

Teaching English as Second Language {CC-14}

There is no doubt that in today's modern world, in the 21st Century, English has become the world's widely spoken language. Almost in all spheres of life, science and technology, medicine, sports, media, international affairs and so on, the importance of English can be seen. Thus, it can be said that English has become a tool for international communication.

David Crystal in his book *English as a Global Language* emphasizes on the importance of English language. He says, "it is the language on which the sun never sets." Due to the extensive use of English language in all spheres of human being's life and the fact that English is the language of international communication, teaching of English as a foreign or second language has become an important occupation throughout the globe. There is no country across the world where English is not studied, taught said that of all the languages in the world today English language which deserves to be regarded as a 'World language', being the common means of communication between the people of different nations.

The U.N.O. has given English the status of being an official language. If we talk about India, English has been used directly or indirectly for almost more than two centuries. This language was given to Indians by the Britishers, who ruled on us for almost two decades. Lord Macaulay wanted not all but selected class to be educated. He wanted "... a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, morals and opinions." Explaining the importance of English, Macaulay in his minutes on education (1835) says, "English stands preeminent among the languages of the West, whoever knows that language has ready access to all the west intellectual wealth which all the wise nations of the earth have created." Even Indians themselves, like the contemporary patriots like Raja Ram Mohan Roy preferred English education.

As a result, English was adopted as the 'official language' of education in 1837. The British empire disappeared years ago but the empire of English language has been extending throughout the country. English became the unifying force in India because it was the only language in which, many English educated Indians could think in and express themselves as effectively as the English people. After Independence, the place of English in India underwent drastic changes. Hindi in Devnagri script was declared to be the official language by

Indian Constitution. But as English with deeply rooted in the system, English was declared to be the associate language with Hindi till 1965.

When in 1960, the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad tried to make Hindi the language of the Supreme Court and all High Courts, there was immediate reaction in the non- Hindi areas. Thus, realizing the importance of English language, The Chief Minister's Conference (1961) concluded that English should also be taught along with Hindi in order to get out side affairs' for All India Services and other departments. In 1967, a law was passed according to which "English will continue as an associate official language for an indefinite period." (Krishnaswamy and Krishnaswamy 2006: 123.)

Neglecting the Aims of Teaching English: The first and most important factor which affects the teaching- learning process in India is teaching of English is not in accordance with the aims of teaching English. The objective of teaching a language is to enable the learner to understand and communicate the language effectively. If we talk about teaching of English language in India, English must serve as 'a window on the world'. It means that the learner must be able to observe and learn other persons' behaviour.

Faulty Curriculum: Another factor affecting the teaching learning process in India is that the curriculum of English has not been designed to reach desired outcomes. In India, students can be classified into two groups : one group belongs to the group of students who are compelled to attend classes under trees despite implementation of several plans to raise teaching learning standards. These students mostly are from rural background. Their family background and environment is not conducive to provide them even basic education. The second group belongs to those students who are having good background in basic education as most of their parents are educated. They join English medium schools and do not face much difficulty in pursuing their higher studies. The reason being in English medium schools, English is taught right from the beginning. But on the contrary, in schools other than English medium, English is introduced at the middle level.

Old Method of Teaching English: In India, in most of the schools, the old and traditional 'Translation cum Grammar' method is being followed. The modern approaches like 'Structural and Situational' are not yet as popular with our teachers and students as the need is. As a result, the practical approach and aspect of English is missing. That is the reason, most of our Indian students lack

proficiency in all skills of language, i.e. Listening, speaking, reading and writing. Moreover, ineffective use of audio-visual aids further intensifies the problem

Lack of Effective Teachers: Teaching is a two way process. In the teaching learning process, two aspects play a vital role - one is the delivering capacity of the teacher and the other one is the receiving capacity of the students. In the absence of a right teacher or a student, teaching is meaningless. The role of the teacher in teaching English language is not only to teach the rules of grammar or paraphrase texts but he has to facilitate the language being taught.

Miscellaneous Factors: Apart from the above mentioned factors, there are numerous other factors which play a significant role in teaching of English as a second language. Environment and family background of the student play a vital role in success of teaching - learning process. In countries like India, where majority of the people are farmers or having the poor background in education, the parents are least interested in providing good education to their children. Moreover, the income of majority of the families is not adequate, hence the parents are more interested to engage their children in some petty jobs to earn money.

While using English language, the pattern of their mother tongue and that of English create confusion among the learners, which has an obvious impact on acquiring a foreign language. They need to first unlearn what they have learnt as per their mother tongue and then acquire a second language. Thus, the influence of mother-tongue often becomes a major hurdle in the learning process.

Another factor which affects the teaching learning process of English language is lack of interest towards English among the students. The reason can be any. It may be that the students having rural background feel inferiority complex in front of other students as they are not as affluent as other students.

Conclusion : To conclude it can be said that no doubt there are many hurdles and constraints in the teaching learning process of English as a second language in India. Many suggestions need to be implemented. But it is also a fact that acquisition of second language is effective when there is equal participation of both, the learner as well as the teacher. When both are involved in the teaching learning process only then the level of interest and motivation can be high.

Courtesy : Dr. Md. Ejaz Alam