
Challenges Faced By English Teachers in Changing Scenario Especially in Indian Context

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Abstract

This paper discusses the present status of English teachers and the challenges faced by them. It is an attempt to discuss the problems of English teachers on successful rectifications for the development of student fraternity. Very often recruiters complain that about 50 % of students do not have employability skills which actually mean communication skills. Communication is the life blood of organization and language is the tool of communication. Human beings are bestowed with language. Language acts as a vehicle for communication. English is the global language and is treated as a window to the world. Success of language teaching depends on training the language skills, especially the productive skills like speaking and writing. As English is a skill-oriented language, English teacher must train the students in a systematic approach, giving emphasis on language skills.

Keywords: Language Learning, Challenges of English Teachers, Communication Skills

Introduction

This paper examines the present status of English teachers and the challenges faced by them in changing context. It discusses different problems faced by the English teachers in Indian classrooms. So, it is an attempt to discuss the problems of English teachers on successful rectifications for the development of student fraternity and to find the common difficulties and challenges faced by the English teachers in the rural institutions.

Communication is the life blood of organization and language is the tool of communication. English is a foreign language and non-native language to Indians, incorporated by the colonizers. It requires constant efforts to excel or master over it. It is a big challenge for the learners of second language.

Acquisition of L2 needs a lot of zeal, interest and skill. Northern Indian people like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar consider this un-phonetic language as mystery. Due to this, teachers of English face unsurpassable difficulties. What are the reasons for this problem? How to overcome these problems?

Human beings are bestowed with language. Language learning is the key foundation for learning of other subjects. Language acts as a vehicle for communication. English is the global language and is treated as a window to the world. A magician creates wonders with his magic wand, same way a person well versed in English can create insurmountable miracles to reach his/her goal. No other language is replaced the position of English in India. English is playing a significant role in Administration, Law, Medicine, Research, Economics, Education and Science etc.

A person who knows English feels superior to others in Indian culture. India is the secular country with multicultural and multi languages. It has its own prominence in all walks of life. Indian parents have been promoting English medium schools and dream about their children to come up in flying colors on global platform.

Why English Is So Important

The latest technological and scientific resources are mainly written in English and they demand language proficiency. Learning English has become necessary to cope up the demands of information explosion and to use Internet effectively. English is a must for cultural exchange to express one's views, ideas and opinions meaningfully.

English is a link language. Different people can communicate with one another with the help of English. Secondly, all advanced knowledge in science, technology and medicine is available in English. The results of the latest researches come to India through the medium of English. If we give up English, we will lag behind in the higher fields of study. Today the world has become one family. It is all due to English. English is an international language. English is the language of the Constitution, the Supreme Court, the High Courts and official departments. English is now firmly rooted in the soil of India. It has become a part of Indian life. Thus English has great importance for the integrity of India. It has to be second language in our country for the better

development. English is however widely regarded by students and parents alike as the language of opportunity, opening the door to higher education, a better job, upward social mobility and so on. Consequently, there is widespread general desire to learn the language.

Problems of English Teachers in the Classroom

In their classes, the teachers have to handle heterogeneous students coming from different backgrounds. The first generations students face a lot of problems in coping up learning candidates with good communication skills and soft skills taste success and those who lack such skills become depressed and get frustrated. Very often recruiters complain that about 50 % of students do not have employability skills which actually mean communication skills. In rural areas, parents admit their wards mostly in vernacular medium. But most of the competitive exams are conducted in English medium. The classrooms in the rural areas may not be suitable to provide or create English speaking atmosphere for students' communication skills development.

On the other hand, the teachers have to handle large group of students in the class, which leads to a lot of chaos and confusion. Individual attention is not paid effectively. Lack of essential aids is another problem identified in backward areas.

Success of language teaching depends on training the language skills, especially the productive skills like speaking and writing. But in a mixed classroom some students possess high caliber, whereas some other students do not have such ability. Most of them hesitate to come forward to express opinions, thoughts and ideas. Rural students feel shy and afraid of speaking. The English teacher must create task based activities and encourage students for participation.

The other problems like persistent use of mother tongue, teaching multiple levels in the same class, huge classrooms, tardiness, facing different social and educational backgrounds, lack of infrastructure, different age groups illegible handwriting, writing compositions, reading compositions developing accuracy and fluency.

Learning English as a foreign language is inevitable. It is an English saying: ‘the way to the man’s heart is through his stomach’. So, a way to face global challenges is through English only, the *lingua franca*. An English teacher is responsible for influencing students learning of the language. All the other learning depends on the mastery over English language. The student who is good at mother tongue L1 can definitely excel in non native language L 2.

Teachers face different kinds of problems that make the process weak and slow. A good English teacher is one who is not only a fountain of knowledge but also an agent of wisdom. English teachers should consider as themselves as master of their trade and not slave of their trade. How a magician makes wonders with a magic wand- English must be a magic wand in the hands of the students.

No language could compete with the international language like English. Half of the mankind prefers to speak English. In a democratic country like India people are bonded with English. English has communicative and educative value. English is dynamic, flexible and progressive. It has universal fame because of its rich literature.

But students of rural background face a number of problems. Firstly they are unable to express in English. They have been poor in grammar, sentence structure and pronunciation. If we compare the old generation with the present generation the results are shocked. Educated grand parents can draft a letter constructively than the youngsters. Currently students are trained to crack the exams, instead of excelling the language.

Presently, in rural areas private schools are mushrooming. They provide readymade materials to the pupils to get through the examination. They are not focusing on the all round development of the students. They are teaching based on Grammar translation method. Due to this, the level of the students after 12 or 15 years remains in low standards.

The rural teachers face a lot of problems like using technical support- audio visual aids, smart classes, digital classes and congenial atmosphere to train the students effectively.

Government teachers have been burdened with too many government works like preparing voters list, participating in voters' identification etc. Tiredness and busy schedule curbs the thinking power, creativity and imagination levels of the teachers also.

Naturally in private schools and colleges the English teachers are equipped with extracurricular activities. They have been engaged with works like organizing programs, magazine work, editorial works, club activities, social activities, newsletter publication, competitions, cultural activities, NAAC and NBA filing works etc. These things make the teacher as busy bee so that he/she is unable to focus on the students' skill development.

Challenges Are Countless For Indian English Teachers

Firstly, English is a colonial legacy, Secondly it is a post colonial necessity. So English is a blessing and a burden. Indian education system is totally exam oriented and students are prone to rote memorization. Indian classroom is far away from activity orient teaching and learning. One can spectate rarely group activities, peer learning and role plays. The teacher role is more than the student's role. As the learners becoming passive they are unable to draft a piece of good writing. Mostly in rural areas there is no room for English outside the classroom. Many of them are first generation students. They deny the immediate need to learn English.

As English is a skill-oriented language, English teacher must train the students in a systematic approach, giving emphasis on language skills. The teacher must design variety of activities and make them involve and enjoy which in turn boost their morale and confidence.

Especially in rural areas, ample training is not provided to enhance listening skills and speaking skills. An English teacher must create situations in the classroom and make them involve in activities like *jam, group discussion, debate, interviews, shipwreck, describing objects, narrating incidents, drafting welcome speech, vote of thanks and develop aural and oral skills.*

A rural teacher has to face more challenges than the urban teacher. Any teacher irrespective of the subject must stand as a role model to the students. Most of the rural students feel English language as monster. As these students are the first generation pupil they need much support

from the mentors. Though they are being taught in English medium schools still they grope in the darkness to exhibit their proficiency.

According to Widdowson, the learning of a language involves acquiring the ability to compose correct sentences. This kind of ability of the learner depends on knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language being learned. Teaching language is viewed as a more difficult task than teaching literature. In literature, one has the freedom to explore into any genre and interpret it according to literary taste.

Students are not accessed to audio visual aids, magazines and newspapers to improve language. Students treat English as a subject consisting of list of words and grammatical rules to be memorized instead of integrating them as set of skills.

Prof. Jacob Tharu says, 'English is no longer some remote but a powerful mystery, lying hidden in the world of textbooks and examination.' A large number of teachers help students to cope with examination in turn to preserve their reputation. Privatization of schools is imprinting the replica to produce the bread earners rather than creative thinkers.

Teachers must use communication materials and communicative space in the classrooms. Textbooks play a vital role in educational system of any country. A text book must contain communicative tasks which can motivate the innate abilities of the learners. Boring outdated, unattractive pictures of the textbook must be avoided. Students' oral and aural skills should be given importance in the textbooks.

There is a lot of lacuna among the materials, methods, teaching learning processes, evaluation, curriculum and syllabus. Language experts do focus on student centered collaborative, context based curriculum and integrate with society. English curriculum should enhance critical thinking, creativity and communication skills. Materials like encyclopedia, dictionaries, Audio visual cassettes, T.V, Radio, pictures, Charts, Handouts can be used to make the teaching learning process effective. Cooperative learning structures, integrated teaching, blended learning, curriculum teaching, flipped classroom help to create congenial atmosphere in the classrooms.

Many teachers are not tech- savvy and the teacher training courses never really prepare them to handle digital aids in classrooms, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in partnership with state government must enhance the capacity of all teachers in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such schemes will motivate the rural teachers and develop their competence.

Conclusion

Success of language teaching depends on training the language skills, especially the productive skills like speaking and writing. Communication is the life blood of organization and language is the tool of communication. English is a foreign language and non-native language to Indians, incorporated by the colonizers. English is a must for cultural exchange to express one's views, ideas and opinions meaningfully. Especially in rural areas, ample training is not provided to enhance listening skills and speaking skills. As English is a skill-oriented language, English teacher must train the students in a systematic approach, giving emphasis on language skills. The teacher must design variety of activities and make them involve and enjoy which in turn boost their morale and confidence.

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