

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE CHANGING SCENARIO: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract:

English has been taught as a second language in the multilingual context prevailing in India ever since it was promoted by Lord Macaulay. The language for a long time was fulfilling its function as a language for administration, trade, commerce, science and technology and as library language for promoting reference skills at the tertiary level. The language which performed its role as language through which one can peep into the other side of the globe for understanding the culture and tradition besides the literature of other disciplines. The language also has been one of the languages in the three language formula adopted in the country. The language over a period of time has gained more importance to the light of the changes taking place all the time. The language having become the language of the global village and the language of the Internet. The approach to teaching the language has witnessed many shifts in paradigms. One of the shifts is in the objectives of teaching. The objective was to develop the basic skills LSRW and the sub skills and the ability to respond to literary texts at the tertiary level. But in the changing scenario the objective to be realized is the development of what is called communicative competence.

Keywords: Multi-lingual context, Changing scenario, Communicative competence, Reference skills, Paradigm shift, Globalization. Lingua-Franca, Library language, Language of Internet.

Introduction

The Changing role of English due to widespread use of English the very character of the English language is changing. During the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th century English was more of culture, race and class marked phenomenon. Now English is a tool for communication. English as the language of the information age has in a way, become culture neutral. This very apparent neutrality of the English Language and its global market value has made it desirable and acceptable to a vast majority of people all over the world. Only effective Communication Skills in English – both spoken and written have a market value. There is a market only for communication skills in English.

All multinational companies, corporations and outsourcing centers ask for competence in communication skills and everyday use of English. English for social roles and interacting in

social contests is considered essential. Call centres also appoint English trainers and conduct accent sensitizing and accent neutralizing programs. The Ability to communicate one's ideas in English and attitudes are the expected skills from person. A Person with internationally intelligible language proficiency and with the gift of the gab in English will reach he learners of the world.

Discussion

English as a Global Language, with the onset of IT revolution followed by its urbanization capitalism and consumerism, life of an Indian has become urban and migratory. Men and material constituted the capital and individual became a machine. David Crystal' English as Global language (1957) gives the estimate about users of English taken from various sources. Even the European countries have started using English as common language for communication calling it 'Euro- English'. English became a global commodity like oil, petrol & microchip and without which the world would come to a halt.

The world of language learning is changing indifferent ways: The socio-political setting is changing and so is the position of English in the world. In addition, positions of language teaching in situations and teachers are changing and so are perceptions of what constitutes learning. There is a need to take these changes into consideration when formulating a language policy in any country. The first issue concerns the position of English in the world.

English language teaching having changed its focus from developing the basic skills to developing communicative competence the ability to be fluent accurate and appropriate in the use of the language , the need for redefining the objectives has arisen . Thus the objective would be to develop in the learner at all levels to use the target language for meaningful and effective communication both at the national and internationally, besides in the prospective work places. However this doesn't imply that skills imparting is ignored

The shift is also from the need to use language as a subject in the curriculum to use it as language for understanding the nuances of language as a tool for effective spoken written/ discourse. In the light of the above, the following are the issues:

-----Curriculum renewal

-----Classroom processes

-----Evaluation systems

-----Technology

----- Objective specification

The curriculum at the present is not clearly defined. It requires to be looked at from the perspective of learner needs. The needs differing from different learning groups and subject specific vocabulary and syntactic structures that define the field specific discourse elements, for instance the language of mathematics is different from the language of other sciences and social sciences and technology This implies that the content development process must take into account the different needs of the learners and incorporate into its fold those text types that expose the learners of different disciplines to that kind of language of the field.

A class room is a place where there are opportunities for language exposure. The class room must be a place where there should be many acquisition rich environments. This will be possible provided the teacher in the classroom makes teaching learner and learning centric which means the learner needs to be exposed to the use of different strategies of learning which is learner friendly and thus making learning more enjoyable. The different types of activities that make the learner independent of the teacher should be designed. As it is now the day of technology and net activities that enable the learner exploit the potential of the academic content in the same may be given .care must be taken however in making the learner not just repeat the content mechanically. The activities must be in such a way there is reading and extension of the understanding received.

The kind of language required for comprehending the different text types and uses the language of the text for expressing what has been comprehended. This further makes it essential to develop the ability to comprehend .comprehension precedes expression. The focus in the classroom by the teacher must be more on developing in the learner comprehension strategies.

The examination or evaluation procedures must be changed. The evaluation procedures must be continuous and comprehension To conclude the changing scenario demands the need for making both learning and teaching more interactive and requires a change in the curriculum content that facilitates the acquisition of communicative competence, the ability to be proficient user of the language besides the ability to interact strategically and grammatically.

Issues and implications:

“There is nothing permanent except change’ says Heraclites, the Pre-Aristotelian Greek Philosopher.The Theories and methods are constantly evolving in the field of ELT. Seasons change ,fashion changes, attitudes of human beings change but it is disheartening to note that in the last century curriculum has hardly undergone any change.

In olden days, the students who had specialized in English joined either teaching or the civil services, now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up. There are now call centers that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills. There are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff that need to be taught spoken English, there are medical transcription centers which need efficient translators and reporters. Those desirous of immigration to the West need professional help for qualifying tests like the IELTS,

TOEFL, GRE, CAT etc. Hence, the use of English Language Teaching has come to be required in India are unlimited today.

Coming to the Teaching methodologies, many reasons can be accounted for the sad and deplorable situation of ELT in India but much of them lies on the ways, approaches and methods adopted to teach English. However, much the examination system may be faulty and the syllabus not suitable to the needs of the students, the methodology of teaching is the key factor and the real power in the hands of a teacher. English is still treated as subject to be taught, not a skill to be mastered. Also the traditional ELT methods like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method and Situational Language Teaching are in no way beneficial to the students in the changed scenario where the majority of students are desperate to learn English only to be communicatively competent.

ELT methodologies in India where the issue of methodology is concerned, ELT seems to be in three transient stages according to the different levels of the paradigm and its demands: a) the first level is that of the institutions run by the Government, mainly Primary Secondary and High Schools. B) At the second level are those institutions that are Semi- Government are run by private managing bodies, assisted through government funds. c) The third level comprises purely private sector academies that undertake to make learners proficient English users within a stipulated period. This creates a ripple which can be felt in three ways: a) Young teachers who work in undergraduate colleges work part –time at these academies where they use the latest teaching aids and materials to achieve fluency at the earliest. b) The administrative bodies of undergraduate colleges realize that a whole untapped market needs to be explored which is why they introduce revenue earning courses in the field of English proficiency, open to the public. c) Parents of learners form an important component of the teaching paradigm in India.

Conclusion: It is true that mostly this Communicative approach is practiced in the institutes that belong to the third category above but the ripple created is gradually reaching the ELT classroom. The most significant impact of this approach is its sensitivity to learner needs and responses. This sensitivity is what has been lacking in the academic aspect of ELT in india. The theories and methods are constantly evolving in the field of ELT also.

The argument advances as the paper proceeds with trends of education with specific reference to the Indian scenario, methodologies adopted, the bygone methods, the peer practice, the present trend, new teaching design, new devices, the need for change, the ICT and English language and also the CALL.

For this, a change in the trend especially the teaching learning process of English language has to undergo a transition for the betterment. Seasons change, fashion changes, attitudes of human beings change but it is disheartening to note that in the last century English curriculum has hardly undergone any change.

The prevailing trends of teaching English, especially in India, lacked both in quantity and quality or may fail to obtain a universal appeal. Rigid curriculums and huge syllabi continue to threaten students who speak regional dialect but love to excel in English. Methodologies adapted during the Previous Years: Communication is the groundwork based on which any idea can progress and develop into a full fledged innovative techniques.

Modern Trends of Teaching English Deena Boraie highlights that there are eight trends in teaching of English. "Change is the Goal of Teaching English" says Boraie "In my opinion there are two key changes in the purpose of teaching English. Firstly, as Penny Ur (2009) noted, the goal is to produce fully competent English knowing bilinguals rather than imitation of native speakers. The purpose is not to aspire to become native speakers of English because we are already native speakers of our own but to focus on English as a means of communication. Secondly, English is not viewed as an end in itself but as a means to learn content such as science and mathematics. Content and Language Integrate Learning (CLIL) approach can be used by an English which uses cross curricular content and so the students learn both the content and English Language.

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