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CHAPTER

Objectives of Teaching English at Junior and Senior Levels

The aim of Education is to make learning occur. Learning is the modification or change in behaviour of students. To make learning occur, the teacher teaches. For good teaching, the teacher must go through three phases—planning, execution, and how to teach? Execution is the practical aspect of planning, when the teacher takes the plan to the class and teaches students in real classroom situation. Evaluation is to see whether learning has occurred. The same is true with English teaching. If a certain behavioural change (learning) is a prerequisite of English teaching, the teacher should plan his lesson beforehand. A good planning can only happen if it is based on sound objective, e.g., if the teacher wants to teach about a composition on 'horses' to class VII, he must know on what activities the plan should be based. In this way, a proper direction is given to planning, the execution of which brings about the desired behavioural changes in students. This whole process can be explained as follows :

Phase I : Determining the objectives

Phase II : Planning

Phase III : Execution

Phase IV : Evaluation

Thus, objectives are the foundation stones of good teaching and learning.

Definition of Objectives

Dr. B. S. Bloom has defined educational objectives as, "The desired goal or outcome at which instruction is aimed."

Suppose a teacher wants his pupils to improve hand-writing. Here the outcome desired or goal aimed at is improvement of hand-writing. The teacher will teach students in such a way that it will help in improving hand-writing. So, the goal or the desired outcome of improving hand-writing would be the objective of teaching.

Characteristics of Good Objectives

(i) Objectives should be based on psychological principles. They should fulfil the needs and interests of students.

- (ii) They should be for the development of students.
- (iii) They should be helpful in acquiring democratic aims.
- (iv) They should help in changing or modifying students' behaviour
- (v) They should be tangible in ordinary circumstances.
- (vi) They should be useful.
- (vii) They should be in terms of changes expected in the pupil and not as duties of the teacher.
- (viii) Each statement should have only one objective in it.

Objectives of English Teaching

L. A. C. Strong once proclaimed, "For us who speak English, English is everything.....English is not a subject, English is our life." But this is not true for English in India, because here it is a foreign language. It is taught as a second or a third language in schools. Its teaching and learning in schools is inspired by one aim—the utilitarian aim. This aim can be achieved by acquiring practical command of English. Yet, clear cut objectives should be stated, so that good planning can be done and right type of methods and techniques of teaching can be adopted, as pointed out by P. Gurrey, "The careful thinking out of a detailed and well defined objective for the lessons will do more than almost anything else to improve a teacher's work and to make it effective."

The two main objectives of English teaching are :

- (i) Language development, and
- (ii) Literary development.

With the advancement of class and age of students, these two objectives might differ.

Objectives at Junior Level

The junior level is the lower secondary stage consisting of classes V, VI, VII and VIII. During this level, the chief aim of English is language development. This means that English should be taught not as literature but as language, as pointed out by P. Gurrey, "Our chief concern should not be about the difficulties of pronunciation, growth of vocabulary, grammar and structure but with language abilities." The words of Thompson and Wyatt explain the first rationale of this objective, "To aim at literature is to miss the way to language. Aim at language is to pave the way to literature." The second rationale is that students start learning this language from this very level. So, first they should have a firm grip over the language. At this stage, language development should not only be the chief objective but also the only objective.

Fourfold Objectives of Language Teaching

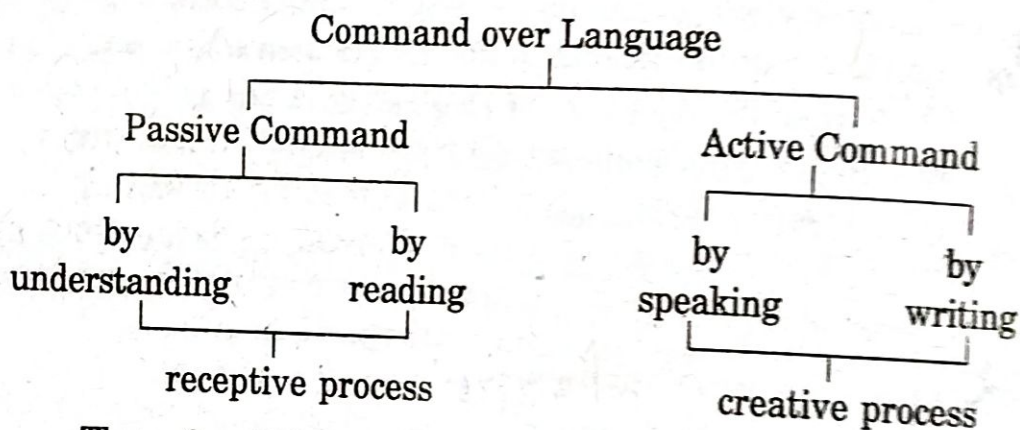
These fourfold objectives of language teaching can be drawn from four aspects of language. The four aspects of language are:

- (1) Semantic—related to understanding.
- (2) Phonetic—deals with sound, spelling, pronunciation.
- (3) Graphic—related to writing.
- (4) Phonetic-cum-Graphic—deals with reading.

These four aspects indicate four objectives of English language teaching at junior level. They are :

- (i) To understand spoken language,
- (ii) To speak the language,
- (iii) To write the language,
- (iv) To read the language.

So far the practical command is concerned, the first and fourth objectives are to have command over the language. The process of comprehension of spoken language and written language (reading) is a receptive one and leads to passive command. The second and third objectives are to have active command over the language. The process of speaking and writing is a creative one and leads to active command. This can be explained more candidly by the following diagram :



These fourfold objectives have been recommended by many scholars, e.g.,

Palmer, "A complete and ideal language method has a fourfold objectives and this is to enable the student, in the shortest possible time and with the least effort, to so assimilate the material of which the foreign language is composed, that he is hereby enabled to understand what he hears and also to express himself correctly by the oral and written medium."

*P. Gurrey*¹, "It is necessary that the Indian pupil should not only understand English when it is spoken or written, but also that he should himself be able to speak and write it."

1 *P. Gurrey : Teaching English as a Foreign Language.*

Some scholars think that Indian students should have only passive knowledge of English, i.e. understanding written and spoken English. After working for a number of years at Dacca, Dr. M. West had commended that ability to read, was of greater value to the Indian student than the ability to speak and write English. But seeing the immense importance of English, this contention does not seem recommendable. For the proper development of language, passive as well as active command is needed. All the fourfold objectives are as important as one. Thompson and Wyatt have rightly said, "It is necessary that the Indian pupil should not only understand English when it is spoken and written, but also he should himself be able to speak and write it." A. V. P. Elliott has also suggested, "The ability to speak and write English and the ability to read English should be regarded as of equal importance." Champion's notion is, "All objectives should be regarded as paramount and equal importance should be given to each."

Abilities to be Developed by Fourfold Objectives

The abilities to be developed by the fourfold objectives are as follows :

Objective I. Ability to understand spoken English :

- (a) Ability to recognize English sounds without errors,
- (b) Ability to draw meaning from what is heard,
- (c) Ability to respond in action as reaction to hearing.

Objective II. Ability to speak English language :

- (a) Ability to pronounce with right intonation and stress,
- (b) Ability to respond in speech as reaction to hearing,
- (c) Ability to speak at a normal speed; as pointed out by

Findlay, "The standard to aim at, is the power to understand ordinary English speech spoken at a normal speed."

Objective III. Ability to write English language.

- (a) Ability to form letters,
- (b) Ability to spell words,
- (c) Ability to select right words,
- (d) Ability to construct sentences, and
- (e) Ability to "Write passage of a page or so of clear, well

connected thought in correct language, with every point relevant to the topic they are writing about." (P. Gurrey)

Objective IV. Ability to read English language :

- (a) Ability to read simple prose, poetry, story, articles with comprehension,
- (b) Ability to read simple sentences with understanding,
- (c) Ability to read aloud without losing the chain of thoughts.

Objectives at Senior Level

Senior level is higher secondary level consisting of IX, X, XI and XII classes. The objectives of English teaching at this level are both :

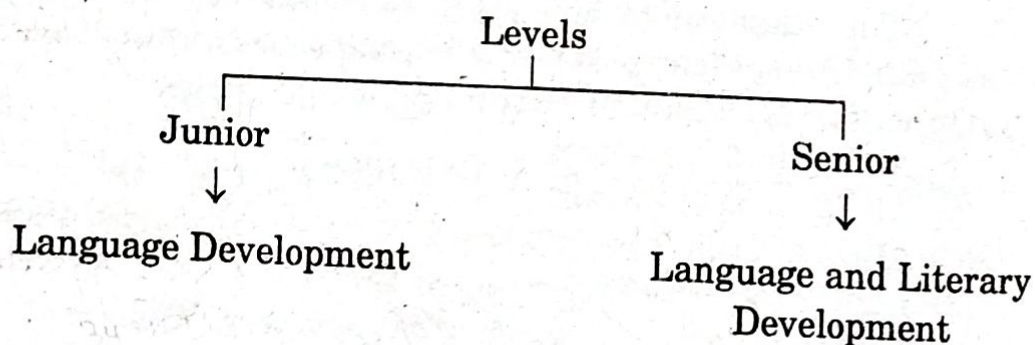
- (1) Language development and (2) Literary development.

It means that alongwith the fourfold objectives of language development which are related to hearing, speaking, writing and reading, the literary development is also an important objective at higher secondary level. The rationale for introducing the objective of literary development in higher secondary level is the development of 'Creative Thought' in students when they are in legible age of creative thinking. At this stage, the age of students is generally 13 to 17 years. Psychologists like *Piget* say that during these years, student's creative thinking can be developed. Studying English literature can facilitate this develop- ment.

The objectives which come under language development will remain the same as in junior level. The literary objectives will be :

- (1) Development of taste for English literature by reading prose, poetry, story etc.,
- (2) Drawing aesthetic pleasure from reading English literature,
- (3) Understanding critical views,
- (4) Development of translating ability and
- (5) Development of interest in English literature.

In short, the main objectives of English teaching, level-wise, can be shown as follows :



Application of Taxonomy of Educational Objectives to English Teaching

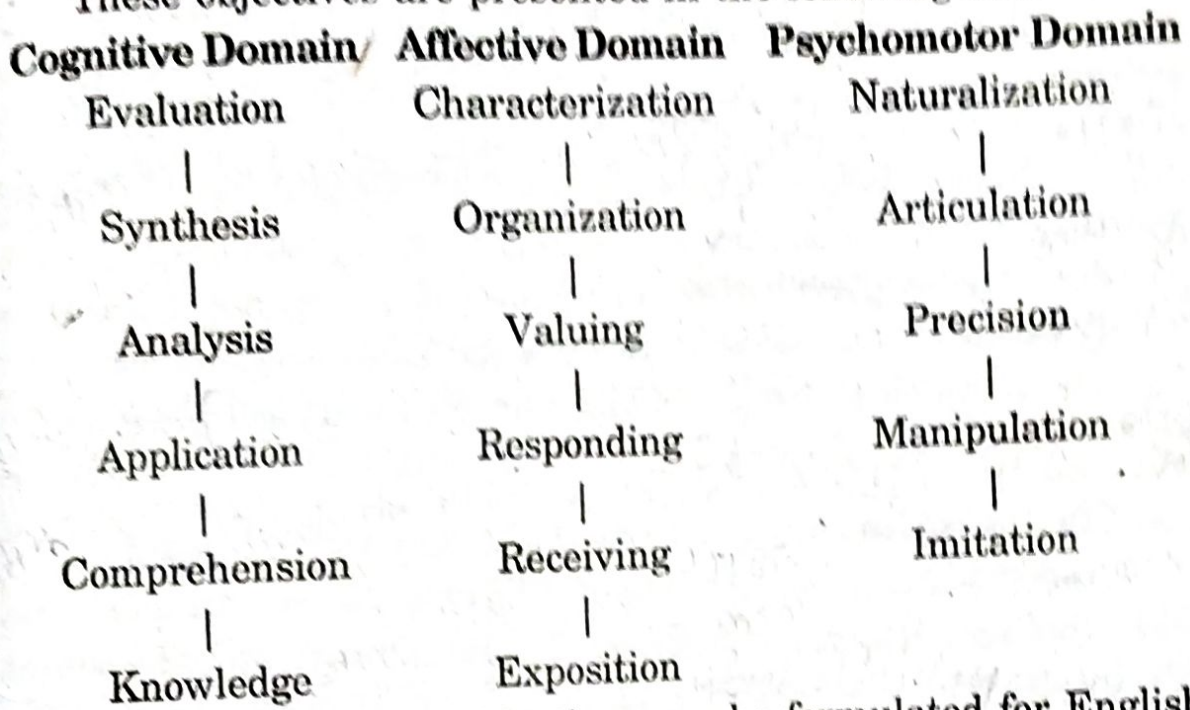
A different approach can be adopted to classify the objectives of English teaching. The approach is "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives." A number of models of classifying the educational objectives have been developed. In recent years, the most convincing of these have been the taxonomical models developed

by B. S. Bloom and his associates and by R. H. Dave. A taxonomy is a classification scheme followed in biological sciences where things are arranged in increasing degrees of specificity. In taxonomy of Educational Objectives, there are three domains :

- (1) Cognitive domain : related to knowledge.
- (2) Affective domain : related to feeling.
- (3) Psychomotor domain : related to doing.

There are many objectives under each domain which are to be realized by teaching and learning. The objectives of cognitive and affective domains are proposed by Bloom and objectives of psychomotor domain have been proposed by Dave².

These objectives are presented in the following model :



These educational objectives can be formulated for English teaching too. These will help in cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of students.

Obstacles in Realization of Objectives

The objectives of English teaching discussed in preceding pages are seldom realized in practice. There are some obstacles which come in the path of realization of objectives. They are :

- (i) There are administrative as well as financial problems of schools which hinder the realization of these objectives.
- (ii) There is a lack of good and trained English teachers.

1 B. S. Bloom, et. al. : *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives—Cognitive and Effective Domains.*

2 R. H. Dave : *Development of Educational Testing*, Vol. I.

(iii) The classes are so crowded that it becomes almost impossible for the teacher to get acquainted with the progress of every child in English.

(iv) Extra work load on teachers does not allow them to devote themselves fully in getting the objectives of English teaching realized.

(v) Lack of teaching aptitude in teachers is the least noteworthy obstacle.

If these obstacles are removed and lessons are planned on sound objectives, it would not only benefit the students, but the whole teaching and learning process would be facilitated.

EXERCISE

Essay Answer Type Questions

1. Write an essay on the objectives of Teaching English at junior and senior levels.

Short Type Questions

1. What are the characteristics of good educational objectives?
2. Write the meaning and definition of educational objectives.

Objective Type Questions

1. "To aim at literature is to miss the way to language."
(a) True (b) False

Ans. (a) True

2. Who said that, "The desired goal or outcome at which instruction is aimed."
(a) Dr. B. S. Bloom (b) L. A. C. strong
(c) P. Gurrey (d) Thompson

Ans. (a) Dr. B. S. Bloom

3. "All objectives should be regarded as paramount and equal importance should be given to each." Who's the scholar of above statement?
(a) A. V. P. Elliott (b) Champion
(c) Wyatt (d) Thompson

Ans. (b) Champion

