

CURRENT TRENDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ITS PROSPECTS – A GLANCE

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ABSTRACT

ELT seems to be a short term which governs large theories and practices involved in the teaching English in Indian education system. Though it is not an official language of India, it has got its own importance as Link Language (Lingua Franca), Library Language and Source of western knowledge. From 1960 to 1980 researches were done at primary level in teaching English from school level to college level. Traditional methods served mere purpose and there were many challenges for English teachers such as, Class room strength, Mother Tongue Influence, Teaching Methods (Prose, Poetry, Grammar and Language skills), Variables in the classroom, Evaluation and Tutorials. **NCERT** and **SCERT** were established to make out necessary changes in preparation of Syllabus, tool design, instructional material design and initiate technological approach in class room teaching (Audio, Visual, Audio-Visual, Multimedia and computer) situation. This method helps to learn any subject on sensory based which stays in student's memory for longtime reuse. In ELT, Phonetics is an important module and teachers of phonetics have to make a tremendous effort to teach English sounds to the students of varied skill levels. There are plenty of materials available to teach English language aspects but the teacher has to decide the apt material suitable to teach to the level of students. For example, US English pronunciation doesn't work at the beginning level because it is further beyond the UK English Pronunciation. This approach never aims to remove teacher from classroom but it is a very good tool in the hands of a resourceful teacher. This paper further focuses the real time issues involved in this method.

Plan of This Paper

1. English Language Importance
2. English Classroom management
3. Role of computer in Teaching
4. Design of Research – Lesson , Instruction and Testing
5. Conclusion

ENGLISH LANGUAGE IMPORTANCE

English is the most widely spoken language in the world and it stands out as the most popular language on earth. “English is being spoken by about 280,000,000 people as a first Language ; by some 120,000,000 as a second language and by an unknown about ever increasing number as a foreign Language” (Encyclopedia Britannica,2004). No language, ancient or modern can be compared with “English in the number of geographical distributions of the homes, shops, factories and offices in which the language is spoken , written or read”(F.G.French,3). Apart from being native or first language in countries as widely apart as the United Kingdom, The United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, English is an important second language almost everywhere in the world.

M.C.Chagla, (Prem Ragul, 2004)when he was the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, once ruled that English was an Indian language and the Supreme Court upheld this judgment. The Sahitya Academy of India recognizes English as one of the Indian languages. Statistics show that over half the world periodicals are printed in English ; three quarters of the world’s mail is written in English and three fifth of the world radio stations broadcast in English. The latest and the most accurate information about the advancements of science and technology is immediately available to us through the medium of English. English and information are inextricably interwoven. The whole world has accepted English language as the medium of intellectual exchange for the following three reasons,

- 1. The commercial weight**
- 2. The technical importance**
- 3. Translation from other languages**

English has been caught in that ceaseless flux which is Indian life and thought at the present time. English, therefore, will continue to enjoy the status of an associate official language of the Indian Union for an indefinite period. The National Policy of Education states that “Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages” (Edn.Report.1964- 66, 15). World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth but should also make her own significant contribution to it. For this, the study of English should be specially strengthened. The teaching of English should continue to be promoted from the school

stage. The **National Integration Council (NIC)** in its meeting at Chennai, clearly pointed out that the teaching of English must be allowed for the following purposes have been recognized by all.

- i. English as an international language
- ii. English as a national link language
- iii. English as a library language
- iv. English as a ‘Gateway of Knowledge’.

ENGLISH CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The teaching of English in our schools is far from satisfactory. The students who learn English for about six periods in a week for six years hardly know 150 words by the time they join a college. This means they have not been able to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. They do not know how to use the commonest structures in English. The conditions of teaching English are different from State to State. The performance of the students in urban schools is better than the students in the rural schools. Likewise, the attainment of students in public schools /model school is better than that of their counterparts in ordinary schools. For this we can enlist some of the shortcomings as follows.

LACK OF OBJECTIVES

After independence, the place of English in India has not been well – defined. It has been changing from time to time. In some of the States in India, English is not a compulsory subject. It is not necessary to study English to get through the high school examination. Hence the students are not serious about the study of the language.

NO CLEAR FOCUS

The teachers who teach the language has little understanding of the aims of teaching the language. The only aim is to make the student pass the examination. The students depend more on memory rather than to master the skills of the language. The aim is on the percentage of pass only.

TEACHER’S SKILLS SET

All teachers of English are not similar in their capacity to teach the language. In other words they are not fully competent to do full justice to their assignment. The **UGC** Committee has remarked that **“There is a shortage of Teacher”**(UGC Report, Vol.3,7) .

This statement refers to not only the number but also the quality and competency. In the high school level, most of the teachers who teach English have just passed school final examination through rural schools. They themselves do not know the correct usage and pronunciation and their vocabulary is limited. It is awful to note that many teachers who did not offer teaching of English in their training period teach this subject. It is wrong to say that any graduate can teach English language to secondary level. Most of the teachers are not in a position to know the latest developments in their subjects. On the other hand, considerable mass of teachers are not interested in improving competency and other relevant skills.

INAPPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING

In most of the high schools of Tamilnadu the subject & language '**English**' is taught by the science teacher since the teacher studied a Language paper in his Teacher Training Programme. So most of the teachers use translation method. They teach **English** through **Tamil** (First and the official language of Tamilnadu State). This translation method enables the pupils to understand the parallel & equivalent terms of both languages whereas the different types of grammatical functions of those terms become big troubling-factors. Students are rarely allowed to express/ speak in the class which makes the process of learning, a dull one.

NO INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

In the Government schools of Tamilnadu, a teacher is expected to manage 100 students. Within the time slice of the period (45 Minutes) a teacher is expected to check the attendance; verify the given home-work; keep up the discipline of the class then the teacher is expected to give a general introduction to the topic followed by lecture/ demonstration and feed-back . Hence teachers cannot pay individual attention to students.

UNSATISFACTORY REGULATION

Speaking practically, there is no supervision on the work of the English teachers. So teachers have no opportunity to get any guidance from experts. No symposium /seminars are conducted for the teachers to update and enrich the subject knowledge.

NO MODERN EQUIPMENTS

Most of the government colleges schools do not have the facilities of Audio –Visual aids as, Linguaphone records, Filmstrips, Radio, Television and other latest tools to teach English. Even the schools that have some aids, do not make use of them.

ROLE OF COMPUTER IN TEACHING

A computer is a power- driven machine equipped with key – boards, electronic circuits, storage compartments and recording devices for the high speed performance. The National Policy of Education has emphasized the use of computer and new technology in English language teaching. As mentioned in the report,“ **Some specific programmes are to be taken up for implementation as mentioned in the programme of action**” (‘ **Programme of Action**’, **National Policy on Education**, 166). The report says that,

- 1 Research in the methodology of effective teaching and learning of languages with particular emphasis on the use of computers and other communication media.
2. Infrastructure facilities of language and other training institutes for training of teachers and experimentation in Computer assisted instruction and the use of new communication technology.
3. Development of textual materials for ensuring attainment of specified language abilities

Conclusion

The following are the questions which will decide the computer’s role in teaching English.

1. Will a computer assist a language teacher ?
2. Will a computer be used as a teaching aid?
3. Will a computer be effective in class room ?
4. Will a computer be comparatively more effective than the conventional teaching?

For example, The Central Institute of Indian Languages (**CIIL**), Kendriya Hindi Sansthan and Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha have been provided with BBC micro computers for undertaking experimentation in computer assisted language instruction and learning. The Central Institute of English and Foreign Language(**CIEFL Now it is known as TEFLU**) has set up an educational media research centre for English Language Teaching. So there are ample opportunities for the intervention and introduction of computers in teaching English for next generation.

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