**English Language Teaching in India: Prospects and Challenges**

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**Abstract**

India 4.0 has begun in India and impact of it is visible among the Indian Industries and MNCs in India, where the demand for skilled Indian professional has increased, but it has been always challenging in India to get hired a skilled workforce suitable to specific job profile. Recently published India Skills Report (2022) states that almost 56% of Indian Graduate do not possess skills required in the Industry, especially the set of soft skills. English language has always been a challange for Indian Graduates as most of them struggle to use it as an official business language for communication in the industry. In the 21st century, English is increasingly becoming the dominant language in global communication. The flow of changing economy, new technology and innovations in the industrial world have put English as undoubtedly one of the most influential languages in the world as more and more people use English as their official or second language. The number of English speakers in the world has increased at an astonishing rate throughout the last few centuries. It remains questionable as to whether or not English would remain a global standard language. The paper discusses English as a Global Language and Contemporary Issues of Teaching-Learning of English in India.

**Key Words:** English Language, Teaching-Learning of English, Graduate Attributes

**English: A key subject to learn in 21st Century India**

The researcher firmly believes that globalization has affected the teaching-learning of English in our country. With the spread and development of English around the world, English is used as a second language in a country like India and for some people the 1st language. As it is stated by R V Bayaskar in her article on the *Importance of Technology in English Language Teaching and Learning* that it enjoys high prestige in the country. At present, the role and status of English in India is higher than ever, as evidenced by its position as a key subject of the medium of instruction, curriculum.

**Challenges of teaching English in India**

The English language teaching in India is full of challenges as many factors affect the teaching-learning process of the English language from primary education to higher education. Few of them are as follows:

**English Language Teaching in Rural Areas**

Students of the rural area background face a number of problems. English is their second language. Learning a second language means acquiring a system of rules, but just as a very little is known about these rules, even less is known about how such rule systems are acquired. Students find themselves unable to express in English. They have no idea of proper sentence structure. They do not know the proper pronunciation, spellings and grammatical rules. The sole objective of the teacher and the learner remain to clear the exams. The students never realize the importance of learning English as a language. In the past, in rural areas, English was introduced to students in the fifth class. But now there is no dearth of English medium schools in such area, yet the standards of English are falling rapidly (Bhandari, 2009).

**Lack of understanding of the aims of teaching English**

There is a general lack of clarity about the aims and objectives of teaching of English in India. The policy framers have tried but failed to specify clear-cut aims and objectives of teaching English in schools. The teachers know that they have to teach the subject since it is included in the syllabus. The students understand that they must study this subject as they will be examined in it. In English medium schools, English is taught from the very beginning. Students learn English as a knowledge subject, not as a skill subject. It is this reason why teaching and learning of English in Indian schools is in a muddle.

**Lack of Competent Teachers**

Incompetent teachers are the main source of trouble as far as the teaching of English in our schools is concerned. They are trained through the old methods and have never cared to look for something better in new techniques, or there are those who receive new insight but never apply their knowledge to actual teaching work and remain satisfied with routine methods. Sometimes, English is taught by those who did not offer this subject while under training.

**Overcrowded classrooms:**

With the expansion of education, there is the unprecedented growth of numbers of the learner. This phenomenon is carried forward to the school stage and from there to the secondary and the university stage. Sixty to seventy students are regarded as the normal class-size, and in certain cases, the class size is 100 to 120 students. The teachers of English experience a lot of problems in handling such an overcrowded classroom as they have less scope for individual attention and feedback. It is difficult to pay due attention to individual students, and this is very much desirable in the English classroom.

As the number of English learners is increasing, the different teaching methods have been implemented for the effectiveness of the teaching process of English. The change in the global economy, the establishment of English as a global language, has impacted the teaching-learning of English in so many from Primary level Education to Higher Education in India. See the given examples:

* To cope up with the Global demand of business world and strengthen the roots of English as a global language, the Government has made a policy to recruit the outstanding English language teachers with the qualifying examination. The impact of the initiative is positive and improving the teaching-learning of English.
* Increasing demand for English in the business world has forced professional programme universities and institutes of the country to include English Subject as a part of the curriculum in various professional degree programmes.
* The interest in communicative English is at a peak level in the state as everybody wants to be competent in the English Language.
* Teachers of English are more focused towards task-based teaching of the English Language as it enables their students in developing the communication skills in English
* Teachers have started to ICT in teaching of English language and communication skills such as learning applications, software, e-materials,videos and many more.

Hence, it is true that global changes in the world have motivated the teachers to replace the traditional teaching of the English Language with new approaches and methods.

**English Language specific Graduate Attributes**

The University Grant Communication (2019) has given the Language and Communication discipline-specific attributes expected from the fresher graduates in India. The expected attributes are as follows:

Students will be able to

* Read, write, speak and comprehend English at the advanced and fundamental level.
* Engage and understand the texts with multiple creative, critical and linguistic levels.
* Read the text, understand the stylistic and linguistic variety and innovation; explore new themes, historical contexts and basic conventions.
* Unfold linguistic or pragmatic frameworks to appreciate the use of language and the literary text itself critically.
* Connect with the scholarly works to develop their critical perspective and express the opinion with coherence.
* Think clearly and critically the local as well as the global trends by reading various original as well as the original and comprehend the world; observe and respect the differences.

**Learners’ aspirations from the English Language**

In the 21st century, learners have some expectations and aspirations that bring them to theclassroom. The learners enter in English classroom with high expectations and aspirations as they think that this language is going to change his life (Study Mode, 2011) When learners belong to regional language background, they face difficulty to adopt English surrounding atmosphere as they are not comfortable to express themselves by using the English Language. Students without English Language background have a psychological fear towards the English Language. Sometimes we called it inferiority complex as they think that during the interactive activities they would not be able to perform well in a comparison of the students who belong to English language background.

They want to speak/share in English but logical they are not able to encode the message/thoughts/ideas from regional language to the English Language. This barrier becomes hurdles for them to achieve fluency in the English Language. They are more concern about communicative English and wants more activities and practice to overcome this weakness. At higher education level, students are always eager to learn English to perform better in the recruitment process that is why they are eager for the group discussions and mock interview activities as they want more and more chance to sharpen their communication skills in English. They want to learn how to put logical arguments properly. They are always concerned about their body language and presentation style.

These aspirations and expectations of learners have inspired the teachers to innovate new techniques and methods of teaching English. The teacher needs to be updated with the current scenario of English as a global language. He needs to be very much clear that what is required for the students and how to teach it effectively. This leads towards student-centric classroom (StudyMode,2013).

**Conclusion:**

English is emerging as the most important language in the business world, and nobody can deny the fact that one must have competency over the English Language if he or she desires to achieve professional heights. But After observing all the above issues and challenges, we have to arrive at the conclusion that 21st Century Teacher, Learner and Academic Policy Makers should address remedies to overcome these challenges. The policies regarding the Place of English should be well-defined. The teacher should utilize different methods of Teaching in the classroom teaching-learning process and focus on Learner Centred Teaching-learning process with effective supervision by keeping the clear aims of teaching English in his/her mind.

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