

A Study of Content and Language Integrated Learning in the Teaching-Learning of English in Indian Schools at the Primary Level with Special Reference to Eastern India

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Abstract: No language can be learnt severed from everyday reality. For every language learning course, starting from the school level itself, the content must be chosen from a student’s everyday needs, their familiar topics and surroundings. At the same time the culture of the target language must be kept into consideration. The content must be interesting and engaging as well. Grammar study by itself does not lead to mastery over a language.

I had conducted a survey at the school level to determine how differences in content for the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, Central Board of Secondary Education, Jharkhand Academic Council and West Bengal Board of Primary Education boards affect their proficiency in English. In this paper, I present the findings for class IV.

Keywords: *content and language integrated learning, proficiency in English, integration, appropriate and interesting content*

I. INTRODUCTION

Content and language are integrated for language studies. I am a state government primary school teacher in West Bengal. There are practically no grammar classes for classes I to II. Now the government policy is to start English medium schools. So far, pre-primary and class I have been set up. In such a situation learning the English language from a very young age becomes the most important factor. But how can that be done from a young age for government school pupils who practically have no exposure to English outside the school? Content herein plays a crucial part in language learning. The more appropriate and interesting the content, the better will be language learning.

Content in Language Learning

If content is integrated in language learning, then language learning will be more effective. Content subjects like sciences, social sciences and mathematics should be taught in the target language, i.e. English. Text books are the primary TLM for any institution, especially so for schools. What this means is that English-medium teaching would be more effective.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to show how if content is integrated into language teaching then language learning will be more effective.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Coyle, D. (1999) developed the theoretical framework for CLIL. It is a flexible model which includes 4Cs:

- Content - Progression in knowledge, skills and understanding related to specific elements of a defined curriculum.
- Communication - Using language to learn whilst learning to use language.
- Cognition - Developing thinking skills which link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding and language.
- Culture - Exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepen awareness of otherness and self.

III. METHODOLOGY

I analysed the English textbooks for class IV for Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Jharkhand Academic Council (JAC) and West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBBPE).

Their performance in English proficiency test was as follows: ICSE performed the best, followed by CBSE. WBBPE and JAC students were approximately at par with each other and their performance was wanting.

The factorial design for the sample collection was as follows: 10 each from ICSE, CBSE, WBBPE and JAC students.

Board	Girls	Boys	Total
ICSE	5	5	10
CBSE	5	5	10
WBBPE	5	5	10
JAC	5	5	10
Grand Total	20	20	40

Students were marked on an index of 1 to 5 with 1 the poorest and 5 the best.

Tools for Collecting Data

For collecting data from the students, the following tools were used:

- Personal data questionnaire for students – for gathering information about their attitude to English, socio-economic background
- Questionnaire for assessing students' proficiency in the four skills of the English language
- Interval scale – for grading students' proficiency level in the four English language skills the data collected was marked on a 5-point scale:
 - 1 – No competency
 - 2 – Sufficient
 - 3 – Good
 - 4 – Very Good
 - 5 – Excellent
- Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) – for evaluating the data collected
- Questionnaire for obtaining feedback from teachers in students' English language proficiency

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Materials and Syllabus Analysis for Class IV in terms of CLIL

The Objectives and syllabus of any board are extremely important in making pupils proficient in English. In this chapter, I have compared and analysed the Objectives and syllabus of the Boards that I have considered in my research, which are ICSE, CBSE, JAC and WB Boards.

A general discussion about the Boards and their examination pattern:

CBSE:

English is optional for Secondary and Higher Secondary levels. Hindi and English must be two of the three languages to be studied at least up to Class 8 i.e. English must be one of the three languages to be studied under the three-language formula up to class 8. Beyond that in classes IX and X English becomes an optional subject since students can take either English or Hindi in combination with another language. Alternatively, both Hindi and English can also be offered simultaneously. Two languages are compulsory for classes IX and X.

English is also not compulsory for CBSE at the 10+2 level. Students can take either English or Hindi (in combination with another language or any other subject).

Medium of Instruction: The medium of instruction in general in all the schools affiliated with the CBSE Board are either in Hindi or English.

Two Different Courses of English for Secondary and Higher Secondary:

CBSE has two separate courses of English – Core and Communicative / Functional – from class 9 onwards. Students take up either course as per their requirements. But for the lower classes there is no such division. CBSE has only one paper for English where both language and literature questions are asked.

ICSE:

ICSE board is totally English medium. It is the only board which offers two papers for English – English Language (Paper 1) and English Literature (Paper 2) of 100 marks each.

JAC:

JAC also follows the CBSE syllabus. But, being a state board, it caters to many first-generation learners and the majority of students coming to the state board schools do not have Hindi as a mother tongue. They are taught through Sadri. English, hence, becomes at best a third language. This is now a prevailing criticism that the CBSE curriculum is superimposed; it is not convenient for the prevailing conditions in the state.

English is Optional for Secondary and Intermediate Levels:

The three-language formula is taught till class 8 where English is a compulsory subject. From class 9, students can opt for either Hindi or English (along with a vernacular); though they can take both languages simultaneously. The importance of English is thus reduced. This scheme is also followed in class 10. Unlike CBSE, which offers English Language and Literature and English Communicative for Secondary pupils, JAC offers only English Language and Literature.

English is also not a compulsory subject at the Intermediate level (XI and XII). Students can take either English or Hindi (in combination with another language), though they can also take both subjects together since two languages are compulsory at the Intermediate level. The importance of English is thus reduced. At the Intermediate level, like CBSE, JAC too offers a choice between English Core and English Functional.

WBBPE:

My survey was completed in 2013. Then **My English Book IV** was taught in class IV. From 2014, **Butterfly IV** has been introduced as per RTE 2009 and NCF 2005.

WBBPE has only one paper for English.

Project Work

Project Work is there for both ICSE and CBSE boards. In the new syllabus being prepared by the Expert Committee of West Bengal project-work of 20 marks has been introduced.

Comparison and Analyses of the Objectives and Syllabus of the Different Boards for Class 4**ICSE:****Aims and Objectives** (*same for classes I to V*)

- To develop in pupils the ability to express themselves in intelligible and acceptable forms of English.
- To encourage fluent self-expression – in speech and writing.
- To develop the habit of micro-skills of listening.
- To develop the ability to read aloud intelligibly and to read silently with understanding
- To form enduring reading habits and to extend the range of their ideas by the reading of factual and imaginative writing.
- To enable the students to appreciate the literary work of various writers.
- To enable the students to develop their phonetics, pronunciation and voice modulation skills.
- To develop an elegant cursive handwriting.

CBSE and JAC:**The general objectives at Level -II (Classes III, IV and V) are:**

- To provide print-rich environment to relate oracy with literacy.
- To build on learners' readiness for reading and writing.
- To promote learners' conceptualisation of printed texts in terms of headings, paragraphs and horizontal lines.
- To enrich learners' vocabulary mainly through telling, retelling and reading aloud of stories/folktales in English.
- To use appropriate spoken and written language in meaningful contexts/situations.
- To give them an opportunity to listen to sounds/sound techniques and appreciate the rhythm and music of rhymes/sounds.
- To enable them to relate words (mainly in poems) with appropriate actions and thereby provide understanding of the language.
- To familiarize learners with the basic process of writing.

At the end of this stage learners will be able to do the following:

- narrate his/her experiences and incidents
- exchange his/her ideas with the peers
- carry out a brief conversation involving seeking/giving information
- enjoy reading a story, poem, a short write-up, a notice, poster etc
- take dictation of simple sentences and to practice copy writing from the blackboard and textbook and to use common punctuation marks
- write a short description of a person, thing or place – prepare a notice, or write a message for someone
- write a short composition based on pictures
- take part in group activity, role play and dramatization

WBBPE:**Objectives of the stories:**

To offer the pupils a complete story so that they can

1. read and listen to some short simple sentences
2. say these sentences aloud
3. talk about these sentences
4. develop a confidence in dealing with stories in English
5. Come to enjoy reading and listening to stories in English.

Objectives of different exercises in lessons:

Let's learn some words:

1. to expand the pupils' vocabulary by presenting them with words and their opposites
2. to provide pupils with practice in identifying the correct use of these words in true/false contexts

Let's talk about object:

1. To provide pupils with structured oral practice through talking about familiar pictures.

Let's circle the odd one out:

1. to make pupils aware of word sets (groups of words which contain similar items – animals, or days of the week, or colours, for example)
2. to give pupils practice in distinguishing between words which belong to a set and words which do not belong to that set
3. To revise vocabulary in word sets.

Let's write:

1. to provide pupils with practice in writing true sentences using pictures and a substitution table

2. to give pupils opportunity to discuss what they are going to write

Let's listen:

1. to develop in the pupils an awareness of listening as a language skill

2. to develop in the pupils the ability to listen to spoken English

3. to provide pupils with practice in distinguishing between true and false sentences through listening

Let's correct the mistake:

1. to practice the skill of proof-reading at sentence level (to help pupils learn how to spell and how to read carefully for spelling mistakes)

Let's chant:

1. to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn and present a chant

2. to promote oral fluency

3. to indirectly revise vocabulary.

Let's check:

1. to focus the attention of the pupils on what they have done during this lesson

2. to begin to make pupils aware of all the different ways in which language needs to be practiced

3. To begin to develop a sense of learner autonomy.

Objectives of New WBBPE Butterfly Book IV:

To develop reading, speaking, listening and writing skills in a well-graded manner. The book is built around a specific theme 'faces of Bengal'. Each unit in a Lesson is built around a different theme to cater to various types of learners.

Objectives of different exercises in lessons:

- Develop conversation skills
- Writing short paragraphs
- Oral-aural skills
- Developing reading skills for skimming and scanning information
- Reciting rhymes with proper pronunciation and intonation
- Expressing views orally and in writing
- Narrate and write personal experience
- Developing conversational skill
- Grammar items like noun, pronoun, preposition, verb, adverb

V. OBSAERVATION

Appropriate use of English: ICSE's primary objective for classes 1 to 5 is to develop in pupils the ability to express themselves in intelligible and acceptable forms of English

and to encourage fluent self-expression – in speech and writing. CBSE for Level II learners mentions, like ICSE, "to use appropriate spoken and written language in meaningful contexts/situations" as an objective. WBBPE does not state objectives in general. But in 'Message from the Board' it is stated that the main aim is to develop reading, speaking, listening and writing skills in a well-graded manner. The theme of the book is 'faces of Bengal' and the lessons present life, events and renowned places and personalities of Bengal. Each unit in a Lesson is built around a different theme to cater to different types of readers.

Listening and Speaking: Awareness and appreciation of rhymes and sounds are the objectives for CBSE in listening and speaking but for ICSE the speaking skills aimed for are more advanced in nature requiring awareness of phonetics, pronunciation and voice modulation skills for speaking. To develop the habit of listening is a separate objective for listening for ICSE. WBBPE also has a separate objective for listening - to develop in pupils an awareness of listening as a language skill and to develop in them the ability to listen (and comprehend) to spoken English - but while ICSE speaks of habit building, WBB talks of developing awareness (which is of a more basic level) for listening as a sub-skill. Since WBB follows the structural-functional-communicative method and *My English Book* is recommended to be taught through the direct method, structured oral practice through talking about familiar pictures is present only in this board. Chanting is also recommended by this board to promote oral fluency.

WBB **Butterfly Book IV** mentions developing listening and speaking skills as one of its aims. The book contains many rhymes for developing pronunciation and intonation. Expressing views orally is also one of its objectives. Talking about familiar pictures still remains an objective for WBB. The objectives are now more at par with the other boards.

Reading: To form enduring reading habits and to extend the range of their ideas by the reading of factual and imaginative writing and to enable the students to appreciate the literary work of various writers are objectives unique to only ICSE. For this purpose, ICSE has the Immersion Project and its texts are so chosen (from primarily Indian settings) that pupils can easily identify with them and develop enduring reading habits. Silent and loud reading of texts is another objective for ICSE. For CBSE, conceptualization of reading texts in terms of headings, paragraphs etc. and building vocabulary are the objectives for reading. So, its objectives are more basic than ICSE and of a more functional nature. Nonetheless, like ICSE, CBSE too aims to provide *print-rich* environment to relate oracy with literacy. For WBBPE, to build confidence in dealing with English stories is the main objective. Enjoying stories through self-reading or listening is another objective. These are even more basic precursors to reading English stories.

For WBBPE **Butterfly Book IV**, developing reading skill is also an objective. It prescribes reading for skimming and scanning.

Writing: Familiarizing students with the basic process of writing is the objective for all the boards, but *elegant handwriting as an objective is present only in ICSE*. Guided writing of true sentences using pictures and a substitution table is mentioned by WBBPE as its objective.

Objectives particular to WBBPE: Vocabulary - to expand students' vocabulary by presenting them with words and their opposites (i.e. through the direct method); to make pupils aware of word sets (groups of words which contain similar items – animals, or days of the week, or colours, for example); and to practice the skill of proof-reading at sentence level (to help pupils learn how to spell and how to read carefully for spelling mistakes). Proof-reading is not present in any other board. Apart from these, WBBPE mentions another objective which is to help pupils to begin to develop a sense of learner autonomy. This is not found in either ICSE or CBSE.

Objective unique to CBSE: To enable pupils to relate words (mainly in poems) with appropriate actions and thereby provide understanding of the language is an objective unique to CBSE.

Examination Pattern of the Different Boards for Class 4		
ICSE Two papers: Language - 100 marks Literature - 100 marks	CBSE & JAC Total – 100 marks	WBBPE One 100 marks paper: Written – 80 marks Oral – 20 marks

VI. SYLLABUS COMPARISON FOR CLASS 4

Reading Comprehension LITERATURE

Textbooks:

ICSE: **Oxford Reading Circle Book 4**

CBSE: **Marigold 4**

WBBPE: **My English Book IV**. From 2014, **Butterfly** has been introduced as per RTE 2009 and NCF 2005.

Discussion about the texts: All the boards have Indian as well as European tales. Indian tales - ICSE and CBSE have modern Indian tales while WB board has Indian folktales. European tales - WB board has fairy tales, ICSE one short story in medieval settings and CBSE extracts and adaptations from European novels. West Bengal Board's texts are more initiative (i.e. simple tales told in simple English) in nature.

Panchatantra and Mahabharata tales are present only in ICSE versus classic Indian comics in CBSE. There is one description each in both ICSE and WB board, the former on crafts and the latter on professions. Biography is present only in CBSE. One Biblical tale is present only in ICSE because the board is primarily Anglo-Indian. ICSE has the maximum number of Indian tales set in Indian settings. This makes it easier for the students to refer themselves to the texts. Poems for all the boards are mostly by British or American poets.

For WB board, the method adopted to teach **My English Book** as elaborated in the **Teacher's Companion** is "not to teach English but to teach THROUGH English. English is not the end-result but the means to an end, so the language is being used communicatively."

WBB **Butterfly Book IV** presents tales located in the Bengal scenario, such as about famous places, food and personalities of Bengal. There is one adventure tale set in Sundarbans. It has one very interesting Lesson 'Sisters' in which there is a play where two sisters namely English Language and Bengali Language talk with each other regarding each other's importance and finally reach the conclusion that in today's world learning English language is a necessity. The textbook lives up to its stated theme of 'faces of Bengal' which pupils can identify with.

Questions: "Standard" of ICSE is more difficult, CBSE & JAC easier and WBBSE the easiest. CBSE & JAC require imaginative answers to certain questions in contrast to ICSE and WBBPE which require factual responses.

Reference to context, rhyme and rhythm, rhyming scheme, syllables, inference are part of ICSE only. Description, meanings of words and phrases and anagrams are part of ICSE and CBSE.

Marks: ICSE has one 100 marks paper entirely for literature in which 50 marks are allotted for literature and 30 marks are assessed through CCE and the rest 20 marks are devoted to listening-speaking & handwriting. WBBPE allots 25 marks in its 100 marks paper for literature while CBSE allots fewer marks in its 60 marks paper.

Extended Reading Program

Immersion Reading programme for ICSE seeks to provide a rich repository of books in school as it will enrich their vocabulary, feed imagination and improve written and spoken expression since English is a second language for us and reading is a wonderful way to immerse our children in the language. Similarly, CBSE also seeks to provide a print-rich environment to its pupils as stated in 'Objectives', but its reading matter are less challenging in nature viz. a story, poem, a short write-up, a notice, poster etc. and less intensive. Input-rich communicational environments are essential for language learning. Inputs include textbooks, learner-chosen texts, class libraries, parallel books and materials in more than one language, media support (learner magazines/newspaper columns, radio/audio cassettes), and authentic materials. WBBPE has no program for

“development of reading for enjoyment and vocabulary expansion.”

Reading Comprehension: LANGUAGE PAPER (unseen passage)

ICSE board students’ proficiency level is much more advanced in that it tests unseen comprehension passages for class 4, which is of 10 marks. This is not done by the other boards.

Oral Fluency (Speaking)

ICSE’s objective is to enable children to express themselves in intelligible, fluent and acceptable forms of English in speech. At class 4, pronunciation exercises are more advanced for ICSE since it stresses on stressed/unstressed syllables; CBSE & JAC deal with pronunciation of consonants, vowels, silent letters and intonation; WBBPE does not mention pronunciation separately as a book exercise.

Listening activities for ICSE include:

- listening to an account and answering questions
- listening and identifying
- listening and following instructions

ICSE also recommends group/pair work:

- pair work: asking questions to find things in common; making statements using should have/should not have,
- Group discussion: comparison, talking about one’s hobby, storytelling, about the lesson.
- enacting the play

CBSE also has talking exercises as individual and group activities:

1. talking about –conversations (between animals), situations (if there is no clock), discussions (different ways of knowing time, why we can’t look at the sun during solar eclipse), descriptions (funny things you have seen, books in a bookshop etc.), answering questions, story telling
2. team activities (requiring both speaking and writing)

CBSE has some interesting Listening Only exercises, in which students are asked to become aware of sounds of the surrounding: songs of birds, call of chicks, sounds associated with certain public places like library, doctor’s place, etc., whispering to friends.

WBBPE concentrates on providing a structural approach to listening and speaking exercises:

1. a. **structured oral practice** through talking about familiar pictures – teacher asks class to look at a picture and says “Let’s talk about...the fish.” Teacher should ask pupils to work together in pairs/small groups. Teacher can help pupils (but only if necessary) by saying “The fish is in...” or the teacher can simply give a one-word clue, e.g. ‘under’

(expecting the sentence, ‘The fish is under the mouse.’) or ‘water’ (expecting the sentence, ‘The fish is in the water.’) (pp 14-15, Teacher’s Companion)

b. Describing pictures orally

2. **listening exercise** – teacher asks pupils to look at a picture and himself describes it in a sentence (once or twice) and asks pupils to answer if what he is saying is true or false (by putting tick marks in appropriate boxes).

Examination items for all the boards are nearly the same with dictation, elocution & reading being the preferred modes of testing.

WBBPE New Syllabus concentrates on providing a structural approach to listening and speaking exercises:

1. speaking exercises -

a. group/class discussions where children develop their ability to express their views and engage in conversations b. Describing pictures orally c. Speaking on a given topic

2. **listening exercise** – Separate listening exercises are not given. It is a part of group and class discussions and conversations and following instructions.

Examination items for all the boards are nearly the same with dictation, elocution & reading being the preferred modes of testing.

Allocation of **marks** varies with 15 for ICSE, 20 for WBBPE and 40 in FA for CBSE.

Punctuation:

None of the boards allocate separate marks for punctuation test but assess it as part of the grammar syllabus.

Capital letter, Full stop, Comma, Question mark, Exclamatory mark, Quotation marks and Possessive mark are part of the syllabus for ICSE and CBSE. Separate words and semi colon are tested only by ICSE. WBBPE does not test punctuation.

Handwriting:

ICSE board stresses on elegant handwriting as an objective and also assigns examination tasks for the purpose. It allocates 5 marks for copywriting.

CBSE mentions in Teachers’ Notes (p 36) the objective to improve children’s handwriting in cursive. No marks are allotted though. The syllabus states that handwriting suggestions can be put up on a chart for the class. Some of these can be to:

- Make the writing even
- Begin sentences with capital letters
- End the sentences with periods or question marks
- Write the letters carefully on the line

WBBPE does not mention handwriting at all.

Writing:

ICSE board is much more complex in composition tasks since it includes picture, description and imaginative compositions, story writing, poems, limericks; CBSE & JAC include primarily picture and descriptive compositions; WBBPE includes only guided sentence and paragraph composition, making its writing task the easiest. Letter – ICSE has both formal and informal letters; CBSE & JAC only informal letters and WBBPE none. Slogans – only CBSE & JAC have slogan writing; this makes it more versatile than the others. For exams, however, in ICSE only essay and letter (of 100-150 words and 10 marks each) are tested and paragraph writing (of 10 marks) is tested primarily in English medium West Bengal Board schools.

Grammar:

The grammar syllabus of ICSE is more complex. It has items like infinitives, transitive and intransitive verbs, verbs used idiomatically etc. which are not present in the other boards. The syllabus of CBSE & JAC are at par with ICSE in many respects with its inclusion of prefix, suffix, articles, framing questions etc. but it is simpler than ICSE with its lack of infinitives, verbs used idiomatically etc. CBSE & JAC are however more detailed in its practice of items like those words with which to frame questions, conjunctions etc. WBBPE barely introduces various grammatical items like nouns (naming objects), adjectives, prepositions, verbs and adverbs with the help of pictures and simple sentences, but the classification of the grammatical items are not introduced.

WBBPE **Butterfly** Book IV prescribes various grammatical items like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, verbs and adverbs with the help of pictures and simple sentences. Alongside WBBPE has also introduced another book **Wings** (Support Material) I, II and III. It focuses on grammatical items and vocabulary. It is modelled on the ICSE board. It has comprehension exercises as well. Paragraph writing is there in the book as well.

Marks: 40 marks for ICSE and 25 marks for WBBPE.

Vocabulary:

Observation: ICSE board is much more complex than the other boards though it does not allot a separate section for testing vocabulary in exam like WBBPE.

For ICSE, vocabulary includes sentence composition, dictionary work, anagrams, word association, description, prefixes, word puzzles, abbreviations, singular/plural, movement words, sound words, matching who/which, nouns/adjectives, synonyms, antonyms, similes, word search/vocabulary, adverbial phrases, proverbs, using adjectives.

Exam: Tested in unseen comprehension passage and part of literature. No separate marks.

CBSE:

Scrabble, words related to clock, dictionary consultation, find one word from story, rearrange words to form sentences, anagram

WBBPE:

Correct spellings of words in a sentence, answering true/false questions relating words based on pictures, e.g. happy/sad dog. – i.e. proof reading of spellings in sentences.

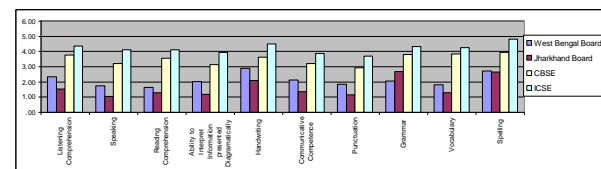
Question paper:

Meanings of words e.g. hungry, forest etc.; opposites e.g. right, inside etc.; unscramble e.g. osqmouit, siperd etc.; circle odd one out e.g. red, yellow, purple, blue, hat etc.; correct mistakes in sentences e.g. He saw an egale.

Marks: WBBPE: **20 marks**, other boards do not specify any marks

Results of Field Survey in Reference to the Syllabus and Objectives of the Various Boards:

Graphical presentation of the impact of factor of Board on ELP of class 4 students:



Observation – The performance of ICSE board was the best for all questions, followed by CBSE. The performance of the state boards was poorer than that of the former two, with JAC performing better than WBBSE only in grammar and nearly equal in spelling.

Pupils studying in ICSE schools were “very good” in their proficiency level in English with 4.00 in 7 questions and 3.00 in 3 questions. CBSE students were “good” with 3.00 in 9 questions. WBBSE pupils were “sufficient” overall with 2.00 in 6 questions, but they got 1.00 in 4 questions (speaking, reading, punctuation, vocabulary). Students from JAC were also “insufficient” overall in their proficiency level in English with 1.00 in 7 questions and 2.00 in 3 questions (handwriting, grammar, and spelling).

Strong points – handwriting, grammar, spelling

Weak points – communicative competence, punctuation

Contrast – vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, ability to interpret information presented diagrammatically. The contrast was between the national level boards versus the state level boards.

The performance of ICSE board was the best for all questions, followed by CBSE. The performance of the state boards was poorer than that of the former two, with JAC performing better than WBBPE only in grammar and nearly equal in spelling.

Pupils studying in ICSE schools were “very good” in their proficiency level in English with 4.00 in 7 questions and 3.00 in 3 questions. CBSE students were “good” with 3.00 in 10 questions. WBBPE pupils were “sufficient” overall with 2.00 in 6 questions, but they got 1.00 in 4 questions (speaking, reading, punctuation, vocabulary). Students from JAC were “insufficient” overall in their proficiency level in English with 1.00 in 7 questions and 2.00 in 3 questions (handwriting, grammar, and spelling). Considering the 1’s WBBPE received it can be said that the board did not achieve its objectives since structured speaking, reading for developing which stories were specifically introduced and vocabulary development are its objectives. WBBPE is the only board which mentions vocabulary development as one of its objectives. Punctuation is not part of either syllabus or objectives for WBBPE.

Strong points for all boards – Handwriting - >4.00 ICSE, >3.00 CBSE, close to 3.00 WBBPE, >2.00 JAC); grammar - >4.00 ICSE, >3.00 CBSE, >2.00 JAC & WBBPE); spelling - >4.00 ICSE, close to 4.00 CBSE, >2.00 JAC & WBBPE. As expected, ICSE’s performance was best in handwriting since elegant handwriting is one of its objectives, followed by CBSE since it mentions handwriting in its syllabus and teacher’s instructions though it does not test it separately. WBB does not mention it either in objectives or syllabus.

Weak points for all boards – communicative competence through paragraph writing (close to 4.00 ICSE, >3.00 CBSE, 1.00 JAC, 2.00 WBBPE) and punctuation (3.00 ICSE, close to 3.00 CBSE, 1.00 JAC and WBBPE) ICSE board assigns complex composition tasks like picture, description and imaginative compositions, story writing, poems, limericks and letters (both formal and informal); CBSE & JAC include primarily picture and descriptive compositions and informal letters; and WBBPE includes only guided sentence and paragraph composition. For exams, however, in ICSE only essay and letter are tested and paragraph writing is tested primarily in English-medium West Bengal Board schools. Given the complexity level of composition tasks set by the various boards as well as their objectives the proficiency level of students of the different boards are justified. For JAC the problem lies in the unsuitability of CBSE syllabus in the prevailing conditions of Jharkhand. Punctuation is part of the syllabus of CBSE and ICSE but not WBBPE. Both ICSE and CBSE students performed at par (very good) in punctuation while WBBPE and JAC students were ‘insufficient’. For JAC the reason again is the unsuitability of the CBSE syllabus for the state.

Contrast – vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, ability to interpret information presented diagrammatically. The contrast was between the national level boards versus the state level boards. But even then ICSE performed the best, followed by CBSE. Of the regional boards, WBBPE was better than JAC; WBBPE managed 2.00 in listening and diagram reading; in all others both boards got 1.00. Comic strip reading is a part of CBSE syllabus and while ICSE does not have it in its syllabus picture composition is a part of its

English language assessment from class I onwards,¹⁹ enabling its students to excel even in this item. Similarly, while it is not a part of WBBPE syllabus, structured *sentence* practice through the help of pictures enabled its students to be ‘sufficient’ in their performance. In this respect WBBPE can be said to have excelled in its performance. To develop the language skill of listening is an objective for WBBPE and listening tasks are a part of part of conversation and group discussion, but it is seldom practiced and in exams only spelling tests are assigned as listening tasks. Hence, it is no wonder that its performance was ‘insufficient’. Unseen comprehension is not of WBBPE class 4 syllabus; hence, it is no wonder its students could not perform well in it. Speaking was poor for WBBPE. Description of pictures orally is part of the syllabus but this is seldom followed in practice. Reading aloud of texts and elocution are often the only speaking tests. The interactive method recommended in dealing with the text is seldom followed. For JAC, the poor performance is the imposition of the CBSE syllabus on a primarily tribal state. Listening and speaking are assessed in FAs in CBSE. FAs do not have the traditional examination system and teachers in Jharkhand are often at a loss while dealing with this non-traditional method of examination. The same is true for all the other skills as well.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

From the above discussion, we can see how much content learning through the use of the target language is vital for the learning of the target language.

In my study, I have restricted myself to the study of the content prescribed in the English literature course as well as the English language course.

The content present in the ICSE course books (which is English-medium board) as well has Biblical, European as well as Indian content. The content is also more versatile. Mahabharata and Panchatantra tales are present in ICSE course. These tales were presented to Indian children right from early childhood and they can easily identify them and identify themselves with them. ICSE has the maximum number of Indian tales set in Indian settings. This makes it easier for the students to refer themselves to the texts.

WBBPE content for English literature is simpler, written in simple language and are taken from Indian folktales.

Descriptions are present in ICSE and WBBPE boards.

CBSE has comic strips and biographies, making it more innovative.

Extensive reading projects are there in ICSE.

As far as language course content is concerned, more grasp over the language is needed for ICSE board. There are unseen passage comprehension tests which can be considered the most difficult proficiency test for a language. Essay and

letter writing are also prescribed, in ICSE, which is not there for any other board.

Positive changes in WBBPE: WBBPE has introduced English medium schools from Pre-Primary level. It has also introduced new English books. It has for the first time devoted one book entirely for grammar, vocabulary and comprehension for classes III and IV, i.e. Wings from December 2018. The new English book, Butterfly IV, harps on the importance of English through short plays and presents English in the familiar setting of Bengal. We look forward to better proficiency in English from WBBPE students.

Thus, we can see that content and language integrated learning is extremely important for teaching any target language, especially English, which is a foreign language for most of the people of the country.

VIII. REFERENCES

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My area of research is status of English at school level in India.