



TEACHING ENGLISH IN INDIA: SOME OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND THEIR PROBABLE SOLUTIONS

Malay Nath^{1*}, Dr. Balaji G. Natkare²

^{1*}(Research Scholar, Faculty of English, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India)

Email ID: god100.2020@rediffmail.com

²(Research Supervisor, Sharadchandraji Pawar College, Pune, India)

Email ID: prof.natkare@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

English is considered to be the lingua franca of the world. Neena Dash and M. Dash state:

English has been decreed by providence to be the world's common language and so it is today. It is a precious possession. It would be profoundly unwise for us to look at it from a narrow nationalistic point of view. It would be a stupendous mistake to minimize its importance or neglect its study. The importance of English in India is to be viewed in the context of the part it played before independence and its importance in post-independence period. (10)

In India, a very important place in the school curriculum is possessed by English. But unfortunately enough teaching English in India has been suffering from a number of major problems such as faulty examination system and overcrowded classroom. This research article intends to briefly present some of the major problems which have been adversely affecting the teaching of English and also intends to give some probable solutions in the light of those problems for an effective teaching of English.

Keywords: *Problems, English, Teaching*

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English is considered to be a world language and is most widely spoken all over the world. Verghese states:

Of all the languages in the world today English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is the world's most widely spoken language. It is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. One person out of every four on earth can be reached through English. (1)

This language is taught everywhere. Teaching it should not be beset with problems. Otherwise, it cannot be fruitful. In India, the teaching of it has a number of major problems like faulty examination system and overcrowded classroom. Among them, some are most common. Tracing these problems and rendering probable solutions to them can improve teaching of English.

SOME OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS

Some of the major problems are below:

1. Teaching English involves both content and skill elements. Unless and until the teacher is competent enough, it is not possible for him to teach them. But the majority of the teachers who are teaching English are found to be incompetent. Neena Dash and M. Dash state:

One reason why we have not made much progress is that education, especially language teaching, is a very difficult task as it involves two aspects, the content element and the skill element. There are not enough competent teachers of English. The average teacher needs upgrading of his proficiency in English. This lack of proficiency in English of the teachers at the school stage has added a further dimension to the problem. While there are specialist teachers in Science, Sanskrit, Hindi, Mathematics and Social Science, English is more often taught by

non-specialist teachers whose own competence in English is questionable. (29)

2. The majority of teachers teaching English can make use only of the traditional methods and materials. They are not aware of the latest developments which have taken place in the field of English Language Teaching. Kalia states:

They are either trained in old methods and have never cared to look for advanced and current techniques that can be employed in classrooms. Many teachers are not even acquainted with the latest and far reaching developments in the teaching of English. (36)

It hampers the achievements of students belonging to various socio-economic statuses.

3. When the classroom is overcrowded, the teacher cannot pay due attention to the students individually.
4. The average teachers are not upgraded. Besides those who are going to be teachers of English and are therefore being trained through courses like B.Ed. are not appropriately taught the innovative methods using which they can properly teach English after they become teachers of English.
5. The examination system is faulty. Only knowledge is tested. Skills are not tested. Examinations are preoccupied with writing. In other words, examinations are not in relation to the four language skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Thus, it is presently knowledge-oriented and not skill-based.
6. Most of the teachers are not trained in pronunciation in language laboratories.



Teachers who teach English are expected to correctly teach students who learn English pronunciation. To teach correct pronunciation, being trained in pronunciation in language laboratories is a must, because if their own pronunciation is not correct, they cannot teach correct pronunciation.

7. The majority of the teachers are not aware of the real aims and objectives of teaching English. Their only target is to get their students to somehow pass their English examinations, which fails to motivate the students.

PROBABLE SOLUTIONS

The following probable solutions can be useful:

1. Teachers should be trained in teaching both content and skills.
2. Teachers should be made able to make use of innovative methods and materials.
3. Classrooms should not be overcrowded.
4. The average teachers should be upgraded through training and how to use innovative methods to properly teach English should be taught in courses like B.Ed.
5. Examinations should be in relation to all the four language skills.
6. Teachers should be trained in pronunciation in language laboratories.
7. Teachers should be made aware of the real aims and objectives of teaching English.

CONCLUSION

Teaching English in India has been suffering from a number of major problems and they should be redressed. This paper has briefly presented some of them and the probable solutions rendered by it

can be of use. If these problems can be solved, it can be expected that the teaching of English in India can be effective and fruitful.

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