

Challenges Faced by English Teacher in Rural Schools



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Abstract

In the era of globalization it is fundamentally imperative for children to learn English. Knowledge of this global language can help them to explore several opportunities and it will be invaluable to their future careers. In India, the language policy is mainly social and personal and is mainly restricted to immediate needs not global. The picture of English education is awful. English language teacher faces enormous and apparent challenges especially in rural schools. The key to enhance the ability of English teacher to teach is to properly make children understand principles of language acquisition and to help them to use it properly. Authors in present study made an attempt to find problems that an English teacher face in rural schools and also have given some suggestive measures.

Keywords: English teacher, Language, Grammar translation method.

Introduction

For learning to take place, knowledge of language is must. It defines human race. It is through language knowledge is transmitted through civilizations. Main characteristic of human being is the inherent ability to use language to communicate. Language is not just the compilation of words but also the patterns that relates to several words. It is the medium through which all the achievements and developments of human race is communicated to one another. Whatever language we speak, it is symbolic of our identity. In other words it can be called as a system of predictable vocal signs by which humans communicate is a language. Language is our mode of interaction but at the same time it can be a barrier to understanding as well. Language is articulatory, systematic, symbolic and arbitrary (Syal and Jindal, 2008).

There are around six thousand languages spoken in the world out of which English has achieved the status of universally accepted and favored language. English language has always had astonishing history. Looking at records it is influentially the speech of non-urban tribes of European continent along the northern sea. But its history can be traced back not only in the regions of Eastern Europe or Western Asia, rather long before the time we can even wonder. From those misty beginnings, English has achieved the label of most widespread language in the world, used by many for varied purposes.

This super language is used all over the world not because of any impositions but because of the fact that it has several advantages. Most important reason to consider English as a world language is that world's entire knowledge is enshrined in English. It is a forward looking and flexible in nature. Moreover it is universally accepted as a medium of communication because of its power of expression and affluent literature. The dynamic times have identified its ever increasing importance in all walks of life. Use of several words consciously and unconsciously in everyday conversation supports this fact.

English language entered India after the arrival of English men. Soon after it influenced the life of people and helped the intellect to reduce the gap between rulers and people of India. With the efforts of Macaulay and Lord William Benedicts along with enthusiasm of revolutionary Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy English language was developed as an opportunity to the western knowledge which has further led to the multicultural exchange between India and Britain. In India it is considered as a prospect for better education, better culture and higher cognitive development. Through education only the formal transmission of English takes place around the world and even in India which lacks the practicality and its efficient usage. It has its co-existence in the Indian sub-continent

along with thousands of local languages. It has taken central place in Indian society.

Aim of the Study

1. To study the problems of English teacher in rural schools.
2. To suggest solutions to the problems

Rural India and English Language

The students of rural areas in India face many problems as English is not their mother tongue and is second language which they need to learn to enjoy a reputed standard in life. It is neither innate nor intuitive. Language learning is a process of analogy and application. Language Teachers have adopted several methods to teach English but still find it as a challenge to cope with the global scenario. Meganathan (2009) in an analysis found the conditions of learners in rural schools even more deteriorating as compared to urban students.

Learning a second language requires adapting a new system of rules, but the problem is that very little is known about the rules of language and even less is known how such rules are acquired and applied. Problem of expression along with structuring of sentences, pronunciation, spellings and grammar rules are there for both teachers and students. The typical classroom in a rural school shows poor attendance of students, disinterest in language learning and burden to finish extensive course. Apart from these problems, another main problem with the entire system is lack of clarity in aims and objectives of teaching English as language as well as a subject which has led to further implications. The main assumed objective of whole system is to make students clear the exams. Students don't feel the importance of learning English as a language and are also unaware about its global importance. Earlier in rural areas, English was introduced in the middle of elementary classes i.e. in fifth class. But now schools prefer to introduce it in early classes. Present scenario reveals the fact that there is abundance of English medium schools but the standard of English is deteriorating which needs strong revival for the betterment of future (Yule, 2009). Students in the rural areas do not learn language of English as medium of communication as they are not aware of its inherent importance of being global.

The speaking and expression skills are weak of rural students because they are taught by Grammar Translation Method which is entirely dependent upon mother tongue or native language. Whatever they learn has to be taught and explained in their vernacular. During the exam time they just cram as they cannot write anything with originality. Because of this method they cannot develop any vocabulary of their own. While writing answers they write crammed sentences or take help from cheap study material. The pattern of examination is mainly aimed at just clearing English as subject not learning it as a language. For this purpose, students are encouraged to choose and pick material of substandard quality which just helps them to clear exam not making them competent in English. This casual approach results in poor performance in translation, lack of proper

vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammar rules. Even studying for 10-12 years, the level of students remains poor. Government had planned and implemented several policies to revolutionize the concept of teaching English, but the policy formulation and implementation lack innovation and initiation. Rapid increase in private educational institutes has neither helped in raising the level of students nor made them learn English as language. In rural areas, students face inequality in getting admissions and at the same time if given admissions are deprived from many facilities.

Discussing and highlighting these few important issues related to teaching of English authors have compiled them under the head of problems of English teachers with implications associated with the.

S.no	Problem	Implication
1	Lack of clarity about aims and objectives of teaching English as language	Poor methods and modes of teaching along with non-availability of resource material.
2	Overcrowded classrooms in rural schools	Lack of individual attention to students and poor ability to solve their learning problems.
3	Lack of basic language teaching learning facilities in rural schools	No language lab, no audio visual aids, smart classrooms and innovative teaching components. Lack of interest in teacher to teach a language.
4	Less effective methods of teaching used by teachers of rural areas	Compulsion to use Grammar translation method is used to make them learn in vernacular and English literature is explained through translation only. Development of Poor vocabulary in students
5	Availability of Inadequate Learning resources in rural schools	Poor quality course books, lack of creative text and help books for both teachers and students.
6	Privatization in rural areas	Hefty fees, lack of incentives and in equality in admission and providence of facilities.
7	Examination oriented	Making children crammers rather than innovators.

In order to bring change in this whole scenario of teaching and learning English language requires a well-defined initiative in order to improve its condition and also to make students competent enough to perform at international level. There is a need of well-defined and systematic approach encouraging teachers, parents and students to learn English together as a language. Government should

also ensure that all policies should be properly framed and required facilities to teach this global language should reach rural schools. Apart from major reforms in policy formulation another aspect which needs to be highlighted is clarity of aims and objectives of teaching and learning English language to both students and teachers. Drastic changes are needed in curriculum construction, preparation of text books, evaluation policies and other related matters (Bhatia, 2008).

The role of teacher should not only be confined to teaching but also in encouraging and mediating to learn English. Teacher should keep in mind the age of student, his/her mother tongue, cultural background and also the previous encounter with English. For this the experience and mastery of English teacher are crucial. To attain the goal of teaching English to the competence level, subject's objectives which are fluency in speech, inculcating skills of translation etc. should also be kept in mind. On regular basis trainings should be arranged for teachers to motivate them and also to enhance their competence and skill levels. Classrooms should be evenly distributed so that a teacher can provide individualized attention to students and also provide remedial teaching if required.

Purpose of an English teacher is to primarily inculcate skills in students for good listening-speaking-reading-writing. Interactive and playful methods should be used in order to build interest and confidence in students regarding the language. Children always learn by the way of imitation, so teacher has to set examples to encourage them. Creative and innovative methods of teaching requires use of laboratories developed for language teaching along with usage of online study materials available through EDUSAT programs and smart classrooms developed by government. A teacher should have enthusiasm and imagination which will help in making English course as a clearing house for ideas and interests which branch out into other subjects as well and will continue even after school.

To solve another problem of poor vocabulary in students, method of use of both productive and receptive words should be used. Students should be made to learn simple and short words which will help in inculcating a habit of learning new words in them. New words which they learn by their own will become part of their own store house and help them in using them in several ways. This process is natural process of reception and productive use of words. Enhancement of vocabulary always results in creative expressions. Errors related to usage of same word can be solved by this method.

By deeply understanding the components of the language one can enjoy its richness to the full extent. Once interest is activated, improvements follow. Reading helps in improvement in spellings and also results in avoidance of errors of translation as they have started the use of different usages of words. Teachers should facilitate students by providing books to them in order to inculcate and encourage their habit of reading. These personal efforts can provide an extra edge to the whole

concept of encouraging students to learn English language in much better way. Separate books should be developed for firstly for rural schools, and then importance should be given to types of learners so as to help them overcome their learning problems. Apart from this specially designed help books should be circulated between students and teachers to help them clarify the concepts and their usages. Contribution towards development of books should come from research scholars and philosophers so as to have efficiency generation in the content of learning resources.

Exposure helps in learning. To have effective learning many interactive sessions can be arranged like debates, group discussions, etc. Use of words will only become part of speech if they are exposed to expression of one's own thoughts. Both student and teacher are interrelated and it is important to make sure that student also contributes to the learning process.

Facilities at school level in teaching English should be improved. Schools should be equipped with latest aids in teaching. Required audio visual aids should be made available for students in schools (Hunamanthrao, 2011). English should not only be treated merely as a subject rather it should be treated as a language of global importance.

Authors have developed list of few possible solutions to the problems of an English teacher of rural schools from the above discussion:-

1. Teachers should encourage English as a language not as a subject.
2. Clarity should be provided to both students and teachers about the clear aims and objectives of teaching and learning English language.
3. Efforts should be developed at all levels in order to bring changes.
4. Pupil teacher ratio should be maintained in order to have individualized attention to students.
5. Rural schools should be equipped with all the necessary facilities required to teach English language.
6. Proper training should be given to teachers to use requisite teaching aid so as to develop interest of students in learning English.
7. Teachers should avoid Grammar translation method and focus should be given to the improvement of vocabulary words.
8. Creative and innovative course books and work books should be developed keeping in mind the objective of teaching rural students.
9. Specially designed help books should be developed for both students and teachers.
10. Creative activities like group discussions and debates should be encouraged.
11. Proper checks should be implemented on privatization in rural areas.

Conclusion

Authors have discussed certain problems related to teaching learning problems and also have suggested few remedial suggestions in order to improve current situation. But need of hour is to critically evaluate the present situation so as to check them from further deterioration. It is not just learner

and teacher in planning and executing improvements, rather it should be collective efforts to improve situation in order to develop initiative and responsibility in creating an environment feasible for achieving excellent results in teaching and learning English.

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