



Abstract

The teaching of English in India has often been a matter of challenge given that it is difficult for the ELT teacher or instructor to inculcate a high degree of interest in the learner. Even though teaching is a humanistic activity which involves the creation and maintenance of a significant ligature between ‘teacher’ and ‘taught’, it is a kind of profession which is somewhat inclined in the direction of the learner. Yet, although teaching involves learners, it is a truism that teaching never guarantees learning. Teaching and learning indeed involve two poles, that of the student as a learner and that of the teacher or pedagogue functioning as an educator or facilitator. And although teaching and learning is a simultaneous process, this procedure does not run well all times. As a matter of fact, there are many hurdles both the teacher and the learner have to face. Particularly in India, the education system has undergone several changes throughout history from the ‘gurukul’ system to the modular classroom that we see today. In the context of this understanding, the aim of this paper will be, first, to examine the status of English in India and to look at the different purposes for which English is used – and taught. Next, the paper will also discuss very briefly some of the problems of ELT in India. After this, a focus will be sought to be brought upon a new approach which may emerge as a solution to overcome at least a few of these difficulties. This mode of ELT application which may be termed “edutainment” may prove to be effective in English Language Teaching since it will involve an alternative pedagogic system posed at a variance from the traditional mode of chalk-talk classroom language teaching. In the edutainment mode, approaches to ELT and the techniques therein can be more inductive

than prescriptive, and thus can allow greater room for liberality, enjoyment, fun and comfort.

This mode of “edutainment” is what the present paper will aim to discuss as a possible innovative trend in the teaching of English language in India.

Keywords- ELT, edutainment, India, teaching, learning



Introduction

Language, the paramount segment of life, is the means of communication. An individual invariably lives in a language as well as dies in it. In meditation or dreams, thought or speech, the actual existence of human being is inextricably entwined with language. According to Noam Chomsky, “A language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.” There are generally three functions of language; firstly, the informative function, that is to communicate information. Secondly, the matter of expression, that is to convey emotions, feelings, attitude etc. thirdly, the function of language is directive, which is to prevent actions. If a matter of discussions comes, which is about the most spoken languages in the world, it will be found that Mandarin Chinese natively and non-natively will take the apex; English comes immediately afterwards, according to the statistics.

Concept of ELT

English language is considered as the world’s most important as well as global language and without the usage of this particular language, proliferation or the expansion of multiculturalism might be ceased or interrupted. English is the most common language which connects the people from china to peru. “For quite a few decades English was taught and learnt with the educated ‘native’ speaker as a model. The two accepted varieties were British and American English. English language learning was an effort directed at reaching as close an approximation of the native speaker model as possible.” ELT, the abbreviation English Language Teaching has been used throughout the world in last few decades. But the title itself is faulty. Because it is known that teaching is a kind profession which is somehow complementary to the learner. The

interrelation between a ‘teacher’ and a ‘learner’ is just like a correlation between a ‘stage-performer’ and an ‘audience’ of a play. The performance of a stage-performer or an actor is successfully executed only when there is presence of audience that may be one or two. But their/his/her attendance is obvious as well as important. Performer will not get applause and be appraised until he is not witnessed to do perform. In the same way, a teacher is successful when he/she is surrounded by the student/s, which means the scenario demands the both poles (teaching and learning). But the title ELT, the one side of the coin only is prioritized, and that is teaching. In ELT, teaching English means whose native language is not English. English language is used in three ways. Firstly, it is used as L1; secondly as L2 and as FL. In Indian context, the status of English is considered as Second Language. In the ancient Indian culture language has been compared with “brahma” or transcendental truth. English has become the language of Indians largely. English has successfully played multifarious roles towards the Indians. Through English we, Indians can establish social, political, economic and cultural relations towards the other countries of the world. Pandit Nehru comments, “English is our major window on the modern world.” If we close this window, we will shut ourselves up in the four walls of our decay and downfall. So English cannot be neglected or ignored.

Status of English in India

English is an associate official language and the language of the Supreme Court and all the High Courts of India, by constitution. Although the High Courts of MP, UP, Rajasthan and Bihar are using Hindi, in consonance with presidential approval. In 2018, the High Courts of Haryana and

Punjab also are anticipating for presidential approval to use Hindi. India does not have any official language, Hindi is considered as “Rajbhasa”. It is the state language of some of the states, like in the Manipur and Mizoram, and in Tripura Bengali is considered as State language side by side English. Not only that, English is the official language of all Indian territories. In India, as we have multilingual problems, English is also used as lingua franca. For instance, in any railway station of India, we have found that the nameplate of that particular station consists of more than two languages; one is English, another one is Hindi and the local language of that place. English is also used as link language. Nextly, it is considered as the library language as it helps to access for enhancing the knowledge. It is also contemplated as a literary language of India. Indian writing in English is a national literature by Sahitya Academy. The most importantly, in India, English got the status of Second Language; but in some educational board curriculum English obtained the status of First Language.

Aims and Objectives of ELT in India

Before dealing with the aims and objectives of teaching English as L2 in India it is imperative to show the difference between the two terms- ‘aims’ and ‘objectives’. Aims are general statements that provide direction or intent to educational actions. Aims are usually amorphous terms using words like learn, know, understand, appreciate, and these are not directly measurable. Example: students will understand and become proficient at identifying the different types of spoken English. Objectives are usually specific statements of educational intention which delineate whether general or specific outcomes. Objectives are always specific in nature.

There are three types of aims of ELT in India. Firstly, the linguistic aim that refers to the attainment of proficiency in expressing ourselves in relation to LSRW, basic linguistic skills. Secondly, the cultural aim that refers to the proper reflection and appreciation of our Indian heritage and culture. R.A. Close (1962) once said, “A language cannot help reflecting the ways of behaviour and thought of the people who speak it as their mother tongue. For proper appreciation of any literature it is necessary to know the culture in which it finds its origin.,,”. English is not only introduces us to the rich Western culture, Indian culture has also vitaminised itself with the works of Edmund Burke, Rousseau, Ruskin, Carlyle, Voltaire etc. the Western countries have also shared the teachings of Indian philosophy and writings of Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, Gandhi and so on with the help of English language. So, a culture and the language used by it are inseparable. Finally, the literary aim, learners will be able to appreciate critically any piece of literature of considerable significance.

In India, we can identify the following objectives of ELT as L2. Firstly, the development of language proficiency that refers to the higher order thinking skills (HOTS) like Analysis, Evaluation and Creation along with the progress of LSRW skills. Secondly, the development of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) that means language skills needed to interact in social situations. Thirdly, the development of lexical knowledge which lies in the importance of the fact that grammatical errors still result in understandable structures, while vocabulary error may disrupt communication. Fourthly, the use of English as a tool for expressing abstract thoughts and acquisition of academic knowledge that means books on all branches are available in English which is the key to the store-house of knowledge. Fifthly, grammar learning in a

constructive way that means it should be learnt contextually and to apply, according to the necessity. Sixthly, development of writing skill that is related to the descriptive English. And, finally, development of imaginative, aesthetic and creative faculties that means someone's acquaintance not only with the bookish lessons, but also with the innovative and ingenious skills of the learners.

The Problems of Teaching English in India

In India, the method of English language teaching does not mean in any particular level like nursery or graduation or school level rather it means taking care of whole structure that is from school to university. All these following problems come in our mind regarding ELT in India-

Vague Objectives- At any teaching level, there should be basic objectives to teach English and that is the ability to communicate which should be taken care of. But our educational system does not cooperate with the students to enhance the communicative competence properly.

Pronunciation problem is one of the most massive problems for ELT as a second language in India. There must be definite or good pronunciation of a teacher whom the student could follow as their role model. But generally it is lack of. Then the next issue is the process of assessment of an English student in their UG or PG level who has to face to this type of question like, Give the critical appreciation of a particular poem (suppose that is John Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale'). But in this way although the writing skill of the student is possible to be judged but the assessment of the four basic skills, LSRW is not assessed. If the student is not able to build up their communicative competence properly, how he/she will be a perfect evaluator in future.

Lack of relevance to the learner- As a learner, it is necessary to know why he/she is studying English and of course his/her knowledge of English will not be confined to the classroom works. Learner has to interact in any situation; it could be job market or in station. Suppose in case of a Science student, he/she should know how to write a laboratory report, how to use a library and so on. But these kinds of things are not taught in a common class like in school days. Evenly the learners are not properly trained for interview board or any kind of group discussion. The same goes on in Language studies also. The students are not taught how to tackle the exams with a genuine care or how they cannot cross their own kinds of limitations, what are the kinds of good ways to crack the MCQ questions. So it's clear that only the knowledge of the subject is not enough for ELT. Sometimes teachers blame that the students have limited knowledge as they bunk classes. If the teacher is good, package of “edutainment”, the students will not definitely bunk the classes.

Lack of coordination to the curriculum- As the discussion is going on about communicative competence, which is not only about the speaking skill but also the writing skill, rather it is about LSRW, the four basic skills. And there should be a good coordination among these basic skills. But the syllabus of English in our system of education (from school level to PG level) does not reflect that. As the coordination is not maintained, the consequence becomes fragile. And that is one of the rationales why English teaching institutes and the coaching centres are easily mushrooming and getting mass root in our locality. These kinds of institutions provide their students a dreamy, utopian Disney land like commitment of success, better to be said a shortcut of success.

Mixed ability groups- It is a salient view in an Indian language classroom which is full of different types (socially, economically, culturally and sometimes linguistically too) as well as background level students. Suppose there could be a student, who is coming to the school as first generation learner. There are also students who have a very good, well equipped library in their house. There are different ground levels of students coexisting and a teacher has to deal with all these levels. In an Indian language classroom there are mainly three types of learners; Upper Ground Level students, Middle Ground Level students and finally the Lower Ground Level students. Whenever a teacher teaches, three concepts are very vital; and these are Input, Output and Intake. Whatever the teacher teaches that actually acts as a kind of Input. Output refers to Intake; it means the intake of the students. The input is given but why does this performance vary specifically because of the variation of the Input; that is learners' absorption capacity is not the same. Whatever the teacher teaches, the students learn. Though they theoretically exist but they practically do not exist. Either they exist in the Upper Ground Level or the Lower Ground Level or somewhere in between them. There are some possibilities. So one is that the teacher teaches a self teacher but some students learn more than what the teacher teaches. There is a possibility. And there is another possibility where rather students learn lesser than what the teacher teaches. So learners learn as much as the teacher teaches. The degree of learning always varies, not the same. It is very difficult for teacher to manage all these kinds of situations but it might be possible only through streaming. In a heavily strengthened classroom, the students cannot get a proper feedback. But in case of Second Language teaching, every student needs a personal care.

Infrastructure- A proper infrastructure is an ample whim of L2 teaching. But maximum classrooms of India lack that. There are inviolable evidences that high-quality infrastructure facilities better instruction can improve the outcomes of the students in a better way, and can reduce dropout rates, among other benefits. But nowadays the educational policy makers are trying to focus on the quality of education. Among the infrastructure large classroom is one of the important aspects for ELT. If it is unavailable, the teacher has to face some problems during group discussions or pair-work or any kind of other methods.

Lack of training of the teachers-It refers to that as an ELT teacher; he/she must be properly trained as well as updated. If it is not done, there will be a gap in teaching-learning scenario.

Status accorded to English-In India, the value of English is not properly justified. Suppose, a student of Science background of 12th standard school level, he/she can take English as his/her honours subject in UG level because he/she scored higher in this subject than his/her subjects of Science and that is being done unwillingly. Evenly in the UG level, there is a subject like Compulsory English; While, it is not properly taught in the colleges or institutions. That means the requirement is that only to pass English in India in all these kinds of mentioned situations. Naturally the status is speeding down.

Different goals of English in contemporary India –

Different goals are related to functions for which English is used in India.

Utilitarian Function- It means English is used as a kind of utility for getting something. English acts as a window to the world. Knowing English helps to get a good job or helps to get

promotions. Evenly English is somehow related to the development of agriculture in India. As English functions as a library language, all the researches, library works become facile to access. All these purposes are related to mobility of English language.

Interactive Function- it is related to the function of modernisation. If anyone doesn't know English, he/she will be considered as handicapped. And there will be some kind of blackout for the information.

Interpretive Function- English also plays the role of the projection profile. India has produced erudite people like Rabindranath Tagore, Ramanujan, and R. K. Narayan and many other geniuses. In order to access enriched heritage of India, English language toils a vital role in the field of translation studies. By translating their works in English, Indian culture heritage literature project their profile throughout the world.

So it can be said that English language is an effective tool for employability. It enhances opportunities for self-employment, corporate expectations and competition within the same skill set. It gives a big chance for academic and research purposes and acts as an instrument of faster career advancement. It welcomes all the global opportunities and also connects the workforce. It is cleared that English has different kinds of functions and there is no doubt about that.

Concepts of edutainment

Edutainment is an acronym of the words 'education' and 'entertainment'. Etymologically, edutainment is a process of learning that is designed with the ligature of education and entertainment in harmony, so that learning process will be more fun and

enjoyable. In a broad sense, some structural activities can be considered as a part of it. This kind of activities not only become a matter of fun and enjoy for the learner, but also motivate them and charge them to learn things in a new way. Unconsciously, the learner is entertained as well as enriched him/her by being educated.

There are some edutainment activities which provoke the learner to grasp knowledge without being bored. Firstly, Game/Play, which is a free activity of a group or an individual person (child or adult) and that, is limited by a certain time period. It can be considered as the channel to procure specific needs or encounter different target. Secondly, Simulation, which means imitation of a situation or process. Here, role playing or rehearsal is done to carry out teaching artificially. It is based on socio-drama. To create non-stressful ambiance in the teaching-learning scenario is the ultimate aim of this.

Nowadays in India, this new emerging trend is intensely used and that gives a victorious aura in ecology of teaching, specifically in the field of ELT. ‘Teaching’ English in India has always been a highly estimated prospect. Education system in India has underwent several changes throughout the history of education in India- beginning from the ‘gurukul’ system to the modern (modular) classroom that we see today. As education system has underwent, rather found out the need to change their mode of instruction with the change of time and in this aspect we must keep in mind that this has been done or rather this has taken place in order to keep pace with the advent of the global market. With this change of education system, there has risen a need of change in the teaching procedure. The traditional mode of teaching has now become sloth and has lost its effectiveness. Like every other thing, pedagogical methods too has

underwent severe transformation, but if we look into the matter of effectiveness of these adopted methods, then we must note that much of the noted transformation has been a vain attempt. Much of the new, adopted measures landed into a puddle but not all, among them, one such method is activity-based teaching learning methodology. Now, this might seem a bit obstructive to many when we use the term teaching and learning together but when probed deeper, we will find out that both teaching and learning is a simultaneous ‘skill development’ process. A number of different teaching techniques have emerged due to this change in education. Many of these teaching techniques are not actually new however! The use of technology in the classroom has simply given education a new lease of life allowing us to approach old ideas in new ways. The most popular six teaching techniques of 21st century are shown in the below.

Flipped Classroom (Inverting your class)- Learners or students are motivated by this flipped classroom technique to draw up for the lesson before the class. As a result, a dynamic ambiance is generated in the classroom and students can elaborate on what they have already studied. Students prepare a topic at home so that the class the next day can be devoted to answering any questions they have about the topic. Thus this allows students to go beyond their normal boundaries and to explore their natural curiosity.

Design Thinking (Case Method)-This technique is rooted on resolving real-life cases through group analysis, brainstorming, innovation and creative ideas. Although “Design Thinking” is a structured method, in practice it can be quite messy as some cases may have no possible solution. However, the Case Method prepares students for the real world and arouses their curiosity, analytical skills and creativity. This technique is often used in popular MBA or

Masters Classes to survey real cases experienced by companies in the past.

Self-learning- Curiosity is the core of learning and at the same time self learning is the best way to enlighten the self of a learner. As a basic principle of learning, it makes little sense to force students to retain large reams of text that they will either begrudgingly recall or instantly forget. The key motif of this technique is to make students focus on exploring an area which interests them and learn about it for.

Gamification- Learning through the use of games is one of the teaching methods that have already been explored especially in elementary and preschool education. By using games, students learn without even realizing. Therefore, learning through play or ‘Gamification’ is a learning technique that can be very effective at any age. This technique can easily motivate students. The teacher should design projects that are appropriate for their students, taking into account their age and knowledge, while making them attractive enough to provide extra motivation.

Social Media- A variant of the previous section is to utilize social media in the classroom. Students today are always bridged to their social network and so will need little stimulation to get them engaged with social media in the classroom. The ways you can use teaching methods are quite varied as there are hundreds of social networks and possibilities.

Free Online Learning Tools- There is an arrangement of free online learning tools available which teachers can use to encourage engagement, participation and a sense of entertainment and fun into the classroom. Teachers can create an interactive and dynamic classroom environment using, for example, online quizzes to test student’s knowledge.

Comics- comics are new trendy material which is used for ELT. Suppose a student who is a fan of comics of Marvel Studios, he/she can be instructed to write something on it. In this way the writing skill of the student is developing. Evenly, pictorial material are provide to the students and the can be instructed to write some dialogue format on that particular task.

Inductive method- In early days teacher first gave the definition and then example was used and that is known as deductive learning. But nowadays as the classroom becomes learner centred and learner oriented, the teacher tries to get the answers from the students before his/her explanation. And this is the inductive method. In contrast with the deductive method, inductive instruction makes use of student “noticing”.

To conclude it can be said that Traditional mode of chalk-and-talk Indian classroom teaching is deductive, alternative teaching approaches are more inductive in 21st century. Although there are multiple methods and techniques are used to teach ELT. But Inductive method is a type which can be applied to teach not only but all different kinds of subjects. Nowadays education is not only the matters of tutelage, coaching, tuition, instruction and guidance; rather education is blends of all those above mentioned pedagogic terms as well as entertainment. So it can be said that today’s education is “edutainment”. And in Indian classroom, specifically for ELT, “edutainment” is a successful genre which not only provides a fun and easy process of learning but also an effective ambiance of teaching-learning.

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