

## Teaching English in Rural Area and Mother Tongue Influence On English

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### **Abstract:**

*English is considered as a global language. The knowledge of English is a demand of time. In the modern world of globalization, English is a linking language. It is very useful and helpful in every walk of life. It is very important for acquiring jobs and developing the personality. English has the status of an international language as it is spoken and understood by a vast majority of people in the world. Knowledge of English is essential for establishing intellectual, cultural, economic, commercial and political relations with the rest of the world and therefore serves as a major link language. In today's world of globalization, study of English is very essential as it is a window to the world.*

### **Introduction :-**

There is irony in the situation that English has been a part of our education system for more than a century, yet it is beyond the reach of most of our young people of rural area. There are many problems while teaching English. The main aim of the article is to show the illusion of English language learning. This article clearly declares the fact that English can be learnt comfortably even by the people who were born and bred up in adverse conditions. "Language must be taught as a means of communication rather than as a mere study of literature. By the time the student passes class XII, he should really have acquired the facility to express himself clearly and concisely in English and in a regional language as well as comprehend without difficulty books and journals published in English in the disciplines of interest to him. This unfortunately is not the case today and it is essential to have a fresh look into the manner in which languages are taught at various levels". Language learning and teaching should be a pleasurable experience. No doubt, very often teachers face certain difficulties while teaching language to the students. Some of the reasons which create these difficulties are 1. Lack of Motivation or a mental lethargy. 2. Lack of true appetite. 3. Absence of a spirit of appreciation or enquiry. 4. Unsuitable and uninteresting texts. 5. Lack of competency and inadequate vocabulary. 6. Unavailability of resources. However, these are not reasons enough or arguments to suggest that an Indian student need not study English language. The truth is that the knowledge of factual English is of prime need.

Most of the students complete their schooling in their mother tongue or any regional language of their area. Though they have scored well in the examination in core subjects, they remain very poor at English still. The students have an unknown fear and fever over English all these years. Now let

us examine some of the various factors which leave English as a hard and tough subject for rural students today. The most important factor in the socio-cultural and financial background of the family. As most of the parents are illiterate, they cannot directly take part in the daily routine of their children though they aspire of their children's bright future. Hence, the student's performance lacks parental supervision and guidance which is necessary at this juncture of their education. The illiterate parents neither realize what their children pursuing nor do they afford time to consult the teacher about the progression in studies of their children. Every minute during the day time is valuable for them as they have to struggle in earning their livelihood. Sometimes the boy or girl is also sent for the work on wages at the special time of the year which affects their education very clearly. On the other hand, it has been observed that the performances in English of the students whose parents are literate and employees and belong to higher middle class is better than that of the students whose parents are illiterate and belong to lower middle class. The probable reason perhaps is that the literate parents meet the teacher and acquire about their children's progress and they can guide their children if necessary. In this way, the socio-cultural and financial background factor is responsible for rural students in remaining poor in English. For the rural students, English is tough and hard to study and understand despite the fact that English is the easiest language in the world to learn.

The second major problem is the inefficiency of the teachers. Most of the students from the rural background are having either Marathi or Hindi as their medium of instruction. The methodology of English language teaching in these schools is bilingual or translation method. The teachers simply translate everything into their mother tongue and explain them on the name of bilingual or translation method. Though this method offers them sound knowledge in the content, it prevents them in

acquiring communication abilities in English when they go to the university level. The teacher here plays more as a translator than a genuine English teacher. Definitely, these poor teachers make English as a nightmare to students and they instigate students to habituate by heart method which deprives students the communication abilities in English. Thus English appeared or is rather made as a dreadful demon for a long years in rural areas.

Another probable reason is the model of the English examination papers. It has been designed in a manner that it helps students to have an authority over English language; rather it makes the students take it for granted. The examinations are content based on memorization where the students are supposed to reproduce what they have recited. Thus, students are forced to adopt by-heart method. Their memory helps them to work more than their creativity and intelligence.

The other factor which affects English language in the educational system itself. There are primarily four skills involved in English language learning i.e. listening, speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). The students of rural area have been tutored and trained well enough in reading and writing for a long time. But listening and speaking skills which play a greater role in communication have been neglected and ignored. Thus, our educational system lacks an important dimension. It enables the students to concentrate on reading and writing only. The final examination does also test them mainly on how good their memory is. The examinations are not language oriented. Thus, the students are deprived of speaking abilities because they have not been properly guided in listening skills. This may be the proper reason why they are not been able to speak and learn English in a proper manner.

Today teaching English language is highly skilled job. With the progressive advancement of technology traditional classrooms have been supplemented by the blessing of educational technology. Televised lecturer, audio tapes, computers, programmed text and language laboratories are the needs of students.

“We must at present do our best to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions in morals and in intellect.”<sup>1</sup>

The students should be taught English as a compulsory language. Language is a vehicle of our thought – a means of self expression and communication. A child learns to use his mother tongue to express his fears, demands, emotions etc. Second language learning means learning another language after having acquired the basics of the first

language mostly mother tongue i.e. native language. English is taught and learnt as an important second language in India as a part of the curriculum.

“Second language speakers of English today out number the first language speakers three to one.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Influence Of Mother Tongue (Mt) On English**

What is mother tongue influence ? Thinking in our mother tongue and just translating it in English directly is called Mother tongue influence (MTI). Although English is supposed to be taught through the medium of English, this may not be practicable always. Very often even a good teacher may resort to the use of M.T. while teaching English. The reasons for this could vary from the teacher's lack of fluency or poor command of English to the student's poor attainment of English. Translations into M.T. constitute a large part of the procedure involved in teaching English. Many are of the opinion that the sole aim and purpose of teaching and learning English being comprehensibility, the translation method can safely be adopted. English being the target language (T.L.) it is necessary and effective to expose the learner to the target language experience as much as possible. The truth is that the learner is exposed to his M.T. for most of the time and for a very short span of English. M.T.I deprives the learner of the much needed exposure to T.L. and may actually accentuate interlingual interference. The practice of teaching English through the M.T. is not a new concept in English. This teaching through translation has been supported by some; and at the same time criticised by others too. Among the supporters are Henry Sweet, Dodson, C.V. Taylor, Harold Palmer etc. Henry Sweet says : "When we begin to learn a new language, we cannot help thinking in our own language" <sup>2</sup>. It is a natural process proceeding from the known to the unknown. A sufficient grounding in the fundamentals of the new language can be provided through the M.T. Pickelt finds the translation method useful as it helps in being a testing technique, and it also tests more abilities than one. However, very often linguists opine and argue that words translated from one language to another do not possess synonymous meanings. Similarly certain concepts and terms cannot be translated in exact terms. Words possess different shades and nuances of meaning which cannot be thoroughly conveyed through the M.T. To use or not to use the M.T. in the teaching of English is a question rather complex. There are pros and cons. M.T. be used in a class room at the procedural stages, for example while

- Explaining and sorting out an activity which is clearly not working.



- Setting up pairs or groups in a class room for a particular activity.
- Checking comprehensibility.
- for translation.
- When suitable equivalent of English words not found.

Many teachers use synonyms and antonyms in order to avoid the use of M.T. sometimes they are at their wits end finding such terms and the situation is in explicable, just goes beyond control. Teaching should not be done in a mechanical and monotonous manner. Creativity in the classroom is very important. Teachers must be creative and innovative in bringing about a live atmosphere in the classroom. Actually using M.T. is not a sin. The students can also be encouraged to use a bi-lingual dictionary, but only for jargons and expressions not otherwise found. The fact that the benefits of using the M.T. while teaching English are many cannot be denied.

- It enhances the students self learning ability and confidence.
- It stimulates a higher order of thinking.
- It re-kindles the student's interest and motivation in learning.
- Promotes active participation on the part of the students.
- Improves student-teacher relationship.

The students should be left to use English at their free will and as per their own convenience. They will begin to find their own way of expressing and communicating in addition. A fair number of addition has already been made to suit the common man rather than for the need of the scholars. When a child begins to use language freely, and without concern for rigid rules, we can be rest assured that he will not only learn but also contribute to it. English is an evolving language where new words keep getting added to it virtually on a daily basis. A lot of French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Indian words are being added to English on a regular basis. No one can claim to have mastered the English language. All are learner, the only difference being we are all placed at different levels of learning.

It should be noted that M.T. does not stand as a hurdle in developing one's accent or pronunciation. Aggressive efforts have to be made. 'Getting rid' is not the only option, on the other hand improving and improvising is the need of the hour. With deliberate hard work there is virtually nothing that cannot achieve. What's important is to stay positive, setting a goal to be worked upon within a certain time frame. There are a few things to be done when it comes to learning English.

- Acknowledge the problems. It takes a lot of courage and determination to overcome the problem.
- Rectify yourself whenever you go wrong and help others correct you
- Practise. Every learner can achieve a good level of proficiency through practice.
- Immerse yourself in the language. v Slowly, but steadily begin thinking in English.

#### References :

1. C.J. Dodson:"Languages, Teaching and the Bilingual method", Pitman Publishing Co, 1967, P. 91
2. Macanlay,Thomas Babington 1835 See at [www.english.ucsb.edu.html](http://www.english.ucsb.edu.html)
3. Erling, Elizabeth J."The Many names of English"Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, January 2005.