

**Review research paper**

**DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION IN INDIA: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITIES IN  
MAHARASHTRA STATE**

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**Abstract.** *English Language Education (ELE) in India has a history of about two hundred years. There were some significant studies in ELE during the British rule. The research in ELE in India was mostly carried out in the second half of twentieth century. A cursory review of bibliographies reveals that ELE is one of the less researched sub-disciplines of English Studies in India. In the absence of a separate study on research in ELE in India, the present paper is a modest attempt to evaluate the doctoral research in different areas of ELE in the universities in Maharashtra State of India. The purpose of the present study is to know the less explored and over explored areas of ELE for doctoral research. This study would not only strengthen the research in ELE but also define the scope for further research in ELE in India. Besides, it may not only help the aspirant researchers but also will determine the path of ELE in twenty-first century India.*

**Key words:** *English Studies in India, Doctoral research, ELE, Maharashtra State*

1. INTRODUCTION

Research plays an important role in the development of language education. English Language Education (ELE) in India is a two hundred year old enterprise. Right from the colonial times, research in ELE in India has been globally recognized. The studies carried out by West (1926) and Prabhu (1987) are two examples to mention. The former focusses on the use of L1 in the teaching of L2 while the latter deals with task-based language teaching. There are some other studies dealing with research in the sub-disciplines of English Studies in India. These studies are reviewed here.

After studying seventy-nine PhDs in English Studies at Kakatiya University (KU), Warangal, Telangana, Damodar (1993) observed that the genre of fiction in American Literature (AL) and Indian English Literature (IEL) are the most researched areas of English Studies and the research in British Literature (BL) is relatively low. New Literatures (NL) and English Language Teaching (ELT) are the areas neglected for

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research. There are two studies on ELT research at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. In the first study, Labade (2013) throws some light on the shifting emphasis in research areas in ELT at the EFLU and suggests new avenues like web-based language skills and employability skills. After surveying 240 PhD theses at the EFLU, during 1968-2011, Tasildar (2013) found out that 39% theses are in English language and 34% are in ELT whereas 17% of theses each in AL and IEL. In another survey of 116 PhD theses in English at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU) during 1967-2008, Tasildar (2013) noticed that the most number of theses (31%) are in IEL. The study by Vyas and Joshi (2013) on researches in English in the universities of Western Region of India till 2012 reveals that fiction is the most popular area of research and there is lot of room for research in ELT, folk, tribal, comparative, nationalistic, diaspora and de-colonization. In her study of 438 PhD theses in English submitted during 1955 to 2014 to the seven state universities in Karnataka, Jyothi (2018) deals with the changing patterns of research areas in English Studies. She notes that the research in the universities in Karnataka focus more on literary studies and research in Applied Linguistics and ELT is sparingly done (194-195). Tasildar (2019) has examined the contribution of a research institute – Institute of Advanced Study in English affiliated to the Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) – to the doctoral research in English Studies in India.

For the studies on research there is need to refer to bibliographies as well. Some of the bibliographies on research in English Studies in India are reviewed here. Kushwaha and Naseem (2000) have classified research in English Studies under nine categories. There were about 150 PhDs mentioned in the sub-disciplines of English Language, Linguistics and ELT put in a single category. The bibliography of ELT in Indian universities by Ganguly and Ramaiah (2000) deals with books, journal articles and M Phil and PhD research. It is divided into five main parts. The part II of this bibliography covers almost every aspect of ELT like Applied Linguistics, Bilingualism, Communicative Language Teaching, Contrastive Studies, Curriculum Planning/Syllabus/Course Materials' Design, Dictionaries, Error Analysis, ESP, Examinations, First Language Acquisition, Grammar, Interlanguage, Language Laboratory to Research Methods and Vocabulary studies.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The studies by Damodar (2013) and Jyothi (2018) and the bibliographies on English Studies in India by Kushwaha and Naseem (2000) and Ganguly and Ramaiah (2000) reveal that ELE is one of the less researched area in Indian universities. Furthermore, there is no separate study on doctoral research in ELE in India. On the lines of previous researches in English Studies, the present study aims to know the less explored and over explored areas of ELE for doctoral research. This study is based on a directory of research in ELE in Indian universities compiled by Padwad (2014). It is a comprehensive source for ELE research in Indian universities. It comprises of dissertations and theses submitted for M Ed, M Phil, M Litt. and PhD to the departments of English, linguistics and education in eighty-two Indian universities during the period between 1953 and 2014. There is no classification of ELE research just like Ganguly and Ramaiah (2000). Nevertheless, the Indexes at the end of the directory provide information on keywords, learners levels and regions of research. The researches mentioned in the directory are put

in more than one area of ELE. The present study considers the doctoral studies in the universities in Maharashtra recorded in Padwad (2014).

**2.1 The Universities in Maharashtra**

The Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Pune (Deccan College), the third oldest educational institution in India, was established in 1821. After independence, the college was affiliated to the Poona University. The Institute got deemed to be university status in 1990. The University of Mumbai (UoM) is the oldest university established in 1857. Shreemati Nathibai Damaodar Thackersey Women’s University, Mumbai (SNDTWU) was established in 1916. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMUN) was established in 1923. SPPU was established in 1949. BAMU, Aurangabad was established in 1958. Shivaji University, Kolhapur (SUK) was established in 1962. Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University (SGBAU) was established in 1983. Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik (YCMOU) was established in 1989. Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon (KBCNMU) was established in 1990.

The number of doctoral studies considered for the present study is as follows.

Table 1 University-wise doctoral studies in the universities in Maharashtra

Deccan College	UoM	SNDTWU	RTMUN	SPPU	BAMU	SUK	SGBAU	YCMOU	KBCNMU	Total
02	08	11	06	37	26	12	05	03	02	112

The 112 PhDs in ELE submitted to the departments of English, linguistics and education in these ten state universities in Maharashtra have been reviewed in the present study.

**3. ANALYSIS**

The doctoral research in the universities in Maharashtra centre around the following major areas of ELE. In the following analysis, the name of the researcher is followed by the entry number, given in the bracket, from the directory by Padwad (2014).

**3.1. The status of English and context of ELT**

Some of the researchers - Jebamani (382) and Saisena (801) - have analysed the status of English at higher secondary level for their doctoral studies at SNDTWU and BAMU respectively. Sthapit (951) has comparatively studied English, Nepali and Newari for their pedagogic application (SPPU) while Shaikh (861) has studied English as a non-native phenomenon with reference to Saudi UG students (BAMU). Yeddi (1061) has studied ELT in Sudan (BAMU).

**3.2. Attitude and motivation, language learning and language proficiency**

The attitude and motivation for learning English language of Yemeni secondary school students and junior college students of Marathwada has been studied by Al-Sohbani (48) and by Kumthekar (497) at SPPU and BAMU respectively. Parikh (674)

has researched on the relationship between motivation and school performance of secondary school pupils studying through Gujarati and English mediums (UoM). In two more studies of comparison at SUK, Karekatti (424) has explored second language learning of child and adolescent Marathi learners and Kumbhar (496) has studied proficiency in English of English and Marathi medium school students in Kolhapur district.

### 3.3. Curriculum development and syllabus design

The researchers have tried to develop programmes to teach different aspects of ELT for different classes in the studies on spoken English [Kudchedkar (476) at the college level (SNDTWU) and Vhanbhatte (1032) for standard 8<sup>th</sup> (SUK)], writing skills [Gulvani (313) for standards IX and X (SUK), Harkare (328) for standard 8<sup>th</sup> (SNDTWU) and Waghmare (1053) for standard IX (SNDTWU)] and grammar [Katoch (428) for HSC (BAMU)].

In addition, More (588) has analysed language needs of Marathi society for syllabus designing of English (Deccan). Patil (693) has tried to develop instructional programme for developing functional competencies for pupils of Std. IX (SPPU) and Quaid (726) has investigated ELT curriculum in Republic of Yemen (BAMU).

There are three studies pertaining to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In a study carried out at SPPU, Abdulhameed (5) has analysed needs for business English in Yemen. The two other studies at SNDTWU are related to development of ESP courses for the students of Hotel Management and Catering Technology by Bhattacharya (139) and for some polytechnic departments of SNDTWU by Deshmukh (226).

### 3.4. Approaches, methods and classroom practices

The approaches and methods of teaching English is the most explored area of ELE research with as seventeen studies related to approaches, methods and classroom practices.

There are three studies in BAMU related to approaches - Deshpande (227) has studied oral approach of teaching English in Marathi medium schools in Osmanabad district. Nadaf (612) has investigated into the implementation of multi-skill approach and the effect of communicative approach in teaching English has been studied by Shivbhakt (894). The last study is on student-teachers. In one of the earlier studies on structural approach, Shastri (887) deals with the teaching of ESL in Bombay (UoM). Surwade (972) has studied the effectiveness of CLT programmes at the secondary level (KBCNMU). The two studies by Gaikwad (275) Patil (692), carried out at SUK and RTMUN respectively, compare the effectiveness of direct method and the bilingual method of teaching English.

There are also four studies in classroom practices. A study by Alnaqeeb (43) deal with Yemeni English teachers' classroom practices in secondary schools in Laboos (SPPU). Banatwala (106) has explored the relationship between classroom interaction and uptake in EFL teaching classes (SNDTWU) and Kharat (453) has studied classroom interaction techniques to develop language skills for business communication (BAMU). In a different research at SUK, Menon (560) has studied the relationship between language barriers emerging from student teachers in the classroom and acquisition of communication skills in English by VI standard students.

The impact of methods of teaching English in the secondary schools has been studied by Khalique (441) at BAMU and Lubde (520) at SPPU. Mohire (583) has analysed the methods of teaching English at the undergraduate level (SUK). Tahir (983) has studied translation and English language learning (SPPU). The two studies in developing

communicative competence carried out by Gandhi (279) and Marje (130), at Deccan College and SUK respectively, deal with the undergraduate and higher secondary levels.

### 3.5. Teaching of language skills, vocabulary and grammar

With regard to teaching of language skills, four studies pertain to listening skills, seven studies are related to reading and three studies are on development of writing skills. The studies in spoken English are in syllabus design and use of AV aids. Two studies on the teaching of listening skills carried out at SPPU are general in nature. Abdulkareem (6) and Mahmood (530) have researched on the teaching of listening skills in English. Aparaj (67) has worked on developing auditory abilities in English of students in secondary schools (SUK) and Ukhalkar (1005) has studied different ways adopted to develop listening skills in English language in students at secondary school (SGBAU).

Out of the seven studies on the teaching of **reading** skills, two studies are related to Yemeni undergraduate students. Ahmed (22) has studied monitoring strategies of reading comprehension by Yemeni English major undergraduates (BAMU) while Almontasser (41) has studied development of reading strategies among Yemeni undergraduates (SPPU). In a literature-based research, Kamala (414) has studied children's fiction in English written by Indian authors from the point of view of contribution to increase proficiency in reading (SNDTWU). In another research, Mahpareh (531) has studied the role of scaffolding instruction in accelerating reading comprehension in EFL for Iranian undergraduates (SPPU). The next three studies on reading carried at BAMU represent different levels of education. Ishakali (353) has researched on the reading efficiency in English of students of Standard XI in Aurangabad city. The teaching and evaluation of reading comprehension at higher secondary level was studied by Shaikh (860). Sonkamble (934) has studied reading interest in English of first year degree students in the colleges affiliated to BAMU.

Out of the three studies in **writing**, one was carried out at BAMU and two were at SPPU. The study at BAMU by Al-Harazy (36) focuses on learner strategies used by Yemeni college students for written communication in English. Among the researches at SPPU, Khodabandehlou (457) has studied the impact of context-based vs. sentence based grammar exercise on EFL and ESL learners' writing proficiency and Kulkarni (479) has suggested ways and means to improve written expression in English.

All the three studies on the teaching of **vocabulary** were carried out at the SPPU. The process of teaching and learning English vocabulary was studied by Ahmed (18). Hebsur (334) has measured perception of English idioms at the junior and undergraduate college levels and Yarahmadi (1060) has worked on the effect of text-generation on incidental vocabulary learning in EFL and ESL contexts.

There are six studies in the teaching of different aspects of **grammar**. These deal with cohesive devices by Al-Raymi (45), syntactic rules by Apte (68), directives by D'Souza (244), adpositions by Mohammad (570), articles and prepositions by Patil (690) and use of tenses by Yannawar (1059). Among these studies second, fifth and sixth were carried out at BAMU, first and fourth at SPPU and third at the UoM.

### 3.6. Materials Development and use of Audio-Visual Aids

Both the studies in materials development were conducted in the first decade of twenty-first century. Karwande (423) has studied the course-books of English for Std, I to IV and the present status of teaching –learning of English in Aurangabad district at the

primary stage (BAMU). Patil (689) has worked on development of self-learning material for engineering students to improve their written communication skills in English (YCMOU).

In a thesis in Marathi language, Gawande (286) investigates the utility of English language laboratory in the teaching-learning of English for Std. I to IV (SGBAU). In the other two studies at SPPU, Hadap (323) has studied the effect of teacher made multi-media programme package on pronunciation skills of secondary-student teachers of English and Paigaonkar (661) has studied the use of mass media with reference to radio and television.

### **3.7. Error analysis and contrastive analysis**

Error analysis (EA) is one of the popular (12 studies) areas of study among the researchers in almost all the universities in Maharashtra whereas there are only two studies in contrastive analysis. The only study on teachers' and learners' perception of oral correction of error in the ESL classroom was carried out by Adhav (14) at SNDTWU. Most of the studies [Aziza (88), Borse (154), Deshmukh (225), Joshi (404), Patel (682) Patrikar (695) and Pawar (699)] are related to the errors in written English committed by learners at almost all the levels of education with different subjects and areas. In the two studies at SPPU, the errors committed by Yemeni students are studied by Aziza (88) and common syntactic errors made by English teacher trainees in the college of education in Yemen are studied by Al-Kadasi (39). Indapurkar (346) has studied errors in English of middle schools pupils of Chandrapur (Chanda) district of Northeast Maharashtra (SPPU). Pawar (699) considers errors in composition by VII standard students (SUK). Borse (154) deals with grammatical mistakes of students of standard X (SGBAU) and Deshmukh (225) deals with errors related to the use of modal auxiliaries by standard IX students. The studies by Deshmukh (225) and Patel (682) at BAMU are restricted to the students in Aurangabad district. D'Souza (242) has analyzed errors by junior college students (SPPU) and Patil (687) and Patrikar (695) have researched on the errors by undergraduate students. Patil (687) has studied the errors of North Maharashtra University (KBCNMU) and Patrikar (695) has analysed the errors of the students of B.A. classes of the colleges in urban centres of Vidarbha (RTMUN).

Both the studies in contrastive analysis (CA) were carried out at the SPPU. Behari (117) has studied Bhojpuri and English with specific reference to the teaching of English and the influence of Hindi on Bhojpuri speakers (SPPU). Pratap (721) has studied grammatical structures of English and Marathi to suggest a curricular programme in English grammar for Marathi medium secondary schools in Maharashtra (SPPU).

### **3.8. Teaching of literature**

All the studies on literature are related to the teaching of poetry. Ganorkar (282) has researched on the British and Indian nursery rhymes for the pre-school curriculum (RTMUN). Jawale (376) has studied comprehension of poetry in the first language (Marathi) and second language (English) of the undergraduate students (SPPU). Syeda (979) has studied difficulties in comprehending English poetry in the junior colleges of Aurangabad district (BAMU).

### 3.9. Testing

The eight studies in testing cover all the levels of education - primary, secondary and undergraduate levels. The first research in ELE was carried out in testing at the UoM in the sixties by Ahuja (25) in 1967. Ahuja (25) has studied construction and standardization of a group test in English for the age group 3 to 17 years (UoM). Kanran (418) has studied effect of blank length manipulation on the reliability and validity of cloze tests (SPPU). Khan (450) has studied construction and standardization of diagnostic test in English for Standard VII with regards to structures (RTMNU). Lukmani (522) has worked on the rationale for proficiency testing in English for college entrance (UoM). Mascarenhas (547) has studied examination reforms undertaken by Maharashtra State Board of Secondary Education with special reference to the question papers in English and Geography (SPPU).

Mitra (569) has studied the achievement in English as first language of students of Std. XI in relation to context and input variables (SNDTWU). Patil (688) has studied English language achievement of Shivaji University Arts graduates (SUK). Paradkar (670) has researched on the cause of poor results in Mathematics, Science and English at SSC examination in 15 municipal secondary schools of greater Bombay (UoM).

### 3.10. Problems of teaching and learning English

Most of the researchers being practising teachers are interested in studying various problems in the teaching and learning of English. The two researchers Bhadange (119) and Kamble (415) at BAMU have studied problems of learning and teaching English. The former has restricted the study to Zilla Parishad high schools of Aurangabad District (BAMU). In another study, Poothongoen (707) has considered problems in higher secondary schools in Yangtalat district of Kalasin province, Thailand (SPPU).

There are five studies separately dealing with the problems in the teaching of English. Asmimana (83) has studied linguistic difficulties in teaching English to Thai speakers (SPPU). Ramnavmiwale (757) has analysed problems of communicative skills in English language with regard to first year degree students (YCMOU). Among the remaining three studies on problems faced by the teachers of English at the primary level of education, two studies [Dahake (196) and Salunke (804)] are in Marathi language. Dahake (196) has studied problems faced by the primary school teachers of Amravati division (SGBAU). Salunke (804) has studied the effectiveness of a manual to solve the problems noticed by teachers teaching communicative approach at the upper primary level (YCMOU). The study by Gaikwad (276) investigates problems of primary teachers of English in schools of Aurangabad District (BAMU).

In the studies related to problems of learning, Mowaji (590) has investigated educational and vocational problems of junior college students of Greater Bombay (UoM). Samran (807) has studied the problems faced by first year Thai students in acquiring English (SPPU). In a unique study carried out at RTMNU, Sangole (812) has studied the phonetic problems of the hearing impaired children and speech therapy.

### 3.11. General

The studies put under this heading are those which cannot be accommodated under above areas. Here studies related to teachers' competencies, teacher training, junior college and English medium schools are considered. Some studies related to teacher education,

junior colleges and English medium schools have been already discussed in the major areas of ELE.

Two researchers have studied teachers' competencies. Chaudhary (181) has studied teaching competencies of teachers teaching English at the secondary school level (SNDTWU) and Chougule (190) has studied relationship between teachers' competencies and fourth standard students' attainment of English communication skills (SUK). In the lone separate research of its kind, Saraf (819) has studied training of teachers of English in Maharashtra (UoM). Two studies by Pradhan (711) and Pamandiwar (676) focussing specifically on the teaching of English at junior college level have been carried out at the SPPU and RTMNU respectively. The researchers are also interested in studying the teaching of English in English medium schools. Among the two studies carried out at the SPPU in the 1980s, Subrahmaniam (953) has studied English language skills attained in the English medium schools in India and Sukumaran (959) has studied the status of English medium schools in Maharashtra. The third study at SPPU was on raising achievement level of children in an English medium primary school in Pune by Ananthakrishnan (59). In another study of teaching English to minorities, Khan (443) has studied English medium schools with reference to Muslim community (SGBAU).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. The development of ELE in the universities in Maharashtra

The doctoral research in ELE in Maharashtra started with studies on testing, EA and CA in the 1960s. The topics of research in the 1970s were structural approach, teacher training, students' motivation, use of AV aids, the status of English and English medium schools and the teaching of reading and writing skills. In the 1980s, studies were in the teaching of spoken English and poetry, problems of students, methods of teaching and teaching competencies. The teaching of listening skills and ESP were the topics in the 1990s. Studies in all these major areas of ELE were undertaken in the first and second decade of twenty-first century.

##### 4.2. The contribution of the universities to the development of ELE

The UoM, one of the oldest universities in India, has the credit of initiating doctoral studies in testing by Ahuja (25) in 1967, structural approach by Shastri (887) in 1973, teacher training by Saraf (819) in 1975, students' motivation and English medium schools by Parikh (674) in 1976 and problems of students in junior colleges by Mowaji, (590) in 1983. The research in the one of the popular areas – EA – was first carried out at SPPU by Indapurkar (346) in 1968. The university, with the most number of doctoral studies in ELE in Maharashtra, also has the credit of initiating research in the use of AV aids by Paigaonkar (661) in 1978, the status of English by Sthapit (951) in 1979, teaching of writing by Kulkarni (479) in 1980, teaching of poetry by Jawale (376) in 1981 and teaching of grammar by Mohammad in 1985.

The university with second most number of doctoral studies in ELE in Maharashtra, BAMU, has initiated a study in reading skills by Ishakali (353) in 1980. The development of a course in spoken English by Kudchedkar (476) in 1981 was the first doctoral study in syllabus design in Maharashtra carried out at SNDTWU. The university also initiated



studies in teaching competencies by Chaudhary (181) in 1984 and ESP by Deshmukh (226) in 1996. The SUK initiated studies in direct method and the bilingual method by Gaikwad (275) in 1982 and listening skills by Aparaj (67) in 1991.

It is to be noted that the initiative taken by a university for research in an ELE area is generally continued with the maximum number of studies in the same area. The following examples can suffice this. The first study on testing was at the UoM. There are three studies on testing at the university. The first doctoral research at SPPU was in EA and there are five studies in EA at the university. Similarly, BAMU initiated the research in reading skills and the university has four studies in reading.

We may have a look at the contribution of the universities in Maharashtra to the research in different areas of ELE. In addition to three studies in syllabus design, there are two studies in ESP at SNDTWU. There are seven studies in the teaching of language skills and three on vocabulary at SPPU. Similarly, there are five studies in teaching methods and three in the teaching of grammar at BAMU. The doctoral studies in ELE are mostly undertaken at the older universities in Maharashtra. Newly established universities are yet to make their mark in doctoral research in ELE. Thus, there is a remarkable contribution of the universities in Maharashtra in the development of ELE India.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The researchers have mostly employed survey method and experimental method for their doctoral research in ELE. Thus, ELE may be one of the less researched sub-disciplines of English studies due to the empirical nature of doctoral research.

It is remarkable to note that the first doctoral research in ELE in the universities in Maharashtra was in construction of a group test by Ahuja (25) in 1967 at the UoM. It has also initiated research related to English medium schools and junior colleges in the 1970s. However, after 1987 there are no doctoral studies in ELE at the UoM. There are no studies on vocabulary at universities other than SPPU. Similarly, no researcher has explored teaching of literature at secondary level. The relevance of contrastive studies seemed to have ceased three decades ago.

The doctoral studies surveyed here consider methods of teaching and testing at all the levels of education – pre-school, primary, secondary, higher secondary (junior college) and undergraduate. These studies are not only related to India, but also deal with ELE in countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand and Yemen, to name a few.

Methods of teaching English and EA are among the popular areas of ELE research in the universities in Maharashtra. With the highest number of location specific (mostly district-wise) doctoral studies on problems of teaching and learning English and EA, it is high time to review these studies for their implications in the current teaching-learning scenario.

In future the ELE research in the universities in Maharashtra can focus on areas like language acquisition and language learning, the teaching of study skills and reference skills, use of dictionaries, methods of teaching spoken English, teaching of literature, materials development and use of advanced teaching aids and techniques like computer assisted language learning (CALL), mobile assisted language learning (MALL) and various other web-based teaching tools and teacher training.

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