

Challenges in Teaching English as a Second language for the Students of 21st Century

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Abstract

English being the lingua franca continues to be a force in shaping the future of the world. From the time of British colonization till today, English is the language used for all purpose - be it trade, commerce, politics, culture or education. English holds a place of status in our country, even after more than six decades since British left India. No native language however has come up to replace English, either as a medium of communication or as an official language. Under the influence of nationalistic feeling and emotional hostility English began to reassert its position. This paper is an overview of the main problems connected with teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). It also focuses on the challenges in teaching English, especially for the students of 21st century.

Keywords: Innovations, English Language Teaching, Influence.

Introduction

English has become one of the world's most widely spoken language and second language for many countries. In India, even after Twelve years of studying English at school level, do not gain confidence over the use of language. As majority of the students are from rural areas, bilingual method is adopted in language classes, which prevents them from using the language. Learning a language requires constant practice and patience. It is not possible to achieve fluency or mastery over any English language, unless they get proper exposure. This kind of tendency also prevents students from learning new languages. Since most of the students are first generation learners, a student cannot get acquainted with the foreign language just by learning the text. Even though they learn English, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical error. This is because more emphasizes is laid on exams rather than learning the language. Examination system in India generally encourages rote learning rather than testing their analytical and creative skills.

Due to the rapid growth in technology, 20th Century teaching strategies are not that effective. Teachers must embrace new teaching strategies that are radically different from those employed in the 20th Century classroom especially chalk and talk methodology. The curriculum must be more relevant to what students will experience in the workplace. It has to be student centered and not teacher centered. Teachers have to be facilitators. The students are learn by doing, and so the teacher has to be like a coach, in helping them while

learning. Textbooks are no longer the major source of information. Students use multiple sources, including technology, to find and gather the information they need. They might refer to journals, interview experts, explore the Internet, or use computer software programs to apply, what they have learned or to find information.

The following sections deal with the role of the teacher, the classroom atmosphere and the methodology adopted for the 21st century students.

English as a Second Language

The educational system in India has the motive to provide education for all the students. Its major objective is to make Indian citizens as literates. In such a scenario the government has undertaken so many projects and plans in order to attain the required goals. In India, the medium of instructions is of two types. They are

- Regional language as a medium of instruction
- English as a medium of instruction

In the last two decades, English has gained prominence in India, because it has become the global and official language of most of the countries and moreover in a multilingual country like India, there is an inevitable need for a common language. Majority of the Indians are farmers and they come from poor background. So they do not possess the awareness of providing proper education to their children. Though government spends a huge amount of money in developing the educational department to enrich the literacy level of the country by providing well-structured classrooms, schools and laboratories, English is not taught the way it should be.

Challenges in Teaching and Learning English

Most of the students are from regional medium background and they do not have proper exposure towards learning English. The twelve years of school experience in learning English was not effective. Students have been practiced to rote learning. Memorization has given an important mode of learning than acquiring. Students have learned English to clear their exams and to score marks. Though English was taught in schools there were no proper practice or training were implemented for oral communication so when students come out from schools they face difficulties in communication. Moreover they have good knowledge in their core subject due to lack of communication they couldn't attain their goal. Teachers those who teach English do not have proper accessibility on language labs and teachers should use activities and tasks to teach English to give a different experience to the learners.

The Role of teacher in teaching English in 21st century

Harmer, J. states that 'it makes more sense to describe different teacher roles and say what they are useful for, rather than make value judgments about their effectiveness'. According to him, a teacher acts as:

- The Controller
- The Prompter
- The Assessor
- The Organizer
- The Tutor

The Controller:

In a teacher centered classroom, it is quite easy to have control over the class but it demands more challenge and on concentration from the teacher. If he/she plans to implement new techniques. When a group of activity is given, he/she needs to have control over the class so that students can enjoy the class and learn something new.

The Prompter:

As a prompter, teacher should encourage students and guide them to proceed with the various activities given in the class. He/she should be help students only when it is needed. For example If the students want to know the meaning for difficult words, the teacher can act as a prompter and can encourage them by guiding contextual clues.

The Assessor:

As an assessor a teacher's role is to see how well the students are performing. A teacher should provide positive feedback and correct them in a friendly manner. This will make them participate actively.

The Organizer:

The success of any activity relies on the good organization. Being an organizer is a difficult one. Well organized activities help the students to know what they need to do. Giving instructions and setting up activities is a vital role. So, to have a control over the 21st century classroom, a teacher should have good organizing skills.

The Tutor:

Tutoring is nothing but one that gives additional, special, or remedial instruction. When students are involved in the project works and self-study the teacher acts as a trainer. He/she should provide advice, guidance and help students in clarifying doubts and incorporate new ideas.

21st Century Classroom

The focus of student learning in this classroom is different. It is no longer on learning by memorizing and recalling information but on learning how to learn. Now, students use the information they have learned

and demonstrate their mastery of the content in the projects they work on. Students learn on how to ask the right questions, how to conduct an appropriate Investigation, how to find answers, and how to use the gathered information. Just as student learning has changed so has the assessment of learning. Teachers can use a variety of performance-based assessments to evaluate student learning. The following table clearly shows the mode of teaching and learning between traditional and present teaching methods.

Traditional Teaching Methods	Teaching Methods in 21st Century
Teacher-centered	Student centered
Emphasis on the prescribed syllabus	Importance to learning and doing
Memorizing the information	Implement the information with real life situations
Whole group configuration	Based on individuals and their needs
Individual work	Importance to the group activities
Written examinations	Performance based assessments
Prescribed textbooks	Various sources
Chalk and Talk	Innovative technologies

Technology in Education in 21st Century

Educational technology is one of the effective teaching tools for the second language teachers. It comprises mobiles, tablets, networking hardware, computers and media. These electronic devices have made our day to day task easier and faster. The media has reached its peak in the 21st century. The influence of mass media among students is quite massive. There has been a gradual development in the mass media from the telegram, radio, newspaper, magazines, telephones, computers, mobiles, Facebook, YouTube, twitter, and Whatsapp. Media connects between the individuals around the world, thus making the entire world smaller. Media plays a crucial and inevitable role in our day to day life. It gives us the illusion that whatever we do, see, and hear is true and trustworthy. The usage of android mobiles has a dominating role Government of Rajasthan has provided android tablets to students. It is a gifted tool for the teachers of second language. Government of Tamilnadu has provided laptops for the higher secondary school students. Students are so smarter than the teacher. In order to develop the language among the students, teacher should teach language with technology. Multimedia, Power point presentations, Video clips, Audio tapes, and Computer games which make them active listeners.

Innovative methods

These are the few methods that can be suggested for the 21st century students:

- Teaching through video games
- Teaching through android applications
- Teaching English through movies with English subtitles
- Teaching through YouTube videos
- Teaching through PowerPoint

Researchers has been proved that teaching through the digital mode that enhances the teaching and learning more effective and it brings a curiosity among learners.

Conclusion

Technology has a dominant role and hence as Harmer had said that students should fuse the four C's:- Critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration in learning. The role of teacher has shifted from teaching to monitoring and therefore students enjoy learning with technology. It is necessary that the teacher make use of the technology appropriately so as to get the desired result. The quick access to new knowledge through technology and since small kids of today can navigate electronic devices better than grownups. For the 21st century learners it is easy to acquire the language more effectively when compared to the traditional methods.

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