

## The Status of English as a Second Language in Indian Classroom

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### Abstract

India is a multicultural place which is well known country for accommodating citizens of different religions, languages and cultures. Indian classroom are not the exceptions for it in case of its typical traditional educational system. Indian classroom is also made up of the learners of different religions, castes and languages and teacher in India plays an important role in teaching-learning activity. He is the responsible factor to shape the learners where he is regarded as a 'Guru'. Since time immemorial, India has followed the Gurukul system where the disciple is observed thoroughly by the teacher where he gets more contact hours but the time is changed and modern era is occupied with the modern learning-learning classroom system. The oldest ashram system is replaced with the modern classroom teaching system. In this system, it is rightly observed that the teacher i.e. Guru is not limited to his or her traditional and routine task of teaching but he started playing more different roles and tasks. In this case, teacher has the divine task to mentor students in case of learning activity. Teachers in Indian classroom have been trying to penetrate English culture as a second language or the language of opportunities. They find somehow more difficult to teach English culture, history, language to non-native learners of English language.

The present paper is the study of the problems of learning and teaching English in India where the classrooms are full of learners' of different religion, caste whose first language is not English.

**Keywords:** Multicultural, COs, PEOs, competent, Electronic Media, assignments

We all know well that *language* is the passion of the quality to acquire and use complex systems of communication, particularly the human ability to do so, and a language is any specific example of such a system. 'Language' is the English word which is derived from the Latin 'lingua'. This word is used to refer to codes and ciphers. A language in this sense is a system of signs for encoding and decoding information. Human language is unique in comparison to other forms of communication, such as those used by non-human animals. Communication systems used by other animals such as bees or apes are closed systems that consist of a finite, usually very limited, number of possible ideas that can be expressed. Language is an integral part of our existence where we cannot imagine our life without it. It helps to fulfill our needs. Learners learn language for existence. In addition to this, the concept 'Globalization' gave the vast scope to the learning of language as the language of information and instruction in all sectors where English enjoys the highest status of demands. So the learning of mother tongue is not enough in 21<sup>st</sup> century. English opened the doors of opportunities to the learners as to keep in touch with many of the branches of knowledge in science, commerce, engineering and technology.

English plays an important role in India today. Judging from certain trends it appears that the influence of English is on the increase rather than on the decrease in India. The English newspaper yield great power. The number of books published in English is far more than those published in any other Indian language. English is still used in offices, High Courts, State Legislative Assemblies and the Parliament. More and more public schools where the study of English starts right from the first class are being opened. It has become a matter of prestige to get admission to such institutions where English is considered as the prominent language of instruction and knowledge.

English rightly serves as a link language in the country that facilitates the government policies to be implemented in all states of India where English is the second language. English is considered as an important

language as an educated person from one state is able to converse with his counterpart in another State only through the medium of English. It is also the language of trade and industry in the country. Learning and speaking English as a second language in multilingual and multicultural country like India where English is not a mother tongue is a big challenge. Learners learn English mostly with translation method where the actual sense of English is lost most of the times. As the learners don't get the suitable environment at home and school, it has created many of the problems where learners don't find comfortable with English or don't command over English language. Problems of learning English from the point of view of the learners and teaching point of the view of teachers can be discussed as under:

#### **Lack of Objectives of Learning the Specific Course**

The education system in India still follows the traditional pattern. The policy or syllabus framers consider the importance of English language from the exam point of view. Syllabus framers still have not upgraded the syllabus commercially and practical oriented. There is lacking of Course Outcomes (COs) of every course in English. Not only learners but teachers engaged in teaching English as a second language lack the objectives of teaching and learning English language in the class. The learners don't know the programs outcomes they are appearing for. They are unaware of Program Educational Outcomes (PEOs). They just complete education sometimes blindly or imitating the traditional education system. They don't go for learning English for their professional development but to secure marks or somewhere in rural areas learners consider English as a language or discipline of prestige.

#### **Large Number of Students in Classroom**

Considering the population of India, the number of students attending the class is a challenge to Indian education system. As the parents of learners do think about English language as a matter of prestige in society, many of the parents admit their children in English medium school despite of their financial condition or learners' understanding level or interest. Due to this, classrooms are overcrowded that consist of around 100 to 110 students. Teachers who do teach in classrooms don't pay personal attention to every learner. They do also not expect maximum participation of the students so the learners are not so much serious in activities and consider the minimum passing score in each activity.

#### **Lack of Competent Teachers in India**

Teachers always play the most significant role in the teaching of English in bilingual patterns of contemporary in India. Teachers of English are not fully competent to give full justice to their work and assignments. There is a shortage of teachers. Those available have just passed the school final examination.

It is ironical to find that many teachers who didn't offer teaching of English in their training and school education teach English at their workplace. The real teachers concentrate on degree rather than knowledge. Teachers are unaware of current knowledge and usage of English. They themselves require training of commercial or business English.

#### **Shortage of Time or Insufficient Contact Hours**

The number of contact hours (lectures) of teachers on teaching English has been drastically reduced. The syllabus framers included some new subjects in the syllabus and reduced importance given to English. Learners don't get sufficient practice of speaking of English due to shortage of lecture duration. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers have changed their attitudes towards teaching profession. They now think in a professional way except the sacred duty of knowledge imparting so they also behave in a professional way and hence they hardly think about learners' development rather than their wages or salaries. They don't give extra time apart from their contact hours fixed by university or board of study.

#### **Traditional Classroom Teaching Method**

Teaching method used in Indian classroom is somehow faulty. Teachers teaching the lesson pick up the passages, give or write the difficult words on writing board with the meanings and translate the lines or passages in first language then finally give the assignments to the learners. Learners imitate the same method

that results most of the time in funny situation. Teachers are still making the use of traditional use of teaching in class.

### **Implementation of Examination Oriented Education System**

Learners of English language in India are usually the puppets of examination and marks. The education system is fully examination centered and score based. Learners do not have positive attitude towards the learning outcomes. They learn the English language not to acquire it but to score good in the exam so the attitude towards English language is not interest based but exam based.

### **Insufficient Provision of Electronic Medias in Traditional Classes**

The success of language learning process depends on a pillar of education i.e. teacher. Teacher is expected to bring changes in his teaching methods as per the level of learner's understanding & changing demands of education system. However, it has been discovered that many teachers are yet to upgrade themselves with technological developments in education system. They can make the use of OHP, LCD projector, Computer and mobile too. But it is observed many of the teachers still are unaware of using Smartphone or latest technologies.

### **Wrong Method of Teaching English Language**

The majority of teachers in Indian classroom still make the use of translation method of teaching English. Learning speech in English is neglected. The students don't get the suitable environment and much time to practice in speaking the language. They are unable to converse in English. Learners before presenting the text in English think in their native language so they literally do word to word translation that may create confusion in the mind of listeners or changes the actual meaning of the paragraph or text. Teachers involved in the education system are themselves unaware with the new techniques of teaching the language.

### **Conclusion**

If Indian education system considers such challenges in teaching and learning English in Indian context and tries to overcome the same by using techniques in their day today teaching, then we can develop learning competence among Indian students and make our education system more effective.

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