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Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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ENGLISH AS A MEANS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

English has acquired a prominent place in the Educational system of Indian Universities today. English has been considered as a window to the knowledge and wisdom in the world. In itself, English is the richest, most varied and most powerful language in the world. The importance of English as an International Language can be judged from the fact that there is no country in the world where a speaker is of English is not understood. With the advent of globalization of education, the significance accredited to English Language has increased in manifold ways. In an era of information and knowledge dissemination, English Language plays a foremost and vital role. The English language has become an essential requisite to survive in the fast and progressive world.

KEYWORDS: *International Communication , Educational system , globalization of education.*

INTRODUCTION :

English language has a special significance for us. To Indians, English has ceased to be a foreign language though it is a language of foreigner. It has brought us new awareness of individual worth, social consciousness national pride and

international responsibilities. With these aims, motives our University has introduced English as one of the compulsory languages for the undergraduate classes. But now, there is a persistent cry that the standard of English is falling. English a seven letter word- is a magical word known for the language, spoken by 1000 million people of the world either as a native language, as a second language, or as a foreign language. English is rapidly becoming a world language. It is the first language of United Kingdom, The United States of America, Canada and Australia. In addition, it is spoken and read by many millions of Europeans,

Africans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese and South Americans as a second language. It is widely known in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, almost every country of the world. In short, one person out of tenth in the world is a native speaker of English. One out of every four on earth can be reached with it.

No language, ancient or modern, can be compared with English in respect of its international status. English has become one of the major languages of the world. It is the most widely used of the world's half a dozen leading languages. It is interesting to note that about one half of mankind has chosen English to communicate with those who do not speak their own language. It is in the way that English helps in establishing



international relations. It is a source of understanding among different nations of the world.

In a developing country like India, a constant touch with the outside world is absolutely necessary to bring about the revolutionary changes in the fields of agriculture, medicine, industry, telecommunications, transport and basic research systems. Without the adequate knowledge of English, we cannot train our young engineers, doctors, technocrats and researchers to come to grip with modern technology in their respective fields. We need it badly to feed, to clothe and to transport the teeming millions in India. If we know English, we can bring in the wonders of scientific discoveries at our door-steps.

English has become the global language. In order to survive in the world of globalization and technological advancement, English is indispensable. English has become the second most spoken language in the world. In the sphere of education one cannot do without English. As English is a means of communication, the communication skills in English are integral. In the globalized context, students need a specific set of language skills for their success in education and career. Industries emphasize about the need for better employees with better communication skills in English. Everyone agrees that adequate language and communication competencies are imperative for the better job prospects. In India, teaching of English in colleges has always held a dubious status. Therefore English for the students should be revamped to suit the requirement of the evolving curriculum and the sphere of work outside college. English is the lingua franca of professional communication today. Today almost all job opportunities require an ability to understand and answer questions in English. Of all the languages in the world today, English deserves to be regarded as the world language. English is being learned and used all over the world not out of any imposition but through the realization that it has certain inherent advantages. With its revolution and most of the software and operating system being in English language a new utility for return and oral communication in English Language has emerged. English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. It is an essential part of human life. It is also used as a means of international communication and social control. In fact, English language has become part and parcel of our life. It is a language of world culture and also an agency for international understanding and world peace. It is progressive, dynamic and flexible. Over and above English is universally renowned for its power of expression and its rich literature. English is the medium of instruction as well as the language of administration in a number of Asian and African countries today. Today the compulsions of learning English are no longer merely political but scientific and technological. And no longer is English the language of great Britain only, it is the language required by the world for greater understanding, it is the most international of language. English has made the world a global village

The English language is perhaps one of the more useful things that India's colonial history has left behind within the departure of the British after independence. The English language has remained the most palpable evidence of India's colonial past previously utilized and accessed only by the Elite minority. Communication through English is the most wanted asset of the modern time. Good communication is the backbone of the teaching and learning. Without proper communication the teaching learning process is futile. Teaching learning is a two way process. Therefore teachers and learners both have to communicate for this purpose properly. All the communication skills such as reading, listening, writing and verbal skills are needed. These skills can be developed and acquired through the help of world building, English vocabulary and knowledge of English grammar, reading habits listening habits, watching movies/English programs and writing habits.

English has become the language of global communication. The huge number of books on arts, commerce, science and technology are written in English. If we are unable to know English then we cannot touch even the surface of the vast sea of knowledge. Taking into account the significance of English language the universities in India have made the study of English language compulsory. But in changing educational scenario teaching English has become a challenging job for the teachers. The difficulties in teaching English language to the undergraduate students are as follows.

EXAM ORIENTED ATTITUDE.

Most of the students in colleges study English as a subject and not as a language. Like other subjects the English subject is also prepared from the examination point of view where the test of the memory is given first

prominence. The university examinations are mechanical. Answering the questions in written form has enlarged. The scope for students to mug the answers up from the notes of guides available in market. Fluency in any language is examined when it is spoken. This is also true of English. The present examination system creates almost human parrots. It has been realized umpteen times that the examination system in our country is highly defective. It encourages cramming instead of enabling the students to have a detailed study and knowledge of the subject.

WRONG METHODS OF TEACHING:

When a teacher begins to teach English he starts from grammar. As a matter of fact English grammar has its own set of complex rules and regulations. Students get confused when they learn these rules. They think that English is a tough language to conquer. Students are habitual to translation methods. It has failed to produce students capable to know English.

Mother tongue influence:

The mother tongue influence is clearly noticeable even in the formal conversation of students. In India there are many regional languages. The biggest difficulty a teacher faces while teaching English as a second language is teaching proper pronunciation to students to have their own mother tongue accents. When English is spoken in different regions it means that it is spoken in different ways. Therefore students cannot understand natural pronunciations. There is a gap between students and teachers. This is where the teacher starts running into.

Indian students are prone to their mother tongue. It creates a major problem for them as they find themselves comfortable in using it. They are taught other subjects in their native language and English fall in their ears only in the class of English. Their poor social and economic background is responsible for it. They do not get enough opportunities to speak English in or outside the classrooms. This process cut short their chances of being competent in English.

It is, however, only the wholesale and indiscriminate use of mother tongue that needs to be condemned. But there is nothing to say against the judicious use of mother tongue in the English class for explaining the meaning of words provided the teacher gets back into English as quickly as possible.

LACK OF FAVOURABLE SURROUNDINGS:

The parents who are well educated and belong to well to do background sent their wards to the professional courses. The students studying degree course like B A belong to financially poor family. Their parents are not educated. Language is developed through conversation. These students do not have suitable surroundings for conversation. Fifty minutes lecture in classroom is not enough.

LACK OF AUDIO VISUAL AIDS:

Many critics pose the questions against the use of audio visual aids in teaching English language. They forget that audio visual aids can provide models for teaching English, pronunciation of words, composition of sentences. Since the classes are overcrowded personal contact between the teachers and the students becomes impossible. Audio visual aids can bring teacher and students near. If the teacher uses effective audio visual aids, it will give a correct or proper direction for learning English language.

SHORTAGE OF APPROPRIATE TEACHING (AUDIO-VISUAL) AIDS:

Effective teaching can be possible only when supplied with proper teaching aids like good text books, work books, hand books, T.V., Radio, Charts etc. etc. Unfortunately some institutions are not in a position to provide such materials to the teachers as well as to the learners. Consequently, a teacher teaching in such cases bounds to be imaginative rather than practical.

The colleges should be provided with at least simple visual aids. Some aids may be got manufactured on a large scale by the private agencies, then supplied to central pools, and from there to all school and colleges. The

libraries of schools and colleges should arrange good journals for the teachers as well as the students to enhance the knowledge of latest developments in the field of linguistics and English language.

LACK OF INADEQUATE ACCOUNTABILITY:

There is generally no or very inadequate system of accountability for the teachers regarding their work. The result is that many of the teachers become indifferent and diffident.

OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS:

Of course there are certain norms in many good colleges regarding teacher student ratio but in most of the colleges there are no such norms or they are observed only in violation, such that the classrooms are often overcrowded. This creates not only a problem for the students to sit comfortably and be able to listen to the teacher properly, but also for the teacher who cannot:

control the class properly.

- ii- makes his voice reach properly to every student to make his point clear.
- iii- put his diverse knowledge to the best advantage of students
- iv- find full satisfaction in his job. The result is:

Indiscipline in the class. B- General apathy and even feeling of aversion in the minds of students. C- Discouragement to the teacher to use his imagination and use new, novel and good methods of teaching.

CLASS STRENGTH:

The size of the class is proved to be a major problem in the present scenario. As the population of India is increasing by the second, the class size is also enlarging. English being a compulsory subject, number of students are found to be around 100 per section. In a class of more than 100 students, it is impossible for a teacher to pay individual attention. A judicious teacher-student ratio is required for effective teaching of English in the classrooms. There must be a provision of tutorial classes for weak students.

Nepotism and favouritism:

Nepotism and favouritism work at several levels such as

An incompetent teacher having such privileged may be appointed and a better teacher rejected.

An incompetent teacher may even be promoted or given a higher grade or more increments, awards and rewards.

Wrong methods of teaching:

A majority of teachers still use the translation method of teaching English which has been universally condemned as wasteful. The result is that speech which is so important in language learning is neglected. The students are provided no practice in speaking the language. They cannot converse in English. They are unable to form any language habits. A majority of teachers themselves are not conversant with the new techniques and of teaching the language.

Improper Infrastructure:

Most of the colleges are in a pitiable condition due to the lack of proper infrastructure. There are no class-rooms available for language teachers. Teachers and students are bound to sit in open and discuss the topic, no matter whether it is too hot, too cold or drizzling. Whenever there is a bad weather, class is suspended.

The English language teachers should be provided all sorts of aids. They must have proper well equipped classrooms with ceiling fans, loudspeakers, blackboards, electronic media like computer aided screens etc. These teachers must have their own cabins where they can upgrade themselves in between two consecutive classes.

Inaccurate Govt. Policy:

Government of India is always in a hurry to implement its policies on educational institutions. But, there are, off and on, some changes towards the policy of teaching and learning of English. In most of Indian universities, English is made a compulsory subject at college level. But, after passing the college when the students seek admission in university, they are supposed to acquire only pass marks in English. Moreover, our politicians and educationists vary on the role, status and function of English.

For a better state of English, time has come for the govt. to formulate fruitful policies for the promotion of learning English among students.

In short Environment plays a important role in making of an individual's integrated personality. Learning a foreign language at its grass root level is possible only if we have that proper environment. This is the area where students are lagging behind. An interesting observation reveals that the parents of more than 80% students admitted in B.A.I, B.Sc. I classes are not even matriculates. More than 60% of them are illiterate. It speaks a lot about our so called urban stature and culture. Poor performance in English Language may be attributed to the conventional method of teaching. The methodology of English Teacher is bilingual or translation method. The teacher here plays more as a translator than as a genuine English Teacher. The translator method adopted by many of the teachers for class room teaching has its impact on the receptive sensibility of the students. Lack of amenities is yet another problem we face in our rural colleges' adequate stock of books, reading materials like periodicals and newspapers are rare things in many of the colleges. Students attend the classes without text books. Managements express their ability to attend the irrelevant problems.

The present state of affairs in the field of English Language learning and teaching in most of our educational institutions at both the secondary and collegiate level is highly deplorable. Several factors have contributed to the deterioration of the standard of English. The increasing politicization and commercialization of education, overcrowding of students in schools and colleges and a faulty system of examination which lay an undue emphasis on rote –learning and blind memorization may be mentioned as the chief causes of the falling standard of English. To compound all this we come across a large scale of apathy and indifference on the part of student towards any kind of persistent and assiduous study in all subject, but more particularly so in the subject of English Language.

The attitude of the most of the students is to somehow scrape through the examination and get the Degree. Many devious and often suspect means are used for this. Even if such means are not used, almost all students just memorize the answers of some expected questions, which they put down on the answer sheets. They have just become carriers or porters of mugged up information. This has been going on right from the earliest stage of education, with the result that the students have lost the ability, if ever they had it of independent thought. Their knowledge of English is very superficial and scanty. The certificate or degree which they get cannot serve as a true mark of their knowledge and many employing institutions like the Banks, L.I.C., etc. conduct their own test of English and also other subjects, in which our spurious degree holders show a lamentably poor performance. When one observes grammatical mistakes like 'wents' and 'wented' even in M.A. paper one is bound to despair of effecting any improvement in the present moribund state of the subjects and considering such efforts as an exercise in futility.

The attitude of the students towards English at u g level can be summarized as follows: A- many learners consider English as the language of their oppressors and develop hatred about it. B- many think that English can be learnt by only advance learners. C- English language is seen as an imposition on them as a language is a compulsory subject in the college curriculum. D- They think that since they are not the native speakers of English they may never succeed in mastering it. Thus they lack confidence and joy in learning English.

E- they are afraid of the language as they think that only intelligent learners can understand English, so they consider that the study of English is beyond their reach. F- many of the learners do not attend the classes as they label these boring. G- They are not at all enthusiastic to learn English. H- Many anyhow recite the materials in English and reproduce the answer without knowing the meaning. I- Many lack the primary knowledge of English grammar because of improper surroundings. J-They also lack the suitable environment to converse in English. And therefore they cannot express their innermost emotions in English. K- They are deprived of the

opportunities like seminar group discussion and other similar activities because of their negative approach to the language.

REMEDIES:

At present there are many challenges before the teachers of English. Teachers of English have to play a major role in order to give shape to our students. The following are the some of the suggestions for raising the standard of English in India.

- 1- The policy regarding the place of English in our education system should be well defined. This should be determined keeping in view the national and international importance of English.
- 2- The teacher must keep in mind the aims of teaching English. These are :
 - a- To enable the students to understand English when spoken.
 - b- To enable him to write English.
 - c- To enable him to speak English.
 - d- To enable him to read English. He must know the standards of attainment to be reached in each class.
- 3- Parent Counselling is important to develop communicative skills. Some schools or colleges arrange the meeting with parents once in a year. Therefore there is no interaction between them. After interaction with parents teacher can understand the problems of the students. Parents can get information about their wards. Every last working day of the month should be declared as a parent teacher meet.
- 4- Special efforts should be made to ensure that the teachers of English themselves possess a good command of English. Refresher courses should be arranged for the in service teachers of English. The teacher should be encouraged to read journals to keep themselves informed of the new developments in teaching the language. The college libraries should subscribe to such journals.
- 5- The teachers must be made thoroughly conversant with the principles of the structural approach. They should give due importance to pattern practice, drill work, and situational approach in their teaching.
- 6- Dialogue system: The teachers teach and the students become only passive listeners. Removing it, we should follow the dialogue system between them. Topics should be well prepared and there will be familiarity between them.
- 7- The examination in English need to be improved. The question should be properly framed so that they really test the student's mastery of the language skills. Cramming should be discouraged. The administration of examination need to be made more effective.
- 8- Group work: It is observed that an individual student has genuine problem about his subject. Hence the subject like English is taught making groups of students, the reserves of the students will be erased to make them competent.
- 9- The use of Audio visual aids for demonstrating, these aids are prominent. If English grammar and literature is taught with them it will really be comfortable to the students. Ultra cd's, LCD projectors should be provided to the students.
- 10- Demonstration- means to point out the power point presentation. It needs extreme intelligence and the honesty of students mind to go through the topics sincerely to collect the gist of the topics. Through this demonstration, he/she will present themselves and get delighted with it. As will perform everything on his own accord. Here he will have to utilize his listening; speaking; writing; reading communication in English. He will handle the equipment related to know their operation. This demonstration technique will take away shyness from students.
- 11- Vocabulary: We teach students the literature of English. It can't be taught without language well prepared. And well prepared language becomes impossible without vocabulary. If an innovative vocabulary is provided to students they will easily collect their words and phrases to speak English language. Students should be guided to read various newspapers, magazines, journals, books etc. They must be guided by the teachers to refer to the treasure of knowledge to make their projects on vocabulary. If possible the teacher can manage some small prizes to arouse their strong courage to shine in the ultra-modernize atmosphere.
- 12- Question answer method: lecture method has now been traditional. Teachers should apply the Question

answer method in the class. He should give some home assignments to his students and there in the class he should follow discussion with question answer method. Here the students will present themselves independently to bring colours to their personalities. Here the knowledge of the teacher and the student will be tested and the healthy relationships between the teacher and the students will grow and the students will be competent to face the challenges of the modern era.

13- Spoken English with phonetics and phonology: Regional languages aren't developed as English has been. Hence, English speaking phonetically should be well developed. The availing of audio visual aids should be done independently by the students to enhance it. English is spoken with different trends like American, Chinese, Japanese, etc. So it becomes our duty to make them familiar with them that they will reach anywhere in into the world.

14- Mini workshop for students: It is one of the powerful methods of consolidating the basic grammar of students. Continuously working on a single topic for three to four hours is always beneficial for the students in understanding a topic. Workshop on various topics are extremely useful for developing the communicative competence of the students. It is generally observed that students find it difficult to create small sentences because of poor vocabulary. With proper guidance this fear can be removed.

15- Counselling to students to turn to lectures and taking notes. It has been observed that students aren't interested in attending lectures and hence the spiritual counselling should be made to them, to turn on to lectures and taking notes.

16- Involving every student and creating conducive atmosphere- the prime requirement for successfully teaching communicative skills to the students is to create a very joyful and conclusive atmosphere in the class so that every student can express himself. Hence the motto of the teaching should be capturing interest, boosting confidence of learners and applying modern tactics and methods for promoting and developing communication skills with knowledge of English. Though, the traditional methodology is considered useless, even then it is helpful for supporting the backbone of the language. It cannot be ignored totally. The soul cannot be removed completely. The body without soul cannot survive. It is true that learners/speakers need to learn and speak easy, simple functional English. They need fast methods of learning. The time promotes computer English/mobile English, but for the proper knowledge of the language, conventional English is important and useful. New methods of learning and teaching should be used the innovative and novel methods such a body language, audio visual aids, mimicry, group discussion, dialogue construction, enactment of drama would be very helpful for creating atmosphere for learning language and boosting confidence of the learners.

CONCLUSION:

In this era of globalization and economic liberalization students require a change. Developing communicative skills among students is the need of the hour. Each and every university should start communicative skills and functional English certificate courses in colleges. Special stress should be given on basic phonetics, applied and functional grammar. Good communication helps to get a job in govt and private sector as well. In other words it will be more beneficial for the students to build their career. Effective communication is the essence of one's personal and professional life. Good communication skills help students to overcome their basic complexities.

There are a number of factors involved to fill up the gap between present level and expected level of students. Teaching learning is a multi-way process. A Teacher is not only a teacher but also a friend, guide, and a philosopher to students. He/ she guide students not only to pass in the exam but also to face challenges and take right decision during the time of crisis in life. On the part of a teacher, he/she should have to maintain a learner-friendly atmosphere; has to focus on average and below average students by imparting them extra time to clear their doubts, clarification, etc. This is of course a real and tough task ahead of a good teacher.

On the whole we can say that we have to produce a generation which may be capable to know English. And the time will come when each and every student of India will gain excess to the world of knowledge through the gates of English language.

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