

# CAMPUS

## Position and teaching of English

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The debate whether English should be the second or third language is finally over and it is now going to be taught as a compulsory second language in our schools and colleges.

In our neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan English is taught in the schools as a compulsory second subject. The importance of learning English these days can hardly be overlooked. If we are to keep pace with the fast developing world of science and technology we have to learn English as it is

marks and are quite happy with it.

As a result of this, there are two sets of students in the country—one who are very strong in English having studied at the English medium tutorials and the other products of our rural schools being weak in English.

Although English in being taught here for quite sometime nevertheless the standard of English has deteriorated fast in the last couple of years particularly after the liberation. If we are to revive the lost

orientation courses.

In spite of all these measures teaching of English is appalling in the country. The teachers who are trained to teach English refuse to adopt the methods that they have learnt as part of their training course in their classrooms. Once out of their training school they rather prefer to carry on with the methods that the already know, and use. As the teacher is not accountable to anyone else he can afford to do what he pleases especially as the modern methods of teaching

teachers to teach correctly and also in the long run help to bring uniform standard of English in the country.

The market is flooded with note books although legally English note books upto class eight are banned by law. These note books are of very poor quality written by ghost writers and edited by obscure editors. Even note books for class three English are available in the market. The same is true of note books of class nine, ten and the HSC level. These are full of grammatical, factual and other errors, or with question and answers which the students learn by heart in order to pass the examination and not to get good marks.

The same is very much true of the available grammar and composition books dealing mainly with definitions of different terms such as nouns, pronouns etc or full of translation and retranslation passages. Some even have stereotyped essays written in obsolete English. This is all the more true of letters in these grammar books which start with, "I beg most humbly to state" and end with "your most obedient pupil or your most faithful pupil etc."

Such books do more harm than good. They spoil the originality of a student. If notebooks and grammar books are to be patronised at all they should be written by experts and approved by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

Above all nothing will be of any use unless and until number of English teachers can be increased. In a good number of schools there is no separate teacher for teaching English but same teacher teaches a number of subjects. This practise should be discouraged.

At the college level a teacher teaches 120-150 students in a class. How can he do justice to his job.

Moreover except for RU, English is not compulsory at the DU or CU. Even at RU it is possible to pass BA without passing in English as long as one has the required aggregate.

We also have to decide from which class to start teaching English and also think about our syllabus and books if we want our children to speak fluently and also comprehend what is written. For this, we have to ensure that we have adequate trained teachers and proper books to back up the effort.



Students at DU's day care centre.

the most widely spoken language in the world.

This is not to say that English is not taught here. It is very much taught in our schools and colleges but the method of teaching is not satisfactory.

Those of us who stay in the villages have an aversion to English from our early school days. Although English is supposed to be taught in the primary schools from class three but in a number of institutions because of shortage of trained teachers English is not taught until class six. By that time it is natural that the students will learn to avoid it. Hence they just study to get pass

standard we have to think seriously about the method of teaching.

The National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee has a policy of teaching English from class three to class twelve. Textbooks have been written for all the ten classes and teachers are trained in Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) at the 54 primary training institutes, ten teacher training colleges, Institute of Education and Research and National Institute of Education Administration Extension and Research, to teach the students. Moreover, whenever a new book is published the teachers are given

involve a great deal of home task which most teachers are hesitant to do.

It is time to think about teachers guide. In the country there is dearth of such guides. One such book was published for class three, four and five by the UNICEF and National Curriculum and Textbook Board jointly but it is today out of print. Whether the copies of this guide were distributed free of cost to the primary schools and whether the teachers actually consulted it or not has not been evaluated.

Teachers guide for all classes at the primary and secondary level will help the