

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

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Abstract

It is a well-known fact that English is the most widely used language and the chief vehicle of international communication in the world today. The term "Global English" is a product of the process called globalization. Ideally and ideologically 'globalization' should mean decolonization and denationalization of a language. David Crystal in his book "English as a Global Language (1997)" said: A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. In this way it became the lingua franca in the age of globalization. Two thousand years ago, it was quite unknown to the world. In India, it is used not only for communicative purpose but also it also serves as a link for inter-state and intra-state co-ordination as the nation is found with the great ethnic and linguistic diversity. In this paper I would like to take up a general discussion on it.

Keywords: international, language, important, English, teaching

INTRODUCTION

In the words of Gandhi, "English is a language of international commerce, it is the language of diplomacy and it contains many rich literature treasures."

This language dates back to the 5th century, when Germanic tribes invaded Britain and their languages combined to form Old English. The earliest form of it looked very different from the modern form, but the two share a number of words and roots of words. In 1606, the Normans conquered England and brought with them the form of French. Many French words, along with some Latin, were mixed in the Old English, and Middle English was born. With the advent of printing in the 16th century, English became standardized. The industrial revolution created a need for more words, and British colonization led to the adoption of many foreign words. These factors converged to create Modern English, as known today.

In the 21st century English has become the world's most widely spoken language. It is estimated that about 1105 million internet users are found all over the world are using this language; though it is spoken by about 1.5 billion people, about 20% of world population. About 360-400 million people speak it as their first language. In addition to being widely spoken, it is by far the most commonly studied language in the world. It is used as an official and semi-official language in over 70 countries. About 2/3rd of the World's scientists writes in English; about 80% of Computers use it. Three quarters of the world's mails are written in this language. Around 70-75% of advertisements are made in it; more than 5,000 newspapers are published world over in it. In this way it can be stated that it has come as a language to stay of books, newspapers, airport, and air traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science and technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, media and advertising and many more. The importance of this language can be known from the fact that most of the articles and the books worldwide are published in this language and it is the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge especially in areas as of science and technology.

Due to its extensive use in all essential fields of man's life and the fact that English is the language of international communication per excellence, teaching of it as a foreign or second language has become an important occupation throughout the globe. There is no country in the world where it is not studied, taught or used. The number of new learners of it is going up day by day, resulting in huge demand for English teachers. The primacy of it as the language of international aviation, business, commerce, diplomacy, science and technology shipping, sports and beauty contests, virtually the lingua-franca of this global village, has created a world-wide demand for qualified EFL teachers.

In short, of all languages in the world today English deserves to be regarded as a 'World-language' being the common means of communication in all spheres of progress i.e. political, social, economic and cultural. The U.N.O. has given the status of it being an official language. It is being learnt and used not out of any imposition but through the realization that it has certain inherent advantages.

ENGLISH BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN INDIA

India inherited it from the British and today it has entered the fabric of Indian culture. The first six decades of English education did not witness any remarkable progress. It was in 1835 by explaining the importance of this language it was made compulsory by Lord Macaulay's Minutes. Patriots like Raja Ram Mohan Roy also preferred it. It was further endorsed by Lord William Bentick and Lord Auckland, who diverted funds towards its development.

All these efforts resulted in the adoption of it as the official language of education in 1837. The Government policies were established to start Anglo-vernacular schools in each district and good English were given the status of colleges. The major two objectives for bringing in the language was to create a class of interpreter's and secondly for the demand of European institutions. But it became a unifying source and many Indians felt more comfortable to express themselves in this language. Meanwhile, people began to think it to be a foreign plant transplanted in the Indian soil and were doing immense harm to the growth of the nation. As a result, in 1904, the medium of instruction in middle classes was suggested to be in mother tongue. Calcutta University Commission, 1917, supported bilingualism, due to which English continued to dominate at all levels of education. Most efforts of late 19th And 20th century made people realize the importance of mother tongue and it was included and a seven-year course of Basic education were started.

The constituent Assembly of 1949 indicating the significance of this language gave it the status of the associate official language for a period of 15 years. But Hindi in Devnagri script was declared the official language of the union. English was removed from the status of medium of instruction. Regional languages were made the medium of examinations. English ceased to be a compulsory subject. State governments started the use of regional languages in administration. It was only in 1961 in the Chief Minister conference it was conclude that English need to be taught along with Hindi. The Indian Education Commission 1966 also recognized the importance of this language. In the conference of Vice-Chancellors New Delhi 1969 it was expressed to use it as library language. It was in 1967 that in the Official Language Amendment Act English was given its importance again. The first education commission, "University Education Commission" also recommended the study of this language in high schools and universities, to keep in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. The Kunzru Committee 1955, also stressed the importance of the use of special methods in English Language teaching and the study of linguistics. Three language formula was proposed by the Chief Ministers conference 1961 and this was modified by the Kothari Commission 1964-66. So, it can be seen that many commissions were formed which recommended the learning and use of this language.

In the present scenario there are two national languages for central administrative purpose, they are Hindi and English. English in the present time serves two purposes- it provides a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of the country, causing people who speak different languages to become united; it serves as a language of wider communication, including a large variety of different people covering a vast area.

Generally, it is used among Indians as a link language and virtually it is the first language for many well-educated Indians. It is the second language for many, who speak more that one language in India. It acts like a tie that helps bind the many segments of our society together. Also, it is a linguistic bridge between the major countries of the world and India.

Now it has a special national status in India. It has a special place in the parliament, judiciary, broadcasting, journalism and in the education system. A person finds him/her surrounded by it everywhere. The importance of the ability to speak or write English has recently increased significantly because it has become the defected standard. Learning it has become popular for business, commerce and cultural reasons and especially for internet communication. Modern communications, videos, Journals and newspapers on the internet use it and have made knowing English indispensable.

In this way it can be stated that it has become as an- official language; associate language; associate additional language; library language; tool language; compulsory language; optional language; additional optional language; language of wider communication; language of need filling; etc.

OBJECTIVES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

Language is one of the major means of communication for a human being. It is required for internal communication between the members as well as external communication with other societies and to express and record its culture. According to T.C. Baruch, "Language is thus seen as a part of human psychology, a particular sort of behaviour, the behaviour which has its principal's function that of communication". Language, when used for communication is a tool requires a certain skill. When a child is born, it hears and later on learns the language spoken around him. Thus, the most important and natural language skills are listening and speaking. The objective of teaching a language is to enable the learner to play their communicative roles effectively and to select languages, register styles according to the roles they play in a society. The objective has to formulated in the light of what we perceive our needs for English to be in a multilingual setting, at both the national and individual levels. A functional approach to a language according to Halliday' "means...investigating

how language serves for us, and how we are able to achieve these purposes through speaking listening, reading and writing.” At the National level it is rightly called a pipeline for the stream of western thoughts.

By acquiring mastery over the language it helps one in the ability to read easily with understanding, it provides to proceed to more advanced reading level, it provides with an ability to understand a talk in English on any subject, it provides an ability to write comprehensively and lastly to carry on comprehensible a conversation.

In the junior and senior levels language development and literary development are the two main objectives of English teaching. At the junior level the aspects being semantic (related to understanding); phonetic (deals with sounds, spelling and pronunciation); graphics (related to writing) and phonetic-cum-graphic (deals with reading). These aspects indicate that to understand; to speak; to write and to read to be the four objectives at this level.

In the senior level along with the four aspects of the language development, the literature development should also be an important objective at this level. Studying English literature can facilitate this development. The literature objectives being- develop the taste of literature by reading it in different forms; drawing aesthetic pleasure; understanding critical views; development of translating ability and developing creative interest.

PROBLEMS FACED IN ITS TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Teachers instructing students in learning English as another language often face with variety of common problems. Instructing students in the English language involves building a student’s reading and speaking vocabulary and understanding of written and spoken language. To facilitate a positive learning atmosphere for students and encourage them to practice and continue to learn the language, teachers should find ways to correct these common problems and reinforce the core information students need to effectively communicate in English. (<https://www.theclassroom.com>) Following are some of the problems which create unhealthy conditions for adequate teaching of English in India-

- a. neglecting the aims of teaching it, old method of teaching, less use of audio-visual aids;
- b. place of it in school curriculum;
- c. condition of classes like over-crowding, shortage of building and lack of furniture, etc.;
- d. lack of uniform policies, loose educational system;
- e. low standard of books, lack of corrective suggestions;
- f. lack of effective teachers, lack of teacher training program, lack of proper teacher education, unawareness of teachers regarding frame-work of timetable;
- g. traditional examination methods, faulty curriculum;
- h. diversity in school and college education;
- i. problems related with different students; above all
- g. lack of quality education in Government schools.

SUGGESTIONS

English should be taught as a skill and not as a subject by the teachers. Group discussions, quizzes and proper language training of home in conducive ambience with the active and willing cooperation of the parents should be promoted. Teaching it through various communicative methods that is radio, as they are easily available and affordable. They kids can listen to news and debates, which can help them sharpen listening ability. TV, as watching interactive programme based on everyday activities motivate learners. It can also be taught through mobiles and projectors as selection of required materials based on countries culture faith and episodes of sacred texts converted into visuals can be helpful for students. Then advertisements can also be a source as social networking sites can be used as a means as advertisements due to their punching lines can be remembered easily. Blended learning should be adopted. Stress should be laid on grammar and correct pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that English Language is the language of the world and every effort should be made to promote it and teach it. In the todays world it should be the medium of instruction as it most of the international transactions are in this language. It has contributed in not only bringing people together but cultures also. To fulfill the rapidly developing economy task and becoming a powerful country up-to date of the knowledge is required from different branches which can be possible only if we are able to read and learn more and which in the recent times is in this language.

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