

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING SKILLS IN INDIA****Dipika Awachite Findeis**

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**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
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This paper deals with the current status of English language in India. It consists of the various hurdles which the students come across while speaking in English and also the difficulties faced by the teacher while teaching English language speaking skills to the students. The scenario of the status of English language in India hasn't changed majorly but has come undergone some changes. Even in the recent years we come across the English language speaking problems quite often when dealing with the students directly. It's not only the students who lack in knowledge and practical use of English language but also the teachers teaching English language do not have sufficient knowledge of English and also lack in ways of teaching and teaching methodologies. Various aspects of teaching & learning are highlighted in the paper. The importance of teaching the language in order to fulfil the ever growing demands of career enhancing to compete in various competitive exams are stressed. The focus is given that how students can put their learning into practice through effective communication skills. The importance of teaching English in order to fulfil the ever growing demands of English language is also stressed.

Key words: contemporary issues, problems in English language speaking skills, issues of teachers in teaching speaking skills, difficulties of Indian learners in learning English language speaking skills.

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Introduction:

English is widely used language not only in India but all over the world. English is globally accepted and most practiced language in the world and is of utmost importance in today's life. English language is the vital mode of keeping the world connected with each other. In the communication process languages play a vital role. To learn English as a foreign language is an artificial and painful process, students have to learn it as we consider English as a world language. "Language is the institution whereby human communication and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory symbol." (Hall 1969). A language is a group of sentences, each limited to a certain length and constructed out of a limited set of elements. English has long become the staple of communications for international relations whether diplomatic or business, it may not be the most widely spoken language in the world due to China being of the largest growing countries in terms of population, but when a Business to Business or Consumer relationship is required, English is the first use.

International Businesses in the west use manufacturers based in China which is well known for being an OEM manufacturer for high-street as well as minor brands and use bi-lingual customer agents whom use English as their 2nd language to receive a client's requirements and act as a point of contact between the parties so the consumer is usually guaranteed to always be using the same person in terms of discussing requirements and provided feedback according to changing demands. The word contemporary means modern, current, present-day or existing. In this context, Contemporary issues in Education refer to the various events, policies and developments of an educational nature which exist in the modern world. Though English is of utmost importance in India but it is still used as an assistant language. after the national language of India which is Hindi only English is the most used language in speaking and writing. English symbolizes in Indians minds, better education, better culture and higher

intellect .Indians who know English often mingle it with Indian languages in their conversations. It is also usual among Indians to abruptly move to speak fluent English in the middle of their conversations. English also serves as the communicator among Indians who speak different language. English is very important in some systems – legal, financial, educational, business in India. Earlier English movies were not given much importance but now we see that students are motivated to watch English movies to get adapted to the correct English language pronunciations and also to enhance their English vocabulary.

In countries like India there is no doubt that dialects tend to get in the way with over 29 states and over 22 languages and a lot more local dialects, so hence it is an intelligence approach to ensure that a robust policy is implemented to ensure the workforce can communicate sufficiently; English is majorly spoken as well, there is no point Indians from Punjab migrating over to Mumbai which is part of Maharashtra for employment when the main tongue if it isn't English is Marathi. Multi-culturalism remains a big issue across global markets especially in China and India so co-ordination needs to be done in one official language everyone can understand, and if people can't integrate, then the motivation is there to basically either learn or find employment elsewhere, and a tough choice it is means that the most highly motivated are applicants for job roles.

Background:

With the consolidation of the activities of the East India Company in eighteenth century, began the efforts of teaching English in the South Asian subcontinent. As far back as 1759, Christian missionaries entered India and the 1787 despatch welcomed the efforts of Rev. Swartz to establish schools for the teaching of English. Another significant effort was the publication of the first book, 'The Tutor', to teach English to the non-Europeans by author John Miller in 1797. This book was published in Serampore in Bengal. Thus the socio-historical stage for the role of English in education was set by the end of the 18th century. T.B. Macaulay, in the Minutes of 1835, for the first time, formally introduced the teaching of English in the South Asian subcontinent. In his Minutes he mentioned the importance and usefulness of the education that would be given to the natives through the medium of English.

Problems faced by teachers while teaching English language speaking skills:

- Most of the English language teachers in India lay more emphasis on the technicalities of English by giving more lectures on Grammar, its rules, the different techniques of English writing etc.
- Not much time is been allotted for the development of speaking skills of English which is the most required skill in this age of globalization.
- The teachers don't feel it necessary and important to enhance the English language vocabulary of the students rather they focus more on the curriculum framed at school and college levels which is only helping the students in their academics.
- In most of the Indian schools English is taught as second language which limits the knowledge to be given to the students.
- The ratio of students to teachers is high, leading to ineffectiveness
- Lack of trained teachers in rural areas has become a reality. Teaching is a continuous process and teachers in rural India are often debarred from attending workshops and seminars to acquaint themselves with new ways and methods.
- The rural population of India, which depends on agriculture and limited income, end up sending their children to government schools where English is not taught as a skill but as a subject.
- Many teachers are unable to teach English effectively because they face a lot of problems due to the lack of teaching aids, non-availability of required technical support and relevant atmosphere to teach English effectively.
- Peer teaching, role-play and group activities, are rare in Indian classrooms. In India, lectures speak. Teacher talking time is more than half of the prescribed time. The class listens passively.
- The teaching of English in India has been text-oriented.

Problems faced by the learners while learning English language speaking skills:

- The rural population of India, which depends on agriculture and limited income, end up sending their children to government schools where English is not taught as a skill but as a subject.
- Strong mother-tongue influence.
- Mixing up the sentence formation with the first language due to lack of knowledge and practice.

- The teacher uses bilingual method for the slow learners to understand which is an obstacle for the others to develop their English speaking ability.
- The classrooms are not well-equipped with regards to language labs in schools.
- Learners become passive in this teaching and learning process.
- Learners face a major problem in English language pronunciation. In India English language pronunciation differs from state to state due to the mother-tongue influence.
- Insufficient practice sessions for the learners.
- Students lack in vocabulary as a result of which they are unable to express their thoughts and imagination.
- Lack of trained teachers with specialization of teaching English language speaking skills.
- Lack of knowledge of presentation skills.
- Uncertainty of timing and the use of vocabulary during interaction.

Current status of English language in Indian education:

- English is taught as a second language at every stage of education in all states of India and has been accepted as the main medium of instruction in higher education.
- English is also the state language of two states in eastern India, Meghalaya and Nagaland.
- In India, English has become an integral part of the curriculum almost at all levels of education.
- There are various social, political and cultural factors that affect the position of English in different boards, universities and other institutions. Even the curriculum offered and evaluation tools employed are very diverse across the country.
- The model of English offered to the learners lacks uniformity and it is this question that continues to challenge the policy makers and education planners.
- While most States accord English the position of second language, some others treat it as the third language; the regional language and the national language getting precedence.

- As in other linguistically and culturally pluralistic societies, the position of English is determined by various political, cultural and social considerations. Kachru (1986 cited in Hohenthal , 2003) sees primarily three questions which continue to be discussed.
- The first question concerns the position of English in early and in higher education. The second question is concerned with the roles of the regional language, Hindi and English. The third question deals with the model of English presented to Indian learners, and how that presentation can be made uniformly and effectively.
- The Government of India has primarily been concerned with the first two questions, which are directly related to language planning at both the national and state levels.

Considering the problems faced by the teachers in teaching English language speaking skills and the problems faced by the learners in learning English language speaking skills, the researcher has recommended some solutions which would help in overcoming the problems of both teachers as well as students.

Remedial measures to make teaching and learning of English language impactful:

- Building a rapport with your class - Assuring smile and greeting from a teacher to the students, helps them bond with the teacher instantly. When the students bond with the teacher, they will find learning the language much easier.
- The teacher should enable the students to understand English when spoken. The teacher should try to use understandable vocabulary with the students and avoid difficult words with primary level students.
- Grammar translation method should be avoided. Instead of teaching only the grammatical rules it is important to teach the students new and useful vocabulary, make it a habit for the learners to communicate only in English in the class, the teacher should point out the mistakes in the students in a very motivating way and then correct them which will help in boosting their self-confidence.
- Teacher should find some ways of helping students to enjoy the language activities and of building their confidence.
- They should use English as a medium of expression.

- To motivate the students think through English. Most of the learners tend to first think in their first language and then translate it as it is in English language which results in the complete meaning of the sentence.
- Create confidence of speaking English in public. It is the teachers responsibility to innovate some new and fun activities for the students to participate willingly and build their confidence in public speaking.
- An English teacher has to encourage the students to talk in English only.
- Teachers should motivate students for participative learning.
- In a scenario where neither adequate resources nor tools are available, English teachers themselves have to devise innovative ways to make their students' climb the staircase easily. This can be done with a resolve, as Patel says: " I have to create opportunities for the students to use English in meaningful, realistic and relevant situations'. (Parel, 2008,)
- English language teachers should be motivated to pursue courses like TESOL, TEFL, CELTA to keep their knowledge updated with the latest trends and methods of English language teaching in the world.
- Both students and teachers should be encouraged to take English language level testing exams like IELTS, TOEFL every 2 years to find out their current levels and to then improve themselves accordingly.

Discussion:

Not all the parents in India are familiar with English language and are not even the fluent speakers of the language in rural areas. The scope for the English language learners in the rural areas is quite limited as to those living and studying in the cities. The only place where the students use and practice speaking in English is their classrooms which again is restricted only to the English lectures. In most of the schools especially in government schools English language is taught as a subject and not as a skill. The students find it very boring to carry on speaking in English as they don't have complete knowledge of the language. when these students move to the cities for further education and take admissions in universities, they see that most of the universities se English as the language of instruction and also of writing the exams. This is the biggest obstacle in front of the students. In this competitive world of globalisation even the companies or job industries in India require the candidate to be fluent in English. Most of the job interviews are also conducted in English language. Even though

the students from rural area are very intellectual academically it gets difficult for them to get through the university degrees with good marks because they lack in writing and speaking in English Language as they do not have enough exposure to the language. They are filled with knowledge but do not the sufficient capacity of expressing their thoughts and putting it into words.

On the other hand the students from cities are quite familiar with the vocabulary and grammar of English as they learn it from their school time. Even most of the parents in the cities are familiar with English language as the population is working in cities. These students pass the university exams easily because of the fluency in the se of English language. but even these students face problems with the detailed and correct use of English language while attempting for competitive exams like IELTS and TOEFL for migrating to foreign countries for jobs , higher education or even for permanent settlement. Hence it is very important for the teacher to be updated with the recent trends in English language education and the new knowledge getting added to English language every couple of years. The language teachers should make it a priority and take it seriously to pursue courses like TEFL, TESOL,CELTA which will make the language teachers efficient and capable enough to train the students for their language based competitive exams.

Conclusion:

In India, majority of the workforce comes from rural areas as 75% of India lives in villages. The policy makers have to bridge the urban-rural divide in teaching of English. An English teacher teaching in rural schools has to come up with innovative strategies in the classrooms. Skilled and committed teachers need to be appointed at primary level. Teachers should be upgraded and trained to meet the problems of the learners. Keeping in mind globalisation and the current Job requirements in the world it is very important to keep the students updated with the latest English knowledge and the teachers who are considered as role models should keep themselves updated as this time demands change in teaching ways. It is the responsibility of the English language teachers to make the learners fall in love with the language which will develop inquisitiveness for English language in the learners.

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Paper Received : 28th Feb, 2017

Paper Reviewed : 25th March, 2017

Paper Published : 1st June, 2017