurt some particular person or damage an individual's reputation or feelings". In course of time, the garos got prepared a schedule of tariff for payment of compensation either to soothe those feelings or to compensate the offended person for any loss. The whole object has been to make the offending and the offended parties return to normal life without carrying any hatred against each other in future¹³.

Every garo regards himself constituent of a kin group, mahari or machong, which has an inherent obligation of looking after the interest and prestige of its own members. Their concept of right and wrong generally concerns the individuals and through them, their respective maharis are involved¹⁴.

Besides Christianity, some of the garos, especially in the interior villages still keep their animist religion. Like any other animists, the garos also consists of many believers in various spirits. They maintain strict discipline in regard to their worship and also they are very superstitious people. But now as mentioned earlier, education and christianity have influenced even their beliefs and has thus broadened the outlook

13. Kar, P.C. : ibid., p. 16.

14. Kar, P.C. : ibid., p. 17.

of the people. They now seem to be more aware, know the reality of life with the knowledge they receive through education. To all these, the garo people owe thanks and gratitude to the Missionaries who had opened their eyes to this world for the first time¹⁵.

The garos speak their own language called the "Garo language". But due to the presence of divisions among the garos into sub-tribes, the languages spoken by them are different from one another, from region to region. Still then the educated garos have maintained to keep the language into one single dialect which they use in literature. With the help of early Baptist Missionaries who had translated garo language and have reduced to writing in an English script. This modified form of language used in literature is understood by all and this made things easier for communication among the different sub-tribes¹⁶.

The garos have developed an institution to train up their young people as good citizens of the akking polity. It is called Nokpante which literally means the house of the bachelors, and is found in every village or akking. All the bachelors of the village have to sleep therein and pass their leisures in and around Nokpante. Under the leadership of the senior youngman of the village, young people were to learn the various arts and

15. Majumdar, D.N. : "The Garos", op cit, p. 18.

16. Playfair, M.A. : "The Garos", op cit., p. 25.

crafts in respect of cane, wood and bamboo works and thus to excel in the making of the nets, mats and baskets of various sizes and uses. Beating of drums, and gongs, playing of flutes, harps and reeds and dances for various festivals were also in use and to be practiced in and around the Nokpante¹⁷.

The entry of ladies to a Nokpante is, however, strictly regulated. Girls had no such common institution for their training, and were to grow up in the company of their parents and married elders¹⁸.

On the economic front, each household constitutes a separate economic unit that maintain its own subsistence from out of land and other resources of the akking. There are certain items of work which a household cannot execute with its limited labour force as in the case of construction of residential houses, field houses, planting and harvesting in a fleeting agricultural seasons. Certain customs were developed in respect of transaction between different households in the akking to meet such situations¹⁹.

With the few exceptions the garos are mostly agriculturists. Jhum cultivation is the chief method they use though few of them who settled down in the plains have their own

17. Kar P.C. : "The Glimpses of the Garod", *op cit.*, pp. 18-19.

18. Kar, P.C. : *ibid.*, p. 19.

19. Kar, P.C. : *ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

paddy fields. Economically the garos are still lagging behind and depend entirely on the agricultural products. Both men and women are engaged in cultivation and they spend most of the time in their fields except during the slack seasons²⁰.

(1) At any peak agricultural season, several households may pool their labour force and work in their respective fields by rotation under system called Kamkagrama in which the amounts of labour to be exchanged by household of varying sizes may be unequal but a rough accounting is maintained²¹.

The garos favorite way of passing their leisure time is fishing, hunting, games and dancing²².

subsistence level

But in this present century the occupational structure has shown a vast difference. The progress of education before long, created a salaried class of white collared job-holders. There are many gazetted officers and many others who are serving different offices. Also there are teachers and efficient technicians who are serving in different areas of the state. There are others who have proved to be efficient politician and still others who joined business and some tertiary jobs. The significant changes, however, occurred in the fold of occupation

20. Majumdar, D.N. : "The Garos", op cit., p. 10.

21. Kar, P.C. : "The Glimpses of the Garos", op cit., p. 20.

22. Sangma, Milton : "History and Culture of the Garos", op cit., p. 162.

and by monetarisation of the economy. The traditional barter system was gradually replaced by money. The total number of population of garo Hills district may be grouped under five classes :

- (i) Agriculturists
- (ii) Government and semi-government services
- (iii) Industrial occupations
- (iv) Businessmen
- (v) Other miscellaneous services.

(iii) The entire garo settlement of the Hills were thus composed of a cluster of akking politics, self sufficient at subsistence level, led by Nokmas under the centralizing force of a kin²³.

1.2 A Profile of Schools in West Garo Hills

Among all the districts of Meghalaya East Khasi Hills district possesses the largest number of high schools which constitutes 50 per cent of the high schools in the state²⁴. West Garo Hills is next only to East Khasi Hills in the number of schools. the district possesses schools scattered over the rural and urban areas and it has high and middle schools.

23. Kar P.C. : "The Glimpses of the Garos", op cit, p. 26.

24. Government of Meghalaya : Report of the Education Commission, Meghalaya, D.P.I., Meghalaya, Shillong, 1977, p. 16.

The growth of such a large number of schools was the contribution of the Christian Missionaries to the cause of Education and the Garo people.

At the secondary level, in the district vis-a-vis the state of Meghalaya, three types of courses are offered :

- (i) ICSE courses in the three English schools viz., Loreto Convent, St. Edmund's School and Pine Mount School is offered. These schools are found only in Shillong,
- (ii) HSLC course in the high schools under Meghalaya Board of School Education, is spread over the urban and rural areas of the district;
- (iii) CBSE course are offered by two schools in the district - the Central School and the Tura Public School.

As regards schools offering HSLC course, there were Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Khasi, Nepali, Mizo and English schools, but these schools have now been converted to English medium schools from Class IV onwards.

The district had 228 schools in all and 153 or 67.10 per cent were high schools including middle stage or Junior stage, and 78 or 34.21 were only middle schools.

In addition to the nine Govt. schools, there were 38 deficit schools; 171 Adhoc schools and 10 private schools. As observed by the Meghalaya Education Commission (1977)²⁵, middle

25. Ibid. : p. 12.

school sections attached to many of the adhoc high schools are under Government's deficit system and high school classes in these schools have been started without prior permission from the authority. In the absence of specific rules and norms, these schools go ahead first and then seek permission later. On the other hand, the schools which have already received permission or recognition for sometime past are still not in a position to attain improvement, some of the reasons of which are shortage of staff, poor salary, shabby building and equipments.

1.3 Position of English in India

English occupied a privileged position during the British period. It was the medium of instruction for many school subjects, so whether the method was good or bad he has to learn it. It was surely the first language not in the sense that it was taught and learnt as a mother tongue but in the sense that it was more important than the mother-tongue for all practical purposes. English was then the language of the government, law, business and trade.

The position has changed after independence and English has lost much of the privileged position it once held, although it is still to remain as an important second language. It is still used extensively in public life. So it is necessary that the Indian pupil should not only understand English, when it is spoken or written but also that he should himself be able to

speak and write it. So the need of the Indian people to learn English is still important. It is, of course quite obvious that the national system of education does not favour a foreign language, and this is clearly seen from the Constitution of India which in 1950 gave a period of fifteen years to continue English as the Official language of the Country. In the meantime the Central Govt. should take steps to promote Hindi as the medium of expression and also instruction.

But in 1953, a Conference of the Professors of English held at New Delhi gave the following resolutions²⁶ :

- (i) English should continue to occupy an important place in the curriculum of secondary schools;
- (ii) The objective of teaching English should be the attainment by the pupils of a good working knowledge of English at the end of the secondary stage.

After the attainment of Independence many people were in favour of total rejection of English but public opinion has changed considerably and it is an accepted thing that English should have a definite place in the Scheme of Indian education. In fact, the whole transformation of India from a medieval state into a modern progressive one, may be attributed to a great extent to English education. English has been assimilated in the

26. Jyrwa, M.B. : "A Study of Common Errors in English made by the Pupils of class VI in the Schools of Shillong Following the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education Curriculum", 1985, (Unpublished M.A. Dissertation), North-Eastern Hill University.

flesh and blood of most Indian even after Independence. That is English has become one of the most important subjects of the Indian school curriculum. This also necessitates the right method for teaching of the English language and the use of adequate text books of English.

It is said that pupils will be unable to express their thoughts in originality in any foreign language. Also the knowledge gained by them through a foreign language cannot be claimed to be exhaustive and thorough. consequently the process of education as a whole would be superficial and divorced from reality. We, however, cannot ignore the impact of English as English is the medium of instruction in India and we find that the masses are being educated in English. There are also classes as to the dominance or abolition of English language and subject. Some say that English should not dominate, others say that we should not entirely abolish English but rather English subject is essential to enhance our knowledge in science and political relations. Expressing his views regarding the teaching of English, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad an Education Minister of India said "so far as general studies are concerned, it was never my intention to suggest that there should be any falling in the standard of English. One hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our educational system and this cannot be changed without injury to the cause of education in India. In addition English has today become one of

the major languages of the world and Indians can neglect its study at the risk of loss to themselves. I am convinced that in the future as well the standards of teaching English should be maintained at as high a level as possible"²⁷.

1.4 Position of English in the Schools of West Garo Hills

The language medium schools viz. Assamese, Bengali and Hindi schools, were holding subsidiary position in the system of High Schools education of the district. English was taught as a second language in the Non-English medium schools and as a main language in the English medium schools. Number of such schools were relatively small in the district. English is the official language of the state of Meghalaya. The erstwhile language medium schools of the state Assamese, Bengali and Hindi schools have since been converted to English medium from class IV onwards. Vernacular languages viz. Garo, Khasi, Bengali, Assamese Hindi etc. are not used as medium of instruction at the Junior school stage. There is no opposition to the use of English as medium of instruction at the Junior school level in this part of the country.

English, therefore, occupies an important position in the life and education of the tribal people of West Garo Hills

27. Asad, A. : Quoted in Panchal, M. R., Teaching English in India (Old and New Approaches), Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p. 3.

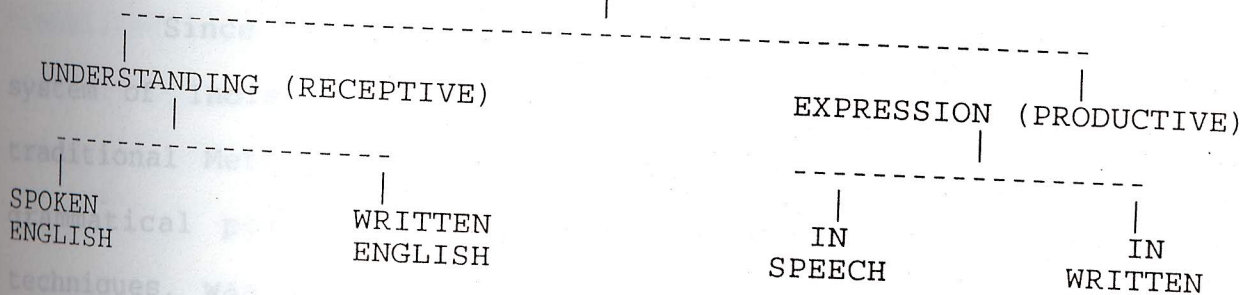
vis-a-vis Meghalaya. The Meghalaya Education Commission²⁸ has rightly pointed out that standard of teaching English in the Junior school stage should be improved.

1.5 Objectives of Teaching English in the Junior Stage

The emphasis given in the study of highly literary and difficult prose, poetry and drama in the past has now, after independence given place for the students in Indian schools to the acquisition of the skills of the language. Development of practical command of the English language which is the ultimate aim of teaching English in Indian schools, can be ensured by the English teachers through realisation of the four-fold specific objectives of teaching English as shown in figure 1.1 below²⁹ :

Figure 1.1

OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH



28. Government of Meghalaya : Report of the Education Commission, Meghalaya, D.P.I., Meghalaya, Shillong, 1977, p. 16.
29. Aberorombie, D. : Problems and Principles in Language Study, Longman Group Ltd., London, 1972, p. 17.
- Gaind, D. N. and Sharma, R.P. : Talks to Teachers of English in India, Ramprasad and Soms, Agra, 1963, p. 17.
- Sewak, N.S. and Khatri, R.P. : Teaching of English, Kitab Ghar, Jullunder, 1969, pp. 32-35.



The four-fold objectives have been recommended in the case of teaching English in the high schools and can be extended to the Junior school section as that stage forms the stepping stone into the high schools under the Meghalaya Board of school education. In other words, students in the Junior school stage, under Meghalaya Board of school Education, irrespective of the medium of instruction used in the schools (that is the primary stage where the medium of instruction is vernacular) have to acquire a practical command or working knowledge of English through the mastery of four basic skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing. The present revised English text books prescribed by the Meghalaya Board of school Education for the Junior school under it, are in keeping with the Latest approach to the teaching of English in Indian schools.

1.6 Methods Used for Teaching English in India

Since the introduction of English in the Educational system of India, it has been taught unscientifically by old traditional Methods based on the principles of Greek and Latin grammatical points. As the need to evolve new methods and techniques, was felt some basic principles were formulated and new techniques seemed to substitute the old ones. These traditional and new methods of teaching English are :- (i) The grammar-translation method (ii) The Direct Method (iii) Dr West's new method, (iv) substitution Method.

At present structural Approach is being adopted in India.

1.6.1 The Grammar-Translation Method

The translation method is the oldest method of teaching English in Indian schools. It began to be used as soon as English was introduced in this country, as this method was in vogue in England at that time for teaching of latin and greek³⁰. Since both grammar and translation equally predominate in it, this method is often called. Translation-grammar Method, The linguistic Material³¹ presented for study is graded on a grammatical plan and according to this method, meanings of English words and phrases are explained by means of word-for-word translation into mother-tongue. The meanings of words and phrases are then integrated into the meanings of a whole sentence. Supporters of this method³² believe that until a word is translated complete mastery over it is not possible and under this method letters are taught first, then words and a sentence comes last of all.

30. Wadhwa, S. S. and Shaida, K.K. : Latest Trends in English Teaching, Aggarwal Publishers, Chandigarh, 1973, p. 23.

31. Bhatia, K. Bhatia, B.D. : 1972, The Principles and Methods of Teaching, Doaba House, Delhi, p. 312.

32. Ibid.

1.6.1.1 Principles on Which Based

Translation method is based on the following principles³³ :

- (i) Translation interprets the English phrasology best.
- (ii) In the process of interpretation in the mother-tongue, the English phrasology is assimilated.
- (iii) The structure of English language can be best learnt by way of comparing and Contrasting it with that of the mother-tongue.

1.6.1.2 Advantages

The supporters claim the following advantages of the method³⁴:

- (i) Translation method enables the learner to acquire Vocabulary economically, quickly and effectively.
- (ii) It helps the teacher to test pupils Comprehension of English by asking them to tell in their mother-tongue what they have learnt.
- (iii) In translation, the pupil associates the English word with the vernacular word and consequently, a strong memory bond is established.
- (iv) By comparing with the grammar of the mother tongue the teacher can teach English grammar clearly and effectively.
- (v) The teacher here, proceeds from known to unknown in the sense that mother tongue being already known the pupils task is to know English equivalent.
- (vi) The method can be very popular with the teacher, because it is very easy for them and they are not required to put in much labour for teaching in this method.

33. Thompson, M.S.H.; Wyatt, H.G.; 1939 : The Teaching of English in India, Humphrey Hilford, Oxford University Press, London, p. 23.

34. Kohli, A.L., 1972 : The Techniques of Teaching English, Dhanpat Rai and Sons, Jullunder, p. 38.

1.6.1.3 Disadvantages

(1) Because of difference of climate and culture³⁵, exact translation of English words into Indian languages is not possible. All meanings are interpretation³⁶ of the culture of a community and symbols are instruments through which meanings are communicated. For example, to an average Indian, the word 'lunch' means usually a heavy meal after which a rest is required, while to an American, 'lunch' is a 'very light meal'. Moreover, meanings of English words are contextual and as such, the Hindi meaning of the word 'table' (mez) does not fit in such expression³⁷ as : table of contents, table of figures, multiplication table, time table, table the motion.

The difference between 'ice' and 'snow'³⁸ cannot be grasped by Indian children through translation. There are, thus, hundred of words and phrases in the English text books for which there are no appropriate equivalent in the Indian languages.

(2) Because of the difference between the structure of English and that of an Indian language, word for word translation is not possible. A few examples are given below³⁹ :

35. Champion, H., 1937 : Lectures on Teaching English in India, Humphrey Hilford, Oxford University Press, Madras, p.45

36. Gaiind, D.N., Sharma, R.P. : op cit., p. 43.

37. Kohli, A.L. : op cit., p. 49.

38. Mennon, T.K.N.; Patel, M.S., 1974: The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, Acharya Book Depot, Baroda, p. 36.

39. Champion, H. : op cit.

Kohli, A.L. : op cit.

- (i) 'a' and 'the' in 'a man' and 'the man' cannot be translated into mother-tongue;
- (ii) English tenses cannot be translated into the simple tenses of the Indian language, some of which have not got equivalents for the perfect and indefinite present;
- (iii) Most of the English propositions are different from those of the mother-tongue, e.g. 'on', 'in', 'the book lies on the table', 'he is on the committee', 'on duty', 'on the move', 'on condition that', 'on the authority of', 'on the contrary', 'on fire', 'on his arrival', 'go on', etc.;
- (iv) Prepositional phrases, such as, 'in the way', 'on the way', 'by the way' have no appropriate equivalents and words for word translation of such expression as 'it rained cats and dogs' give ludicrous renderings.

3) Even for the purpose of understanding the meaning of an English expression⁴⁰ translation is not the surest and quickest way, as it has been now found that direct observation of near objects, demonstrations of actions, gestures, illustrations, with pictures, etc. are easier and quicker means than translation.

4) Since it lays emphasis⁴¹ on reading and ignores speech practice as a necessary preliminary to the learning of a new language, this method is unnatural and it is psychologically wrong, speech before reading and writing is the natural order of language learning and because of the neglect of speech training the language would not appear, to the child, as a living one.

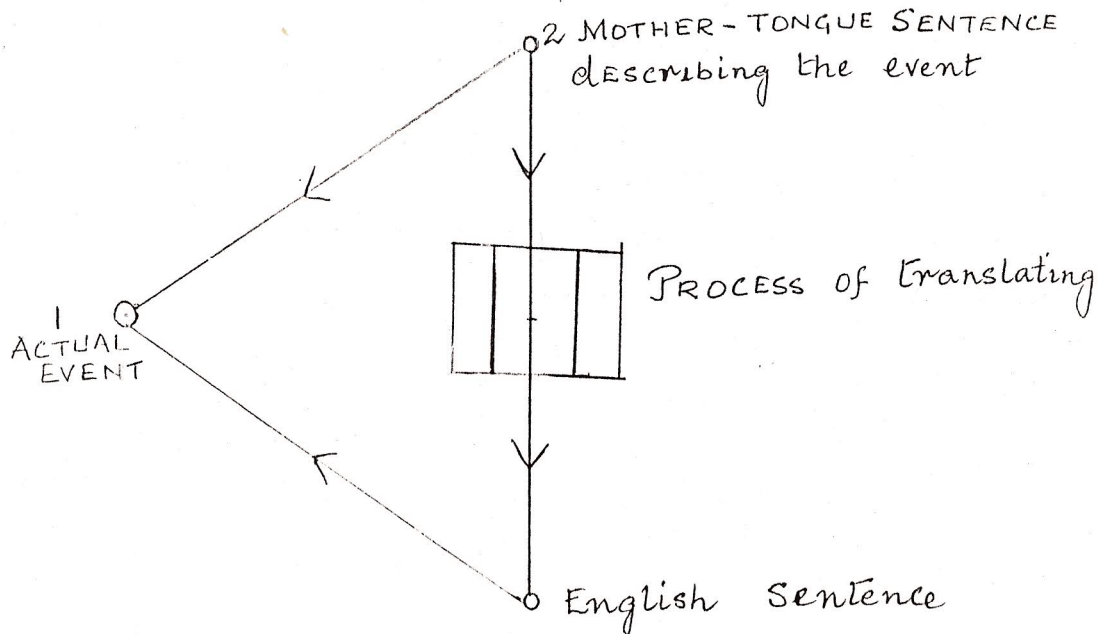
40. Swarup, S. (ed.), 1964 : The Teaching of English, P.E.P.S.U. Publication, Nabha, p. 70.

41. Ibid. : p. 71.

5) Lack of direct thought and expression in English due to intervention of mother-tongue retards the pupil from self-expression in English and he takes⁴² twice as long as^{is} usual to alter one sentence, as illustrated in Figure 1.2⁴³.

Fig. 1.2

Intervention of Mother-Tongue



42. Regional Institute of English, Chandigarh, 1973, : Teaching of English, Notes for Teachers in Training, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 10.

43. Ibid. (To speak this sentence in L, the speaker takes a length of time equal to the distance between 1 and 2. To translate the sentence, he must first take the time 1 to 2 and then the time of translating it 2 to 3. If he can relate the event directly to words and grammar in L2, the time taken will be equivalent to 1 to 3, the same as 1 to 2. Again the length of time taken to translate will vary according to the structural difference between the two sentences, and if that difference is great, the translation is more likely to come out wrong.

The habit of translating vernacular words and sentences into English often leads the pupils to substitute English words for vernacular⁴⁴ and if a pupils, for example, mentally translate Hindi sentences into English he will write : 'I am play', 'he is play', 'he was played',⁴⁵ and make such ludicrous expressions as 'my head is eating circles' for 'mera sir chakkar kha raha hai' or ungrammatical expressions as 'the teacher is angry for me', 'she went on the station', 'the headmaster is kind on me'.

6) It is not true that a language can be best learnt through its grammar⁴⁶ because though the grammatical scheme of a course of lessons may be interesting to an adult, it is definitely detrimental to the interest of young learners who pick up a language through imitation and through reason. In other words, grammar, which describes a language, which is something about the language, can have a place only after language.

1.6.1.4 Evaluation of the Method

From the review of the advantages and disadvantages of the method, it can now be concluded that the method has more disadvantages than advantages and that since it has been established by researchers on the psychology of language learning

44. Srivastava, B.D., 1966 : The Structural Approach to the Teaching of English, Ram Prasad and Sons, Agra, p. 44.

45. Ibid. (The reason for these mistakes is very obvious : they have tried to fit in English equivalents for them?, 'hai', and 'tha').

46. Thompson, M.S.N.; Wyatt, N.G. : op cit, p. 24.

that a language cannot be acquired through translation or memorisation of grammatical rules, it should be condemned as a method of teaching English as a second language. One does not know English until one breaks the habit of mentally translating every sentence into the vernacular or formulating ideas in the mother-tongue and then converting them into English⁴⁷. This method is most unsuitable for mastering the sound-system of the language, practicing speech to acquired confidence in speaking, which are the pre-requisites of language learning. For learning a language, one must directly plunge into the language, function within it just as one learns swimming by actually plunging into the water, ^{and} by practicing it.

Translation as an exercise can, however, be taken after the pupils have learnt the language, because of the fact that translation from one language to another is a separate intellectual exercise and ability.

1.6.2 The Direct Method

The direct method⁴⁸ was adopted in India in the early part of the 20th century in order to reform the method of teaching English. It came as a reaction against this translation method. Fluency in speech can be acquired only when one thinks in the language and thinking in a language is possible when words

47. Regional Institute of English, Chandigarh : op cit. p. 123.

48. Thompson, M.S.M., Wyatt, H.G. : op.cit., p. 32.

and objects are directly associated in the mind. The direct method teaches English directly by establishing immediate association between experience and expression, between English word and its meaning without the intervention of the mother tongue.

1.6.2.1 Dictionary Meaning

Webster's New International Dictionary describes the method as : "a method of teaching a foreign language, especially a modern language, through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself without use of the pupil's language, without translational and without the study of formal grammar.

At first words are taught by pointing to objects of pictures or by performing actions⁴⁹.

1.6.2.2 How Originated

The Direct Method was the outcome of the Natural Method, 'which had a considerable Vogue in America as long as 1866⁵⁰, and which aimed at teaching⁵¹ a foreign language naturally, that is, in the same manner in which mother tongue is acquired. The method was originated⁵² when Jespereen of Denmark, Lundell of Sweden and Western of Norway put their heads together to find out a suitable method of teaching foreign languages at

49. Goswami, P. : 1969, The Teaching of English, Lawyer's Book stall, Guwahati. p. 19.

50. Thompson, M.S.H.; Wyatt, H.G. : op. cit., p.32.

51. Mennon, T.K.N.; Patel, M.S.: op. cit., p. 38.

52. Goswami, P. : op. cit., p. 18.

the Philosophical Congress of Stockholm in 1886. These philologists realized that mere memorization of rules of grammar and learning of word meanings without speech practice could not give the student a practical command of the foreign language. Suggestions offered by them came to be known as 'reformed instructions' and were accepted by the Scandinavian countries. Norway, in 1897, produced a large number of teachers trained in 'reformed instructions' and its example was followed in other countries. This 'reformed instructions' came to be known in English, subsequently, as the Direct Method.

1.6.2.3 Features of the Method

H.E. Palmer has put forward the following features of the Direct Method⁵³ :

- (i) Translation is banished from the classroom including the use of the mother tongue as well as of the bilingual dictionary,
- (ii) Grammar is taught inductively,
- (iii) Oral teaching precedes any form of reading and writing,
- (iv) The use of disconnected sentences is replaced by the use of connected texts,
- (v) Pronunciation is to be taught, systematically on a more or less phonetic basis,
- (vi) The meanings of words and forms are taught by means of object lessons or by natural contexts,
- (vii) The vocabulary and structure of the language are inculcated to a large extent by questions asked by the teacher and answered by the pupils.

53. Mennon, T.K.N.; Patel. M.S. : op. Cit, p. 37.

1.6.2.3 Advantages of the Direct Method

- (i) The Direct Method tends to give fluency in speech⁵⁴ in as much as it lays stress on oral work,
- (ii) Direct association between the word and its meaning enable⁵⁵ the learner to grasp easily and spontaneously the sense of what he hears,
- (iii) Fluency of speech and expression tends to facilitate writing⁵⁶,
- (iv) Since it lays stress on speech, correct articulation, and pronunciation, it makes loud reading easy and natural⁵⁷,
- (v) The technique adopted in this method makes⁵⁸ pupils active and alert and the use of objects, illustrations, actions and demonstrations makes the lesson interesting and concrete.

Psychologically, this is a sound method⁵⁹, as it follows the main principles of education, e.g. the particular must precede the general, the concrete must come before the abstract and practice must precede theory.

1.6.2.4 Disadvantages of the Method

- (i) Some critics do not consider that the Direct Method is a complete method. For example, Kittson⁶⁰ thinks that it does not embrace all aspects of language teaching; Palmer defines it as a 'vague term'⁶¹, West renames it 'Direct

54. Wadhwa, S.S.; Shaida. A.K. : op. cit., p. 38

55. Bhatia, K.; Bhatia, B.D. : op. cit., p.316

56. Wadhwa, S.S. Shaida, A.K. : op. cit.

57. Ibid.

58. Bhatia, K.; Bhatia, B.D. : op. cit.

59. Champion, H. : op. cit., pp. 54-55.

60. Thompson, M.S.H.; Wyatt. H.G. : op-cit., p. 36.

61. Palmer H. E., 1968 : The Scientific Study of Languages, Language and Language Learning, Oxford University Press, London, p. 225.

Principle'⁶²; and O Gardy⁶³ thinks that it does not give adequate emphasis on reading and writing,

- (ii) It is held⁶⁴ that there are many words which cannot be directly explained without wasting time and creating confusion and sometimes the words explaining or defining the meaning of a word may appear as more difficult than the word explained or defined; e.g. the word 'mist' is defined as the 'condensed' drops of vapour hanging in the air. It is also difficult to explain directly the differences in meanings between words, such as, 'tremble and shiver', 'beautiful and pretty', 'fetch and bring', etc.
- (iii) This method is based on the principle⁶⁵ that the aural-oral appeal is stronger than the visual in fixing foreign phraseology; but that all children are not linguistically minded is ignored by this method. Moreover, because of large classes, this method cannot be conducted successfully in Indian schools.
- (iv) For the success of this method⁶⁶ suitable readers in which reading materials and grammar are closely co-related, are

62. Thompson, M.S.H : Wyatt, H.G. : op. cit.

63. Ibid.

64. Bhatia, J.; Bhatia, B.D : op. cit., pp. 316-317.

65. Thompson, M.S.H,; Wyatt, H.G : op. cit., pp. 37-38

66. Sachdeva, M.S., 1974 : A New Approach to Teaching of English in India, Prakash Brothers, Ludhiana, p. 38.

necessary; but there is a dearth of such readers and a paucity of teachers competent to teach English by this method.

- (v) The extreme followers of the Direct Method overlook;⁵⁷ the fact that it is difficult on the part of Indian Children, who have a very strong hold on mother tongue on them, to establish direct association between a word and its meaning.

1.6.2.5 Evaluation of the Method

The objections raised against the method are mostly frivolous and silly⁶⁸ and a resourceful and imaginative teacher, who instead of becoming a mechanical follower of the method would handle it successfully by way of modifying his technique here and there. It is, however, true⁶⁹ that mother-tongue words do come, automatically to the minds of the Indian children; but, then, if the teacher tries to keep the mother-tongue in the back ground as far as possible, the learning of English would become easy.

The method did not work well in India because of the fact that a vast majority of the English teachers of the country were not trained in the method which calls for fluency of speech

67. Swarup, S. (ed) : ibid.

68. Itty, P. I. : 1947, Notes on the Teaching of English, M.S.P.B.U.T.I., Travancore, p. 61.

69. Ibid p. 62.

with correct pronunciation for them. On the other hand, as P. Gurrey⁷⁰ points out, the method has been handled successfully by the well trained teachers of the West African schools.

In fine, as Gaind and Sharma⁷¹, assert, the Direct Method would go a long way to give the children a practical command of English, if the language material are properly selected and graded, if priorities in objectives of teaching is fixed and if teachers are trained in phonetics.

1.6.3 Dr. West's New Method

Michael West⁷², formerly Principal of the Teacher's Training College at Dacca, studied the problem of teaching English in India from the point of view of the bilingual needs of the Indian children. The findings of his study revealed that an Indian Child requires a passive knowledge of English and in his booklet entitled 'Learning to Read a Foreign Language'⁷³, he observed that a bilingual child does not so much need to speak his second language as to read it. According to him, reading ability can be acquired without preliminary work in speech and writing. He suggested that until about twelfth year, an Indian

70. Gurrey, P., 1961 : Teaching as a Foreign Language, Languages, Green & Co. Ltd., London, p. 26.

71. Gaind, D.N.; sharma, R.P. : op. citt., p. 48.

72. Swarup, S. (ed.) : op. cit.

73. Widdowson, H.G : 1972, English Studies Series/Language Teaching Texts, onford university press, Madras, p. 141.

child should be engaged in reading English only for the following reasons⁷⁴ :

- (i) Learning to read a foreign language is easy and as such, the child can begin it early,
- (ii) Teaching to read a foreign language is easy and as such the lower grade teacher can undertake it,
- (iii) A reading lesson is not affected by the size of a class, for all read simultaneously.

1.6.3.1 Contrast with the Direct Method

While the Direct Method lays stress on speech, the new Method⁷⁵ seeks to lessen the excessive emphasis on speech by stressing reading. The new method is based on the principle of priority of reading, separate provision for readers with controlled vocabulary and a judicious use of the mother tongue.

1.6.3.2 Silent Reading

West gives⁷⁶ first priority to reading ability. Next comes writing, and last position is given to speaking and understanding. According to him, purposeful silent reading and not oral reading, should be the objective of Indian children learning English.

74. Mennon, T.K.N.; Patel, M.S. : op cit., pp. 41-42.

75. Ibid. : p. 42.

76. Ibid.

1.6.3.3 Special Readers

West brought out a series of Readers⁷⁷ containing interesting reading materials with controlled vocabulary and in his view the special readers should

- (i) give ease and pleasure,
- (ii) suit the age and interest of the pupils,
- (iii) contain plenty of illustrations, and
- (iv) include words of the highest frequency

1.6.3.4 Advantages

It is held that West's stress on reading is justified on the following grounds⁷⁸ :

- (i) Indian students have little opportunities for speaking in English. They need information from books,
- (ii) Since reading is easier and more important than speaking or writing, reading has a high surrender value to a pupil who leaves school before completing the stage,
- (ii) Reading is free from phonetic difficulties,
- (iii) It serves as a basis for active work in writing and speaking,
- (v) Reading ability can be improved without much help from the teacher.

1.6.3.5 Disadvantages

The method suffers from the following disadvantages⁷⁹ :

77. Ibid.

78. Swarup, S. (ed.) : op cit., p. 81.

Bhatia, K. Bhatia, B.D. : op cit., p. 318.

79. Swarup, S. (ed.) : ibid., p. 83.

Gaind, D.N.; Sharma, R.P. : op cit., p. 51.

- (i) The approach through teaching students reading first, and then speaking and writing is pedagogically unsound,
- (ii) The psychology of learning a language has proved that speech is basic to language learning. Good reading ability is the result of good speaking ability,
- (iii) Pronunciation cannot be learnt by reading,
- (iv) West's contention that the ability to speak English is more difficult than other linguistic abilities seems to be wrong. In fact, speech is easier and quicker to learn than reading or writing,
- (v) Reading alone may not have much attention for adults.

1.6.3.6 Evaluation of the Method

This is not a complete method. It emphasizes reading rather than speech and thereby it ignores the most important psychological principle that one learns a language by first speaking it.

1.6.4 The Substitution Method

The substitution Method⁸⁰ was introduced for supplementing the Direct Method and removing its difficulties and according to Rynburn⁸¹, it can be used in places where the Direct Method fails. It was originated and developed⁸² by H.E Palmer, but only in recent years it has come to be recognised as an important tool for teaching English as a second language.

80. Swarup, S. (ed.) : *ibid.*, p. 24.

81. Ryburn, W.N : 1961, *The Teaching of English*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, p. 26.

82. Trench, P.G. : 1970, *English in Tables*, English Language Book Society and Oxford University Press, London, p. 1.

1.6.4.1 What is Substitution

According to Palmer⁸³, substitution is a process by which any model sentence can be multiplied indefinitely by substitution for any of its words or word groups, others of the same grammatical family and within certain scientific limits. The teacher, for teaching a particular construction, will first construct a model sentence embodying that construction and then draw up a substitution table round it on the same pattern. Thus, if the teacher wants to teach the construction 'is made of', his model sentence may be 'The pot is made of clay' and he may build a substitution table as follows⁸⁴ :

| | | |
|-----------|------------|--------|
| The ring | is made of | gold. |
| The table | is made of | wood. |
| The pant | is made of | cloth. |

1.6.4.3 Uses of Substitution Tables

According to Palmer, substitution tables can be used for the following purposes⁸⁵ :

- (i) To present the words and word groups of high frequency to form the greatest number of useful sentences,
- (ii) To provide ear-training exercises,
- (iii) To give context for words,
- (iv) To serve as pronunciation exercises,
- (v) To offer a variety of model sentences to be memorized,

83. Swarup, S. (ed.) : op cit.

84. Ibid : p. 85.

85. Swarup, S. (ed.) : ibid., p. 88.

- (vi) To enable the teacher to guard against literal translation, artificial separation of words, non-recognition of word-groups, and over reliance on visual memory,
- (vii) To form the basis of series of progressive exercises in grammar,
- (viii) To serve as vocabulary and phrase-books to be used with a key in the mother tongue.

1.6.4.4 Advantages

The advantages of the method are as follows⁸⁶ :

- (i) It ensures the formation of correct speech habits,
- (ii) Since the sentence is the basis of this method, pupils learn to think in sentence rather than in words,
- (iii) Pupil's interest can be aroused easily and they can make rapid progress, 'substitution tables lend themselves to various class competitions and class games-all played against a time limit⁸⁷.

86. Ryburn, W.M. : op cit., pp. 27-28.

Trench, F.G. : 1970. pp. 15-16

87. Trench, F.G. : ibid.

- a) The class is divided into as many terms as there are columns in the table. On a five seconds time limit, each team has to produce an item, for column it represents, to agree with items already given.
- b) Two sides compete
 - Team A : as a question on the last column of the table.
 - Team B : answer the questions, all within a time limit, thus :
 - Team A : what will happen to this room before mid night ?
 - Team B : This room will have been cleared before midnight.
- c) A 'Poetry' game

Students repeat sentences from the table. If any student produce a sentence which has already been given by somebody else, he 'goes into the bag' and cannot come out until he puts up his hand a volunteers a new sentence of his own.
- d) Revision of old tables

The teacher from memory a sentence from a table studied a few days, or a few weeks, previously. After a minute or so for resolution, other examples are called for. Any learner who fails goes 'into the bag'.

1.6.4.5 Limitations

Swarup points out the following limitations of the method⁸⁸ :

- (i) Only too many isolated sentences can be learnt,
- (ii) Sequence is absent,
- (iii) Systematic grammar-teaching is not possible.

1.6.4.6 Evaluation of the Method

Substitution method, though not a complete method, can serve as a very useful technique of teaching English and it can be profitably adopted in combination with any method. It is now commonly held that substitution tables play⁸⁹ a very important role in English teaching programme during the first three years and that though they may not be very useful during the first year later on, during the second and third years, they have a very useful place in the material selected for teaching.

1.7 Necessity of a New Approach

Each of the methods so far discussed has its own merits and demerits and none of them it has been observed is a complete method. The translation method⁹⁰, which was first adopted keeping in view the ideas that a language can be learnt by working through its grammar and by doing translation exercises, failed to

88. Swarup, S. (ed.) : op cit., p. 89.

89. Gaiind, D.N.; Sharma R.P.: op cit., p. 80.

90. Hill, L.A. : 1969, Selected Articles on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, Language and Language Learning, Oxford University Press, London, p. 85.

give to the pupils the ability to use English in their real life. Next, the Direct Method⁹¹, which banned the use of translation and stressed practice instead of theory was adopted; but this method also did not work well. The next step⁹² taken was to select and grade vocabulary. Researchers were made to discover the frequency of words and text-books were written with graded vocabulary. This, however, was *not* found to work as well as had been hoped; because even though the pupils knew all the words in a sentence; they could not understand what the sentence meant. The difficulty is caused not by the actual words but by the way they are combined in a sentence.

These experiences that have been gathered⁹³ over many years in Africa, India, Burma, Malaya, Japan and China have clearly shown that a new approach is both possible and necessary.

1.7.1 The Structural Approach

The new approach⁹⁴ other wise known as the structural approach consists of selecting and grading the structures of the language rather than the words. Of course, words are also selected and graded, but the main emphasis is put on enabling the pupils to acquire command of the structures. If, for instance the

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*

93. Menon, T.K.N.; Patel, M.S.: *op cit.*, p. 46.

94. Hill, L.A.: *op cit.*, p. 86.

pupils know the pattern⁹⁵. Ifhad beening.....would have (done); they can fit words into them easily.

1.7.2 An Approach not a Method

Structural approach is an approach, not a method. An approach tells us what to teach, while a method tells us how to teach⁹⁶. Once the structures⁹⁷, which constitute the frame work of the language, are selected and graded, any method can be used for teaching them.

1.7.3 Origin of the Structural Approach

The structural approach is the outcome⁹⁸ of the extensive researches carried out at the University of London, Institute of Education by the British Council language experts and at the Universities in U.S.A., such as Michigan, Cornell, and Georgetown. The researches in the U.K. stemmed from the works of Faucett, Palmer, West and others and that in the U.S.A. from the investigations of linguists into the true nature of language.

95. Ibid.

96. Kohli, A.L.: op cit., p. 65.

97. Hill, L.A. : op. cit.

98. Mennon, T.K.N; Patel, M.S: op. cit., pp. 46-47.

1.7.4 Two Forms of the Approach

The structural approach has taken two different forms on the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. These two forms are different in origin, usefulness and essentials⁹⁹.

The first movement known as vocabulary approach, grew from inside the classroom and was referred by eminent teachers of English like Michael West, Harold Palmer, L. Faucett and A.S. Hary. Reforms began in this field during and after the first world war when increased number of foreigners began to study English. Some problems were very common in all the countries. Research on sentence pattern began in Japan where in 1923 the Institute for Research in English Teaching was organised and H.E Palmer was appointed Director of the Institute and Editor of its Bulletin, issued ten times in a year, Palmer made real contributions to the vexed problems of the romanization of Japanese. Researches in languages profited much from the advances made in Educational Psychology, descriptive linguistics and the study of literature. Reform in English teaching began with vocabulary by finding the best words for specific purposes. It was felt that the real intrinsic difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in mastering its vocabulary, so they began to focus attention on vocabulary. They considered vocabulary more important in learning English than its grammatical pattern. A

99. Sharma, K.L.: "Methods of Teaching English in India", Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publishers, 1979, p. 95.

distinctive feature of the approach was its emphasis on meaning. In order to convey proper meaning of the words taught, simplified and graded patterns are presented with suitable situations¹⁰⁰.

The second movement was a development in linguistics. The underlying assumption was that all languages were structural and systematic. It led to objective studies of various languages. So it was not a pedagogic approach like the first one. It did not offer the 'why' and 'how' of teaching English. It concentrated on 'what' to teach. In U.S.A., this approach was called the 'oral approach'. They first compared English with the native languages and then found out areas of interference in learning English. As such they prepared the the teaching material to cope with this difficulty. The different native languages created different problems in learning English¹⁰¹.

1.7.5 Comparison with the Direct Method

The structural approach is not different¹⁰² from the Direct Method in its efforts to teach the language by actually using it in life situation, and as a matter of fact, it is an off shoot of the Direct Method¹⁰³. But while in the Direct Method the new sentence patterns or phrase patterns are presented without much grading, in the structural approach there is a well graded

100. Ibid. : pp. 95-96

101. Ibid. : p. 96.

102. Srivastana, B.D : op cit., p. 32.

103. Ibid.

list of structures. Again, while the Direct Method completely bans the use of mother tongue, the structural approach may allow it at the initial stages for the purpose of explaining a situation where certain sentences are to be practiced, for giving certain instructions.

1.7.6 The Structural Approach in India Today

The structural approach¹⁰⁴ in India is the product of necessity. They have borrowed and accepted the tenets of both the vocabulary approach and the oral approach. They have made it very popular as a linguist find supported^d by language specialists all over the world. In passing from West to East the two approaches have also become methods of teaching. In India this method is generally understood as 'direct method with some additions and alterations here and there, plus the play-way method'. But an approach is not a method. An approach is concerned with 'how', so it may vary from teacher to teacher and from situation to situation. An approach does not change like methods¹⁰⁵.

Now, it is possible to state what are the structures or patterns which English employs in order to convey meaning. These structures generally consist of arrangement of words in a certain order and other syntactical devices like the addition of "-ed" to

104. Sharma, K.L. : op cit., p. 96.

105. Sharma, K.L. : ibid., p. 96.

certain verbs in order to situate an action in the past. In the case of English the structure is by nature analytic and not synthetic. A student of English should have mastery in the handling of word order devices. The basic structures of English should be arranged in order of frequency by the teacher. Then for classroom purposes the items should be arranged in a teaching order. A structural syllabus clearly states which items are to be taught at which stage. It also indicates the order in which the items should be presented. The crux of the problem is how to make it yield maximum results in terms of the learners' achievement even in rural schools. The pioneering work in this field was done by the British council and the C.I.E. Hyderabad, In the hands of appropriately trained teachers the structural syllabus proves to be an effective tool. By nature it is an activity method which demands initiative, resourcefulness, imagination and skills on the part of the teacher. It keeps the pupils keen, active and fully co-operative in the class. The learning of English becomes more delightful when they actively participate in the enterprise of language learning¹⁰⁶.

1.7.7 Gradation of Material

According to Mr. Burton the material for teaching is arranged in graded structures with the following consideration in mind :

106. Sharma, K.L. : ibid., pp. 96-97.

1.7.7.1 Areas of Difference¹⁰⁷

The areas of difference between Hindi and Gujrati or between Hindi and Punjabi may be very small as compared to the difference between Hindi and English. The area of difference is always large between languages belonging to different families. For e.g., 'Ra' in Hindi is not equivalent to 'of' in English. Where such words correspond in use their meanings can be taught more quickly. But areas of difference need special attention e.g.: sentences in the present-perfect continuous tense in English differ very much from their equivalents in Indian Languages.

1.7.7.2. Usefulness¹⁰⁸

The usefulness of the structure should be determined in terms of the age and experience of the learner. In the beginning the child talks about his present actions, so structures of present continuous tense will suit him most. When he grows older and talks about his past and future verbs and structures required for such expressions *can be taught.*

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

1.7.7.3 Surrender Value¹⁰⁹

Any item of language should not be taught in isolation, e.g. "this is a table and this is its leg." It can also be presented like this: "This is a table and this is a leg of a table." In the second sentence 'of' indicates ownership or possession which has been indicated by another method in the first sentence. In two ways, one item can be linked with other items to be taught subsequently. A series of such inter locking items can be worked out in English.

1.7.7.4 Teachability¹¹⁰

The items that we want to teach must be such that it may be presented by creating a suitable situation in the class. The linguistic material should emerge naturally from the situation of which the pupils are a part. If the situation is presented after proper introductory work, the linguistic material *emerging out of it will be readily assimilated by the pupils.*

1.7.8 Important Characteristics of the Structural Approach

1. The structural syllabus¹¹¹ is generally a list of linguistic items arranged in teaching order, and accompanied by illustrative sentences.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid. : pp. 97-98.

111. Ibid.

2. Language, being primarily¹¹² a spoken thing is to be presented in its spoken forms in the first instance.
3. Mastery over the signalling¹¹³ system of English language is more important than the detailed knowledge of the forms. This mastery is best acquired by repetition or drill.
4. The teacher's most important¹¹⁴ work to create meaningful situations in the class.
5. The principle of teaching¹¹⁵ one item at a time should be strictly followed so that the pupils may acquire complete mastery over a given structure and may use it with full confidence in life situations.
6. The item¹¹⁶ must be firmly established by plenty of oral work before the pupils read it in their books.
7. Every reading book¹¹⁷ is accompanied by a teacher's Hand book which offers practical suggestion for the teaching

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

of words and structures. The Vocabulary for each standard is fixed.

8. The pupil at the end¹¹⁸ of a six year course is expected to know about 3,000 root words and their derivatives. He is also expected to master about 275 basic structures in six years.

1.7.9 The Structural Syllabus

In India, several states have prepared and adopted¹¹⁹ syllabi based on the structural approach. Madras is the first Indian State to adopt such syllabus as early as in 1952. It was popularised in other parts of the country during the sixties and the pioneering work was done by the institutes of English and the All India council for secondary Education.

The Directorate of Extention Programmes for secondary. Education New Delhi, has published in its journal 'Teacher Education' a list of 250 structures¹²⁰ to be taught in the first three years of secondary school and a list of 3300 words¹²¹ for a six years' course in English and the central Institute of English and foreign Languages, Hyderabad¹²² has also prepared suitable

118. Ibid.

119. Kohli, A.L. : op cit., pp. 58-59.

120. Srivastava, B.D. : op cit., (Appendix I), pp. 103-130.

121. Ibid. (Appendix) pp. 132-168 (reproduced from Teacher Education, February 1958.

122. Ibid. : p. 7.

Vocabulary and reading material for P.U. class students. The structural Approach, with slight modification, is in use in Andhra Pradesh and U.P.¹²³. The Bombay syllabus¹²⁴ has included, in its vocabulary, about 3000 root-words and 'Deepak Readers', published by the Oxford University Press, Bombay is based on the structural approach.

The State of Punjab, including Haryana,¹²⁵ has introduced the 'Read and learn' series, prepared according to the syllabus worked out by the English language Teaching Institute, Allahabad in 1965, The Regional Institute of English, Chandigarh¹²⁶ has recently prepared a structural syllabus to be used in schools of Himachal Pradesh.

The newly introduced 'Meghalaya Readers', as text book for classes IV to VIII, of the high schools under the Meghalaya Board of secondary Education has also been written according to the structural syllabus.

1.7.9.1 Merits of the approach

1. It lays more emphasis¹²⁷ on oral work, giving more opportunities to the learners to practice the use of

123. *Ibid.* : p. 8.

124. Mennon, T.K.N.; Patel, M.S. : *op cit.*, p. 55.

125. Kohli, A.L.: *op cit.*, pp. 58-59

126. *Ibid.*

127. Sharma, K.L. : *op cit.*, pp. 105-106.

language. According to Jespersen language cannot be separated from sound.

2. In oral work¹²⁸, the difficulties of the pupils are removed then and there. Language-Learning, through oral work, becomes lively and real.

3. This approach creates¹²⁹ suitable environment (the work-shop, environment, the class-room being teachers laboratory) in the class for learning a foreign language.

4. It gives more opportunities¹³⁰ to pupils to express their ideas, feelings and experiences. As such, it gives some Command over the language.

5. Since there is much emphasis on practice of language¹³¹ in a given situations, whatever is acquired by the pupils in the class, is made stable in their minds.

6. This approach is based on scientific principles¹³² of language and is further supported by linguistic research work. It has proved its success in other

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid.

1.7.10.1 Countries where English is not the mother-tongue of the learners.

7. This method alone fulfills the four-fold aims¹³³ of teaching English, Therefore, it is a complete method.

8.2 It is a comprehensive method of teaching English¹³⁴ and brings about a harmonious development of the skills implied in to language learning.

9. It utilises the pupil's knowledge and experience¹³⁵ in his mother-tongue which play an important part in learning a foreign language, .

1.7.10 Teaching of structures

The selected and graded structures can be taught by any method and the teacher will select his own method or methods according to needs and requirements since structural Approach is an extension or off shoot of the Direct method, the teacher may teach the structures through the Direct method. Other methods and approaches which may be adopted by the teacher are as follows¹³⁶:

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid.

136. (i) Bhandari, G.S., Minkley, V.A.: Ram S.K. 1966 'Teaching English, A Handbook for Teachers, English Language Teaching Institute, Allahabad; Orient Longman Ltd, New Delhi. p. 8-9; (ii) Sachdeva, M.S.: op cit., pp. 59-61. Unesco : 1975, International Understanding at school, Unesco associated school Project no.29

1.7.10.1 Oral Approach

Since children should become really fluent within a small group of structures with a limited Vocabulary before they encounter the written language, It is implied that in the early stages oral teaching occupies a very significant place.

1.7.10.2 Drill Method

Since language learning is a process of habit formation the structures are to be repeated by the learners. The teacher is however, required to see that drilling of structures does not become mechanical and boring.

1.7.10.3 Situational Approach

Since a structure or a word becomes meaningful for the learner when it is used in appropriate situation, the teacher should use a particular situation in order.

- (a) to practice the structures and to relate it to its meaning and
- (b) to build up a Vocabulary of content words. situations may be created
 - (i) by showing actual objects inside and outside the classroom.
 - (ii) through gestures and actions
 - (iii) by using models, charts, pictures,
 - (iv) by drawing match-stick diagrams in the blackboard,
 - (v) by using substitution tables.

Since structural Approach is now in use in most of the states of India, a study of its working in the classroom situation should be done.

1.7.11 Working of the structural Approach

As it is very new in this country and as it is still in an experimental ^{stage} in the Indian schools, no final verdict about its efficacy can be given. It can, however, be said that while formerly the experts were seriously engaged in finding out 'how to teach' the advocates of the structural Approach sought to find out 'what to teach' and it is definitely an improvement upon the earlier methods in so far as it aimed at selecting and grading the materials to be taught. Randolph Quirk says that 'the structural Approach brings us nearer to an understanding of the most characteristic human activity and near to linking it up with the rest of man's patterned and systematic behaviour',¹³⁷.

1.8 The Beginning of the Junior School Stage - the Appropriate Stage for Beginning to Teach English

The question as to what is the best stage for beginning to learn a second language has been studied by neurologists, psychologists and linguists and it has been observed that study of a second language should begin as early as possible.

137. Sachdeva, M.S. : op cit PP 61-62.

Penfield¹³⁸ the world-famous neuro-surgeon of Canada, who conducted researches into human brain, claimed that to start learning a second language after Puberty is difficult because it is 'unphysiological'¹³⁹. The British Psychologist, Tomb¹⁴⁰, observed that children placed in multi lingual environment show remarkable ability to pick up all the languages they are exposed to. The specialist meeting at the Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg (1962)¹⁴¹, concluded that childhood is the best period for learning a new language. In a statement submitted to the modern Language Association of America in connection with a conference on the age for beginning to learn a second language,

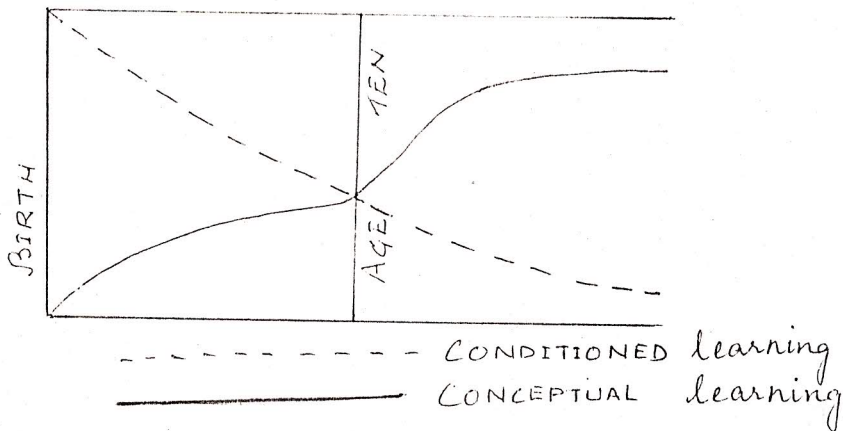
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138. Mennon T.K.N. and Patel, M.S. : op cit., p. 19 (Quoted)
 Dr. Wilder Penfield (1963) challenged the methods of educators who ignored the unalterable evolution of the human brain and tried to start teaching foreign languages after students had long passed the age when they could easily and effectively learn them. There are four separate areas of the human cerebral Cortex devoted to Vocationalization. There is an age when the child has a remarkable capacity to utilize these areas for the learning of a language, a time when several languages can be learned simultaneously as easily as one language. Later with the appearance of Capacity for reason and abstract thinking, this early ability is largely lost.
139. Christophereen, P. : Second Language Learning. Myth and Reality, Penguin Education, Cox and Wyman Ltd. London, 1973, p. 49.
140. Mennon, T.K.N. and Patel, M.S. : op cit., p. 20 (Quoted).
141. Stern, H.H. : Foreign Language in Primary Education, Unesco Institute, Language and Language Learning, Oxford University Press, London, 1974, p. 11.
 The meeting which was held from the 9th to the 14th April, 1962 was attended by twenty participants including nationals from Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Morocco, U.K. U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. They represented such diverse disciplines as language teaching, linguistics, primary education, Educational Psychology Neuro-physiology and comparative education.

Gessel and ILG¹⁴² said that a child, with favourable motivation, is emotionally ~~emana~~nable to a second and even a third Language. Emile de Sauze called the period before puberty as **bilingual**,¹⁴³ on the basis of available studies. According, to Anderson the period of childhood is 'multilingual',¹⁴⁴ concluded that the linguistic achievement of the child is the result of conditioned and Conceptual learning, that in the early childhood conditioned *i.e.*, unconscious learning prevails, while conceptual learning is still at a low ebb and while gradually the conditioned learning capacity declines the reliance on conceptual learning increases.

The figure 1.3¹⁴⁵ below makes the point clear.

Figure 1.3

Linguistic Achievement of the Child



142. *Ibid.* : p. 20.

143. Mennon T.K.N. and Patel M.S.: *op cit.*; p. 22 (Quoted)

144. *Ibid.*

145. Stern, H.H. : *op cit.*, p. 22.

In India, Menon and Patel ¹⁴⁶ after discussing Various research evidences, suggested that when the child goes to the middle school at the age of 10 or 11, he should begin the study of English. They further pointed out that the success of six years course beginning in the second standard of the middle school, can be achieved if it is preceded by one year's oral work in the first standard of middle school aiming at the development of the skills of understanding and speech.

Thus the linguistics are of the opinion that the Junior school stage is the best stage to acquire a second language. In all the types of schools under the Meghalaya Board of School Education the students learn English as a compulsory subject from Class IV onwards till the end of the High School stage. Students in the English schools, here, however, are exposed to English language before reaching class IV and for that matter, much earlier than the students in the Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Nepali and Hindi schools, But the age at which the students in those Non-English medium and bilingual schools like Assamese, Garo, Nepali schools etc. (which existed before 1993) starts learning English, falls within the age limits prescribed by the language experts, They study English for a period of seven years and this duration is in keeping with *the Standard followed everywhere and*

146. Mennon, T.K.N and Patel M.S.: op cit., p. 24.

147. Nambiar, K.C. et al (eds) : XV Annual Conference of English

what has been prescribed for effective teaching and learning of English.

1.9 Rationale of the Present Study

Having considered the important position that English has in Garo Hills as the medium of communication, ^{and} the medium of instruction in all schools and colleges and universities, the investigator felt the need of taking up the present study in order to locate the status and problems of teaching English at the Junior school stage which forms the most important base for the learning of a second language.

The Meghalaya Education **commission** (1977)¹⁴⁸ has rightly pointed out that standard of teaching English at the school level should be improved and this stage is important as at this stage the foundation of the whole school and Education career is made.

An analysis of the results of the high schools examinations for the last few years in respect of the students of west Garo Hills as well as the State as a whole would reveal that it there has been identified by the SCERT, Meghalaya, ^{English} as a

148. Govt. of Meghalaya : Report of the Education Commission op cit., p. 14.

subject in which a large number of students at the school final level cut sorry figures. It is therefore necessary to undertake studies in different geographical areas of the state to identify the various problems and difficulties in teaching and learning of English at the Junior school and High school stage.

The English teachers were found not abreast of the latest developments in the field of English teaching Methodology and that they used traditional method for teaching English through word-for-word translation into mother tongue. Explanation in the mother-tongue seemed to occupy prominent place in the scheme of English teaching. Students' comprehension was not ensured by putting questions and encouraging students to give answers in English. The teachers were not habituated in the use of aid materials in teaching English, use of situation in drilling of words and structures. It appeared that the teachers were treating English as a knowledge subject, since their approach to teaching of English was not different from that of teaching knowledge subject like History and geography.

Moreover, there is a backlog of untrained teachers in Meghalaya in general and west Garo Hills in particular. Lack of training facilities and absence of attempts to familiarise the English teachers with the latest methods and techniques of teaching contributed to the failure in teaching English. Handling of the present revised English readers used in the Junior school

also needed training and expertise on the part of the English teachers.

The Junior schools were not equipped with books on English teaching methodology to keep the English teachers abreast of the development in English teaching.

The Junior schools of the district were not in possession of modern aids for teaching of English and the teachers were not keen in using improvised aid material.

Teachers in the adhoc and private schools were in receipt of poor pay and since these schools were under staffed, the teachers in those schools were over worked. This produces a sense of frustration and feeling of insecurity among the teachers of schools in the private sector. Consequently a large majority of teachers of such schools were always in the look out for more paying jobs elsewhere. This type of half-heartedness on the part of teachers affect the quality of teaching and a majority of teachers in these schools were indifferent towards effectiveness or other wise of their teaching of any subject.

Generally, undergraduates and untrained teachers taught English at the ^{JUNIOR} school stage and trained and more qualified teachers were given to teach at the high school stage. As a

result of this practice students did not have a firm foundation in English.

In view of the unhappy state of affairs, the present investigator found it necessary to conduct a study on the present status and problems of teaching English at the Junior school stage.

1.10 Statement of the Problem

The problem selected for the present study is as follows "A STUDY OF THE PRESENT STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL LEVEL IN WEST GARO HILLS DISTRICT, MEGHALAYA."

1.11. Definition of the Terms Used

Present status refers to the status of teaching identified by observation of classroom teaching.

Problems of teaching English include problems as perceived by the English teachers themselves as well as those identified by the investigator through the practice followed by them.

Junior school level includes classes IV to VI in high and middle schools of west Garo Hills District.

1.12. Objectives of the Present Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows :

- i) To identify the present status of teaching English through observation of classroom teaching;
- ii) To study the strengths and weaknesses in the classroom teaching of English;
- iii) To find out the problems of teaching of English at the Junior school level;
- iv) To suggest measures for improving teaching English at the Junior school level in the west Garo Hills district.

1.13 Delimitations of the Study

One limitation of the present study was that it concentrated on process variables, which pertains to the teachers of English only. It did not attempt to establish a link between process variables and product variables, which deal with the extent of achievement of pupils on various dimensions like achievement in knowledge, gain in skills, change in attitudes etc., occupying as a result of the process in the classroom. However, Some answer-scripts were reviewed in order to detect the errors generally made by students in written English.

Another limitation of the present study to be mentioned here was the validation of the tools used by the present investigator. The present investigator ensured only content validity of the tools by collecting opinions of selected judges.

Lastly, the study was limited to west Garo Hills district only.