



TEACHING ENGLISH IN INDIA – PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

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There is no doubt that English is an international language. It is a window language. To get knowledge of the world you must know English. The students must study English today. We are living in a technological world. To understand computer technology one must know English language. But there are many challenges before the teachers of English. This research paper aims to study the challenges before the teachers of English and to discuss the remedies so that teachers of English can use the knowledge which is useful for their tasks.

English language learning is compulsory in India. Although the students do not want to learn English language, but there is a compulsion. When one learns language, he or she must adopt four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is the fact that many students want to pass the examination and so they learn English as a subject not as a language. They lay more emphasis on reading and writing. So the important skills like listening and speaking are ignored. Many times teachers also lay emphasis on scoring marks in English rather than teaching skills of language. The reason is clear that everybody is more concerned about the result of the students in the form of marks scored so the effect of such teaching is temporary and the students cannot learn English permanently. After growing older, the students become shy and they do not use English. Thus it becomes a Psychological problem. There is a phobia of English. Due to phobia of English the students avoid to attend classes. Even some students avoid to speak with the English teacher. As a matter of fact there is no proper communication between teachers and students.

The classes are overcrowded and the teacher cannot concentrate on each and every student. Hence, the students get confused. They lack interest for

language learning. When interest is not there, automatically process of learning English becomes boring. Teacher feels that he has taught complete syllabus, but the students do not understand it properly. The curriculum prescribed for the students is not suitable to develop their skills of learning English language – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Many times it is observed that the contents of the syllabus are based on the information about the persons or the geographical location of the other countries. Naturally, the students cannot grasp it easily. They have to work hard. Other thing which should be mentioned here is that the syllabus is vast and the teacher is constantly warned by the higher authorities again and again to complete the syllabus. Hence, the English teacher has to complete it within a period of time. Teacher is not a machine and therefore, he has to go as per the system.

The examination system also does not evaluate the four language skills of students. More emphasis is laid on evaluating only writing skill of the students. Other three skills are not taken into consideration. There is no test which can provide the students opportunities for developing their communication skill.

It is expected that English teacher should speak English in his period. Many teachers try to speak English, but students make sorry figures. If the teacher continue speaking English in class without using vernacular language, the students avoid to attend his/her classes. What can be the outcome then? In fact, students have very less exposure of English language. At many places, English teacher is the only teacher who speaks English and when he or she is compelled to make use of vernacular language, the opportunity of listening to English is missed and so the students cannot get proper ear-training. If they do not get proper ear-training, they will lack in acquiring listening and speaking skills. After some years they would think that it is difficult to use English in daily life. Inferiority complex would develop and they would not love English. It would reduce their interest and the teacher of English would feel helpless.

As we discussed above the teacher has to face many challenges while teaching English language. So the first thing that the teacher of English has to do is to remove psychological fear of the students by focusing on personality

development of the students. Once, the attitude of the students has become positive, half the work is done. At the same time the teacher has to be very positive, experimental and creative. He/she should teach all the skills of language. The first skill of listening should be taught by making use of T.V., L.C.D. Projector, computers and overhead projectors. He/she must organise some activities like debate, elocution, interviews or dramas in English so that students would get opportunities to open their mouths. No doubt, when they start speaking English there would be mistakes. The teacher has to observe them and without pointing out mistakes he/she should encourage them. The journey should be from fluency to accuracy. Once, they are trained to speak, the mistakes done by them should be discussed politely. In this way two skills-listening and speaking – should be taught to the students.

Next skills which are to be taught are reading and writing. Reading, apart from listening, is important way of getting exposed to English. When students read more, automatically, their competency in English grow. Hence, the teacher should encourage the students to read more and more. The students who mastered the art of speaking can read with confidence. Students should be given proper training of pronunciation. If the students can read well, they understand well. Even they can speak and write well. After good practice of loud reading, they should be trained to read silently. The teacher can use variety of teaching aids like flash cards, blocks and interactive board.

The fourth and very important skill of language teaching is writing skill. The simple topics can be given to the students for writing paragraphs. Then the teacher should evaluate the paragraphs carefully. Once they write a single paragraph, the teacher should give paragraphs after paragraphs. This activity would remove their fear of writing English.

From the above discussion it is clear that the English teacher must adopt certain ways and means to make the learning process interesting. He should not only use lecture method. There are many methods to be adopted for making the process of learning interesting. Plenty of interesting reading materials like magazines, weeklies and newspapers should be made available to the students in

reading rooms. The students should be motivated to speak and read. Everyone learns by 'trial' and 'error' method. If required, proper suggestions should be given in a polite manner. Thus, it is necessary that the teacher should change his/her methodologies as he/she is a facilitator.

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