

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS IN RURAL AREAS OF INDIA

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to bring in problems of teaching English to students in rural areas of India. Nowadays in rural areas, the knowledge of second/foreign language English emerged as a social and personal problem in the areas of speaking, pronouncing, communicating and writing. In the majority the quality of English language education in rural areas of India presents a very appalling picture. Proficiency in Teacher's language, exposure to the language and materials are the major concerns for quality English language learning. In reality, the actual situation of rural students is very difficult. They do not have opportunities as urban students had i.e. language laboratory, audio-visual aids and whatnot. In General, rural students consider English as a subject and not as an important language. In today's world English is the most preferred language. This is the main obstacle of them. Most of the students learn English only for the sake of examination purpose and do not realize the importance of learning English. The students are not known on how to learn English but they are well known on how to learn, by heart it. In fact, rural students have fear of English. On the other hand, a lot of teachers do not have a long vision of students' life. They give importance only on Examination.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Students of India, Rural Areas, Problems of Teaching English, Teaching Methodology.

The study of language is the starting point of all other learning. It is the most important part of our life, which defines us as human. A language is not just a collection of words, what we find in a dictionary. It is also the rules and patterns which relate our words to one another. To be human is to use language, and to talk is to be a person, is important in all aspects of our lives. Language allows humans to communicate in a manner that enables them sharing of ideas.

When a person achieves something great in art, music and athletics, we instantly turn to language to tell other people about it. The rapid increase of cell phones, instant messages and voice mails, simply illustrates a simple fact about humanity: We humans love to talk. In fact, we could not stop talking. Whatever language we speak- Tamil, English, Malayalam, Hindi, Chinese and Frenchetc., helps to express us personally and identify the community that we belong to. But the fact that we can talk about is that we have a language, which is inextricably bound up with our humanity. Language is our medium of communication and it can also be a barrier to understanding.

It is widely known fact that the English language entered into India only after the entry of the English men. After their arrival, the English language began to employ its influences of the intellectual life of the people and it lessened the communication gap between the rulers and the people of India. And, with strong efforts taken by Macaulay and Lord WilliamBenedict, and also because of the enthusiastic Indian, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, it has developed a way that it became a gateway to western knowledge and also it began as a mutual cultural interaction between Britain and India which lead the way, the transaction of cultural heritage between the two country.

The English language has had a remarkable history. When we first get a glimpse of it in historical records, it is the speech of some none-too-civilized tribes on the continent of Europe along the North Sea. Of course, it still had an earlier history, going back to somewhere in Western Asia or Eastern Europe, and long before that to origins, we can only speculate about. From those dark, gloomy and undistinguished beginnings, English has become the widely spread language in the world, used by many people's for so many purposes than any other language on Globe.

- Students do not realize that English is the most important language in this Earth.
- Students in rural areas face a number of problems because English is their second language.
- Students find themselves not able to express in English.
- Students do not know actual Pronunciation, Spelling, and grammatical rules.
- Students have no idea of proper sentence structure in English.

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- Students lack the confidence to speak in English.
 - The chief reason is that they have been taught English through the Grammar-Translation Method.
 - This method makes them be dependent on their mother tongue.
 - Some teachers have a good accent, but they don't take possess a good command over the language.

All over the world, English is used not out of any imposition but because of the realization that it has certain advantages. English is the most important language in the world having communicative and educative value. An important reason for English becoming as a world language is that the world's knowledge is enriched in language English. English is a progressive language universally renowned for its power of expressing in both written and communication. It is a vital, dynamic and flexible for its power of expression and its rich literature.

The changes in times have witnessed the growing importance of English language in all walks of life. It does not seem that as a second language speakers or non-native speaker's conscious and unconscious use of the words in our everyday conversation from the English language being evidence to this fact. Education has been the prime factor in the more formal transmission of English around the world. In India English symbolizes better education, better culture and higher intellect. In today's scenario, English is the most preferred language. The Indians, as well as the Indian English language press, uses many words derived from the Indian language. Sometimes the Indian accent is difficult for non-Indians to understand. Actually English has co-existed in the Indian sub-continent close to the side of thousands of local languages. It has remained at the heart of Indians. Language learning for the natives is a natural process and the approach to this learning process is called the 'behaviouristic approach'. But for the students of other languages, deliberate efforts are needed to learn a second/foreign language which necessitates a 'mentalist approach'. The students of rural areas in India face such problems because English is not their mother-tongue. It is neither intuitive nor instinctive. Language acquisition appears to be a process of both analogy and application, nature and nurture. Teachers of English language have adopted, invented and innovated a variety of methods to teach English.

English is the second language for the students of rural areas, learning a second language means acquiring a system of rules, but just as a very few is known about these rules, even the same less is known about how such rule and systems are acquired. Students find themselves not able to express in English. They do not know proper spellings, pronunciation and grammatical rules. As a result, they have no idea of proper sentence structure. In the past English was introduced to the students, in rural areas. But now in such areas, the standards of English are falling rapidly. The main objective of the teacher and learner remain to clear the

exams. The students do not realize the importance of learning English as a language.

Teachers have to keep in mind the students' age, their native language, their cultural background and their previous experience with the English language. The experience of the teachers and their level of English mastery are equally important. In order to achieve the desired effects, the desired goal of a course must be kept in mind whether it is aimed at fluency in speech, reading and inculcating translation skill, and all these objects shape methodology.

The students of the rural areas do not realize the importance of English as a language of communication. Whereas this is the most significant aspects of this global language. The students have a lack of confidence to speak in English; expression in the language is weak. The prime reason is that they have been taught English through the Grammar- Translation Method. This method makes them be dependent on their mother tongue. Whatever the students read, they translate it into their own vernacular. Throughout the time of exams, they cram the expected questions because they cannot write one original sentence on their own. Because of the Grammar-Translation Method, they have no vocabulary of English words. While writing the students depend on the cheap material from the help books.

The stereotyped, traditional and hackneyed pattern of exams aims at clearing English not as a language but only as a subject. Therefore, the students are guided to practice the pick and choose a method from the low-grade material available in the market. That the students merely pass the subject far from learning any level of the language. It is also more shocking to learn that even the questions that students are supposed to answer are told to learn through translation from English to their own vernacular. Poor performance in translation, lack of proper vocabulary, no knowledge about the importance of English language all are results of a casual approach. The level of the students still continues to remain poor even after reading English for 14 to 15 years. Because of the fast increasing web of Educational facilities, the students of urban areas have been enjoying the facilities.

But in rural areas, it has neither helped in raising the level of the students nor made them learn English as a language. The infrastructure of such areas is weak. Some teachers have a very good accent but don't possess a good command over the language. Now in the rural areas, the study of English language begins at an early age that is at the KG level and it continuous to Senior Secondary or first Degree level. Even in the Professional Courses, the teaching of the English language as communication skills an essential part of the curriculum or the course obligations. It is quite hapless that whatever our English language teachers gain in the completion of their course or education as eligibility for seeking a job or an employment, it stays there and the teaching-learning stagnates.

Possible Solutions

- Teachers should try to create interest among the students in teaching the English language.
- Should make the students understand the importance of the English.
- Should avoid the Grammar-Translation Method.
- Teachers should find new ways of helping the students to enjoy their language activities.
- Should build their confidence.
- The English language teachers should have to cover extensive-ranging enthusiasm and imagination.
- Group Discussions could be arranged.
- Textbooks should be read loudly by the students.
- The language English will be used by the students as a medium of expression.
- Motivating the students to think through English.
- The students will be able to use English as a language of communication.
- Build confidence in speaking English in the public.

In order to resolve all the problems, systematic approaches should be followed. Primarily the teachers should aim at teaching, not knowledge but skill, the different skills required for good Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The teachers should find some new ways of helping the students to enjoy their language activities, and of building their confidence. A teacher who tries to help his/her students in this way has fairly rejected the image of the teacher who acts as the arbitrary dispenser of all knowledge. As children learn by way of imitation, likewise, the students learn to follow the example set by their teacher. The English teacher should have to cover extensive-ranging enthusiasm and imagination. It can make the English course a kind of clearinghouse for ideas and interests which branch out into all the other subjects that the students are studying, and beyond them.

To deal with the problem of lack of vocabulary in the students, productive and receptive use of words should be kept in mind. That is the students should be made to learn simple words. This will help them in inculcating a habit of learning new words in them. Their newly learnt words will be in a position to use those words, will become a part of their own vocabulary. This improvement of vocabulary will result in better expression. The common errors made by the students in the different usages of the same word can be cured better by this technique. By noticing all such elements of the language they can enjoy the richness and flexibility of language. Once the students' interest is aroused, they will show very great improvement. Reading can also help in making the students aware of spellings. When they have practised different uses of words and have developed a habit of reading, they can avoid the common errors of Translations.

There cannot be learning without exposure. Group Discussions can be conducted. Making the students to read the text loudly. Simple usage of words will become a part of their speech only when they exposed to deliver a speech and express their own thoughts and ideas. The eagerness for learning will help them in their own advancement. The problems of the students and the teachers are connected to one other. It is important to assure that the learners make a tremendous contribution in the process. If we take into careful thought the role of a teacher and learner in acquiring the knowledge of a language, the problems can be resolved effectively. Only then the students will realize the actual use of the English language. English will be used by the students as a medium of expression and they will be able to use the English as a language of communication. Fluency in the speech, knowledge of proper sentence structure, confidence in speaking in the English language in the public will make the students, able to keep their pace with the developing world. It will help in raising the standards of the English language. On the basis of recommendation given above, the critical situations in the teaching of English language can be checked from further worsening. Decidedly one or two persons cannot do anything solid. Let everybody concerned with it take the responsibility. Only then we can create a compatible environmental and we can be able to achieve better results in the teaching and learning of English.

A good teacher can be defined as one who helps the students to learn. The teacher continues to have a key role in students learning. Teacher and learner should always remain intact for the growth and process. As Abdul Kalam says:

“Winners don't do different things but they do things differently”.

As a teacher, we do not need to teach a new concept every day but can teach the same concept in new methods, which the students will enjoy and learn. According to the present needs of the learner, the teacher should lay more emphasis on practical everyday English and proper teaching strategies should be used at different levels. Teacher contributes to this in a number of ways. In English language teaching emphasizes that teacher should be creative and inspire the students to new and better forms of learning.

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