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The Social Impact on English Language Learning and Teaching in Schools Level: The Present Scenario in India.

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Abstract:

It is now well established and self-evident fact that English, the fourth most widely spoken native language in the global world, has become the most spoken official language in the whole world. It has become today's inevitable need to have command over this trendy language so that one can compete with their co-participants in national and international affairs successfully. Its official importance is undeniable even in those nations where it is not the primary spoken language and India being a Non-English-Speaking Country is one of them and it has its largest effect because of its second largest population in the world. English is now the language of global partnership, multi-disciplinary work culture, global business. In India, English has become one of the social status symbol in the Indian societies or culture as it is now gifted to determine the survival of the fittest of upcoming generation. With the expansion of scientific approaches and technological advancements such as computers, internet, e-books and smart phone, e-learning, it has become a popular and desired trend among youth to communicate in English language. To acknowledge its worth, English language has become a very crucial part of every curriculum in the government and non-government universities, colleges and schools in India. As per its global need, the roles and responsibilities of English language teachers have become very critical. The main objective of the study is to make an assessment on the suitability of current trends, perspectives and pedagogical methods used by English language trainers or teachers to improve English language among English Language Learners and to suggest them certain practical ways to improve its efficiency among beginners, intermediate and advanced level learners.

Keywords: *English Language, Language Learning, Classroom Pedagogy, Language of Liberty.*

1. Introduction

Language plays a very pivotal role in uniting nations, building relations and creating harmony. Being a linguist is not at all necessary for becoming a good communicator in any

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language. Language is a very strong medium for stimulating imagination. Expression is easy in one's primary language but it becomes a challenging task when one wants to acquire language competency in different or second languages. The youth of India is being the part of that era where they are struggling for acquiring linguistic competency in English language as India is a non-English-Speaking Country where English Language Learners are learning it as "ESL" (English as a Second Language), "EFL" (English as a Foreign Language) and "ESP" (English for Special Purpose). As Graddol points out that, "English is a fascinating tool for Indians as they have been ruled by British people for many years. Throughout India, there is an extraordinary belief, among almost all castes and classes, in both rural and urban areas, in the transformative power of English. English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression. Aspiration of such magnitude is a heavy burden for any language, and for those who have responsibility for teaching it, to bear. The challenges of providing universal access to English are significant, and many are bound to feel frustrated at the speed of progress. But we cannot ignore the way that the English language has emerged as a powerful agent for change in India." (Graddol 2010:120)

After self-government, they develop a tendency to see this language as a quality for upgrading social status. They feel that command over English will help them to look them unique from the general crowd. According to NCERT report, it is clearly written that "English in India today is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life. The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to people's aspirations, rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of a very early introduction. (NCERT 2006:1)

After independence, English Language Learning has become very crucial due to India's diversity in terms of numerous official and native languages. This discourse unveils the special status of English language has in India and its significances, changing needs, classroom pedagogies and contemporary challenges.

2. The Universal Significance of English

The importance of English will never be under rated because in the progressively more unified and globalized world, millions of immigrants come to non-English speaking countries every year to learn it. To enter, compete, survive and succeed in mainstream English speaking countries, communication in English is indispensable. It has become the pivotal part of our existence and we can see its importance everywhere in today's Indian society. Some major significance is listed below:

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i. Global Lingua Franca
ii. Global Language
iii. E-Communication
iv. Higher Education
v. Global Trade and Commerce
vi. Career & Job Opportunities
vii. Digital Communication
viii. E- learning & teaching
ix. Professional Communication
x. Internationally acclaimed official language
xi. Dominant Business Language
xii. Rising Interest Range in Worldwide Entertainment and World Cinema
xiii. International Tourism
xiv. Language of the Internet
xv. Language of Social Media Networking Sites
xvi. Language of the Multi-media industry
xvii. Language of the Electronic Devices and Gadgets
xviii. Globally searched online Library Language
xix. Language of Empowerment
xx. Language of Mass Media
xxi. Compulsory English Language Tests for Competitive exam
xxii. Link Language

Significance to learn English language is self-evident now-days. India's economical expansion is depending on the availability of people who know how to communicate beyond language and cultural boundaries, both globally and countrywide. Therefore, teaching of English should be given lot of importance and strengthened by improving techniques, methods and approaches which will be very effective for English language practitioners. Larsen-Freeman claims that Language learning and teaching is dynamic and fluid. There is nothing fixed about them (Larsen- Freeman, 2004: 186).

3. Challenges in Teaching English to Non-English Language Learners in India

i. Lacking of the Required Number of Competent Teachers
ii. Huge Communication Gap
iii. Deep Rooted Cultural Diversity

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iv. Late Learning of Language

v. Limited Vocabulary

vi. More Theory Focused Teaching and Lesser Practical Practices

vii. Less Interactive Teaching Sessions

viii. Seldom Use of Audio and Visual Aids in Teaching and Learning Process

ix. Wrong Social Phenomenon Between English Speakers and Non-English Speakers

x. Stupid Comparison and Discriminatory Behaviors based on Language

xi. Lack of Learning Oriented Facilities

xii. Lack of Supporting Environment

4. Necessity for Change in Emerging Trends & Prospects in ESL/ESP/ELT Context

To bring some useful changes, it is important to understand emerging trends & prospects in ESL/ESP/ELT context, here are few noticeable trends and prospects which should be altered by English language teachers and English Language Learners.

4.1 Need to change purpose of teaching and learning English

Focusing more on the current trends & prospects in ESL/ESP/ELT context leads us to identify some root causes of problems and for which certain modifications are required to bring some productive changes in the lives of non-English language learners. In India, non-English speakers are compulsorily in to English language learning due to modern global needs and technological fashionable trends. Learners should learn it by interest not as an obligation. It somehow affects their process of learning and their lack of interest stops them to acquire good command over language which results in damaging the true spirit of the language. These learners will become inefficient trainers and again they become the weak link of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, not only learners but also trainers should change the current trend by changing their objective of learning and teaching from social obligation to individual fervor.

4.2 Focus on English as a means of communication not as a means of content

English should not be taken in to consideration as a means to learn content such as literature, science and mathematics. Content and language integrated learning approach should be adopted by the teacher so that students can learn both the content and language of English.

4.3 Maintaining balance between subject competence and linguistic competence

It is the duty of English tutor to tell students about maintaining balance between subject competence and linguistic competence. It happens most of the time that students focus more on getting marks in written exams of different subjects including English and Grammar rather

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than their oral test or viva voce. Consequently, most of them are good in subjective knowledge of English but unable to give oral presentation or spoken demonstration of the same. Teachers should try hard to make student understand about maintaining balance. In this cut throat competitive environment, this balance between the possession of subjective knowledge and the possession of good language skills is the basic necessitate.

4.4 Shifting Views of English Teachers as well as English language learners.

An English teacher should be away from this wrong assumption of language oriented social discrimination. Teacher should not create any biased differences between slow and fast learners of English Language. This changing perspective will encourage students to learn in a transparent, healthy and cooperative environment without any fear, hesitation or shame. In the Forbes, it is mentioned by Sahith Aula in his article '*The Problem With The English Language In India*' that one need not mention that universities and even government jobs require fluency in English, as mandated by the ruling elite. Therefore, a person's socioeconomic status in Indian society is approximately in line with his or her fluency in the language. In other words: a new caste system.

4.5 Changing perspective of English Language Learners as a foreign or second language in the comparison to their native language.

India is a non-English-Speaking Country where English Language Learners are learning it as "ESL" (English as a Second Language), "EFL" (English as a Foreign Language) and "ESP" (English for Special Purpose). The common phenomenon of seeing the second or foreign language as threat to the survival of their native or mother tongue and this mental block stops them to learn English. This negative perspective will work as an obstacle in teaching learning process. Changing perspective to see it not as threat but as a tool for global level communication will change the current static trend of conservative societies.

4.6 More Center on maintaining Quality and Quantity among English Language Teachers in Education System.

Quality should be maintained as English language teachers so that it does not negatively affect the learning's of English Language Learners. It is obvious that a great teacher is capable to make a great change not only in learner's lives but also helps in building the future of the nation. Only a quality teacher is having outcome-based perspective and value-added analysis to get higher achievement from students. Even Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh quoted in his speech that '*the standard of teachers and teaching is not up to the mark*,' S. Dutta wrote in The Wall Street Journal, "Indian government's initiatives have

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focused largely on increasing the number of students attending schools. In 2010, it introduced the Right to Education Act, which made education free and compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14. It also reserved 25% of seats in all schools for underprivileged children. The IDFC report concurred with this, saying that India's primary schools are short of more than one million teachers. Existing teachers have poor training, partly because teacher training institutes have a shortage of faculty. In addition, teacher training institutes are concentrated in urban areas. Thus rural areas – where literacy levels have traditionally been lower-end up with fewer trained teachers."

4.7 Focus on more activity oriented English Language Learning

Classroom pedagogy for learners in India should be more focused towards the practices, activities and experiments based English language. A paradigm shift will be observed if English Teachers will prefer English language teaching through diverse activities among English Language Learners such as personal Interactive sessions, Group Discussions and Debates, Mock Interviews and followed by oral, written and audio-visual presentations, storytelling events, prep reared and on the spot speaking etc. Teacher can show them latest motivational movies and asks them to write their observations, learning and movie reviews. They can make it more delightful by adding English songs and chat shows.

4.8 Focus on more engaging and entertaining English language based advanced technologically driven practices.

In technological driven world, teacher as well as learner should not hesitate to explore all the technological methods for customized education. Due to rapid growing technological advancements, English has become one of the prime sources of information on the Internet. According to Wikipedia, it is stated that, "In terms of users, there is a consensus to state that the top three languages are respectively English, Chinese and Spanish; beyond the consensus is lost… In terms of contents, there is no consensus on the order of languages beyond the fact that English is still the first language in terms of contents, although the value of the corresponding percentage varies greatly depending on the source (from 32% to 52%)." Internet World Stats presents its latest estimates for Internet Users by Language which claims English language 'an indisputable winner.' There are a lot of resources to practice English language with the help of technology and internet i.e. various software, applications, online games, online dictionaries, online e-books, audio books, videos, documentaries etc for the improvement of English language according to the current professional requirements which can be an efficient, effective and interesting way to command over the language.

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4.9 Shifting Focus from Marks Oriented and Job Oriented Teaching Learning Process to Lifelong Learning based Outcomes.

In India, Current Education System is completely blind folded by the pressure of gaining marks and by the ultimate objective to get the job for financial security. This has become a big hurdle in English language Teaching-Learning Process as it diverts the learner as well as educator from the core objective of Lifelong learning based outcomes. During the studies Language is limited to theory as everyone focuses on marks given on the answer sheets. Their focus is limited to learn or to cover only those sections which make them enable to crack a good job interview for getting a good job with handsome amount of salary. It has been observed that most of the Indian employee learns the good command on the English Language more appropriately and accurately through their working environment not prior to that when they are seeking the jobs. It has become a crucial matter for Indian education system to shift the attention from Marks Oriented and Job Oriented Teaching Learning Process to Lifelong Learning based Outcomes to increase the productivity of an individual, growth of the nation and success of the nations in all aspects.

5. Classroom Pedagogy:

As Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "I would have English as an associate, additional language, which can be used not because of facilities, but because I do not wish the people of non-Hindi areas to feel that certain doors of advance are closed to them. So I would have it as an alternative language as long as people of India require it." Hence, some corrective measures should be implemented also during classroom.

English Language Teachers should not confine themselves into fixed classroom pedagogy. Every year new methodology or approach comes into existence and with time they fade as quickly as they can from human minds. Both the teachers and students are aware of the fact that gone are the days when teachers deliver lectures in front of their pupils who just sit as passive listeners.

Presently, in this age of Computer and smart phones, Computer based language learning comes into existence. Classroom pedagogies are altered as per the changing need of technology and language. Some tips can help to improve English Language Learning in class for teachers.

a. No need to follow set confined method but follow diverse and dynamic technique
b. Addition of various listening activities should be encouraged in English language classrooms.

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c. Teachers have to play the role of active facilitators in the classroom.
d. Doing group activities are more fun and more efficient and productive.
e. Involving students in doing exercises rather than teaching grammar rules.
f. Teaching material should be according to the culture of the practitioner.
g. The more a learner will try to speak, the more he/she will learn the language.
h. Take the help of Digital media to learn new terms and be updated.
i. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are four necessary elements to practice English language.
j. Project-based, theme-based, problem-based, Content-based, task based, learning and genre based emphasized teaching language through meaning making.
k. Supportive Learning processes teach learners different learning strategies to apply while learning a language.
l. Teachers can take the help of new technological means to upgrade themselves as well as their students in languages learning i.e. new software, applications, online dictionary, games and exercises with correct answers, audio and video clips, documentaries etc.
m. Audio-Visual methods should be effectively used with the help of mass-media communication.
n. Encourage students towards Contemporary Literature in English so that they can connect themselves with English Language, its culture and history and that awareness will help them to learn the language with ease and interest.
o. Encourage students towards creative writing in English Language.

6. Conclusion

It is an undeniable fact that English Language plays a very pivotal role in uniting nations around the globe. Its influence and power is irresistible. This Language is not only very dominant but also a game changer for any nation. Having a good command over English language is now a necessity to compete globally. The Language Learning helps learners to develop not only emotionally but also intellectually as it simulates imagination and impresses thoughts. While teaching them English

Language, teachers should focus on practical implementation of language with feelings. Now a days customized education system should be introduced for language learning where learner is free to discover, explore and consult various authentic resources of learning and can be selective without following a set regulatory education system. The basic teaching

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philosophy as an adroit educator of English Language should be to render the knowledge, experience, and expertise in all aspects starting from implementing innovative teaching-learning practices to proper molding of students with subjective, linguistic and professional competency as well as nurturing them with values and principals of life to enhance their multidimensional competency. It will be possible only when both the teacher and the learner are keen to learn and teach by internal will not only by external need. Not only learners but also teachers should not be afraid to experiment new teaching strategies or hesitate to introduce innovative and interactive ways beyond the given curriculum. Modern education system is blessed with technology, which is capable to change the way we see, experience or educate ourselves. There is no doubt about it that English Language has become the medium for empowerment, equality and liberty for the speaker as it is capable to open gateways for outcome based lifelong learning as well as opportunities.

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