

# Teaching English in Multilingual Secondary Schools



# Teaching English in Multilingual Secondary Schools:

*Bridging Languages,  
Empowering Minds*

By

Reshma Tabassum

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## FOREWORD

English language, once considered alien among the Indian masses, has attained a high status in all walks of life. To think of a decent life and station in a corporate world without English is just impossible. A worldwide weapon for business transactions and upward mobility, the use of English has become mandatory. English has become a link language, and its effective use in all echelons reflects one's personality. While discreet use of every language is essential at all levels, English has an edge over other languages because of its universal appeal and acceptability beyond borders. Noam Chomsky, considered the father of modern linguistics, has rightly remarked, "*Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation*".

English language, too, is not an exception to the various changes which the world has witnessed. And in order to adapt to these changes, the new generation of learners have to respond wilfully to the innovations of language at different levels. The real learning of language, albeit, begins at home, school education plays a vital role in refining and polishing. In this regard Ms. Reshma Tabassum's book entitled *Teaching English in Multilingual Secondary Schools: Bridging Languages, Empowering Minds* can play a pivotal role in realising the need of learning English effectively. Descartes doesn't exaggerate when he says 'Thanks to language, man became Man'. Needless to mention that today's generation has to become more productive despite several challenges blocking their paths.

Dr. Reshma Tabassum's book is an outcome of her revised research work focused on the use of English language inside and outside the classroom in multilingual secondary schools of Darbhanga (Mithila region), where English is still being taught traditionally. The book suggests ways and means required to teach English through modern ways, empowering learners to carve their niche in a cut-throat competitive world. Ms. Tabassum suggests various tips to make the teaching and learning of English more friendly and practical.

I recommend Ms. Tabassum's book to the avid learners of both rural and urban India, to enhance their abilities of communicating effectively in English and to prove their mettle in all fields.

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## PREFACE

English has attained a very superior position in Indian society. It is widely used for communication purposes all over the world. It has spread because of colonisation, migration, and globalisation. Globalisation has led to linguistic ecology in many countries (Crystal 1997). English is taught in India as a second language, and English proficiency is one of the most sought-after goals in India. It is the language of most of the functional domains. English has a correlation with the social status of its users. Language is just like religion, and in some cases, it may be more powerful than religion. Language is a very powerful marker of human identity. Economic development encourages the development of English. Such development over the years has led to the globalisation of the world. For a global world, English is functional as a *lingua franca*. Thus, English gets prime attention in schools; it is the language of instruction in many schools. In my book, I have made an attempt to look at the teaching of English in multilingual classrooms, English teaching in schools and English as a language in our society, and also the position of English in the multilingual context of the city of Mithilanchal with reference to the nature and structure of language.

English is in a paradoxical situation in India. It is enmeshed in a variety of different situations; it is very much found in education, and its use is reduced to a minimal in the household domain. In the household domain, it is found in the houses of aristocrats and a highly-educated class of families. English has settled quite well in the Indian society.

This book begins with an introductory chapter. The first chapter deals with the history of the English language and English in education in India. The second chapter deals with the political history of Mithilanchal and the teaching of English in Mithilanchal. The third chapter deals with multilingualism in schools. The fourth chapter deals with the research methodology, using a detailed and carefully drafted questionnaire. From this, we get an idea of the teaching of English in the secondary schools of the city of Darbhanga (Mithilanchal and Darbhanga are used synonymously). In the last chapter, I conclude the work.



This book discusses multilingualism in the city of Mithilanchal, with special reference to the teaching of English in secondary schools. This study was carried out with the help of multilingual classrooms in some selected secondary schools of the city. I tried to find out about the teaching of English language in these schools; in most of the privately run English-medium schools, teaching takes place in English, as the medium of instruction. These schools are very popular, they are supposedly providing a better education and developing the English skills of the children. It will be seen that the competencies in English developed among these students vary from very good fluency to extremely poor. I also looked at the government-run secondary schools.

This book investigates the teaching methodologies adopted by the teachers of English of both types of schools: the government-run schools, and the privately run and managed English-medium schools. As the sample for my study, I picked eight schools, of which four belonged to the government and four to the privately managed English-medium schools. The names of the four government schools are H. B. Sogra Hasan Memorial School, Shafi Muslim Boys School, Ram Nandan Mishra Government Girls School, and L. H. Government High School. The names of the four privately managed English-medium schools are Woodbine Modern School, Don Bosco School, Rose Public School and Iqra Academy. In the English-medium schools, teaching is carried out mostly in English and rarely in Hindi, but in the government schools, teaching is carried out in Hindi and English words are used in between sentences. I found out, during my field work, that English teachers are required to have a sensitivity to language use and an understanding of the nature and structure of language. Without this, any emphasis on teaching using English as the medium of instructions (this is found especially in the English-medium schools) would not yield the desirable results. From the responses, I realised that most of the teachers did not have sufficient training in understanding the nature and the structure of the language and language use. Teachers need to know that the walls between the languages are porous; there are no hard boundaries between languages. They need to understand the principles of language acquisition and language learning. Learning takes place when we can interact with students. Interactions are natural and effective when we talk to children in their language. Children use the language of their society. The language in any given society is equivalent to multilingualism. This is what it meant when Agnihotri (2007) defined language as multilinguality. A lack of sensitivity will lead to failure in achieving the desired results. The languages that the children bring to schools from their surroundings are not respected and taken care of in the schools. They are taught in a

language that they are not very familiar with. The school appears as a foreign land to them and, hence, they feel alienated. These things together fail to bring the desired results from the students. This book is an attempt to find out how multilingualism can be used as a resource in delivering comprehensible and meaningful input (Krashen 1988).

Dr. Reshma Tabassum

# INTRODUCTION

English enjoys a very special status in Indian society. This may be because power, success, and prestige are attached to this language. This global language opens the door to many good opportunities in one's life. In realisation of its importance, the demand for this language has risen to a great extent; it has become a language of prime importance. It is hoped that by possessing a good knowledge of this language one can lead a glamorous and responsible life, which is availed of by the privileged class.

There are various factors responsible for the increasing role of English in every sphere of life. Among many, globalisation appears to be one such factor. Globally, people are interested in acquiring this language, the English language plays many roles in the modern era of globalisation (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997). Globalisation has led to an increase in mobility among people for various reasons, such as education, business, etc. To get a good education, one has to leave their state or country. In this case, knowing only one's regional language and a national language would not help them, they need to have a working knowledge of the language of the place where they go. This becomes a tougher job because one is generally moving to pursue education or a job. Here, English does a good job, by helping one to converse anywhere across the globe.

English is in a paradoxical situation in India. It is enmeshed in many different situations (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997). Its presence is felt from the formal domain that is education, to the informal domain that is the house hold. Its role is minimal in the home domain, it is generally used for conversations by the members of highly educated and aristocratic families. Language, just like religion, is one of the significant markers of human identity. It clearly shows to which community and to which place the speaker belongs. In India, the English language is everybody's second language. Indian schools, these days, give prime importance to English, but still there are only a few studies that explain how it is taught in schools.

This book tries to study and evaluate the teaching of English carried out in a multilingual secondary classroom in Mithilanchal, and subsequently suggests some effective teaching methodologies to be carried out in these

schools. English has become the target language of many schools because of its rising demand in nearly all domains, both formal and informal. There are several language teaching methodologies that have been adopted but, among them, the most common is the communicative approach.

The English language has attained the status of the language of communication all over the world. It enjoys a very special status in Indian society. In this book, I have also tried to find out about non-native speakers' attitudes towards this language. For this, apart from meeting the students, teachers, and parents of the schools, I have also visited some important places in the city, with the intention of meeting various types of people speaking different languages. These are religious places, courts, doctors' clinics, etc. Unsurprisingly, those interviewed had a positive view of the English language, nearly all of them showed their eagerness to learn this language if they get the chance. They did not show any sign of a non-native approach towards this language. They use this language in the form of code-mixing and code-switching. Most of them send their children to English-medium schools with the hope that their children will do well in this fast-moving world. Parents are enthusiastic and happy that they are doing the best for their children by sending them to the private English-medium schools. This has resulted in the mushrooming of English-medium schools in all of the cities, towns, and villages of India.

This book also examines multilingualism in the city of Darbhanga, through information gathered in visits to a number secondary schools in the city. At school, children who speak different languages come to study; they speak different languages inside and outside of the classroom. I visited schools in all areas—the east, west, north, and south—of the city. Two schools, one private English-medium, and the other government-run, were chosen in each direction to build a comprehensive picture of schools in the city. I made a set of questionnaires for the teachers and the students at different schools. I met and talked with them so that they would feel at ease to answer my questions. While talking with them, I got much more information than I expected, which also helped me to bring out the true picture of multilingualism prevalent in the city.

I also visited primary schools and madarsas, etc., to examine the concept of the existence of multilingualism inside and outside the classroom.

This book carefully brings out the extent of multilingualism prevalent in Mithilanchal, and endeavours to find out about the speakers of various languages in the city: their numbers, etc., and the most commonly used

languages heard and spoken among the bulk of the population. I hope that this enhances the picture of multilingualism in the city of Darbhanga (Mithilanchal and Darbhanga used synonymously) that this book presents.

Apart from obtaining valuable information regarding the prevalence of multilingualism in the city, I fulfilled my aim to study and understand the teaching of the English language in the secondary schools of the city. When I visited the schools, I talked to the management teams, the teachers, and the students at each school. I asked the English teachers how they taught the students: what methodology did they adopt in teaching so that they achieved the maximum output from the students? How are the teacher and the student relationships maintained in the class? I also attended the classes of many of the English teachers, with their permission. This helped me to get first-hand information regarding their teaching methodology. I applied this methodology for both types of schools, private and government-run. I also met roughly ten students from each school: among them, five were students from class IX and five were from class X. I talked with these students about various aspects of the teaching of English that went on in their classes: for example, the number of English classes that were held in a week, whether they found the English classes interesting or not, their interest in English, how the teachers taught in the English lessons, if they completely understood what the teachers wanted to teach them, and what medium of instruction was generally followed in their classes.

I used these visits and discussions to evaluate the language-teaching methodologies adopted by the schools of Darbhanga. Furthermore, I also tried to find out how multilingualism can be used as a resource in delivering “comprehensible and meaningful input” (Krashen 1988).

I chose this topic—*Teaching English in Multilingual Secondary Schools: Bridging Languages, Empowering Minds*—because I was motivated to study both the English language and Darbhanga. I have been fond of English since the initial days of my schooling. I was educated in a private English-medium school, located in Jharkhand. There, the students were asked to speak in English and the medium of instruction was also English. Stress was often put on the writing skills of the students, though the communicative approach to learning the English language was also strongly present. The students had to participate in debates, extempore speeches, quizzes, competitions, etc. These things collectively helped the students by building our confidence and increasing our conversational skills in English. I chose the city of Darbhanga because I am a resident

here and I became interested in knowing its linguistic features and how the teaching of the English language occurs in this city. There are many schools located in all four directions of the city, both private English-medium and government-run schools. English-medium schools are open in nearly every mohalla and gali of the city. These private schools have big, attractive names in English, like Don Bosco School, Little Angel School, Mother Teresa Public School, Scholar Public School, Woodbine Modern Public School, Jesus and Mary School, Rose Public School, etc. I would often come across these schools, and a simple question would arise in my brain: are these schools really helping society by teaching English in proper way? Or are they simply helping themselves by charging exorbitant rates of fees. The other, and even more important, thing that came into my mind was that English is a language that has spread its tentacles into all domains, so this language should be properly taught. I decided that I would write a book on a topic that would help me to find out these things and to provide suggestions, if required, for the improvement of English teaching methodologies in schools, which might be beneficial for the students.

This book is divided into seven parts, including four main chapters. The design of the chapters is as follows:

Introduction

History of English Language and English in Education in India

Political History of Mithilanchal and Teaching English in Mithilanchal

Multilingualism in Schools

Research Methodology

Conclusion

References

In the chapter entitled *History of English Language and English in Education in India*, I have concentrated on English in secondary education in the city of Darbhanga, in particular, and the role of English education in general. There are many factors responsible for the increasing role of English in our lives. Apart from globalisation, the other reasons are education, jobs, businesses, etc. It would not be easy to learn the language of each state or country one visits—it would be next to impossible. This has led to an increase in the number of learners of this language. People have started realising its importance: that this is the language that opens doors to broader prospects in one's career. It acts as a link language, and bridges the gap between two different languages. English, today, occupies an important place in the school curriculum. It has become an important aspect of

education. Education is a significant aspect of our lives, therefore, the role of English becomes very important in our education system. It can be said that education has become the fourth necessity of our lives, after food, clothing, and shelter.

I organised Chapter 1 as follows. The first part deals with the Old English period, which fell between AD 450 and AD1150. This section investigates the phonetics, morphology, and syntax of the Old English period. In phonetics, I dealt with all four sound changes that occurred during this period: voicing, palatalisation, breaking, and fronting (Gelderon 2006). In the morphology section for this period, we find that verbs come at the end of sentences, unlike in Modern English, where the verb is found in the middle of the sentence. In Old English, third-person pronoun was available in all three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter, like in Modern English grammar. The syntax of the Old English period was very flexible: the word order of the sentence was not very important in this period.

Then, I discussed the Middle English period in a similar pattern of phonetics, morphology, and syntax. This period fell between 1150 and 1500. Changes in phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon, dialects, etc., were visible from 1150. On the basis of the development of these things, the period from 1150 to 1500 is termed Middle English. I have also discussed the loan words from French, Celtic, and Scandinavian found during this period. Some borrowed words (1066–1500) from French are related to government, law, learning, art and fashion, food, and religion (Baugh and Cable 2002; Neilson 2005): *royal, state, governor, jury, dinner, supper, etc.* Derivational words from French loans can also be found in this period. Books on literature, court, and church became available in English after 1300 (Baugh and Cable 2002).

The Modern English period began in 1500 and continues to the present day. Like the other two periods of the English language, this period was also discussed similarly, in a pattern of phonetics, morphology, and syntax. The Great Vowel Shift (GVS) occurred in this period, spelling became standardised, and stress was put on the correct pronunciations. The word order in the Modern English period is SVO: subject, verb, and object. The highest number of loan words entered English during this period. Garner (1982) and Wermser (1976) were of the opinion that, between 1500 and 1660, nearly 27,000 new words arrived. Thus, we find that the English language has travelled a long way from the time of its beginning, with lots of changes since then. Now, it has reached a place where we are using it for various purposes in our day-to-day lives; it has

become a necessity to know and use this language in our communication with one another.

The English language has flourished, and is still flourishing, because of its increasing demand everywhere. In India, this language has penetrated both formal and informal domains, though its role is minimal in the home domain. The credit for starting the use of this language in education in India goes to Lord Macaulay.

I have also dealt with the role of missionaries in the spread of English in India in that chapter. I discussed the arrival of the British Missionaries in 1614, Macaulay's Minute in 1835, which brought about a turning point in education in India, and also the policy of Lord Charles Wood in 1854, which came forward with liberal views regarding education. Even though Lord Wood showed the importance of vernacular language in education, the position of English is unabated.

In that chapter, I also discussed the place of English in education after independence. English flourished after independence, but its steep rise only came after the 1990s—after globalisation. According to a report in *The Times of India*, dated 2 March 2010, for the fourth year, English was the fourth medium of instruction in India and its speakers were large in number. Nearly, 4% of Indians use English in different domains (Crystal 1995). This 4% controls nearly all of the major domains: administration, the judiciary system, science and technology, media, schools, the social sphere, home, etc. I have also discussed the presence of English in some form or other in nearly all households. It may be in the form of newspapers, books, children's education, television, radio, etc. The English language is commonly used, consciously or unconsciously, by the literate, semi-literate, and illiterate classes of people in their daily conversations in their day-to-day lives, in the form of code-mixing and code-switching. Thus, we see that this language has fully established itself in Indian society.

The second chapter of my book deals with the *Political History of Mithilanchal and Teaching English in Mithilanchal*.

It is necessary to know the political history of a place to successfully study elements of life in that particular city, town, or region, etc. Since my area of work is focused on teaching English in the schools of Darbhanga at secondary level, I will be concentrating on that. The second chapter provides ample support for carrying out my work.



In that chapter, I have discussed geographic features, languages, ancient activities, academic profiles, the multilingual structure, etc., and have correlated these things with the teachings in the secondary schools of Darbhanga.

Mithila is a rich linguistic region. It is stretched between latitudes 25°N and 26°52' N, and longitude 84° 46' E. It is surrounded by the Himalayas to the north; the Ganga to the south; the Gandaki river to the west; and the Kosi to the east (Imperial Gazetteer of India, part III, Mithila). Darbhanga city is located in the very heart of Mithilanchal, it is situated at 26.17° N and 85.9° E (online). This district is surrounded by Madhubani in the north; Samastipur in the south; Saharsa in the east; and Sitamarhi and Muzaffarpur districts in the west.

There are many languages spoken in Darbhanga. They are Maithili, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Marwari, Punjabi, Sindhi, Nepali, Gujarati, Marathi, etc. However, the commonly heard languages are Maithili, Hindi and Urdu. Hindi and Urdu sound similar, as earlier, both came under the Hindustani language. Day by day, the number of speakers of the Maithili language is decreasing. They are switching to Hindi in their normal discourse. It is seen that Hindi enjoys the same position in its relationship to Maithili that English enjoys with regards to Hindi in India (Kumar 2001). The number of speakers of other languages is also decreasing.

The culture of this land is rich and full of life. This is mainly because of the mixture of religions followed in this land. Here, we find temples of Saiva, Sakta, and Vaisnava. A large number of mosques are also present. Apart from temples and mosques, we also find both Protestant and Catholic churches, and Gurudwaras. Mithila's Godna and wall paintings are very unique and famous in themselves.

This land has been the centre of learning for a long time. Earlier, the medium of instruction of this land was Sanskrit, and this language played an important role in maintaining and promoting unity. English education started quite late in this land. This can be proved by the report of the director of public instruction, Bihar, given in 1876:

The fact of Tirhut Brahmins attending the schools is an encouraging sign because tenets of their religion have hitherto led them to regard any attempt to educate the people in English with distrust and suspicion is the ignorant belief.....

Academically, Darbhanga is marching forward. It has a large medical college and two famous universities: namely, Latit Narayan Mithila University and Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University. Apart from these, the town has a women's engineering college, a polytechnic college, private dental colleges, and two regional centres for distance education—Indira Gandhi National Open University and Maulana Azad National Open University.

I hope that my book conveys that Darbhanga is a multilingual town. Multilingualism is not a new thing for this city, though it only became visible long after India won independence. Multilingualism in Darbhanga is the product of close contact between people of different languages and the Maithilis. The coexistence of many languages, races, religions, and cultures is the essence of Darbhanga.

Darbhanga is advancing in the field of education. The people of this land want to be part of the mainstream, and because of this, they give too much importance to the English language. The people of this land understand the importance of English and want to use this language. They are interested in sending their children to private English-medium schools, so that they can perform better in life with the help of this language. The increasing demand for English has led to the opening of many English-medium schools; the opening of English-medium schools has become a good business in Darbhanga. There are many government-run schools in the town too but the children of educated and economically sound families are not generally found in them.

In the third chapter of my book, I have dealt with *Multilingualism in Schools*. Multilingualism is a worldwide phenomenon. Further, the multilingualism in this country is unparalleled in the world. India's history of multilingualism is quite long. It dates back to ancient times when ethnic groups or races came in contact with one another because of migration from one place to another. Each state of India is multilingual. The linguistic majority of one state is the linguistic minority of another, and vice-versa. In this chapter, firstly, I dealt with the multilingualism found in India and, then gradually, I came to the multilingualism found in Mithilanchal, Darbhanga, and, then, to multilingualism in schools. The multilingualism found in the schools of this city is just a dissection of the multilingualism found in India.

In this chapter, I dealt with the various aspects of language in society, how language creates society, and the interdependence of language use and

society. I also dealt with speech community, variations in language, and speech community and schools. This chapter further dealt with multilingualism in India, language contact, first- and second-language acquisition, multilingualism in pedagogy, multilingualism in Darbhanga, the role of language in schools, and English and multilingualism.

Language is one of the most fundamental aspects of human behaviour and it is a social phenomenon. It can be said that society is the cause and language is the effect. Language acts as an intermediary between the individual and society. There is an inter-relationship between language and society.

Languages are not born of themselves, like that of herbs' roots. They grow in contact with other languages. Edward (1994) called languages inorganic parasites that live on human hosts. On receiving favourable conditions, the language grows. It is also known that all languages do not occupy the same strata. They are placed according to their rank in a hierarchical order. India is a multilingual country, where Hindi and English enjoy the higher strata. The languages in the higher strata have greater territorial reach.

I have also tried to show in my book the dynamic role of schools in a linguistic context. We find children speaking different languages; interacting with their fellow friends either in their mother tongue or in the national language, or in English, depending on the type of school and the prevailing environment. Reputed English-medium schools put stress on English as the medium of instruction and also as a medium of conversation. The schools act as agents in building the gap between the different categories of students. The languages of ethnic minority children are checked at the initial, or lower, level by many schools. Multilingual schools take care of the diversity of languages and literary practices that children bring to schools.

The fourth chapter of the book dealt with the *Research Methodology*. This was an important chapter of my work as it showed how I have carried out my work in the schools. This chapter shows the multilingual structure of the city and the people's inclination toward the English language. Many present residents of the city—*Punjabi, Bengali, Marwari, etc.*—came to this city immediately after independence, though some came even before independence. They started their careers with small businesses and now they are well settled in this city and have become permanent settlers of this land. These people speak their own languages at home and with their near and dear ones but, when they go out of their home, they generally speak in

Maithili or Hindi, which are the more prevalent or common languages of the city. It was like compulsion on the part of the migrated people to learn the dominant languages of the city to run their businesses successfully. They did not learn this language by going to any schools, but by regular contact with the Maithili and Hindi speakers.

During my research, I realised that whatever languages people speak, almost all of them have a fascination with the English language. Highly literate people converse with their fellow friends in English, and they send their children to reputed English-medium schools like Holy Cross School, Madonna, Woodbine, Rose Public, etc. Others who, themselves, cannot speak properly in English are eager for their children to become fluent in English. With this hope, they send their children to private English-medium schools. There is a great rush for children to go to these schools because of people's opinion that the English language is the key to success in one's life. They are of the opinion that this language will open up wider prospects in their children's lives. They know that this language will help them to get very good jobs in the private sectors. Globalisation has led to an increasing number of MNCs in the towns and cities of India. To get jobs in these places, fluency in the English language is compulsory. Even in government jobs, a good knowledge of the English language helps a person to get better position.

The people of Darbhanga have started realising the importance of the English language and are sending their children to private English-medium schools. The great rush for these schools has resulted in a large number of these schools being opened. Parents spend huge amounts of money on their children's education, with great hopes and expectations of the schools and their children. Now, the question is, are the schools meeting the expectations of the parents? The simple answer is: even if not much, then at least to some extent. These private schools are reaping the benefits from both the parents' desires to see their children speaking in English, and the parents' loss of faith in the government-run schools. These private schools are successful businesses in this city. In nearly every Mohalla and Gali of the city, we see attractively named private English-medium schools. Some of these schools are good, where the teaching goes on properly in English and attention is paid to the overall development of the children's personalities. However, it can also be seen that some of these schools are just running in two rooms without any playground for the children. In these schools, too, there are children. The schools' management teams are benefitting from people's inclination towards this language. The city also has many government-run schools but, as teaching

in these schools goes on in Hindi and the classes are not held properly because of the teachers' engagement in other work such as census duty and election duty, parents have lost faith in these schools. Still, these schools also have students.

Darbhanga city has been linguistically, culturally, and educationally rich for a long time. Linguistically, it is rich because many languages are spoken here. Apart from Maithili, Hindi/ Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Marwari, Sindhi, etc., are all spoken here. Culturally, too, the city is very famous because of its Godna and wall paintings. Educationally, it has advanced well since ancient times. In the ancient times, the medium of instruction was Sanskrit. This land is famous for its learned scholars, like Vidyapati, Kumaril Bhatt, Nagarjun, etc.

In order to see the teaching of English in the multilingual secondary schools of Darbhanga, I made sure to select schools covering the dominant and minority language speakers' areas. My intention for doing this was to cover almost all of the different language speakers. I visited all eight chosen schools: Woodbine Public School, Rose Public School, Don Bosco School, Iqra Academy, H.B. Sogra Hasan Memorial School, Shafi Muslim School, R. N. M. School and L. M. High School, and met with the English teachers of classes IX and X. I, first, introduced myself to them and told them the purpose of my visits. After noticing that they were convinced with what I had said, I tried to be cordial to them. In the midst of our discourses, I distributed the questionnaires that I had made. The questionnaires were designed to get the maximum information possible regarding the teaching methodology adopted by them, their training with respect to SCERT books, the sort of discipline they used in the class, etc. I also met with the students of classes IX and X of those schools. I distributed the questionnaires among ten students (five of class IX and five of class X) from each school. These students provided valuable information regarding the schools' profiles. A total of eighty students were interviewed, of which forty were from privately managed English-medium schools, and forty were from government-run schools. All interviews were carried out successfully. The last section of my field work dealt with the analysis made between the responses of the teachers and the students. This was done with view to bringing forth the effective teaching results.



# CHAPTER 1

## THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH IN EDUCATION IN INDIA

### 1. Introduction

We are in a period where the demand for the English language is huge. English is regarded as a language of power, success and prestige. English has become increasingly associated with important jobs, both in the public and private sector, and in higher education. Industries like information technology, tourism, and aviation generate jobs that require fluency in English. The top five information technology companies spend US \$500 million a year on the education and training of their employees (online). English links the whole world, by bridging the gaps; it connects the people. Learning English helps one to stay well informed, as the majority of websites are available in English, and this increases our career prospects. Nowadays, our government is sending students to learn science and technology. For this, a good knowledge of English is compulsory. It occupies an important place in the school curriculum.

English is an important aspect of education. Education has increased the role of English. Education is a significant aspect of our life, therefore, English becomes an important part of our education system. In today's world, education has become the fourth necessity of our life, after food, clothing, and shelter. Its importance is rising in India. Education guides us on how to think and work properly. Regarding education, the Kothari Commission said:

No nation can leave its security only to the Police and the Army, to a large extent national security depends upon the education of citizens, their knowledge of affairs, their characters and sense of discipline and their ability to participate effectively in security measure.

I am aiming to study English in secondary education, in the city of Mithilanchal (Mithilanchal and Darbhanga are used synonymously) in particular, and the role of English in education in general. There are many

factors responsible for the increasing role of English in every sphere of our lives, and globalisation appears to be one such factor. The movement of people across borders has increased for various reasons, such as business, education, etc. It is not easy to learn the language of each country one visits; this would be next to impossible, which has led to an increase in the number of learners of the English language.

This chapter is about the history of the English language. To know this, we focus on how and when this language came into existence; and how it gradually spreads its tentacles in different parts of the world, and in our own country of India. We will focus on how the demand for English in the educational system grew. However, our primary concern is to find out about the teaching of English in the secondary schools of India, and, more specifically, we will focus on the secondary schools of Darbhanga. We know that students with different linguistic backgrounds come to schools in Darbhanga. English developed its roots in education, and in Indian education particularly, over a long period of time. Its significance grew after Macaulay's education policy of 1835, and English is now a key part of our education system.

This chapter is organised as follows: the first section deals with the Old English period. This section investigates the English language on the basis of its features, from phonetics to morphology and syntax. The second section outlines the Middle English period. I will provide a description of the Middle English period on the basis of phonetics, phonology, and syntax again. The third section of this chapter will cover with the Modern English period. The final section of this chapter involves the present position of English teaching in the secondary schools of Darbhanga.

Different writers have divided the phases of the English language in different ways. Graddol (1997) categorised it into several phases: the Pre-English period (c. AD 450), Early Old English (c.450–850), Later Old English (c.850–1100), Middle English (c.1100–1450), Early Modern English (c.1450–1750), Modern English (c.1750–1950), and Late Modern English (c.1950–). Gelderen (2006) divided the period into four phases: Old English (AD 450–1150), Middle English (1150–1500), Early Modern English (1500–1700), and Modern English (1700–now).

In the following section on the Old English period, I will discuss the development of English and the features of Old English including phonetics/phonology, morphology, and syntax.



## 2. The Old English Period (450–1150)

In this section, we deal with the phonetics, morphology, and syntax of Old English. Even though English probably existed before the official beginning of the Old English period in AD 450, I will only focus on this period. In the Old English period, spelling was not difficult because words were written as they were pronounced.

### Phonetics (Sound):

Four significant sound changes occurred during the Old English period. They were voicing, palatalisation, breaking, and fronting. Voicing and palatalisation affect consonant sounds, and breaking and fronting affect vowels.

**Table 2.1.** Fricative voicing

[f]	>	[v]	between two voiced sounds
[s]	>	[z]	between two voiced sounds
[θ]	>	[ð]	between two voiced sounds

This can be found in the pronunciation of “wife,” “half,” “knife,” “leaf,” etc., where *f* in word’s final position becomes *v* in the plural: *wives*, *halves*, *knives* and *leaves*, etc., between two vowels.

Words like “vase,” “voice,” “vaccine,” “variety,” “value,” “village,” etc, in singular have the [s] sound and in plural the [z] sound comes out, like *vases*, *voices*, *vaccines*, *varieties*, *values*, *villages*, etc.

**Table 2.2.** Palatalisation

Sc	[Sk]	>	[f]
c	[k]	>	[tʃ]
g	[g]	>	ʒ[j]

Thus, the Germanic word “skirt” became the Old English *shirt*; “scatter”—*shatter*; “kirk”—*church*; “egg”—*eye*, etc. Skirt and egg exist in Modern English because other Germanic languages did not undergo palatalisation (Gelderen, 2006).

**Table 2.3.** Breaking

i	>	io/eo
e	>	eo
æ	>	ea

In this case, “ald” and “half” become *eald* and *healf*, “were” becomes *weorc* and “picts” becomes *peohtas*. This rule applies when the vowel is followed by *l* or *r* and another consonant, or when the vowel is followed by *h* (Campbell, 1959). Most probably, this took place around the seventh century in the south (or West Saxon). Some other words that undergo breaking are “beasn”–*child*; “heard”–*hard*; “pealm”–*palm*; “eahta”–*eight*.

**Table 2.4.** Fronting

u	>	y later i before [i]
o	>	e before [i]
a	>	æ before [i]

Some examples of fronting by Gelderen (2006) are given below:

“mouse”–*mice*; “goose”–*geese*; “tooth”–*teeth*; “foot”–*feet*; “fall”–*fell*.

Some more examples of fronting and raising occur in the pairs like these: “man”–*men*; “long”–*length*; “whole”–*heal*; “food”–*feed*.

### Morphology:

This section will provide some information on pronoun paradigms and pronoun reflexives. These are given below:

**Table 2.5.** Old English Pronouns

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Dual</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>First NOM</b>	ic	Wit	We
<b>GEN</b>	min	uncer	Ure
<b>DAT</b>	me	Unc	Us
<b>ACC</b>	me/mec	unc(at)	us/usic
<b>Second NOM</b>	pu	Git	Ge
<b>GEN</b>	pin	incer	Eower
<b>DAT</b>	pe	Inc	Eow
<b>ACC</b>	pe/pec	inc(it)	eow/eowic
<b>Third NOM</b>	he/heo/hit	-	hi/hie
<b>(M/F/N) GEN</b>	his/hire/his	-	hira/hiera
<b>DAT</b>	him/hire/him	-	Him
<b>ACC</b>	hine/hi(e)hit	-	hi/hie

It was found that the text of Old English varied in Orthography. For example, hiene, hine, hyne are masculine singular accusative pronouns and hie, hi and heo are third-person plural nominative and accusative pronouns.

In Old English, the **adjective** *self* is used in an emphatic manner and not as a reflexive.

- (1) *æpele cempa self mid gesidum*  
 noble fighter-NOM self-NOM with follower-DAT.P  
 “The noble fighter himself with his followers.” (Beowulf, 1312–13).

In Old English Grammar, the **verb** comes at the end of the sentence, which we have already found in the above sentence: “sealde.” In today’s English, we find that the verb comes in the middle of the sentence. It separates the subject from the object. For example, “Yamna loves her brother Ahsan very much.” During the Old English period, the use of auxiliaries was not very frequent. Words like “can,” “could,” “will”, and “would” were regular verbs in Old English. “Have” and “be” were used as main verbs in Old English. The difference in these words is that they lose their meanings but gain grammatical functions. Infinitives in Old English had the ending “an” and an optional “to,” very closely connected to the infinitival verb. Looking to these things, we can say that Old English is syntactic, whereas Modern English is analytical.

Old English grammar, like Modern English shows its third-person pronouns in all the three forms of gender: masculine, feminine, and neuter. We can see that Old English marks grammatical gender on the basis of demonstratives, adjectives, and nouns. The grammatical gender of the noun determines the gender of the demonstrative and the adjective. In case of the demonstrative and adjective, the masculine forms are used before masculine nouns, for instance, *cýning* “king”; the feminine forms for feminine nouns, such as *lufu* “love”; and the neuter forms for neuter nouns, such as *godspel* “gospel.” The grammatical gender need not correspond to the natural gender of a noun; for example, *wif* “women” and *cild* “child” are neuter (Gelderen, 2006).

In Old English Grammar, **Reflexive Pronouns**, such as *myself* and *himself*, did not occur. They were used in the later text:

- (2) *ic on earde bad* I...ne swor fela  
 I on earth was-around...not me-DAT swore wrong  
 “I was around on earth...I never perjured myself.” (Beowulf, 2736–38).

**Adverbs** in Old English had many endings, such as *-e*, as given in the example below, and *-lice*, which later became *-ly*.

- (3) heofodwope hlude crime  
 Voice-DAT loud-ADV cry out-is  
 “I cry out loudly with my voice.” (from Riddle 8, Line3).

The **verb ending** depends on the tense (present and past), the person and number (of the subject), and the mood (imperative and subjunctive).

In the case of a strong verb, we find that there is a change in the main verb vowel in the past and the past participle: for example, ring, rang, rung; drive, drove, driven. In the case of a weak verb, we find *-ed* inflection: walk, walked, walked; plant, planted, planted.

## Syntax:

In this section, we will deal with Old English word order and adverbs.

The syntax of Old English is very flexible because of the declension of the nouns. The **word order** was not very important in the sentence because of the case endings. It told the function of the word in the sentence. But gradually, it was noticed that, because less importance was paid on case endings, it began to diminish from the language. In Modern English, word order bears importance because declension was removed from the sentence.

In Old English, we find the omission of the subject pronoun, prepositions and articles:

- (4) Geherest pu eadancer (Gelderen, 2006)  
 hearyou Eadwacer  
 “Do you hear Eadwacer?” (from Wulf and Eadwacer).

The **word order** was not very important in the sentence because of the **case endings**. The verb and the pronouns have more fixed positions.

- (5) hwæt gehyrest pu  
 what hear you  
 “[What so you hear?]”

**Adverbs** in Old English, like those of Modern English, were used to express the mood of the reader. Adverbs are found with –e or –lic endings.

- (6)      ac        hi        pah        ledað    to        deðe    onende  
          but they though lead to death in end  
          “But they lead to death, however, in the end.” (Lambith Homilies, 1175).

In Old English grammar, we find that the **negative adverb** often immediately precedes the verb. For example:

- (7)      Ic ne dyde  
          “I did not.”

This part of the chapter provides an overview of phonetics, morphology, and syntax.

In the following section on Middle English, I will try to discuss the development of English and its features, including phonetics/phonology, morphology, and syntax, as I have done for Old English.

### 3. Middle English Period (1150–1500)

In this section, we will deal with the phonetics, morphology, and syntax of Middle English. Developments in phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon, dialects, etc., were mostly visible from 1150. On the basis of these developments, the period from 1150 to 1500 was termed Middle English.

The organisation of this part of the history of the English language is done in similar manner to the previous one, i.e., phonetics, morphology, and syntax.

#### **Phonetics (Sound):**

Looking at the phonetics of Old English, we realise that many changes took place for it to become Middle English. In this period, we find consonant deletion, such as [g], [h], [w] and [l], and vowel shifting. The Great Vowel Shift (GVS) had not occurred in the early part of this period. It occurred in 1400.

**Table 3.1.** (Gelderen, 2006)

OE		ME	OE		ME
Boga	>	Bow	Ploga	>	Plow
Dæg	>	Day	Pugal	>	Owl
Sezal	>	Sail	Fæger	>	Fair
Nægd	>	Nail	Dragan	>	Draw
Halgion	>	hallow	Morgen	>	Morrow

**Table 3.2.** Consonants in Middle English (Gelderen, 2006)

Manner:	Stop	Fricative	Affricate	Nasal	Liquid	Glide
Place						
Labial	p/b	f/v		M		W
Dental		θ/ð				
Aleolar	t/d	s/z		N	`lr	
Alveo-palatal		ʃ	tʃ/dʒ			J
Velar	k/g	h/v		ŋ		

There was the loss of [h] in consonant clusters, for example in the words *half* “loaf,” *hnutu* “nut,” and *hnacod* “naked.” This slowly became the norm in writing.

### Morphology:

The Middle English pronouns underwent many changes. We find changes in the endings of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. From the Old English third person plural, the pronouns of this period, first, become *th-* from *h*. The changes started in the north with the nominative. We can see this in the sentence below.

*wat heo ihoten weoren; wonne heo comen*

“what they were called and from—where they came”  
(Layamon, 8, Appendix).

### External Changes:

#### *Latin Loans:*

Words borrowed during 450–1150 from Latin are of commercial, military, religious, and cultural importance. Nearly one thousand words were borrowed from Latin during the renaissance. Here are some of them: