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The Difficulties of English Teacher in Tribal Area

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to bring the issues related to the problems of teaching English in tribal and rural schools / colleges of India. The quality of English language education in majority of rural schools and colleges presents a very disturbing picture. Teachers language proficiency, exposure to language and materials are major concerns for quality English language learning. In reality , rural students situations is very difficult. They don't have opportunities as urban students had (i.e.)language lab, audio visual aids,etc. Generally rural students consider English language as a subject not as a language. It is the main obstacle of them. Majority of students read English only for the sake of examination. Actually, these rural students have phobia of English on the other hand many teachers don't have language vision about students life. They focus only on examination. Corder (1973) says that how grammar is learnt is not doubted. The teachers should teach the learners to use the language. Grammar should come when learner shave learnt the language.

A language is not just a collection of words, such as we find in a dictionary. It is also the rules or patterns that relate our words to one another. A language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate language. Language is one of the medium of expressing an idea, feelings and emotions.

The present paper expresses English language teaching problems faced by teachers in Tribal and Rural areas.

Key Words : English language,learning,teaching,teaching methods,

INTRODUCTION

English is important language of the world. The development of science emerged the need of oral and written communication in English language as Pandit Nehru said , “English is the window of the world”. It is used for communicative and educative purpose all over the world. English is a world language. Over and above English is universally renowned for its power of expression and its rich literature.

In India, English is used as 1st and 2nd language. In current situation, English is the most preferred language. In language learning is a natural process. Behavioristic approach is useful in this kind of learning process.

But for the students of other language, deliberate efforts are required to learn a foreign language which requires a mentalistic approach. The students of rural and semi-urban areas in India face some problems while learning because English is not their mother tongue. Language acquisition seems to be a process which child learns from his childhood. While teaching, the teacher has to keep in mind the age of the student, his previous experience of English, his cultural background, his previous experience of English, his interest area, his learning style (i.e. visual, kinesthetic etc.) all these aspects shape the classroom teaching methodology.

Students of rural colleges face a number of problems. English is their second language. Learning a second language means acquiring a system of rules, but most of the time students are unaware about this rules. This student find themselves unable to express in English. They don't have idea about proper sentence structure. They don't know the proper pronunciation of words, spelling and grammatical rules. Actually both the teachers and the students sole objective is to clear the exam. The students never realize the importance of learning English as a language. Instead of that, they wish to speak and write English in their day to day life. The change in time have witnessed the growing importance of English language in all walks of life. Most of the times, these rural and tribal students lack the confidence to speak in English. First reason is that they have been taught English through Grammar Translation Method. This method makes them dependent on their mothertongue. Corder (1973) says that how grammar is learnt is not doubted. The teachers should teach the learners to use the language. Grammar should come when learner shave learnt the language.

Whatever they read or write they translate it into their own vernacular. During the time of exams they cannot write one original sentence on their own. Because of Grammar Translation Method they don't have vocabulary. While writing they take support of the chief market material. So, the students merely pass the subject far from learning any level of the language. Even after learning English for fourteen -fifteen years the level of the students remain unsatisfactory.

Even after years of learning English at schools many students fail to learn the language. They are unable to communicate freely in English language. Our average undergraduate cannot speak a correct sentence in English. Parents, teachers, examiners and employers complain our learner's poor achievements in English (S.C.Sood 1995:167). When these students enter college most of the students do not perform well. Even after decade of learning English in schools and colleges students are not able to use it appropriately to meet their needs. They fail to use the language effectively in day to day communication. This problem is very acute with the students who come from the rural or tribal area.

The problems teachers face while teaching English language :

We also noticed that English language teachers in rural/tribal areas face many problems and come across a variety of challenges that hinde effective teaching and learning of English as a second language, We need to continuously identify these problems and challenges, analyze these in order to take remedial steps. The following are the problems teachers face in rural /tribal areas.

1. The students family background :

Most of the times these students are facing many financial issues. Their parents are totally dependent on farming. So, these students remain absent in schools/colleges because they prefer daily wages work rather than education. They want to fulfill their families' needs by earning money. Their parents are illiterate, they don't understand the importance of education. Financial condition of their parents is a major challenge. So they are not mentally prepared for grasping language teaching.

2. **Poor condition of the classroom :**

Sometime teacher seems to be very enthusiastic and creative while teaching English. She/he wants to use different methods for language learning. But she could not attain her goal, these schools & colleges are not spacious enough to accommodate the students. The seating arrangement is not adequate when compared to the urban schools. This kind of situation makes them less confident and it becomes a challenge to the teachers.

3. **Shyness :** These students are very shy. They don't open mouth though teacher is very friendly to them as compared to urban students. Even teacher encourage them, admire them, motivates them, they are not able to open their mouth because their self-esteem & confidence level is very low. In this kind of situation it becomes problematic to teachers to cope up with these students. Actually, their family background & environment is responsible for this.
4. **Phobia :** These students have also phobia about English language since their school days. So it creates negative attitude towards learning and using English. Sometimes, these students are first generation learners in their families. The attitude of the rural students can neither be called completely negative nor completely positive. Their attitude towards English language learning is paradoxical. They want to speak and write English but they find it very difficult.
5. **Attitude :** Their attitude towards their ability and capacity is very negative. This negative attitude creates fear about subject & especially subject teacher & this all make them less confident about English learning. Though teachers are good ; teaching becomes futile in this situation.
6. **Mothertongue of the students :** In tribal /rural areas the mothertongue of the students becomes one of the problem while teaching English. Most of the time teacher is unaware about their mothertongue . Some difficult words or some difficult concepts he/she could not explain properly through their language. When teacher use their mothertongue in classroom while teaching ,it is found that students becomes more attentive and take interest in learning . Some teachers are unable to translate English words into students' local language for good understanding. Each & every teacher must know and understand the mothertongue of these students for effective teaching.
7. **Teacher's attitude about English :** Most of the time these students teachers are responsible for creating phobia of English from their childhood days. They say, "English is difficult language" may be this sentence hammering sets their sub-conscious mind & it gives them negative results. Teacher has to make up their mind-set properly from their childhood. Sachdeva (2002:)) explains a teaching and learning relationship in which he says , ' teaching and learning are inter-related and inter-dependent. Both teaching and learning are the foundations in the process of education. Good teaching results into good learning. In the process of teaching learning, teaching is the complement of learning. Teaching learning may be said to be the two sides of the same coin."
8. **Student-teacher relationship :** Some teachers have a negative attitude towards their students. They are always of the opinion that these students are dull & can never improve. Due this attitude, students are not taking part in school/college activities. They become passive, dumb & it is also one of the challenge for the teachers. Actually, it is related with students' psychology. Teacher has to understand the psychology of his/her students properly. Some times, the teacher's attitude is highly authoritarian, they also threaten students with punishments. Sometimes these teachers are very strict towards their students. So these students afraid to their teachers. It prevents to create healthy positive student-teacher relationship. These all things are related to language teaching & learning.
9. **Lack of motivation :** From their childhood these students never get proper motivation ,encouragement and that's why it becomes challenge to the teachers in schools & colleges. The teachers of these tribal areas join these schools as per the orders of institutions or Govt. He/She is not

willingly doing this job in this tribal area. So he/she never give her/his true efforts or their 100% to these students. According to Skinner, “learning is both acquisition and retention.”

10. **Lack of Exposure :** Most of these students may be first-generation school/college entrants. They have had little exposure to English in the social context in which they live. The level of English learning/teaching is not adequate in their schools. In some schools, the students are never taught English at the lower class. The students need to be given enough opportunity to develop their capability. At the college level, even sometime they don't write their names properly. This kind of students becomes one of the challenge to the teachers.
11. **Teaching Pronunciation :** One of the biggest difficulties a teacher faces while teaching English as a second language is pronunciation. Though the teaching of pronunciation is a complicated task, it is one of the most significant features of English language teaching. The teachers should be conscious of their own pronunciation. Learners should be exposed to a wide variety of dialects & different pronunciations. In this situation, if teacher wants to provide other facilities like audio-visual aids, screening of films, group discussions, it takes lot of time. Bhatt B and Sharma .S said, “Alert teachers of foreign languages have always made good use of supplementary aids. . . . they must make use of every device they can think of. To make the study of the language interesting and practical, posters, photographs, pictures, postcards reproduction of famous work of arts crafts-map, travel folders, must also be used.”
12. **Large classes :** Another major challenge is the strength of the class. In many schools in tribal areas the classes are quite big, having more than 100 students. Besides, sometimes due to lack of sufficient number of teachers, the classes are combined & the number of students in a class goes up to 100 or more.
13. **Mix abilities /different potential :** Students in any class fall under different levels of IQ. They have different potential. Their learning styles are different. Some are visual learners, some are audio learners, some are kinesthetic learners. These categories are also problematic for teachers while teaching English.
14. **Limited Time-span :** Teachers of English have very limited teaching hours. These hours are not enough to teach the language elaborately. It is also one of the problems teachers are facing at schools & colleges. In this time span teacher is unable to focus properly on four basic language skills.
15. **Syllabus Framing :** One more challenge relates to the suitability of the syllabus. The syllabus is always prepared by a committee, the members of which may not be able to handle these classes.
16. **Teaching Methods :** Most of the time, teachers are using Lecture or Grammar Translation Method while teaching. From this they never get proper results. So teachers has to decide which method /methods he/she has to use in a classroom where different kinds of learners are enrolled.
17. **Ineffective teachers :** Some time the teachers are not well-qualified or they don't have proper skills to handle these kind of students. They are also not able to use proper language / fluency while teaching.
18. **Lack of Practice & Exercise :** The teachers are not giving proper time to practice as well as exercise. But most of the time these students are not regular and it becomes problematic for the teacher to gain good teaching-learning output.
19. **Lack of library & Language Lab facility :** These schools are always in remote or tribal areas. They don't have proper facilities of teaching at the same time they are also not aware of all this. It creates problem for the teachers.
20. **Use of Modern Technology :** Most of the time teachers are unaware of this modern technology like ICT, internet, online teaching, etc. They remain backward because of lack of skills. As Vera denoted (1974 pe: 10) “teaching and learning may be considered to mutually defining aspects of the same

process. The teacher is not just a giver but also a receiver and the learner is not just the passive recipient of “made to measure” packages of knowledge but also an active participant.”

Though English is important language, it is a complex task to teachers as well as students in their teaching learning process. It is a matter of great sorrow that effective implementation of English curriculum is still far away. Especially, in tribal/rural area English is yet the matter of fear for students. Urban students are comparatively good in English language because school teachers are skilled in English language teaching & they get support from parents & teachers & tutors. But in tribal as well as rural area most of the parents are not educated & unable to spend money on their education. If teachers become qualified, enthusiastic, & conscious to teach students, it will be helpful for tribal students to learn English effectively.

To solve all these problems, a systematic approach should be followed. The teacher should focus on four basic language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading writing. The teacher should find some way to help his/her students to enjoy their language activities and of building their confidence. The students learn by imitation. As Verghese (1981:27) observed, teaching English as a second language in India is thus beset with problems such as poor motivation, inadequate exposure to the language, poor classroom condition, lack of teaching aids and material, incompetence of teachers, bilingualism and its effects on the learner etc. However, some worthwhile teaching is possible with the right relationship established in the attitudes of the learner, the teacher, the learner's parents and if through this relationship, the learner is properly motivated.

The teacher should have wide ranging enthusiasm and imagination. The students should be made to learn simple words. It will inculcate a habit of learning new words. Their newly learned words will become a part of their own vocabulary which they will use when they want. These vocabularies will result into better expression. If we take into consideration the role of teacher and learner in acquiring knowledge of a language the problems can be solved effectively. The most important thing is that the student should realize the practical use of English language. English will be used by them as a medium of expression. They will use English for the better communication purpose with fluency in the speech. It will also help to use proper language with proper sentence structure. Confident speaking in public will make them able to keep their pace with the developing world. It will also help in raising the standard of English at the college level. Let everyone concerned with it take the responsibility. The teacher should arouse a student's interest in English language learning to bring about a positive change in their performance. Only then we can create a good environment. Through this we can be able to achieve better results in teaching and learning English.

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