

Challenges of English Language Teaching in India as a Second Language

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Abstract: English has become a global language for communication, higher education, science and technology etc. Despite being a second language, English serves as a spinal cord in contemporary India. Teaching English as a second language on Indian soil presents numerous challenges for Indians. However English Language Teaching (ELT) as a second language faces many challenges that serves as an obstacle for the learners. Hindrances such as large size classes, insufficient teacher training, lack of modern teaching resources and inadequate use of audio-visual and technological aids. This essay examines the major challenges of ELT as a second language in India with a focus of pedagogical limitations, resource constraints and learner difficulties. The study highlights the importance of current practices in order to English teaching more effective, practical and accessible for learners in diverse educational contexts

Keywords: Challenges, English Language Teaching (ELT), Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

INTRODUCTION:

People use different languages in diverse ways all around this huge world. But one of the most important language is English. Once India was a British colony, as we know, for a long time. However, English's status in India was completely altered both before and after independence. The dominant language throughout that colonial era was English. The leaders of India took the initiative to teach English to Indians in order to support their economic and administrative sectors. However, after gaining their independence in 1947, Indians ignored the English language. Hindi gained privileges when English was exiled from our social life. In contrast, English is becoming more and more important globally every day. English was deemed necessary by Indians as well. This situation shows us that throughout the colonial era, English was a foreign language. However, throughout time, English gained the esteemed status as the second language in Indian society.

A person's second language is the language that they do not speak as their first language. ESL refers to the use or study of the English language by individuals whose first language (mother tongue) is not English. When non-native speakers in prominent English-speaking nations use English as their mother

tongue, it's sometimes referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL). For those whose first language is not English, learning English as a second language indicates the language instruction. English is therefore seen as either a foreign language or a second language by such individuals. But English is the language that present for the Indians. The gift of the procedure of colonization. The English language is highly valued in India. There are several issues in India when English is taught as a foreign or second language.

It is very pitiful to state that the majority of Indians are unable to adopt English freely if we take the entire situation into consideration. They thus felt uncomfortable speaking English in our daily lives. The process of teaching English as a second language in India is hampered by numerous issues. There are several challenges while teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL) in India.

I. DOMINANT USE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE (L1):

Indian students make extensive use of their mother tongue when learning a second language. They are more eager to learn English in their native tongue when they are learning it as a second language in a classroom setting. However, they fail to remember the original meaning of the English language. Their mother tongue was valued more than their second language. When speaking in their mother tongue, individuals occasionally intervene English terms into their sentences. Only weak learners are produced by this combination method. Therefore, the majority of issues stem from the overuse of mother tongue in English instruction. Even though English is a second language, this issue was resolved when the teacher and the student both adore it. In your capacity as a teacher, you translate texts from English to English in a clear and understandable manner that entices students to experience the true spirit of the English language.

II. INSUFFICIENT TIME:

The time is one of the biggest challenges of teaching English as a second language in India is time. One class lasts for forty-five minutes. However, a teacher's effective time is thirty-five minutes. Details of a crucial topic like English cannot be learned in this short amount of time. Thus, the instructor just covers the essential elements of the subject. We know that effective teaching occurs when there is time for feedback and question-answer sessions. However, this procedure shouldn't always be continued for that brief period of time. We occasionally see teachers hurrying to finish the exam syllabus alone. Students were unable to acquire the second language in the appropriate manner as a result. English is a second language in India, time should be set aside for improved instruction and learning.

III. INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE:

The main components of college infrastructure are classrooms, school buildings, labs, playgrounds, and libraries. However, inadequate infrastructure causes problems for schools at all levels, from primary to higher. However, the administration is unable to supply enough equipment for improved instruction due to a lack of appropriate subsidies. As per NITI aayog report highlights that most state public universities which enrol nearly 81% of higher education students struggle with outdated physical facilities and limited access to well-equipped research labs, with only about 10% having adequate infrastructure.

IV. OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS:

The image of a classroom depicts an extensive number of diverse students assembling in one space. The teacher-to-student ratio was not upheld in this instance. It is therefore impossible to provide individualized care in this brief time frame. Crowded classrooms can occasionally lead to chaotic circumstances. We must split up the big class into smaller study groups in order to prevent having too many people. The teacher-to-student ratio must be maintained for this process to be successful. This makes it feasible to provide each student individualized attention when teaching English, which is essential to solving this issue.

V. LACK OF ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT:

We still see the same image of the classroom from a long time ago, complete with chalk, a duster, a chalkboard, etc. However, we must keep in mind the evolving nature of time and a child's evolving psychological state. Students become bored in their academics when they are not able to access modern technology.

VI. LIMITED PRONUNCIATION ABILITY:

Pronunciation plays a vital role in second language acquisition as it directly influences learners' ability to communicate effectively and be understood. Inadequate pronunciation often becomes a barrier to successful interaction even when learners possess adequate grammatical and lexical knowledge. However many ESL learners encounter continuous pronunciation difficulties due to differences between their first language (L1) sound system and the English phonological system. Scholars argue that explicit and systematic pronunciation training, combined with the use of audio-visual resources and consistent corrective feedback can significantly enhance phonological competence. Regional dialects should be avoided by a language instructor. We must succeed if we practice frequently and use the right intonation and stress.

VII. DISCREPANCY BETWEEN SPOKEN/WRITTEN ENGLISH:

One of the most prevalent issues is spoken English confusion. Young learners pay attention to and comprehend spoken English. The students believe that their English knowledge is good. But another fact is shown by actuality. Speaking English presents numerous challenges for students. The majority of the issues were

- A. Lack of confidence in speaking English
- B. Fear of making mistakes
- C. Reluctance to use the English language
- D. Feeling uncertain when speaking in English

Many learners experience oral-written interference, where features of spoken English unintentionally influence their writing. Students often transfer informal spoken expressions into their written work, which reduces accuracy appropriateness in academic writing. Before and after writing, students should double-check their spelling and pay closer attention to grammar norms. Students increase their vocabulary in order to speak English more fluently.

VIII. BACKGROUND OF FAMILY:

Our family indirectly influences our educational system because we are social beings. They become accustomed to using their mother tongue when they return home after acquiring their second language. As

a result, learners are unable to practice the second language. We occasionally notice that the majority of a student's family members lack literacy. As a result, people lose their second language without practice. Today, the darkness is dispelled by the light of education. When their families encourage them to pursue higher education, students feel more energized.

IX. ABSENCE OF ENTHUSIASM:

One of the major challenges in learning English as a second language in India is the lack of interest among students. As in their primary level, many learner's fail to recognize the importance of English as their main focus remains on the mother tongue or regional language. Since India is a multilingual nation, primary school learners are disinterested in studying English. However, it's too late for them to effectively study English once they realize how important it is to speak the language in order to obtain a better job. The education system, society, and family history are to blame for this insignificant circumstance. Students are often encouraged to focus on memorization rather than communication skills. To address this issue, teachers need to adopt student-centred and interactive methods that make English learning enjoyable.

X. VOCABULARY LIMITATION:

Vocabulary is an extremely important aspect of the English language. We need to be familiar with the language if we want to communicate in English. However, some students from India have a small vocabulary. Because of this, individuals have a lot of trouble when writing in English. One of the biggest challenges in teaching English as a second language is a limited vocabulary. Developing the habit of reading English-language books, newspapers, magazines, etc. is the answer to having a limited vocabulary. Indian students benefit from this reading habit by becoming more proficient in English.

XI. INADEQUATE METHODS:

Some teachers still employ outdated methods and tactics when teaching English. Oral work, the method's primary component, is often overlooked. The use of textbook translation by teachers lowers the standard of effective instruction. The theoretical foundations of language teaching and learning are included in the broad word "method." The right approach enhances vocabulary of pupils and reduces teaching time in the classroom. Without the use of their mother tongue, the Direct Method assists pupils in developing their ability to think and speak English fluently. Although effective teachers with oral proficiency are uncommon in India, the method's success hinges on their effectiveness.

XII. INADEQUATE AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS:

The use of audio-visual aids in the classroom is crucial. However, a lack of funds and school officials cannot offer enough audio-visual resources to improve English language instruction. These days, technology has a significant impact on our thoughts. The usage of technology in the classroom is something that students' desire. Students' listening skills can be greatly enhanced by audio media, which also actively stimulates the brain. Distance learning is supported by audio-visual content. courses facilitates the process of remembering. Visual aids improve students' interest in the material, boost their retention rate, and pique their curiosity. Students find the process of teaching and learning a second language to be highly engaging when audio-visual aids are utilized in the classroom. The most efficient method for teaching second languages and expanding students' understanding is to use audio-visual aids.

XII. LACK OF EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT BY TEACHERS:

The teaching-learning process is triggered by emotions. However, some educators are unable to evoke feelings in their pupils. Teachers are always working to finish the upcoming exam's syllabus. They have to keep in mind that the teaching-learning process and emotions are inextricably linked. A new cognitive study reveals the hidden role of emotions in teaching. A learner's motivation levels might be impacted by their emotions.

XIV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION:

Economic background refers to a family's financial situation within society. In fact, the economic history of the student discloses the educational background, jobs, family income, and other details of the parents. In current society, a student's academic achievement and their economic background are strongly correlated. One significant economic problem is poverty. Some pupils leave the normal school system because they are underprivileged. Poor students confront numerous challenges during the teaching-learning process and are unable to pursue higher education due to a lack of funds. However, our government works to address this less privileged background. In order to improve students' nutrition, the Indian government introduced the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme in school meal programs in 2021. Scholarship funds enable students to pursue further education. In addition, the government supports improved educational programs through the provision of several flagships schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA), Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya(KGBV), PM Vidhyalaxmi Scheme, Swami Vivekananda Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme etc.

XV. Inadequacy of trained English Faculty:

The shortage of qualified and sufficient teachers remains a critical obstacle in teaching of English as a second language in India. The majority of this English teacher shortage is particularly seen in rural areas. Many qualified and experienced teachers prefer urban institutions due to better facilities and opportunities. English teachers need better training so that what they learn in theory can be applied effectively in practice, helping students learn a second language more easily.

Conclusion:

Teaching English as a second language in India is hindered by a variety of interrelated challenges ranging from overcrowded classrooms and inadequate classrooms to limited time and over-reliance on mother tongue. Students often struggle with pronunciation and with distinguishing between spoken and written English. Addressing these obstacles requires a multifaceted approach that includes improved teacher training, better infrastructure innovative teaching strategies and active efforts to make classrooms more interactive and learner friendly. By overcoming these barriers, English language teaching in India can be more effective and equitable and aligned with the needs of modern learners.

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