

**"A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND
ITS USE BY PROFESSIONALS AND NON-
PROFESSIONALS OF BARODA CITY"**

**A Synopsis Submitted to
THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Education)**

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October, 1999**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Wisdom is to know each other. So, one of the main duties of human beings is to know themselves as individuals and as groups. This knowledge cannot be attained without a means and the best means of attaining knowledge and facilitating communication is language. Language is one of the most powerful and greatest means of communication. It is the easiest tool of exchanging one's thoughts, feelings, desires and exchanging the views and ideas either orally or in a written form. The importance of language can never be underestimated. Nobody can deny that language is extremely important, vital and necessary in the day-to-day life of every human being. It is by and large the only means we rely on to express our feelings, thoughts, wishes and desires. In this present Age of Communication, when knowledge and scientific inventions are recorded and retrieved, day after day, language becomes a vital and an important means, on which human beings are by and large relying upon.

Communication is being carried out among individuals, within the society and outside the society. To comprehend and to share the experiences and events of this present scientific world and to cope up with the changing ways of life, man needs to know more than his own language so that he can link himself with all the areas of existence. A person's outlook will almost inevitably be provincial, if he confines himself to his own language. In order to keep in touch with every activities of in the changing modalities of life, learning a foreign language has become a basic need. In case, the language learned is one like English, that has universal status, it will enable the individual to pick up more information which, in turn, would make him able to see things in a wider perspective and reach out to a larger audience.

Today, English has been spreading around the world making itself the second language of the world, after Chinese and the first global language with respect to international usage. With the recent expansion and extension of non-ethnocentred purposes, irrespective of nationality, English language education became one of the several umbrella labels that are applied to the complex field of teaching and learning. English literature is wide and various as life itself, offering potential benefits to the learners to increase in the power of judgment of critical balance and speculative equity.

Traditionally, English language teaching gave much emphasis to the usages of language, i.e., grammar. However, the contemporary studies, realizing the needs and

purposes of the learners, started much emphasis to specific purposes and needs of the learners, like ESP (English for Specific Purposes). These studies usually focus attention on discovering ways as to how language is used in real communication and how it can meet the needs of the learners.

From the late fifties onwards, rapid developments in the field of politics, economics and technology have brought about a radical shift in priorities for English language teaching which resulted in the rapid expansion of technological education in developed as well as developing countries. This has led to the development of an increasingly varied range of professional, specialist, technical colleges, polytechnics, law, medicine etc. The basic contrast between English as a foreign language for external communication and as second language for specialized internal functions became sharper. Learners started realizing their needs and targets for learning the language and specifically why they are learning the language. This generally affects the pressure and development on the language teaching profession to deliver the required needs, where the learners had no question of wasting their time and go through with their untainted requirements and limitations in order to make a success at their specific fields. With this, the needs of English for special purpose i.e. to meet and to know the needs and wants of the learners started realizing. Emphasis has been given to this aspect, rather than simply learning the language for pleasure and prestige. The increase in demand for English in every field to suit the particular needs of the learners helped in developing the specialization in language learning.

In a complex multilingual society like that of India, English plays a very predominant role touching the various spheres of national life. As a result, concerning the teaching and learning of English, pressures are mounting on the teachers of English tremendously. The English language pedagogy is now facing several new challenges with respect to providing the right types of courses to the learners fulfilling the need of their specific field. So, finding and identifying the needs and requirements of different categories of professionals and non-professionals will at least help in framing appropriate courses. Knowledge as to how different professionals and non-professionals learned English, how they make use of it in their day-to-day life, and their opinions as to the type of courses they need to undergo, etc, is of utmost importance in providing them better opportunity for learning the language.

II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Language acts more or less as one of the most important means of communication amongst the human beings. Human beings are social animals and through language only they are differentiated from other animals. Today, drastic changes owing to advancement of new technologies and scientific inventions have necessitated men to communicate more with other people. As different people speak different languages, in different parts of the world, communication through language becomes a problem. This has led to the learning of languages other than one's mother tongue.

With the tremendous growth of modernization, industrialization, economic and scientific development, learners need a wide diffusion of the scientific temper of mind. Learners should have the readiness to adapt new techniques and new knowledge to their needs to keep pace with the ever changing modern complex society. Thus, in a vast country like India, with its several ethnolinguistic contrasts, the only way to overcome the problem is to have facility with a language that has universal application. English, with its intrinsic quality and unifying function seems to be the only alternative that can preserve the unity and integration amongst the different ethnolinguistic groups.

Ever since India became independent in 1947, the heated arguments related to the status of English still remains the same as before, due to many socio-cultural and political interests. This resulted in bringing about a hindrance to the growth and expansion of education and modernization. The role of English language in India for shaping the patterns of living of a large number of people cannot be underestimated. In spite of all the controversial and contradictory arguments, English language has retained its status unproblematically as one of the important and main functioning languages which help in keeping in touch with every activities of life in its tremendous growth of development. English is assumed to be deeply concerned in uniting the masses of different dialectical people. It also plays a significant role in bringing about advances and benefits of the contemporary knowledge to the multilingual people of India.

English is considered to be the language of science, technology and advanced literature. In India, a majority of the standard journals, magazines, and books published are found mostly in English. This helps in acquiring better knowledge of science and technology, social sciences, industry and health. English plays a vital role in producing and promoting changes and accepting new trends in the society. English helps in generating modernity, imparting new knowledge and skills and in providing a formal system of living

which is found in the advanced countries of the world. Learning a language like English has become a very important aspect in order to succeed in every field of our life. It has, therefore, acquired a great instrumental value as it promotes social mobility, status and power through highly remunerative jobs and positions. Its use is associated with material progress in many parts of the world. English is a language rich in literature and also covers a large spectrum of science and technology as well as industries and commerce. In India, still English continues to influence the life and profession of the majority of the educated Indians in every aspects of their life. Thus, in order to cope with the drastic changes brought about by science, technology, social sciences, industry, health and commerce, etc. the scientists and the concerned professionals or intellectuals should have adequate knowledge of English to be successful in their own specific profession or work.

Ever since India became independent, political leaders, eminent educationists, scientists and scholars have been endeavoring to bring about renovations of English language teaching in the country. To extirpate the ideology of English language teaching with the departure of the British would be a naive to assume and at the same time, English though served as an overreaching category, it would not be possible to create any organic unity among the vernaculars without English. This seems to be particularly absurd in view of the fact that English language teaching policy did not change substantially after independence. Although, the English language retained its status at the educational field, the fate of the English language teachers and the learners does not seem to be very pleasant. The context of English language teaching in India entails radical revision and renovations. The pedagogical assumptions must be in consonance with the contemporary realities. There is a serious need of developing the necessary infrastructure and teaching aids for proper training of the teachers so that real atmosphere could be created for natural socialization of English learners from the lower level to the higher level in order to keep up with the present world.

Initially, English language teaching was in a traditional way stressing much of the usage of norms and rules of the language, i.e., Grammar. It was learned for the pleasure and prestige of knowing the language. A knowledge of a foreign language especially English was generally regarded as a sign of a well rounded education, but few had really questioned why it was necessary. English usually served to preserve the identity of the elite. Now, English has become a subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people, which resulted into motivating to and therefore on the effectiveness of learning. The English pedagogy in India is now facing new challenges of providing the right type of courses respectively concerning to the needs and demands of the learners.

It has long seemed unjust that a growing number of young people learning English and also studying science and technology should be forced to learn their English largely through the study of literature and literary criticism, simply because that has been the only form of teaching offered to them which resulted in spending more time and effort learning materials that are not their primary concern. The curriculum needs updating and slimming down to the specific needs of the learners. The pedagogy should be less cultural and in particular less bound up with English literature, as well as should be more instrumental, whereby the learners can open a window on to the modern world, especially the world of science, technology, the media, trade and industry, and international aid and administration. More emphasis is needed to be given towards the learners, their needs, in order to help them in acquiring better proficiency relating to their specialist fields or professions. This focus on the specialist areas, resulted into the emergence of the pedagogy of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses which are more relevant to the learner's needs. This pedagogy will help in giving the learners a more useful and a better command over the English language which will enable them to have a living interest in their own specific field, so also to maintain their links with the everchanging developments of knowledge, as for, e.g., businessman and woman who want to sell their products, mechanics who have to read instruction manuals, doctors and engineers who need to keep up with the developments and succeed in their specific fields and a whole range of students whose courses of study include textbooks and journals only available in English. All these and many others needed English, and most importantly, they are learning and for what purpose they need it to learn. Thus, a method of teaching English language which stresses both the target situation needs and learning needs must be taken into account.

During the seventies, the ELT (English Language Teaching) methodologists demanded fresh reassessment of objectives and syllabus reforms. Attempts to frame the right patterns of courses and to bring them into the main stream are being made by many educationists and leaders. Several Commissions and Study Groups also stressed the need for moulding English language pedagogy to suit the needs of different categories of students of science, commerce and humanities and also emphasized the need for changes in teaching techniques, so that, these methods can reach out the different sections of masses without differentiating the hierarchy of the society. But still, in India, there is a confusion about the nature and purpose of courses for the right and proper students, methods to meet adequately the specific needs of the learners, inspite of the enormous revisions and renovations.

At the moment, English is the associate official language, a link language, viable medium for higher education, language of elite, language for science and technology, etc. English has become a must and an essential necessity. As the present study mainly stresses in investigating the needs and uses regarding the English language by various professionals and non-professionals, it would be worthy and useful to go with the actual users of English. An awareness as to how they learn, whether in a spontaneous (naturalistic) way or tutored way, what prompts them to learn the language, what advantages and benefits they gain from the learning of English, etc. would be an interesting knowledge. This will also help in providing a strong evidence about the needs of the learners, their uses of the language, their attitude and feelings about the English language. It is regarded that information on all these aspects is of vital importance. So, this study is thought to be highly imperative.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Study of English Language Learning and its uses by Professionals and Non-Professionals of Baroda city.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the processes adopted by professionals and non-professionals for learning English Language.
2. To study the extent of utilisation of English language by the professionals and non-professionals in their day-to-day activities.
3. To study the reactions of the professionals and non-professionals about the relevance of English language in their day- to-day activities.
4. To find out the nature of the courses they felt they ought to have undergone.

V. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

(i) PROFESSIONALS

The term "professionals" refers to those individuals who are engaged in full-time, non-manual, service oriented occupations, with both subjectively and objectively recognized occupational status, having a code of professional conduct and specialized body of knowledge and skills acquired during a prolonged period of education and training.

(ii) NON-PROFESSIONALS

The term "non-professionals" refers to those persons engaged in either manual or non-manual occupations or vocations, which are neither basically service oriented nor required prolonged training.

VI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study has been delimited to the following points:

- (i) The present study has been confined to Baroda city only.
- (ii) In investigating the learning and uses of English language of various professional and non-professional groups, this study has been confined to six professionals and six non-professionals. Such delimitation is essential since it is not possible to investigate the learning and uses of all the professionals and non-professional groups at the same time. The selected professionals and non-professional categories areas under:

Professionals

1. Doctors
2. Engineers
3. Lawyers
4. Teachers
5. Nurses
6. Chartered Accountants

Non-professionals

1. Clerks
2. Businessmen
3. Sales Executives
4. Life Insurance Corporation Officials
5. Hotel Receptionists
6. Agents

The reason for selecting the above professional and non-professional groups is that it was intuitively felt that the more prestigious professions like the chosen professionals involve higher level of proficiency in the use of English, while the non-professionals are hypothetically felt to be minimal in terms of the using of English language. The investigation will reveal whether this was really so.

(iii) As the study mainly confines to the English language only, the investigator assumed and selected the respondents i.e., both professional and non-professional personnels should have the background of English language as well as they should have the ability to converse in English.

VII. METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Methodology contains population of the study, sample of the study, tools used for the study, framing of the questionnaires, procedure of data collection, statistical techniques used in the analysis of data.

(A) POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population consists of people belonging to different linguistic communities representing the different professionals and non-professionals functioning in Baroda city. The population is based on the consideration of adequacy and feasibility.

(B) SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of conducting this study was to obtain the background information about the ways through which various professionals and non-professionals learned the English language, what their attitude towards English is, and how they make use of their knowledge of English language in their professional as well as social life.

The technique used for the selection of the sample was purposive or judgment sampling. The main reason for selecting this technique was its feasibility in terms of time and cost. As the population consisted of various personnels representing each for six professional and non-professional groups, it was not possible for the investigator to procure an exhaustive list of all the professional and non-professional personnels functioning in Baroda city. The investigator therefore, decided to select a sample consisting of 120 respondents representing the different categories of professionals and

non-professionals without the barriers of any specific linguistic community or sex. The investigator, at the same time, has also tried to include some respondents from different linguistic communities. Thus, on the basis of purposive / judgment, the investigator selected 10/10 respondents from each category of professionals and non-professionals functioning in Baroda city, as shown in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2. The sample of the present study consisted of 120 respondents.

Baroda has been chosen as the location for the sample, as it is a metropolitan city. The investigator felt that an adequate number of respondents of different linguistic communities representing the different professionals i.e. (doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, nurses and chartered accountants) and non-professionals i.e. (clerks, businessmen, sales executives, Life Insurance Corporation Officials, hotel receptionists and agents) would be available in this city. Thus, keeping in mind all these facts, area for the study was limited to Baroda city only.

Table 1.1
Break up of the professionals according to sex

Sex	Doctors	Engineers	Lawyers	Teachers	Nurses	C.A's.	Total	Percentage
Male	7	10	8	5	--	9	39	65%
Female	3	--	2	5	10	1	21	35%
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	60	100%

It is evident from the above table that the investigator has collected under professional categories, i.e., (doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, nurses, chartered accountants) 39 male and 21 female with the percentage of 65 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.

Table 1.2
Break up of the non-professionals according to sex

Sex	Clerks	Business-men	Sales Executives	L.I.C. Officials	Hotel Recps.	Agents	Total	Percentage
Male	7	10	6	8	4	8	43	72%
Female	3	--	4	2	6	2	17	28%
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	60	100%

It is evident from the above table that the investigator has collected under non-professionals categories, i.e., (clerks, businessmen, sales executives, Life Insurance Corporation Officials, hotel receptionists, agents) 43 males and 17 females with the percentage of 72 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.

Thus, these 120 professionals and non-professionals represent the sample. Among the 10 teacher professionals included in the sample, 4 persons spoke Marathi, and 1 each, Manipuri, Maithili, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Bengali. Among the doctors, 6 persons spoke Gujarati, 2 persons spoke Tamil and 1 each Hindi and Chinese. Among the sample who were nurses by profession 5 were Gujarati speaking, 2 were Marathi and Malayalam speaking, and 1 English speaking. Among the Engineers 4 persons spoke Gujarati, 2 Punjabi, and 1 each spoke Arabic, Bengali, Sindhi, and Malayalam. Among the chartered accountants, 6 spoke Gujarati, 3 Hindi, and 1 Marathi. Among the lawyers, 6 persons spoke Gujarati, 1 each Konkani, Tamil, Urdu, and Marathi.

The sample of Non-Professionals consisted of 60 personnel. Among the sample of 10 agents, 3 spoke Gujarati, 2 spoke Urdu, 2 spoke English, 1 each spoke Telegu, Malayalam, and Hindi. Among the sales executives, 3 spoke Malayalam, 2 spoke English, 2 Hindi, and 1 each Marathi, Maithili and Bengali. Among businessmen, 6 persons spoke Gujarati, 2 English, and 1 each Malayalam and Urdu. Among the Life Insurance Corporation Officials, just 1 spoke Hindi and all the other remaining spoke Gujarati. Among the hotel receptionists, 3 persons spoke Gujarati, 2 Marathi, 2 Malayalam, and 1 each spoke Punjabi, Urdu and Konkani. Among the clerks, 7 persons spoke Gujarati, 2 Marathi, and 1 Urdu.

(C) TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

The investigator prepared a few tools to collect the data and the details of which are given below:

The different tools prepared for collecting the required data were as follows:

- (i) Questionnaires
- (ii) Interview schedule, and
- (iii) Opinionnaire.

Questionnaire was considered to be one of the most suitable tools for collecting relevant data for achieving the aims and objectives of the present study. In order to get more detailed data regarding the various aspects of the study, other than the questionnaires, the investigator used an interview schedule, questionnaires, and library materials. Details in brief about the various tools are presented below :-

(i) With reference to the first objective, i.e. to study the processes adopted by professionals and non-professionals for learning the English language, a questionnaire and an interview schedule, covering such aspects as, how they learnt the English language either in a naturalistic (spontaneous) way or tutored way had been prepared to elicit appropriate information from the respondents.

(ii) With reference to the second objective, i.e., to study the extent of utilisation of English language by the professionals and non-professionals in their day-to-day activities, a questionnaire and an interview schedule, covering the uses of English in their professional and non-professional activities had been prepared. The investigator also prepared an observation schedule to mark the different uses of the language.

(iii) With reference to the third objective, i.e., to study the reactions of the professionals and non-professionals about the relevance of English language in their day-to-day activities, a questionnaire and an interview schedule had been prepared.

(iv) With reference to the fourth and last objective, i.e., to find out the nature of the course they felt they ought to have undergone, a questionnaire seeking the opinions of the respondents had been prepared.

Apart from all these, the investigator referred relevant library materials in order to get a clearer understanding pertaining to the various aspects of the study.

(D) FRAMING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires developed were mainly meant for eliciting the background information and opinions regarding the learning and use of the English language. After reading the necessary literature and books related to the topic, a questionnaire was formulated. The investigator formulated two types of questionnaires, one concerning the professionals and the other, the non-professionals. After preparing the first draft, it was given to some experts in the field to assess its content validity and language clarity as well

as to determine its adequacy and appropriateness. After receiving their comments, the questionnaire was modified and thus the final version of the tool was ready. The designed questionnaire covered a wide range of topics, keeping in mind the main objectives of the study. It included items on general information about the persons responding to the questionnaire, their designation, their mother tongue, their sex, and the means by which they acquired English. The questionnaire also included items on the respondents' opinions regarding the teaching of English in various formal Institutions, the uses of English at their specific work places, and its use in various social communicative situations outside their work place and their general attitudes towards the English language. The questionnaire includes both open ended and closed items. Closed items were of Yes / No type as well as multiple choice type. In case of open ended items, space was provided in the questionnaire for the respondents to provide their answers. The final version of the questionnaire for the professionals consists of thirty-two (32) items and twenty-seven (27) items for the non-professionals.

(E) PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

The study included extensive field work including the administration of the questionnaire, interview schedule, observation of the personnel representing the professionals and the non-professionals at work.

The investigator contacted personally the selected respondents to administer the questionnaire, to interview them and to collect their opinion. The final version of the questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents representing the professionals and the non-professionals.

Moreover, the investigator also observed the selected respondents to find out how they put to use their knowledge of English in their routine practice of tasks.

(F) STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected were analysed with the help of percentage, and co-efficient of correlations. The analysis is carried out in four sections, and the first section is related to the analysis and interpretation of the data referring to objective one. Section two consists of the analysis and interpretation of the data relating to objective two. Section three consists of the analysis and interpretation of the data relating to objective three and section four consists of the analysis and interpretation of data relating to objective four.

d) Age, length of occupation, place of birth, religion, teaching of English as part of their courses and occupation are associated with learning of English language (LEL) for professionals.

e) Age, length of occupation, teaching of English as part of their courses, occupation is associated with learning of English language for the non-professionals.

(2) The main findings related to the second objective, i.e. to study the extent of utilisation of English language by the professionals and non-professionals in their day-to-day life are as under:

a) Both professional and non-professional personnels needed English to read books, journals magazines, etc. relating to their subjects. Most of the books pertaining to their areas are also found readily available in English and not in Hindi and other regional languages.

b) Professionals are found contributing papers and articles relating to their subjects to journals and newspapers and not the non-professionals. The subjects who publish papers or articles do not experience any difficulty in expressing themselves in English and do not seek any help from the experts.

c) English is found playing a significant role while communicating with the seniors and equals while mothertongue or Hindi is found playing a dominant role while communicating with their subordinates during their working hours.

d) The professionals and non-professionals used English in the home domain only in extremely limited cases. English is found being used only in some exceptional cases.

e) English is found playing dominant role when the professionals and non-professionals carry out official correspondence.

f) The medium of instruction was found responsible for strengthening their proficiency in English both by the professionals and the non-professionals.

g) Most of the professionals and non-professionals are found to have high ability to understand, speak, read and write English.

h) Most of the professionals and non-professionals mostly read English newspapers while Gujarati newspapers are found favourable with a few of them.

(3) To study the reactions of professionals and non-professionals about the relevance of English language in their day-to-day activities.

a) With regard to the reactions about the relevance in their day- to-day activities, most of the professionals and non-professionals are found to have highly favourable reaction towards English. They found it necessary to know for interstate and international communications, learning for higher education and, for better opportunities of job. They also found it necessary for running social, political and economic activities and to keep abreast with current information.

(4) The main findings related to the fourth objective, i.e. to find out the nature of course they felt they ought to have undergone, are as follows:

a) Both the professionals and non-professionals were satisfied with the English courses being taught at different educational levels, i.e. primary, secondary, University and professionals courses.

b) However, most of the professionals and non-professionals felt that changes in the present syllabuses of English courses going on in various institutions should be work out in such a way that they become an efficient tool for them.

c) Most of the professionals and non-professionals felt that the present syllabuses may be modified in the light of courses catering to the specific needs of the learners than courses that give much emphasis on learning the language.

VIII. CHAPTERISATION SCHEME

This thesis has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter I is an introductory chapter giving details and defining the scope of the study.

The second chapter deals with the review of the related literature.

The third chapter deals with the methodology followed in the study, i.e. selection of sample, sources of data and their collection, methods of analysis, technique of analysis, etc.

The fourth chapter includes the critical analysis of the field survey of the English language skills required on their works by the professionals and non-professionals .

The fifth and last chapter concludes with the major findings of the study and suggestions for the possible areas of further research allied to the present investigation.

IX. MAJOR FINDINGS

(1) The main findings related to the first objective, namely, to study the processes adopted by professionals and non-professionals for learning English language are as follows:

- a) All the professionals and non-professionals learned the English language under a tutored or formal situation.
- b) Most of the professionals and non-professionals had their schooling in regional languages. However, most of them had their higher education through the medium of English.
- c) Most of the professionals and non-professionals had not attended any English improvement courses.