



English Language Teaching: Challenges and Strategies from the Indian Perspective

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Abstract:

English, an extensively used language of today, has often been mentioned as „global language“. It is the lingua franca of the current era and the same is taught and learnt as a second language around the world. In India, English is used not only for communicative purpose but also serves as a link language for inter-state and intrastate coordination as the nation is found with the great ethnic and linguistic diversity. Though modern technology has started playing a considerable role in imparting and acquiring the language in schools and colleges especially in the small towns and rural areas is rather inadequate and unproductive. The students studying English at school and college level manage to get through the exams without making enough attempts to either understand the language or learn to appreciate the utility of language. This article highlights the significance of using English as a tool to fulfil the interminably increasing requirements of the competitive corporate world. The tasks before educators in the contemporary day ELT and strategies to overcome are considered in this paper. The method by which the learners can put their knowledge into real daily practice is to fulfil their real-world necessities to gain an expertise over the language is emphasized.

Keywords: ELT in India, received standard English, linguistic imperialism, linguistic globalization, language acquisition.

Introduction:

It is evident that in India, for the last three decades or so, people in general and students in particular have been crazy about speaking English. It is still wonder that the crazy is increasingly high with the development of corporate industry and business in the era of scientific and technological innovations. No doubt, a large number of English Language Teaching Institutes in the name of Spoken English Institutes have been established, mostly private, only to plunder the hard-earned money from the aspiring general public. The colleges and universities also organize seminars and conferences at frequent intervals in this regard but nothing useful, encouraging, or substantial has emerged out of the exercises. Moreover, what is generally motivated at these institutes is spoken English only and they have very little to do with written English. In the words of R.K. Bansal and J.B. Harrison, “Several books are in the market for those who wish to improve their English pronunciation, correct patterns of accent, Rhythm, and intonation...”

ELT in India with a Backdrop

It is historically evident that in the forties and fifties in the last century, the study of linguistics was only a distant, remote possibility and did not form a part of syllabi, the course of studies. All that was done in respect of language consisted of lectures on the development of the English language with the borrowings from Scandinavian, Greek, Latin, French and Italian languages. Grimm'sformation and degeneration and regeneration of meaning were discussed at length. English could be learnt as a language through literature and not the other way about, and the language was written and spoken correctly and presentably as the senior school students without having any training on linguistics. A scientific study of language is felt for “Language is a type of a patterned human behaviour. It is a way perhaps the most important way, in which human beings interact in social situations. Language behaviour is externalized or manifested in some kind of bodily activity on the part of a performer presupposes the existence of at least one other human participant in the situation”. English Language was meant to be a King's or Queen's English, British English, Received Standard English, etc. The language itself is spoken in a large variety of written and spoken form with the second one dominant. In Great Britain alone, Scottish English is spoken by the highlanders and lowlanders; Irish English is in vogue in and



around Wales and Cornwall along with Cockney English. Standard English or Queen's English is used mostly at the universities in the areas around London. In India, people at large speak American English which is different from British English in three ways: in terms of making decisions, pronunciation, and spelling. There is no such thing as "African English" or "Africanized English" in India. The transition from the "linguistic imperialism" of the past to the "linguistic globalization" of the present has been underway for some time. At this point, it is more accurate to point to Braj Kachru's concept of World English as the most significant explanation for English's global dissemination. Three concentric circles, representing the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle, are used to represent the spread of English in this paradigm. The Inner Circle is a reference to early global English when it had undergone significant changes. As a result of this linguistic transplantation, English is now spoken as a first language in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, South Africa, and some islands in the Caribbean. The second English diaspora, which saw the language expand throughout Asia and Africa as a result of British imperialism, is responsible for the development of Standard English outside of the British Isles. Countries like India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia, Tanzania, Kenya, non-Anglophone South Africa, and the US-colonized Philippines are also part of this group. The Outer Circle also includes places like Jamaica and Papua New Guinea, where the majority of the population speaks a creole based on English yet uses Standard English in formal contexts. Last but not least, the ever-expanding circle of English's worldwide communication usage includes nations where it has no historical or governmental significance. Among these regions are China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, and Indonesia, as well as those in Europe where English is not the official language. The inner circle (UK, US, etc.) is "norm-providing," which implies that standards for the English language are established there. The nations in the outer ring (mostly the New Commonwealth) are considered to be "developing" norms. The outer group (which includes most of the rest of the globe) is referred to as "norm-dependent" because it follows the guidelines established by the core group of native speakers. Should English be decolonized, and action be taken? is a subject on everyone's mind. A "No, not at all" response is appropriate if ESL/EFL kids are considered. Two reasons for this: first, promoting the case and cause of English language needs to go hand in hand with the boosting up of regional and local languages; second, students learning English as a target language need to keep in mind the correctness, authenticity, and competence as guiding principles, as only a person who becomes proficient in the language can make changes or modifications.

Basic Problems of ELT

First, outside of the classroom, there was a precipitous drop in the quality of ELT in India, especially in the northern region of Vindhya. About half a century ago, the Hindi-English divide caused widespread unrest throughout India. The northern region's proponents of Hindi or Hindustani pushed for the elimination of English from all educational settings. Interestingly, anti-Hindi activists in the south have started sustained and aggressive agitations and campaigns in favours of English. In India's federal democratic politics, education is a shared responsibility of the central and state governments. Thousands of otherwise capable people in their late fifties and sixties have no knowledge of English and feel handicapped and helpless in their day-to-day lives because English Language Teaching was altogether stopped in some of the states in north India as a result of continuous and persistent agitation. Despite recent efforts, there is still a substantial portion of the Indian populace that views English Language Teaching as a remnant of the colonial and imperialist past. Few Indians understand that English is more than just a bridge language; it is a vital international communication tool. Second, since India's independence, several commissions and committees have been established to, ostensibly, introduce new policies and bring forth improvements in the current policies in the education system. The government has reviewed or implemented the proposals provided by the commissions and committees that were established in this way to make improvements to the educational system, including the English Language Teaching (ELT) system. Unfortunately, adhocracy and improvisation continue to characterize India's education system and policy, and it's worth noting that the curriculum has also been subject to abrupt and unjustified, uncalled for alterations from time to time. Getting the appropriate type of education, whether that's learning a language or teaching one, calls for meticulous preparation and strict adherence to a stable schedule. The field of education is one that requires careful attention and should not be experimented with for the sake of novelty. Third, following on from the second, the ELT is sensitive because it encompasses all three stages of human development—infancy, adolescence, and adulthood. The transition from elementary and secondary school to college or university is poorly coordinated in India, for example. That is to say, there is zero integration between elementary and secondary levels of schooling. Each of these three tiers of schooling may be thought of as a distinct entity in its own right. It's unfortunate that there's so little room for pupils to be screened according to criteria like age, ability, motivation, and more that influence the language-learning or -acquisition process. All of these things are

really unfortunate and harmful to the ELT in India. Finally, the situation is too complex to comprehend and appreciate, especially given the significance of governing bodies and their role in the educational system. Educators and policymakers at the national and state levels, including the State Councils of Education and Research Training (SCERT), University Academic Councils (UAC), University Grants Commission (UGC), state education departments, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, are constantly looking for ways to enhance and modernize academic programs across the board. In addition to these goals, it is desired that the ELT be modernized, streamlined, and made more effective. It's disappointing to see how much work has been undone due to unhealthy competition between language and linguistics enthusiasts and self-proclaimed literary champions. The study of English language and literature suffers as a result of the sharp separation between the two groups. Tertiary-level students with regional medium backup and students with English medium backup were surveyed, and their responses were analysed to support the point made and provide insight into the students' language skills. The categories and criteria for evaluation are shown below. The responders come from a wide range of backgrounds, and they have been chosen at random.

Table 1: Communicative Capability of Students

Categories of Respondents	High School Level			Higher Secondary Level			Tertiary Level			Total
	Average	Good	Excellent	Average	Good	Excellent	Average	Good	Excellent	
English Medium	9	10	11	8	10	12	12	10	8	30
Vernacular Medium	11	12	7	9	10	11	12	11	7	30

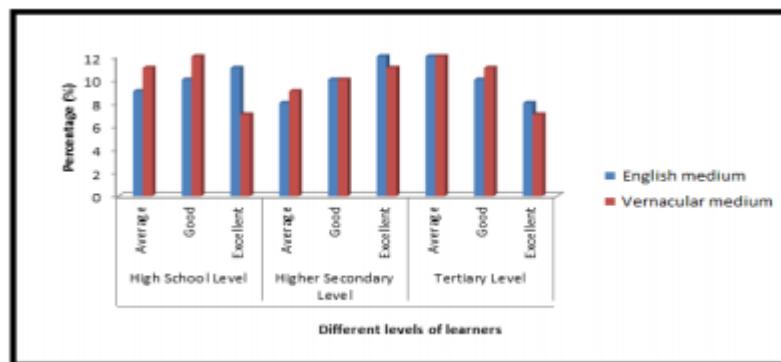


Figure 1: Communicative capability of students

Of the thirty responses whose first language is English, the vast majority are high schoolers, only eleven applicants really stand out as excellent communicators. There has been a consistent increase in the percentage of students with vernacular medium who exhibit great communicative competence, with seven students presenting themselves in an excellent way compared to twelve students with good communicative capability and eleven students with ordinary communicative capability. By analysing data from the aforementioned groups of respondents, we find that the general performance of high school pupils has increased somewhat. Even if eight pupils are only ordinary, ten are excellent and show improvement, and the remaining twelve—almost half of the respondents—are even better. Nine vernacular medium students are ordinary, ten are exceptional, and eleven are superb, therefore there is very little variation between the two groups. Learners at the university level are showing a shocking lack of interest, which is indicative of a gradual decline in their linguistic proficiency. Only eight of the English-medium students are at the outstanding level, while 10 are at the acceptable level, and a whopping twelve are at the ordinary level. There is a tight relationship between the English medium respondents and the respondents whose first language was not English in terms of their proficiency in communicating with others. Eleven students have decent communication abilities, while another seven have great talents. It is often acknowledged that students vary in intelligence and skill level. Everyone is different. There is no one trait that all people share. Therefore, their ability and maturity level affect the options they choose from. Three different levels of pupils were selected from two groups of respondents: those who speak English as their first language and those who speak a different language. Most kids lose their proficiency in their second language as they get older and tend to bring in much of their mother tongue, according to the data interpretation and based on the performed survey a, with a three-grade point scale of average, good, and exceptional. The student's language development might suffer as a result of this. It's irrelevant to focus on the medium of teaching, but it's clear that



pupils at the university level are not as successful as they were back in elementary school. If this shift in mindset isn't stopped soon, it will have lasting consequences for them.

Hypothesis:

Over the course of these many years, many different strategies, methods, theories, and procedures have been developed to teach English language skills. Even in a nation like India, which is home to many different languages and cultures, the language is difficult to master despite these many approaches. Challenges need to be recognized, and then carefully chosen solutions developed, for the sake of both current students and future generations of educators. In line with the needs of the modern age, engaging methods may transform education into a rewarding experience for instructors and students alike. This research aims to shed light on the wide gap that exists between students who choose alternative learning formats, demonstrating that not all students should be evaluated using the same criteria. It is also recognized that the educational, economic, and socio-cultural contexts of learners at different stages influence their language learning in different ways. In order to properly address the aforementioned fundamental challenges, researchers and analysts must pay attention to the following pressing concerns: Literature and language should not be at odds with one another. ii) Educators should always strive to provide a fair and thorough evaluation of the quantity and quality of students who are really motivated to study English as a foreign language. In addition to the ratio, the real situation with regards to the quantity and quality of qualified instructors employed or to be appointed for teaching English as a language must be shrewder. The schools should have cutting-edge equipment and facilities in their language labs. Whether or whether the diachronic and synchronic approaches to studying language, including their corresponding linguistic notions and theories, have any bearing on English as a Foreign Language (ELT). Why not Panini, the first grammarian, in addition to Katyayan, Patanjali, Bhattacharya, and Hemachandra? Saussure, Levi Strauss, Skinner, and Noam Chomsky are often mentioned and used for this reason. Unlike their western counterparts, English language learners in India almost never speak just English and instead use English to supplement their native languages and dialects. As a result, students seldom retain the information presented to them by their English language instructors. The direct engagement of students, instructors, and parents is essential for successful language teaching and learning, and therefore socio-cultural and linguistic awareness is always required.

Strategies:

It's about time the following solutions were implemented to fix the underlying issues. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has state-of-the-art facilities and resources. In addition to universities offering distance programs, all other colleges and universities delivering a normal stream of education should access and take use of the assistance of the apex institution. The translation process should be seen as a rigorous language exercise in terms of its effectiveness and worth. It necessitates a growing familiarity with at least two languages, as well as the right and effective use of words, idioms, emotional nuance, cogency, and significance of ideas; and the rendering of the source language text into the target language text, regardless of its size. When it comes to teaching and learning a new language, translation is a powerful tool. Not only are dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence distinct translation notions, but it is also worth noting that renowned linguists like Eugene Nida have abandoned the labels "literal translation" and "free translation" in favour of more nuanced labels. Consider the significance of all past and future developments and experiments in the subject. iii. Every new idea should be embraced with a wider familiarity. The blind pursuit of novelty might have negative consequences. English in its spoken form is essential, but it would be a mistake to ignore the written form altogether. Finding a middle ground between the old and the new ways of teaching and learning a language will need the development of novel and appropriate approaches. While encouraging students to speak English is emphasized in the classroom, the importance of mastering the fundamentals of grammar and writing is downplayed.

Conclusion

Cultivating skill-based habits, such as group discussion and correct language training at home in a favourable ambiance with the active and willing involvement of parents, may advance the cause of English language teaching and learning. The more time spent using English, the better. Because of the complexity of the language learning process, students must take responsibility for their own education and work diligently to improve their listening, reading, speaking, and writing abilities, even if some coaching is offered. Learning and using a



language are independent activities that can't be replaced by anything else. At the same time, remember that being picky or too fussy about language use is never a good idea. Native speakers should not worry as much about proper pronunciation as outsiders do since it is based on metabolic processes. To sum up, the human element of individual trial and initiative is the one that should be prioritized; cutting-edge technology may come in later.

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