

English Language Education Situation in India: Pedagogical Perspectives

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Abstract

This paper attempts to present a critical review of the current state of English language education in schools in India in view of the prevalent pedagogical policies and practices. Different types of schools in the different school systems and typologies of teaching situations, the diverse nature of curriculum, syllabi, materials development, and the related quality issues are critically analyzed. Based on the critical perspectives and insights certain pedagogically important implications have been explored and recommendations made to improve upon the standards and quality of English language education in schools in India.

Keywords: English language education, diversity and disparity, schools in India, prevalent pedagogical policies and practices

English Language Education Today

English language teaching in India is a complex and diverse phenomenon in terms of resources for teaching and learning of the language, the teacher, pedagogical practices and the demand for the language. It is an ever-expanding part of almost every system and stage of education in India (Tickoo, 2004). Out of 35 states and Union Territories, 26 have introduced English as a language from class 1, of which 12.98% are primary schools, 18.25% are upper primary schools and 25.84% are schools at the secondary level (National Council of Educational Research (NCERT), 2007). A network of secondary schools numbering more than 110,000, some 11,000 colleges, universities (numbering 221 apart from 40 odd deemed universities) and other institutions of higher learning and research whose numbers and reach keep growing, offer instruction in and through this language at various levels and under different arrangements. Table 1 shows the increase in the use of English as a medium of instruction at the school level.

Table 1
English as a medium of instruction in Indian schools

	Primary		Upper Primary		Secondary	
	1 993	2 002	1 993	2 002	1 993	2 002
English as medium in %	4.99	2.98	5.91	8.25	8.37	5.84

Source: Seventh All India School Education Survey- 2002 (NCERT, 2007)

The near-total achievement of universalization of elementary education has intensified pressure on secondary and higher secondary education in the country today. This is the stage when the English language attains greater importance as it serves as an additional instrument for undertaking higher education because 90% of higher education is through the medium of English.

English language education is marked by diversity and disparity in terms of provision and resources for teaching of English as a second language as well as a medium of instruction in school education. There are varieties of school systems that exist in the country today: the state-run schools where the medium of instruction is the state language or the vernacular; the English-medium schools known as the “public schools”, which are actually private schools where the medium of instruction is often English; the Kendriya Vidyalayas, also known as Central Schools, where the children of central government employees study; and a special category of schools known as the Navodaya Vidyalayas set up as a follow-up to the National Policy of Education-1986 for nurturing rural talents. The last two categories of schools follow a mixed medium of instruction. Children learn Science and Mathematics in English, and Social Sciences in Indian languages. There are schools where one section in each class is English-medium. Mohanty (2010) describes how this “mixed medium within a school and within a classroom” works in these categories of schools.

English is used to teach ‘prestigious subjects’ like Mathematics and Science, whereas, Hindi or other languages are used to teach the ‘less prestigious’ subjects like History and Social Sciences. Hindi used to be the second language subject in most of the non-Hindi states in India. Now, it has been replaced by English and it is relegated to the position of a third language subject in most states. (p.168)

English is a second language in all these categories of schools and the systems of school education. It is also a standard medium of education for the sciences and professional subjects at the university-level across the country

today (Ramanathan, 1999, p. 34). This presents a “huge linguistic gap” for students who have attended vernacular-medium schools (Anderson, 2012). Their learning English language often becomes a burden for students as they are forced to learn English on their own (Sheorey, 2006, p. 70).

We can also find that the English language teaching situations within and across the school systems present a mixed picture in terms of teacher proficiency (TP) and the exposure of the pupils to the language in and outside the school, i.e. the availability of English in the environment of language acquisition (EE) (Nag-Arulmani, 2000 cf. NCERT 2005b). Kurrien (1997) identifies four types of schools as follows:

- a. ↑↑TP, ↑↑EE (e.g., English-medium private/government-aided elite schools): Proficient teachers; varying degrees of English in the environment, including as a home or first language.
- b. ↑TP, ↑EE (e.g., New English-medium private schools, many of which use both English and other Indian languages): Teachers with limited proficiency; children with little or no background in English; parents aspire upward mobility for their children through English.
- c. ↓TP, ↓EE (e.g., Government-aided regional-medium schools): Schools with a tradition of English education along with regional languages, established by educational societies, with children from a variety of backgrounds.
- d. ↓↓TP, ↓↓EE (e.g., Government regional-medium schools run by district and municipal education authorities): They enrol the largest number of elementary school children in rural India. They are also the only choice for the urban poor (who, however, have some options of access to English in the environment). Their teachers may be the least proficient in English among these four types of schools. (Position Paper, Teaching of English-NCF - 2005- NCERT, 2005b, p. 2)

The difference in the teaching-learning situations, learners’ exposure to the language outside the school and parental support further divides each category of students. As Prabhu (1987) observes “typologies of teaching situations... should thus be seen as an aid to investigating the extent of relevance of a pedagogic proposal, rather than as absolute categories” (p. 3). The teaching situation decides where a school stands. Most rural schools in India today fall under the fourth category where we have children with almost no exposure to the English language, where the teachers’ proficiency in English is in question, and where the parents cannot support their wards in learning the language.

Selvam and Geetha (2010) bring out the disparity in English language education in the context of one of the south Indian states, Tamil Nadu from a “class perspective” (p. 56). They describe the schools as type A, B and C in terms of locations and resources. Type ‘A’ schools are located in big cities and are attended by upper middle class children. English language proficiency of both teachers and learners here are higher than all other categories of schools.

Type 'B' schools are also found in big cities and additionally in smaller towns, and cater to the middle class which cannot afford to pay the high fees that type 'A' schools demand. Here the learners are not as confident and comfortable with the English language as their peers in type 'A' schools. Type 'C' schools are the ones located generally in small and mofussil towns, catering to rural households that want their young to know English. "Neither the teachers nor the students in these schools move in an English-speaking world in the way that their counterparts in the cities do ... But there is a greater anxiety about learning English in these institutions" (Selvam & Geetha, 2010, p. 56)

The two categorizations above inform us that the prevalent diversity of English language teaching situations even within a small town poses a serious challenge for an effective planning and implementation of language education. Also, there is a general dissatisfaction about the way in which the language is taught in most of the schools, particularly the government schools run by the states. The general view that India's ELT methodology has been built all along on borrowed methods taken directly from the native English-speaking world or grafted arbitrarily on to whatever existed before is true to a large extent. There are few indigenous (Indian) experiments like the Bangalore-Madras Communicational language teaching project (Prabhu, 1987) which made an equal impact in the Western and the Asian ELT scenario. However, such new experiments have not impacted the existing English language curriculum and the practice of English language teaching. Heavy reliance on the grammar-translation and structural approaches, and teacher-centric teaching continues to dominate in most of the school systems. Moreover, English as a school subject is a major cause of students dropping out of schools at the end of class X. Disinterested classroom transactions, lack of any meaningful teaching and language proficiency of the teacher, and uninspiring methods and materials are attributed as major reasons for the sad state of English language education in schools (Govt. of India, 1993; Meganathan, 2014). "Incomprehensibility" of the content as well as treating the language as "content" subject in terms of materials and classroom transactions increase the burden on the learner. This was recorded with concern by the Yashpal Committee Report, *Learning without burden* (1993). The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCERT, 2005a) aims at reducing the burden on learners by suggesting methodologies which would connect the classroom with the lives of learners. It believes that the burden on children is a major hindrance in the learning of subjects as well as the languages. Incomprehensibility of the language of the content subjects (say Science, Mathematics or Social Sciences) and studying through a medium that is not their mother tongue proves to be a double disadvantage for the children. This is compounded when children either drop out of the school or are declared as "the ones who can't learn" (Jhingaran, 2005, p 48). Introduction of English language without adequate resources, particularly English language teachers, throws a much greater challenge when it comes to the quality of education. The position paper on teaching of Indian languages (NCERT, 2005c) rightly asserts:

Where qualified teachers and adequate infrastructural facilities are available, English may be introduced from the primary level, but for the first couple of years it should focus largely on oral-aural skills, simple lexical items, or some day-to-day conversation. Use of the languages of children should not be forbidden in the English class, and the teaching should as far as possible be located in a text that would make sense to the child. If trained teachers are not available, English should be introduced at the post-primary stage and its quantum increased in such a way that learners should soon reach the levels of their classmates who started learning English early. (p. 38)

The lack of research inputs for evolving a methodology that would suit the Indian situation is a major concern for researchers, teachers and those involved in the design and development, implementation and evaluation of curricula. In the 1970s, Tickoo (1971) argued that what is needed in India is a method, which should grow from research and experiment within the country and in the circumstances of an average schoolroom. To use Swan's (1985) remark here, "Defective language learning is often attributed to defective syllabus design, the student does not learn the language properly because we do not teach the right things or because we recognize what we teach is the wrong way" (p. 77).

Planning and implementation of English language education in the diverse Indian contexts calls for a flexible approach which suits the diverse needs of the learners. Language education in India is not conceived holistically for it is characterised by the many-fold fragmentations. Fragmentations in terms of regional languages versus English, and within the space of Indian languages the question of majority versus minority languages and tribal languages, has greatly disadvantaged the learners. It is recorded in the Fourth Survey of Research in Education (1983 -1988) conducted by the National Council of Educational Research (NCERT) as,

Language teaching standards are divergent in different regions of the country. One thing common to all is the consistently low standard of achievement in languages as well as subjects. Instead of learning subjects through languages subjects are used to learn languages. Therefore students are poor both in subjects as well as languages. Minimum competencies in language must be a pre-condition to the study of subjects, which in turn enlarge the scale of language learning. (p 127)

The situation has not changed much even after two and a half decades. (Meganathan, 2014). Efforts to implement mother-tongue-based multilingualism where the child begins her education in the mother tongue and moves on to add at least two more languages by the end of ten-year schooling has not been successful. Multilingual characteristic of the Indian classroom should be treated as a resource rather than a problem. The supplementary and

complementary roles of languages in learning have to be seen as an instrument for facilitating learning. (NCERT, 2005; Meganathan 2014; Mohanty, 2010)

Denial of learning through one's mother tongue and unwillingness to use the languages of children as a resource for teaching-learning of languages as well as content subjects is seen as one major reason for children not learning in schools (Position Paper, "Teaching of English" and Position Paper, "Teaching of Indian Languages"). The National Curriculum Framework – 2005 calls for multilingualism as a language policy in school education and for using the languages of the children as a resource for learning.

Language Policy in Education and the English Language

In view of the National Language-in-Education-Policy for school education, the three-language formula recommended by the National Commission on Education 1964-1966, (GOI, 1968) was incorporated into the national education policies of 1968 and 1986. Accommodating at least three languages in the school education has been seen as a convenient strategy, but concerns have also been expressed from various quarters about its unsatisfactory implementation. India's language policy in education emerged as a political consensus in the Chief Ministers' conferences held during the 1950s and 1960s. The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), which consisted of Education Ministers of all the states, devised the three-language formula in its 23rd meeting held in 1956 with a view of removing inequalities among the languages of India, particularly between Hindi and other Indian languages. It recommended that three languages should be taught in Hindi as well as non-Hindi-speaking areas of the country at the middle and high school stages, and suggested two possible formulae as given below.

1. (a) (i) Mother tongue or
(ii) Regional language or
(iii) A composite course of mother-tongue and a regional language
or
(iv) A composite course of mother tongue and a classical language
or
(v) A composite course of regional language and a classical language.
- (b) Hindi or English
- (c) A modern Indian language or a modern European language provided it has not already taken under (a) and (b) above.
2. (a) As above
- (b) English or a modern European language
- (c) Hindi (for non-Hindi speaking areas) or another modern Indian language (for Hindi speaking areas) (CABE 1956, Item 2)

The other major objective of the formula was to promote mother-tongue based multilingualism, where the learner starts school education in the mother tongue and at least two more languages are added (aiming at additive bilingualism) by the time s/he completes ten years of schooling. The three-language formula was simplified and approved by the Conference of Chief Ministers, held in 1961, to accommodate the mother tongue or regional language, Hindi, the official language (any other Indian language in Hindi-speaking regions) and English. (GOI, 1962, p. 67) The CAGE also deliberated in details on the study of English as a compulsory subject as recommended by the Education Ministers' conference held in 1957:

1. English should be taught as a compulsory language both at the secondary and the university stages so that students acquire adequate knowledge of English so as to be able to receive education through this language at the university-level.
2. English should not be introduced earlier than class V. The precise point at which English should be started was left to each individual state to decide (MOE 1957, quoted in Kumar and Agrawal, 1993, p. 98).

A comprehensive view of the study of languages at school was undertaken and concrete recommendations were made by the Education Commission between 1964 and 1966 (NCERT, 1968). The Commission, having taken account of the diversity of India, recommended a modified or graduated three-language formula:

1. The mother tongue or the regional language
2. The official language of the Union or the associate official language of the Union so long as it exists; and
3. A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under (1) and (2) and other than that used as the medium of instruction (MOE 1966, p. 192)

The Education Commission went on to comment on the status and role of English in education.

English will continue to enjoy a high status so long as it remains the principal medium of education at the university stage, and the language of administration at the Central Government and in many of the states. Even after the regional languages become media of higher education in the universities, a working knowledge of English will be a valuable asset for all students and a reasonable proficiency in the language will be necessary for those who proceed to the university. (MOE 1966, p. 192)

The English language's colonial legacy has now been lost and the language is seen as a neutral language, much in demand by cross sections of the society. As Crystal (1997) remarks, "the English language has already grown to be independent of any form of social control' and 'in 500 years' time everyone is multilingual and will automatically be introduced to English as soon as they are born". (p. 139) The first part of the statement has to be viewed with much apprehension since the language in the Indian context has already perpetuated inequalities. The language has been out of reach of millions of people who belong to the lower socio-economic strata of the society. This has been recorded in the report of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). (GOI, 2007, p. 47) There is an irony in the situation. English has been part of our education system for more than a century. Yet English is beyond the reach of most of our young people, which makes for highly unequal access. Indeed, even now, more than one percent of our people use it as a second language, let alone a first language. But NKC believes that the time has come for us to teach our people, ordinary people, English as a language in schools. Early action in this sphere would help us build an inclusive society and transform India into a knowledge society.

India's once deprived sections of the society (like the Dalits) now perceive the language as an instrument for progress. The news of a temple for English language in a village in the Hindi heartland (Pandey, 2011) tells its own story and there is a demand for the English language and English medium education for reducing exclusion. (Illaiyah, 2013) Illaiyah (2013) emphasises that it is the right of the Dalits to be exposed to English,

Within 200 years of its introduction in India it (English) has easily become the language of about 100 million people. Its expansion in future will be several folds faster than earlier. It has become a language of day-to-day use for several million upper middle class and rich people. The poor and the productive masses have a right to learn the language of administration and global communication. (p 5)

However, this notion of the empowering role of English language is contested from the points of view of language endangerment and harmonious development of learners. (Mohanty, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) Uncritical promotion of English as a language and as the medium of learning in school education has resulted in migration of learners to English medium from the Indian language medium without even minimum requirements for English language teaching. (Meganathan, 2010; NCERT, 2005) Pattanayak (1981) argues how the education system in India has consistently weakened the advantages of grass-root multilingualism that characterises the society. As Illich (1981) suggests, we need to make every possible effort to empower the languages of the underprivileged, and tribal and endangered languages.

Affirmative action is called for in this domain (NCERT 2005a). To quote Pattanayak (1981, p. 38), “if participatory democracy has to survive, we need to give a voice to the language of every child.” Macro level policy planning calls for mother-tongue-based multilingualism where the use of two or more languages as medium of instruction is seen as beneficial for all languages (UNESCO, 2003). But the developments in the last three decades reveal that the number of languages used as media of instruction in schools in 1973 was 67 (Third All India Educational Survey, NCERT, 1975); the number came down to 47 in 1993 (Sixth All India Educational Survey, NCERT 1995; cf Rao, 2008). While the promise of education in the mother tongue of the child is made time and again, we notice that within a period of 20 years at least 20 languages were thrown out of the school system. Though linguistic diversity is recognised at the policy level, its implementation is faulty. There appears to be a language hierarchy, where English and the state languages get privileged and the tribal/minority languages get neglected, often leading to a sense of exclusion amongst its speakers. The language hierarchy could be depicted as shown in Figure 1.

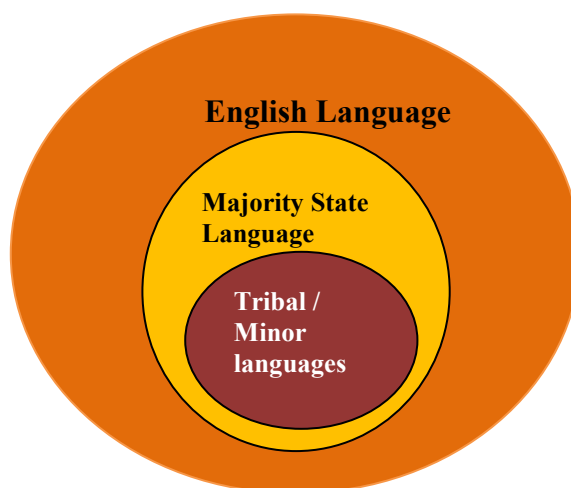


Figure 1. Language hierarchy in the Indian context

The many of the tribal and minor languages have not found a place in school even as a language, leave alone as a medium of instruction. The promotion of English language as an instrument for upward mobility and notions relating to development has to be seen from diverse perspectives. Even within the English language education in practice shows the hierarchy as discussed elsewhere above. (Meganathan, 2010)

This brief historical account of the evolution of the language policy in India tells us how the apprehension about the dominance of English as a colonial language has been naturally alleviated by the role which the language has attained. This is in spite of the efforts (political and systemic) to contain its

spread. Today, every child and parent understands the need of the language. It is a compulsory second language in most of the states. The liberalisation of Indian economy in the 1990s and the impact of globalisation have intensified the spread of the language as an instrument for upward mobility and as a language of opportunity.

The Demand for English language

While the diverse nature and quality of English language education in India poses a serious challenge both in terms of access, resources and quality, the demand for English language has been on the increase since independence. The language, which was defined as “a library language” by the National Commission on Education 1964-66, has broken the walls of the library and the demand is so huge that every parent in India today wants to send his/her child to an English medium school, whatever be its quality and resources for learning. The national curriculum revision carried out in 2005 recognises the growing demand for the language and the position paper of the National Focus Group on Teaching of English for NCF – 2005 (NCERT, 2005b) makes this clear when it addresses the English language question.

English in India today is a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origins now forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independent India, tailored to higher education (as a “library language”, a “window on the world”), now felt to be insufficiently inclusive socially and linguistically, the current status of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena (p. 1).

The position paper also makes an attempt to find a space for English in today’s context in India. Stating that “English does not stand alone”, the paper argues that

it (English) needs to find its place (i) along with other Indian Languages (a) in regional medium schools: how can children’s other languages strengthen English learning? (b) in English medium schools: how can other Indian languages be valorised, reducing the perceived hegemony of English? (ii) In relation to other subjects: A language across the curriculum perspective is perhaps of particular relevance to primary education. Language is best acquired through different meaning-making contexts and hence all teaching in a sense is language teaching. This perspective also captures the centrality of language in abstract thought in secondary education. (p. 4)

English today is a compulsory second language in the native/vernacular medium schools and in English-medium schools and it is making a case to gain the status of a first language, thus contradicting the spirit of the three language formula.

Recognising the diversity and enormity of the demand, Graddol (2010) in his *English Next India* brings out the divide in the demand-supply business of the English language and the responsibility on the teachers. He says,

Throughout India, there is an extraordinary belief, among almost all castes and classes, in both rural and urban areas, in the transformative power of English. English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression. Aspiration of such magnitude is a heavy burden for any language, and for those who have responsibility for teaching it, to bear. The challenges of providing universal access to English are significant, and many are bound to feel frustrated at the speed of progress. But we cannot ignore the way that the English language has emerged as a powerful agent for change in India. (Graddol, 2010, p.120)

The demand for English language education (both as a language and as a medium of learning) is leading to the marginalisation of Indian languages. It is believed that the English language acts as an instrument for exclusion of Indian languages, particularly the minor and tribal languages, some of which are yet to find a place in school education or have been thrown out of the system. The English language acts as “a killer language” in these situations (Mohanty, 2010, p. 77). Phillipson (2008) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. 66) believe that there is an “uncritical promotion of English language in education”. While the demand for English language and English medium education from every quarter makes the English language a “neutral language” in terms of ethnicity, religion, linguistic groups, region and ‘the language that unifies India, but it has become a medium used to maintain inequalities in society” (Baik & Shim, 1995, pp. 123-124).

As Anderson (2012, p. 44) asserts, “the language remains inaccessible to those who are disadvantaged because of their economic situation, their caste, or both.” There are also arguments that it is the state/regional languages, which push the minor and tribal languages to the corner, not the English language. The languages of many tribal communities in the states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh can be cited as illustrations where the state languages dominate as medium of learning. This demands a relook at the language-in-education policy both at the macro and the micro levels. Stating the policy in terms of number of languages and provisions at the macro level policy planning for mother-tongue-based multilingualism does not necessarily achieve the objectives of promoting multilingualism. There is a need to understand the learner needs and to foster a cognitively and pedagogically sound language education for the harmonious growth of school children.

Though the governments at the central and state levels through their schemes like the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and *Rashtirya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) have made serious efforts to provide access to education for all children, achieving quality becomes an illusion on many counts. This starts with curriculum planning at the national and state levels to ensuring quality teaching by the teacher who has to face many constraints. Curriculum planning demands well-planned processes wherein people from different areas of expertise come together to design a pedagogically sound plan of action through curricular statements, defining objectives, suggesting methodologies appropriate to the context and understanding the profile and needs of the learner, chalking out assessment strategies that would support teaching-learning.

ELT Curriculum, Syllabi and Materials

Curriculum and Syllabi

English language curriculum and syllabi which guide materials developers in producing materials to support learners in English language learning and teachers for providing opportunities for language use through interaction and reflection has been a major concern of educational planners and implementers. The development of a “considered” curriculum and syllabi by stating the aims and objectives in comprehensible and meaningful terms for users, suggesting methodologies and assessment procedures throws a big challenge. Ineffective curriculum and materials add to the misery of the ill-equipped teacher resulting in disinterested classrooms and examination-driven teaching (Meganathan, 2010). Many Indian states develop syllabi and materials without even making any curricular statements or vision meeting the national and regional norms. It is assumed that the guidelines from the National Curriculum Framework developed at the national level would be adopted as guidelines. Meganathan (2014) finds in the context of Tamil Nadu that English language teachers have not undergone any professional development activity for two decades since their beginning as teachers. The process of curriculum development and implementation (from design to evaluation) is highly inadequate in the Indian context. The teacher is central to the process of teaching-learning and has to do his/her job without clearly stated curricular objectives.

India has in a way three models of curriculum (and materials) development for English language education in schools. The first model is adaptation of the national level curriculum developed by the NCERT and by the national level boards like the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The second model is the complete adaptation of the national curriculum by (some) state boards like the Delhi Board. The third model is the states or other boards developing their own curriculum taking into consideration the ideas of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) developed by NCERT (Meganathan,

2010). However, the approach to syllabus design could be stated mostly as “Forward Design” (Richards, 2013, p. 31), starting from stated objectives and moving on to stating the expected outcomes. Richards’ (2013) recent paper describes the existing models of syllabus design. The national level model syllabus based on the National Curriculum Framework-2005 developed by NCERT could be stated as more of a “Central Design”.

Table 2

Comparison of the features of the three approaches to syllabus design

	Forward design	Central design	Backward design
Syllabus	Language-centred; Content divided into its key elements; Sequenced from simple to complex. Pre-determined; prior to a course; Linear progression.	Activity-based; Content negotiated with learners; Evolves during the course; Reflects the process of learning; Sequence may be determined by the learners.	Needs based; Ends-means approach; Objectives or competency-based; Sequenced from part-skills to whole; Pre-determined prior to course; Linear progression
Methodology	Transmissive and teacher-directed; Practice and control of elements; Imitation of models; Explicit presentation of rules	Learner-centred; Experiential learning; Active engagement in interaction and communication; Meaning prioritised over accuracy; Activities that involve negotiation of meaning.	Practice of part-skills; Practice of real-life situations; Accuracy emphasised; Learning and practice of expressions and formulaic language.

Role of teacher	Teacher as instructor, model, and explainer; Transmitter of knowledge; Reinforcer of correct language use.	Teacher as facilitator; Negotiator of content and process; Encourager of learner self-expression and autonomy	Organiser of learning experiences; Model of target language performance; Planner of learning experiences.
Role of learner	Accurate mastery of language forms; Application of learned material to new contexts; Understanding of language rules.	Negotiator of learning content and modes of learning; Development of learning strategies; Accept responsibility for learning and learner autonomy.	Learning through practice and habit formation; Mastery of situationally appropriate language; Awareness of correct usage; Development of fluency.
Assessment	Norm-referenced, summative end-of-semester or end-of-course test; Assessment of learning; Cumulative mastery of taught forms.	Negotiated assessment; Assessment for learning; Formative assessment; Self-assessment; Develop capacity for self-reflection and self-evaluation.	Criterion-referenced, Performance-based summative assessment; Improvement oriented; Assessment of learning; Cumulative mastery of taught patterns and uses.

(Source: Richards, 2013, p. 31)

Materials Development

The three models which exist at the curriculum and syllabus development levels are reflected at the materials development level too. However, there is much to regret when it comes to materials development at the state level. Lack of pedagogical understanding of “What should materials do?” (Tomlinson, 1995) and authenticity of materials and tasks remain in question (Meganathan, 2010). The reason for this is that materials development is not taken as a professional activity though one can notice commercialisation of materials

development in India where private publishing houses also publish text books and other materials in English for mostly English-medium schools run by private agencies or individuals. An analysis of the textbooks at the primary level reveals how textbook development at the primary level does not fully recognise the recent development in pedagogy and our understanding of language and language acquisition and learning (NCERT, 2010).

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

English language education has come a long way in India and has, in a way, lost its colonial legacy. It is being seen as a language for upward mobility and has been accepted without much contestation. So it has become a neutral language moving beyond boundaries across the states and regions, cross sections of the society as a whole. But the major concern and worry is the way the language is perpetuating inequalities among languages in the country and inequalities within its own realm where the rich and elite get “good quality” English language education and the poor and rural mass get the “not so good quality English language education” (Mohanty 2010 p. 36). This “good quality” (by whatever means we define it) is reflected firstly in the teacher as a resource for learning English and then in materials and methods (strategies and techniques which are adopted). As Graddol (2010) points out, the huge responsibility of addressing the demand lies in the hands of people, teachers who are in a way not so well-equipped. Adding to the problems is the initiatives of the state governments to introduce English as a medium of teaching in one section of each class. Teachers who are not well-equipped to teach through English medium are now to teach in English the subjects such as Mathematics and Social Sciences. These are the same teachers who teach the subjects in the medium of Indian languages like Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi, and so on. They are not oriented to teach the subjects in English. The argument is the teachers have studied their subjects at the university level in English medium and this makes them naturally suitable for teaching in English medium. This needs to be understood in a pedagogical perspective of language across the curriculum (LAC) and the role of language in learning any subject. The subject teachers need to develop better awareness to understand how ideas are covered and qualified when said in a language.

Research in ELT or language pedagogy is another area which needs strengthening. While research is happening in English literature and Linguistics as courses of study at the university level, ELT is the field which is still shaping itself in India. One major reason is that there are very few universities which run courses in ELT or English language education as applied linguistics. So, classroom-based researches and research on curriculum development and implementation are very limited. (Meganathan, 2014) The following could be seen as areas which need attention and initiates both the governments at the national and state levels, as also by NGOs and private

agencies and schools involved in the business of language education in general and English language education in particular.

- *Professionalization of curriculum, syllabi and materials development:* There is an urgent need to develop teams of professionals in the vital areas of curriculum, syllabi and materials development in India. The practice in the states now is that curriculum development is a once-in-a-while activity where a group of teachers, teacher educators, and other professionals come together and do the activity of curriculum development and then it is forgotten. There is no regular exercise of curriculum research and professional training on curriculum development and evaluation at the state levels. It is necessary to have curriculum and materials development as part of both pre-service and in-service professional development courses (Meganathan, 2008). This will have both short and long-term implications.
- *Courses on English language teaching / education or language education:* A country which needs quite a huge number of English language teachers does not have courses on English language education or language education at the under-graduate or postgraduate level, except in few higher education institutions. Specialised courses on language teaching will equip the young graduates with an understanding of language pedagogy and pre-service teacher education courses could shape them to be able to deliver their lessons effectively when they join schools.
- *Teacher Development:* Teacher's continuous professional development has not been recognised as a major component for quality improvement of teaching in the classroom. Though many agencies like the NCERT, SCERT, EFLU (English and Foreign Languages University, which was CIEFL, i.e. Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages formerly), RIEs (Regional Institutes of English), University Departments of Education, NGOs conduct training and orientation programmes for teachers and key resource persons, the content and methodology of such courses remain a question in many institutions as to whether they really address day-to-day problems and issues that arise in the classrooms. A typical classroom teacher expects a training to equip him/her to enhance classroom interactions and learner motivations and participation in learning.
- *Research in ELT:* ELT stakeholders in India should recognize the need for classroom-based and teacher-initiated research to understand the classroom problems and to address them at the levels of curriculum revision, materials production, assessment and teacher training.

To sum up, the questions of quality will continue to persist in English language education at all levels and regions in India, which pose serious challenges and call for attention on research-based curriculum planning and its implementation at the classroom level.

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Note on Contributor

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