



CHALLENGES OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS IN INDIA AND THE REMEDIES TO OVERCOME IT

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Abstract: This paper reflects the present scenario of English as a second language in India. It explains language and recognizes the factors that affect second language learning. It examines different challenges encountered by learners of English and what is the right way of language acquirement for second language learners in India. It is even more difficult in an undeveloped rural area because of the lack of exposure, lack of opportunity to practice English outside the classroom, lack of facilities and poor economic condition. Language acts as a tool to express properly in various communicative situations. However, it is the very second language which needs a watchful and persistent, systematic effort to gain or master it. Second language learning is really a big threat for all native speakers of that language who really deal with it. Many of the Indian students, especially from rural areas, particularly in the states of Bihar, U.P. and Maharashtra, signify this seven-letter “ENGLISH” as a magical and cryptic word. A feeling of restlessness arrives, the moment they hear something in English. As a result of this, teachers who handle English classes face innumerable problems. Students find it hard to listen and to figure out the English language. What are the causes for this? What are the remedial measures to be taken to rectify these problems? This paper is an attempt to evaluate the nature of second language acquirement and the exact factors responsible for its slow acquirement, especially in the rural areas of India. Appropriate and immense solvable measures are cited for the successful reformation of these problems.

Keywords: Language learning, second language acquirement, Slow acquirement, Solvable measures

I. INTRODUCTION

The review and research of language is the base of all other learning. Language explains us as human being. To be a man is to utilize language, and to communicate is to be a person. Language is the channel and medium of communication. English as a dynamic means of communication serves as a link language in a multicultural and multilingual society like India and also as a global linguistic negotiator. English language relishes a position which no other language does because it is more than a means of transmission of knowledge, thoughts, ideas etc.; it is a language of potentiality, status and upward social flexibility. It grasps a place of status in our country, even after seven decades since Britishers left India. No other language however, has come up to substitute English, either as a medium of communication or as an official language. Over the years, it has made an appearance as a language of choice for commerce, economic growth and social mobility. Teaching students English has consistently rose as one of the top supposition of parents from school. However, learning English is not as easy as the wish to learn it because many researchers and teachers have pointed out that teaching and learning English has always been a tough and tedious process. Even though, many efforts have been taken to make English language learning easier, failure on the part of students to achieve the desired level of competency, substantiate the fact that there are many challenges that creates an obstacle in the process of learning English. Every teacher who educates any subject matter in English to “English as Second Language” students is not only a teacher of all subjects but also is a teacher of English; therefore, the teacher should have to continuously focus on teaching and upgrade practice to address the requirement of the learners. This paper includes an analysis of the challenges English as Second Language students face and the plan of action that teachers can employ to meet these hindrances.

II. PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDIA

There lie many hindrances of teaching in India. Although the English Language Teaching Institutes at Allahabad and Hyderabad have done a lot to upgrade the English Teaching in India by manufacturing new text-books; gramophone records; flash-cards; pictures; training teachers through the means of B.Ed.; promoting structural approach of practice English teaching, yet there are innumerable difficulties which generate unhealthy conditions for adequate teaching of English in our country. Indian students can be classified into two; the one who is having the regional language as medium of study from the primary level and the other who is having English as the medium of study. Hence, the problem of teaching English as a second language, to the Indian student’s starts

from the pre-schooling. English teaching in India has always been in difficult situations. This is so because of the large population of the country, bleak economic conditions, the cultural diversities, etc. Apart from these reasons, there prevail many other causes that disturb the teaching-learning process in India.

a. Psychological Problems

It is a widespread misunderstanding amongst students that English is the most difficult of all subjects. The result and the failure candidates act as evidence to prove this fact. Therefore, maximum students look at this subject with an impaired vision and carry the fear through the year. The psychological stress and anxiety results in poor conduct at the end of the year.

b. Lack of Exposure

Most of the Indian students are exposed to their mother tongues. They do not get adequate opportunities either to listen to or speak in English. As they have poor social and economic backgrounds, they neither get enough susceptibility to English outside the classroom to upgrade themselves.

c. Learning Methods

One of the reasons for the degrading standards of teaching English is the incompetence of teachers to realize the contrasting nature between the teaching of literature and the teaching of language skills. Everybody knows that the learning of a language is not an end in itself, it is a means to uplift one's power of expression and comprehension can be gained by mastering stylistic elements of the language.

d. Translation Method

Translation method is widely used in rural areas. It assists the learner to perceive the content matter of the text but put a bar from learning the language. The main aim of teaching the language is kept aside and the teaching of matter and subject is given importance. Translation method is thus a great difficulty in learning English.

e. Lack of Motivation

As students do not find any prompt need for English, their interest naturally decreases. Similarly, as there is no instant gift for their success, the interest lacks. The poverty and the insecure sociological conditions also push them to ignore the language. Learning a foreign language is a tough task and the much-needed openness and cultivation of the language are not accessible to attain fluency in the utilization of the language.

f. Mother Tongue Interference

Most of the hindrance arise due to the intervention of mother tongue in speaking English. Both the teachers and the students are very fluent and vocal in speaking their own mother-tongue. But they forget the attribute of pure language. When they talk in their mother-tongue they sometimes use English words in the middle of the sentences. They forget that every language differentiates in stress, intonation and pronunciation.

g. Defective Methods

The methodology which is practiced to teach English in schools is not proper. The oral work which is the soul of any method is totally ignored. Writing which is an upgraded skill to be learnt is taught right from the beginning. Students is not given exposure to the utilization of language. Language is trained and taught by the rules and learnt by rote memory.

h. Difference in English

English is spoken in a very different way from almost all other languages of the world. Every place of the world where English is spoken has a different pronunciation and accent. When a teacher teaches English as second language, he/she must bear in mind that his/her students will not know the difference between US English, Queen's English and the entire sundry English's of the world. This could lead to disorientation.

i. Excess strength in class: - As we have large population, we do not find any class where students number is less than 60. As the student in the class are always diversified, there remains hardly any time to pay attention to the weak or creative child. Even the average child does not get enough exposure and experience in the use of language. There is no scope for individual attention. This certainly affects the intellectual development of the students.

j. Lack of Practice

Language could be grasped by exercising all the four skills viz. Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing. The rural areas do not allow the learner to rehearse and cultivate any of these skills. The lack of audio tools also adds in the obstacle of lack of practice. Many teachers are inadequate to teach English productively because they face lot of troubles due to the lack of teaching aids. There are very few audio-visual aids available and it is inadequate for the teachers to utilize it properly. Some are so costly that the colleges can only afford to buy few.

k. Lack of Expert Teacher

Efficient English teachers are found in less number in India. Hence, not having a good teacher of English is familiar experience of all the students of English. The teachers of English are either not trained by the teachers of English in India or by the native speakers. Even the materials and methodology used in these training programs are obsolete. As such, it is the same limited experience that is shared. There is hardly any room to improve perceptive and spontaneous knowledge of the language. Though there are many institutes to train teachers of English, they are hardly enough for the large demands of the Indian teacher population. With all problems, the benchmark of English in our country is disastrously low. Hence, a lot of burden is thrown on the shoulders of the teachers to make their classes interesting and learning of English effective. They have to warm up to meet the demands of the situation and diligently perform their duties.

I. Malpractices in Exam

One of the causes subjected for the degradation is the pattern of English question setting. It is easy to guess what questions would be asked from which books in examinations. The students simply have to cram it. The teacher also teaches only those portions which are necessary for the examinations. In most of rural areas we see that malpractice at the time of exam is a familiar practice. It is on its peak at the English exam. Students, Teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, relatives, principal, officer in charge of exam and many others are involved in this custom of malpractice. They all heighten the problem of learning English in rural areas.

III. REMEDIAL MEASURES TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES

Teachers face immense problem when they teach English as a second language. It becomes more challenging and problematic in rural areas because in such areas it is the teacher plays the model, to whom a student looks up for all learning requirement. They should be able to understand and identify the needs of learners, to make them capable to interact with one another and also to gather information all over the world by building a rapport with your class—Assuring smile and greeting from a teacher to the students, helps them bond with the teacher immediately. When the students possess a healthy relation with the teacher, they will find learning the language much easier. Place of English If someone learns English, it has vast opportunities. The place of English in our education system should be well defined by the policy makers. This should be understood keeping in mind its usage, practice and innumerable opportunities in the field of science, technology, social sciences, philosophy, journalism, etc. We should keep in mind the principal aims of teaching English—the teacher should help the students to understand English when spoken. To make the students to speak, read and write in English as a Second Language. Grammar translation method should be avoided by the teacher. Teachers should find some means of helping students to enjoy the language activities and of constructing their confidence They should use English as a medium of expression to motivate and encourage the students, think with the help of English, create confidence of speaking English in public places/gatherings, in a state where neither sufficient resources nor tools are available, English teachers themselves have to plan innovative methods to make their students' climb the staircase easily. A teacher's role is massive in rural areas as the student has only a teacher to look up to and learn from. Teachers' responsibility is to take care of not only with the average and above average students but also with below average and slow learners. A good teacher has to take a hold of his/her classes for all the students in a classroom. If the teacher pays individual attention to all the students of his/her class. It will solve many problems, which emerge while taking class. An English teacher has to motivate the students to talk in English only. This act makes them confident. Teachers should encourage students for participative learning. This will solve all the hesitation in students. Teaching learning is not a one-way process. It is a dimensional process.

IV. CONCLUSION

In India, most of the workforce comes from rural areas as most of the population of India lives in villages. The urban-rural gap in teaching of English should be bridged by the policy makers. An English teacher teaching in rural schools has to use unique ideas in the classrooms. Teacher preparation programs should be done as that benefit new and upcoming teachers when they focus on strategies included in their teaching. The teachers within the individual classrooms must utilise particular knowledge gained through training and teacher preparation programs. Efficient and committed teachers should be appointed at primary level. Teachers should remain updated and trained to cater to the problems of the learners.

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