



TEACHING ENGLISH: CLASSROOMS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

India has an extraordinary opportunity for teaching English in its education system. Since ages, English language has been considered a colonial language or a foreign language in India. It has been largely realized recently that English is more a language of worldwide communication, research, education and employability. Due to its socio-economic-cultural variety, Indians need a common linguistic platform to deal with the official language as English. Hence, across the country, English language plays a very important role as a link language. Through curriculum, English has been serving as a bridge across the schools and colleges in Indian education system. Hence, this research paper aims to focus on the challenges faced by the English educators in the Indian classroom and offer a few strategies.

Keywords: Teaching, Classroom, Challenges, Strategies, Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

With hundreds of dialects, India is a country with officially twenty-two recognized languages. Though the role and requirement of English language is much clear in India, English language faces a lot of hurdles in the education system. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has pointed out that more focus should be given to multilingualism. The reference to Indian context has become an important point even while teaching English language. Activity-based education in English teaching is now the newly adopted pedagogical approach with the aid of technology e.g. flipped classroom, e-learning, smart classroom, MOOCs etc. The influence of mother tongue and the difficulty faced due to its interference with English language can't be neglected. It becomes very important for an English teacher to decide the methodology for teaching English in classroom. Due to rote learning, the important skills of speaking and listening are missed out. Examination-centric education doesn't allow one to focus on the LSRW skills in total.

One must understand decolonizing English language is not the way to love the mother tongue more, rather one has to adopt and accept English language. A supportive learning environment is required at the schools and colleges for learning of English language without any bias or resentment. English language learning environment can be fostered by innovative teaching methodology and effective teaching. Therefore, the research paper is aimed at finding the difficulties and offering strategies for the educators of English language in India.

AIM

To understand the challenges faced in teaching English and suggest a few strategies to make the English language teaching-learning better

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine socio-cultural and linguistic diversity present in the classroom and its impact
2. To find out the infrastructural and pedagogical challenges faced by the teacher in classroom
3. To study existing teaching practices and check the effectiveness with reference to multilingual Indian classroom
4. To promote and understand the nuances of contextual learning
5. To recommend teacher training

RATIONALE

Following reasons build the rationale for the present research paper.

1. Diversity of Indian language
2. Age-old teaching methods and exam-oriented approach
3. Limited resources and socioeconomic differences



4. Training of English teachers for professional development
5. Overloaded classrooms

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a lot of research in teaching English as a second language or a foreign language in Indian context. The review is done to summarize the various findings of the researchers and scholars and in teaching English language. Agnihotri (2007) emphasizes Indian classroom to be governed by multilingualism to understand the language better. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) also puts emphasis on importance of mother tongue in learning a different language. English is not only a second language but also a language of status. Kumaravadivelu (2006) says that local languages are more neglected when it comes to giving importance to English language. Mohanty (2009) mentions that teachers are largely unprepared when it comes to handle the diversity in teaching English as a second language. Even classroom teaching is exam-oriented which does not develop the communicative language learning approach (NCERT, 2005). Students also face socio-cultural barriers when it comes to speaking in English language.

Psychological barriers like low confidence, anxiety before speaking English language and the fear of being ridiculed are the most common reasons for students not to speak in English. Students might feel linguistically dissociated, if English is imposed on them, referring to 'linguistic genocide' as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) warns. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is one such solution which mentions that a child can be initially instructed in the mother tongue before learning English language. Teachers are also required to teach English language as per the linguistic variety and needs of the students. Moreover, the uses of language learning apps, technology, and digital books are very powerful tools to make students learn the language smarter. Due to linguistic varieties in classroom, it is very difficult for an English teacher to address the language learning issues. Moreover due to lack of teacher training and limited resources, it is very complex for a teacher to cope up with the students ability to learn English language.

From the above review of literature, it is made clear that using the mother tongue can help in English language learning. Teacher training, contextual learning, welcoming linguistic diversity can help both the teacher and learner for effective English language learning.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Mother tongue has to be used for introducing English language to the new learners so that there seems some proximity in learning a new language.
2. Group work and peer learning are the best methods to teach language in the new environments.
3. Digital tools like audio-video, language labs, flipped classroom, bilingual dictionaries, can be used to boost the learning process.
4. Learning with some regional context is necessary to make learners feel homely about the new language learning experience.
5. Teacher training is must if we want to teach good English to our learners. Due to this, it will not only motivate the teachers but will also make the teaching learning process more innovative and updated.
6. Development of curriculum has to incorporate regional language varieties so that multilingual education is boosted.

CONCLUSION

Teaching English in Indian classroom is merely not less than a challenge due to its complex linguistic varieties and different socio-economic culture. Effective English learning can take place only when the classrooms are not overburdened, technology is used to make learning more interesting, innovative teaching methods are used, teachers are given enough training, policy makers are required to know the need of contextual learning through regional language and enough teaching resources are available.

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