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English Language Teaching In India (ELT) Challenges Facing In Learning English As Secondary Language

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ABSTRACT:-

English is one of the most important language used throughout the world .In India approximately 83 million Indian (6.8%) reported English as their Second language and 46 million (3.8%) reported it as their third language, making English the second most spoken language in India.

English in India is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. The visible impact of this presence of English is that it is today being demanded by everyone at the very initial stage of schooling. English Language Teaching (ELT) in India is vibrant and dynamic today. The context of the whole teaching paradigm has changed totally. This article traces the course of this change, along with the causes and consequences while comparing this with the course of ELT in other contexts

where it has always been a first language. English is recognized as most spoken language and used widely for communication. In present generation English language learning has become a necessity. The present paper discusses the importance of English language learning in schools and the skills required to master the language. The paper also throws light on the issues and challenges faced by English language learners .

KEYWORDS:

ELT in India, Evolution of ELT, Foreign language and Educational, Programmes, Language, Learning, Communication, & English Language

INTRODUCTION:

“I would have English as an associate, additional language, which can be used not because of facilities, but because I do not wish the people of non-Hindi areas to feel that certain doors of advance are closed to them. So I would have it as an alternative language as long as people of India require it” –

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

India is multi linguistic country and land of diversity. There is a popular aphorism that depicts india's linguistic diversity

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rather well; Kos-Kos per badle paani, char kos par baani. The language spoken in India changes every few kilometers like the taste of the water. Though Hindi is our national language, English is the language mostly used for communication. Learning English is important as people all over the world communicate in English mostly. It is noteworthy that, of six official languages UN has recognized, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish. English language takes the first position because of its easy access to people across the nations. The other reason may be because almost half of the nations in the world were under the British rule. Hence, all the nations had under British rule had to learn English compulsorily. For others learning English is important to keep pace with the modern world and many are influenced by English culture. English has emerged as the most important global language and also evolved to be a language of science and technology. English as a Second Language (ESL) helps students learn how to speak, read and write English. English as a Second Language is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. In many schools English is taught as a second language with different approaches to those whose primary language is not English (1).

Every educational system has certain objectives which aim at bringing about desirable changes in pupils, like their thinking, representation, speaking. In order to bring about those changes, the institutions arrange learning experiences. The

success of learning can be judged only in terms of the changes brought about by this experience. This is a learning experience and evaluation. English has become a global language and teaching it as a foreign or second language has increasingly become a universal demand. Due to its association with the British colonizer, English started life in India as not just a foreign language, but as a much-avoidable language. From the despised instrument of oppression to the reluctantly adopted lingua franca to the status symbol of the upper classes to its position today as a second language, English has come a long way. In fact, it won't be an aberration to label it a first language for some echelons of Indian society. Just as the status of the language underwent constant reinvention, the whole ELT paradigm also travelled the complete gamut of modification. In the closing years of the Twentieth century when English began to emerge as the global language, the Indian classroom was transformed because of the change in the environment of the learner. Whereas the earlier surroundings had been acquisition poor with regard to English, suddenly every language user seemed to be jumping upon the learn-English bandwagon. The liberalization of the Indian economy ushered in all kinds of reasons to learn the language. While earlier in the century students who had specialised in English joined either teaching or the civil services, now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up.



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There are now call centres that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills, there are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff that needed to be taught spoken English, there are medical transcription centres which need efficient translators and reporters.(1,2)

New technology which are launched in market use English language as English is international language and every one can understand it. Those desirous of immigration to the west needed professional help for clearing tests like the ELTS. Hence, the avenues where ELT came to be required in India are unlimited today. Although a foreign language is now as much an Indian language as any other. English has been taught in our schools and colleges for many decades. It occupies the position of associate official language. It is used widely as a link language in offices and among the educated people. It is not only a compulsory subject at school, college and university but is also the medium of instruction to the large extent. It is the language of science and technology. It occupies the position of a second language in the school curriculum and for higher education. English language has been assigned the role of library language. Without exception every secondary school child has to learn English as a subject, usually for six years but in some cases for three years only. This contemporary position of English in India shows English language teaching occurring at all levels of Education, mainly as a second language. This brings us to our present topic of interest - a history of English language teaching in India. English language teaching as a

discipline has come into its own during the past several decades both in India and abroad and along with it English language teaching historiography also has gained prominence. It is now possible to cite a large body of literature devoted to this area of study. But in India, even though English language teaching has been going on for many decades there is no document, which contains a comprehensive history of English language teaching in India. Now English language teaching has gained the status of a new discipline and also has gained relative importance on our educational programmes. It is felt that a comprehensive history of English language teaching in India is needed.(3,4)

SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The skills required for any person to master a language are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Come to mind other skills like pronunciation, grammar, Vocabulary and spelling all play a role in effective English. The first two skills like listening and reading are used as the channels, or receiving information and, skills like speaking and writing are called productive skills (4).

LEARNING A LANGUAGE:

Each language is structured differently, and the different structures offer users different suggestions to meaning.



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so when we learn our first language, our brain / mind 'tunes into' the way the particular works, and we learn to pay attention to particular cues to meaning that are most helpful. When we meet a new language, our brain / mind automatically tries to apply the first language experience by looking for familiar cues. Part of learning a foreign language is developing new understandings about the particular cues to meaning that the new language offers, and that differ from those of our first language. The transferability of knowledge, skills and strategies across languages depends closely on how the two written languages work (4,5). Thus learning a language is a complex, time intensive task that require dedications, persistence and hard work.

ROLE OF A TEACHER: Teacher play an essential role in the field of education, A students learns a lot from teacher. In students life teacher has to carry out the part of being an external parent, counselor, mentor, role model and soon. As said by Sir Philip Sydney, teaching is the end of all learning. A teacher's primary role is not only to enable the students to understand what he is intending to say or teach. It is also the duty of the teacher to understand what the student wants and says.

In teaching-learning process, two things play the vital roles; one is the delivering capacity of the teacher and the other one is

the receiving capacity of the students. Without the two aspects, the teaching-learning process will not be a successful one. Teaching-learning process is just like making sound by clapping. Without two hands we cannot clap. Like that without a right teacher and the students, the teaching learning process is meaningless. Teaching should be a worthy of learning a concept deeply and broadly. Teaching should facilitate the students to face the world which is full of political, social, international as well as personal controversies, without fear. It should give self-confidence to the students. By the effective teaching, the students should be enabled to go for right choices, judgments and also decisions individually. In the process of teaching-learning, the teacher should try to understand the students first. Then only, he can enable the students to understand him or his teaching (5,6).

Theory with practice on some of the teaching topics may enable the students to understand the concept easily. Success of a teacher in his/her attempt in enabling the students to understand what is the concept taught by the teacher, depends on the methods he/she applies.



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The teacher may be a good, but the students' physical problem may lead him to ignore the teaching.

Or sometimes, the background of family of the students may drive him to be dull. Hence, the teacher should take into account everything. At the school level, the teaching-learning process is checked up the teacher by repeated class tests and examinations. Based on the result (marks scored by the students), different methods are adopted to improve teaching in case of negative result. At the college levels also the same traditional method of examinations is used. The only difference is the volume of syllabus prescribed for the colleges students will be more than that of the school level(6).

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:

The main objective of teaching English as a Second language is to develop the communicative skill for the expression of basic needs and for basic interactive skills.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), U.S., defines English language proficiency in this way: A fully English proficient student is able to use English to ask questions, to understand teachers, and reading materials, to test ideas, and to challenge what is being asked in the classroom.

Four language skills contribute to proficiency as follows:

READING: - Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. It is the ability to comprehend and interpret text at the age and grade appropriate level. It includes translating the printed word into sound and derives meaning from the text. Reading is cognitive process as it decoding of symbols in the text. Reading means comprehend written material. Practice is the only way of comprehending written material. Reading involves interaction with the text, where learner decodes and constructs the meaning

LISTENING: - To listen , we need to make a conscious effort not to just hear what people are saying but to take it in , digest it and understand it . It is the ability to understand the language of the teacher and instruction, comprehend and extract information, and follow the instructional discourse through which teachers provide information. is an ability to receive and interpret message accurately. To learn English language, listening skills helps in increasing the vocabulary. Listening also improves the learner's comprehension. Listening is the most important skill, as it is an active process.



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Listening is complex process as it contains features like stress, rhythm, intonation .Listening involves, receiving the sounds of a language in s systematic manner then constructing the sounds into words. Giving meaning to the words received and also includes the ability to interpret and to comprehend the utterances of the speaker (7,8) .

WRITING: Writing skills include all the knowledge and abilities related to expressing yourself through the written words. Of all the skills in language learning writing is the most difficult one. The learner should have awareness of letters punctuation , spelling and grammar. Writing is a process of conveying thoughts through written symbols. It involves ability to shape letters, convert thought into letters, writing without grammatical errors and finally ability to present the thoughts in comprehensive way Writing - the ability to produce written text with content and format fulfilling classroom assignments at the age and grade-appropriate level.

SPEAKING: Speaking means to say something or communication with other. It is often connected with listening. This skill can be developed by observation and repetition. Here importance given to pronunciation, intonation and stress. Speaking activity involves, the consciousness of the

grammatical and cultural features of the language. The ability to speak error-free sentences and situation-based conversation. It is also important to speak the language correctly, with the right pronunciation and present in a comprehensible way. Speaking the ability to use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities (such as peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities, and question/answer sessions) within the classroom and in social interactions within the school. (9)

Hence, the teacher should keep in mind while teaching English as a second language to the students.

CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The five biggest problems in learning English language are:

GRAMMAR

Grammar play important role in any language . It is defined as the body of rules that describe the structure of words, Phrases, Clauses and Sentences. It is essential for effective communication and is important in learning English language. When correct usage of grammar in



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English language learning give intended meaning while its improper usage creates utter confusion and changes completely the meaning of the sentences. Therefore it can be said that English grammar is complex and has to be used logically. English grammar includes learning of theories, rules and regulation which can be mastered only through practical application. Usage of grammar in English is very important as it incorrect usage creates confusion and comprehension becomes difficult (9)

VOCABULARY

In simple way vocabulary is all the words that a toddler understand. English has one of the biggest vocabularies of all languages. Vocabulary difficulties arise when the complexity of word knowledge is much more than the dictionary definition. Lack of understanding the grammar and incorrect pronunciation also leads to difficulties in vocabulary.(9)

SLANG

Is type of languages consists of words and phrases that are considered to be very informal. It is typically restricted to one particular group. Slang is internal language that is used between people who belong to the same social group and who know each other well.

PRONUNCIATION

The act or manner of pronouncing syllables, words and phrases with regard to the production of sounds and the placing of stress, intonation etc. Many students learning English as second language have problems in pronouncing the words correctly. A

student's native language determines, for the most part, the degree of difficulty and the types of difficulties students will have.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS: The language proficiency test is an evaluation of how well a person can use language to communicate in real life. The first of these trends, the discrete point approach, was based on the assumption that language proficiency: ...consisted of separable components of phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, and so on, each of which could be further divided into distinct inventories of elements (e.g., sounds, classes of sounds or phonemes, syllables, morphemes, words, idioms, phrase structures, etc) A discrete point language proficiency test typically uses testing formats such as phoneme discrimination tasks where the test taker is required to determine whether or not two words presented aurally are the same or different (e.g., /ten/ versus /den/). A similar example might be a test designed to measure vocabulary which requires the test taker to select the appropriate option from a set of fixed choices.(10)

TECHNICAL/BUSINESS ENGLISH FOR ENGINEERS:

Students comprises of the four skills as below;



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- a) Listening
- b) Speaking
- c) Reading
- d) Writing

The subject title is “Technical English”, a theory subject and “Communication Skills Lab “, a practical subject. The former is taught to the first year students of the four years engineering degree course and the lab course is conducted in second or third year of the same students.

TECHNICAL ENGLISH-THEORY:

Technical English is a four level course for students in technical or vocational education and for company employees in training at work .

The main objective of this course is to help students to develop listening skills for academic and professional purposes.

1. To help students acquire the ability to speak effectively in English in real-life situations.

2. To inculcate reading habit and to develop effective reading skills.

3. To help students improve their active and passive vocabulary.

4. To familiarize students with different rhetorical functions of scientific English.

5. To enable students write letters and reports effectively in formal and business situations. The lab training is given with the assistance of Networked Computers and specially designed software (11,12). The difference between technical english and general English is that the choice of contextis for listening and reading texts and in the choice of lexis grammar and vocabulary excersis.

The objectives of the practical training are given below.

- To equip students of engineering and technology with effective speaking and listening skills in English
- To help them develop their soft skills and people skills, which will make the transition from college to workplace smoother and help them to excel in their jobs



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- To enhance students' performance at Placement interviews, Group Discussions and other recruitment exercises.

The lab practice is divided into two categories as “English Language Lab” where the listening comprehension, reading comprehension and vocabulary and speaking tests are conducted, and “Career Lab” where writing tests on Resume/ Report preparation and Letter writing are conducted. Also the students are given training in presentation, Group Discussion and interview skills. Forty per cent of the total marks (100) in final examinations is given for the English Language Lab practice and the rest of 60% is given for the Career Lab Practice, for which the test and evaluation are decided by the examiners during final examinations (13,14).

CONCLUSIONS

English has become a main subject of competency and a pivotal in the education system. English is considered as the second language in every school. It is difficult for the students to understand the English language. Some of specific challenges can be unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and unfamiliarity with connotative and denotative meanings of words. English language Teacher can create lot of activities for improving the listening, reading and comprehension skills in class everyday for student language

development and overcome the challenges faced in learning English.

In our country, as already said 75% of the students are from rural areas and they are coming through regional language medium schools. Hence, based on their background, we have to design the syllabus and adopt methods to test their English language proficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to go for a detailed discussion as to whether the existing curriculum is fulfilling the need of the hour and suitable to the students in achieving their goals, the present methods for testing the proficiency of the students are suitable and opinion and suggestions from the teaching faculties of the English language in technical institutions are to be obtained. Thus English is the second language for many who speak more than one language in India. Taking into consideration of all the above points and undergoing a detailed analysis, a real solution may be found out for the betterment of the students as well as society

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