



LETTERS

Degree English Vs Modern English

Sir—With great interest I have gone through the letters captioned 'Degree English Question Paper' by Mr Muslim and Mrs. F. Begum and 'Modern English' by Mr. Zaman in your recent issues.

I feel constrained to comment that Mr Muslim and Mrs. F. Begum dwelt at length on the beaten track of English Grammar while Mr Zaman spared no pains to set Mr Muslims humble views on this year's Degree English Question Paper at naught. Instead of considering the pros and cons of the arguments put forward by Mr Muslim, he seems to extend his support in the name of Modern English to the use of the preposition in the question paper.

Now let us go deep into the problem and see what follows logically.

As to the expression 'Fill up the blanks' Mr Zaman has pointed out that, 'what is apparently incorrect as per age old worn-out classical grammar is absolutely correct as per usage and modern grammars'. The very statement is contradictory as something classical is eternally classical, it never gets worn-out or exhausted with the passage of time. We have all praise for classical values of life although they have been in vogue from time immemorial.

Apart from this English language was introduced in British India and taught as classical grammar whittened by authorities like Nesfield and others. This is still in practice here in the subcontinent. So when a question setter will set questions on prepositions he will have to adhere to the rules as laid down in the classical grammar because I have already said that we are accustomed with classical mode of English language.

One cannot deviate from the original and genuine rules only for the sake of 'Modernity and usage'; We often use many an erroneous words in our day to-day life but for this we cannot treat them as correct.

Mr Zaman has rightly asserted that 'due to' is not a preposition; it is predicative adjective followed by 'to'. His absence was due to illness. Again he has rightly added that the pair is freely used as a prepositional phrase by all people and authors (?).

My answer is the same as before; when this pair will appear in connection with correction we have to invariably use it accordingly. Here I would like to refer to the grammar books of Nesfield, Mohiuddin and a Quesem.

We see eye to eye with Mr Muslim when he remarks citing a selected passage for solving the problem of prepositions is not perhaps the appropriate way to judge their knowledge if examining the candidates knowledge of prepositions is not intended. By citing a small passage of the text how could the learned examiner intend to examine candidates knowledge of prepositions I wonder! Finally question No-6 involving phrases and idioms is yet another point. Mr Zaman has kept silent to the criticism regarding phrases.

We would therefore request the appropriate authorities to kindly take cautious steps in preparing question papers in future and take a lenient view in looking over the answer scripts of this year. We believe there should be a Board of question setters for each subject and then no controversy will arise. Yours, etc. PULOK HASAN, H.G. College Munshigonj, Dhaka.