
PROMINENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITS EDUCATION IN INDIA

GUDIGE CHANDRAIAH

Abstract: The Prominence of English language and its education in India have long history. The enthralling note is that India as a multilingual nation stands at third position among English speaking countries after US and UK. English acts as not only as lingua franca for people speaking various languages but people who belong to same speech community utilize it in their everyday inter-personal communication. It is used for so many activities like trade, commerce, news and information in this world of globalization. It is also used in higher education research, nautical communication, international air traffic control and it is used even for internal air traffic control in countries where English is not a native language. Thus, with all these qualities and procedures, English accomplishes the prominence of a global language ever in shifting economic perspective and situations.

Introduction: In India, people recognize it as a 'must-know' language for getting better education and thereafter for obtaining jobs in world market. English becomes a mark of ladder to move people towards betterment and opportunities and it also becomes a see through to the world. The importance of English is observed for its demand of various learning coaching centers and educational institutions. It is clearly evident by everyday establishing new English-medium schools as prestigious annotation in India.

Going back to English introducing time in India, East India Company in the beginning of 19th century made an effort to bring English in India in order to improve their trading. Then slowly, they started teaching European literature, and education in English. It has given a scope for Indians to understand and to get in contact with European culture and mainly to understand the mind set of colonized countries. Krishnaswamy and Sriraman in their book 'English Teaching in India' reminds the time of Macaulay's intervention to introduce English education in India. They say that:

"Lord Macaulay's famous minute of 1835 settled the issue, in favor of an English education and this year marks a watershed in the annals of the history of Indian education system. his observation that a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the native literature of India and Arabia and subsequently his suggestion for the inclusion of English in the educational curriculum, both as a medium of instruction and as a subject of study had far reaching implications in the Indian context." (Krishnaswamy & Sriraman, 1994:46)

Mainly, Lord Macaulay's minute suggests teaching European science and literature with consideration of oriental plan of education. And it has taken consideration of Sanskrit and Arabic literatures and thereby translating them to English and to make available to the world. It says that it is immutable to say that language is an obstruction in the process of obtaining knowledge about European science and literature, but, England Emperor makes sure that

proper knowledge and awareness is obtained through English education.

English being as colonial language, it occupies reputable position even after independence. Though, there is an opposition from one side of the country or from certain religious sections of people to condense English speaking, but India as a democratic country welcomes English speaking and it also encourages its significance in educational institutions especially. One of India's Education Commissions has emphatically asserted that:

"For the successful completion of the first degree course, a student should possess an adequate command of English, be able to express himself with reasonable ease and felicity, understand lectures in it, and avail himself of its literature. Therefore, adequate emphasis will have to be paid on its study as a language right from the school stage." (Report of Indian Education Commission: 1883)

The above lines do comprehend an implication that a student from India in order to hold an award of degree needs to understand English, should be able to communicate in English, has to be aware of its literature and has to stand in a position to secure job. That is the main purpose of introducing English language in schools. Thus, an English education is primary residual endurance for bettering people and for enhancing opportunities. J. C. Aggarwal in his book 'Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education' explains Wood's Education Dispatch of 1854 approach towards English education that:

"Wood's Education Dispatch of 1854 expressed the view that English and the modern Indian languages together would become the media for giving European knowledge. With the founding of three universities (Calcutta, Madras, Bombay in 1857) in the presidency towns, English education in India was established. Despite the recommendations of Lord Macaulay the English language teaching had suffered to a great extent and the trends which were visible during those years were." (Aggarwal, 1984: 22)

The main objectives of students in secondary schools are to learn English applicably. The students need to

understand spoken English used in and outside the school in order to improve one's communication skills, especially listening skills. Every student needs to speak English with

confidence as they come from rural background and their mother-tongue becomes major used language in their communication. So, students have to cultivate learning right vocabulary, grammatical forms and acceptable pronunciation from teachers and others to better one's language skills. They need to figure out written texts in English both textual and non-textual in order to learn new aspects of language in everyday learning. The primary learning purpose of the students is to learn writing in simple, understandable and sensible English. Students focus should be at procuring the required communication skills for their day-to-day social interaction and their main purpose should be cultivating to learn human and cultural outlook of new persons and new places. The University Education Commission headed by Dr. S. Radha Krishnan recommended:

"English is studied in high school and universities in order that we may keep in touch with the stream of ever growing knowledge. This would prevent our isolation from the world and help us to take advantage of the wider reach of the English language." (University Education Commission, 1941: p. 1)

Thus, English language or English education is the procurement towards development. It endures the connectivity with outside world and helps to progress in acquiring knowledge of world. The ability to speak English language in addition to native language can be advantageous for pursuing job opportunities with international companies. It is the widely spoken language in the world so, the ability to speak an English language benefits to step ahead in the competitive world. And it is used predominantly in academics all over the world, with a large amount of research conducted, written and presented is in English. It benefits scholars who wish to communicate their ideas and research findings to experts in their field. In this present modern world, most software programs are written in English, so, students who strive to expand their computer knowledge can find the ability to read and understand the English language. In learning English language, communication skills play important role. In order to learn better communication skills, one must learn or has to be expert in four necessary skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

A) Listening: Apart from introducing English language in schools, it is very essential for every student to better his/her communication skills specifically listening skills. Since, listening is a process and procedure of humans in every second of life, they involve in the process consciously or unconsciously. So, it is the first process to enter into

proper communication with others, it is to understand what the other person is speaking, then after cognizing things in listening then it is possible to come into spoken language. Listening is an indispensable skill, present in most of the activities humans do throughout lives. The main purpose of communication is to achieve an effective transfer or exchange of information to others and receiving the same from the others. For this, the two main objectives are listening and speaking. When information is not send or received properly, then the communication falls into deaf ear. Thus, listening skill has so much importance in communication process and for students in high school section. According to Nunan:

"Listening is a six-staged process, consists of Hearing, Attending, Understanding, Remembering, Evaluating and Responding. These stages occur in sequence and rapid succession." (Nunan, 2001: 23)

According to these stages, taking a student into consideration and the class room ambiance may fit here to explain better how a student develops learning a language process. Hearing is mainly depends on sensitivity of observing sound system. Though, a student is not attentive in classroom to what teacher teaches, but as an effective listener, he/she understands a speech process is happening around him/her. So, it becomes learning process to hear something which helps to understand happenings around at student's space. Thus, in a classroom, student is able to comprehend what teacher teaches something either in mother-tongue or in English. Then he has to attend lessons carefully, which means the student should be attentive to what a teacher teaches in the class and ready to grab information in possible way. Then next step is to understand the lesson in receptive approach where he/she can hold the information applicable to his/her learning process. Then it is important to establish him/her to be critic of the information and gathering points to debate, argue, explain and making him/her to be obtainable to the next process of responding. The last stage in listening process is responding in which two objectives serve the purpose effectively, one is writing down required information in order to cognize himself/herself for the latter progression of learning. Then, the second point is after studying the information thoroughly, the student needs to respond to it to the teacher directly in discussions and explanations. Apart from class room activity, the listening process happens every day through various activities. Lindsay and Knight in their book Learning and Teaching English clarifies about listening process in everyday show:

"We listen to a wide variety of things, for example; what someone says during a conversation, face to face or on the telephone; announcements giving

information, for example, at an airport or railway station; the weather forecast on the radio; a play on the radio; music; someone else's conversation (eavesdropping); a lecture; professional advice, for example, at the doctor's, in the bank; instructions, for example, on how to use a photocopier or other machinery; directions; a taped dialogue in class." (2006: 45)

Thus, listening is an important aspect in learning a language; in fact, it is the first procedure from childhood to learn a language. People's mind is flooded with information every bit of time in everyday life. It is like computer taking everything inside and adding or saving useful information and deleting unwanted data. Same way, human's mind works in the process of learning a language. It may be said that sixty percent of learning happens through listening.

B) Speaking: The second aspect in learning language is speaking. It is very significant process in human beings' evolution. After collecting information through listening, the next process is to communicate human beings' ideas to the society, to the world. Otherwise, it becomes one side flow of information and it is not actually communication, because, communication includes both listening and speaking, giving and receiving. K. M. Bailey and L. Savage in their book, 'New Ways in Teaching Speaking' say on speaking that:

"Speaking is an activity requiring the integration of many subsystems...all these factors combine to make speaking a second or foreign language a formidable task for language learners, yet for many people, speaking is seen as the central skill" (Bailey & Savage, 2009: 6-7).

So, speaking is dynamic and functional skill. It is an instant activity not unlike writing and reading. It is flow of words with systematic structure. As the thesis confines to classroom activity, it describes students and teachers' way of listening, speaking, writing and reading skills in classroom. Speaking includes forms like reciting poems with appropriate rhythm in classrooms. It denotes making meaningful use of words, phrases, and sentences in context. It explains using variety of new words and phrases for effective communication in different contexts. Main objective of learning a language includes speaking language fluently and intelligibly on a given topic for a reasonable period of time. Students responding to teachers' questions through correct answers make them successful with oral set of narratives and descriptive passages. It includes constructing simple statements, questions, commands, and requests in classrooms. It consists of discussing appropriately in formal and informal contexts with teachers and fellow students. It includes expressing freely one's ideas comprehensibly and rationally. It gives effect by

narrating events, stories, and experiences in brief. Speaking is actually a reply in describing the process one observes in classrooms from teachers. It facilitates students to partake in discussions, debates, and conversations in classrooms or outside classrooms with other students. And there other ways of practicing speaking, but, to mention some, these are the observations of speaking. Finally to conclude, it also contains students' using variety of expressions for complementing, requesting, apologizing either from text books or by observation from others.

C) Reading: The comprehension of reading to make it simple, it provides students an opportunity to acquire more concurrence how native speakers talk and write according to the content and understanding the context. It is very significant to understand the language usage before exhibiting into speaking, because, one can learn the usage of words and sentence structure through reading academic and non-academic books. And knowing words and phrases through reading dictionaries with proper pronunciation is an added advantage in executing language. By reading and reciting the sentences, students get confidence to use language more effectively. In other words, reading permits students to excavate deeper words and phrases knowledge and challenging themselves more and more towards grasping a language. Students' phase is ever challenging task; it is the process of learning continuously, so, in this process, conversations in learning language become common and must. Hence, reading helps students to learn complex words and phrases which they come across in different contexts. It could be right to say that students get the real flesh of the language through reading which allows them to consume the grammar agreements logically, without fear of reprimands from teacher. Stallfer defines reading as:

"Reading is complicated procedure. Readers read to get information from the printed pages. They should be able to pronounce and comprehend the printed words, signs, letters, and symbols by assigning meaning to them." (Stallfer, 1969:2)

So, reading is a procedure to observe pronunciation, how to utter a word and then comprehending the meaning and the context in what sense the writer has written the text and briefly, reading is acquiring knowledge of the text and comprehending the meaning of the text. Reading is to enable the students in observations like to read aloud effectively with correct pronunciation, stress and intonation. Reading contains to read aloud with suitable pace and giving pauses in order to show awareness of punctuation. It includes reading poems loudly with appropriate rhythm. Reading is about to read silently with reasonable speed, depending on the type of text. Reading is to deduce the meaning of words, phrases

with the help of context. It is also about reading informative material such as notices, advertisements, road signs, and news headlines. Reading is to learn group sentences into appropriate sense groups/grammatical groups. It is learning to use a dictionary and such other reference material. It is about reading to understand themes ideas, emotions, expressed in the text and to respond appropriately. Finally, it is about understanding logical sequence of sentences in the text. Reading is for some to read for pleasure extensively the texts within the range of one's imagination. Thus, in a classroom, students need to observe all these aspects in order to better the language.

D) Writing Skill: Writing skill is very significant among four functional skills of communication. A person is said to be literate only with application of writing. There are many ways to learn and to master writing skills. The language is learnt by students or students' dwelling in academics is done by writing, because, most of the student learning is done through listening and writing. One mostly used method in writing skill is to study subjects that student likes most and to learn writing in the style of one's favorite authors of those subjects. It becomes easy for students by writing and rewriting particular passages, words and sentences that make up the work, and they have to notice and understand gradually particular themes that are often used in English writing. Of course, the best way to learn English writing is together with a good English speaking and reading programs, so, by clubbing all three skills together one can get knowledge about English language. There are several approaches to learn writing skills effectively. A. Raimes in his book, 'Techniques in teaching writing' advises certain approaches:

"They are Controlled-to-free approach, Free-writing approach, Paragraph-pattern approach, Grammar-syntax-organization approach, Communicative approach and Process approach." (Raimes, 1983:6-11)

Basically, writing skill is about empowering the students to direct the procedure of writing including the use of punctuation marks, capital letters, and spellings. The skill is about to write correctly, neatly and legibly with a reasonable speed, writing grammatically in standard and contextually in proper methods of English. Writing skill is about writing answers to questions on textual/non-textual reading material. Students should learn framing statements, questions, commands and requests for their applicable use in different contexts. It is to develop a paragraph on a given theme in substantial consistency, logical sequence and in connectivity procedures. Writing skill is about writing formal and informal letters with the help of given points. It includes developing a story with the help of given summary and points. It is about writing short own

thinking write-ups like personal essays, compositions, with the help of guidelines. It is about writing a short conversation with the help of given guidelines. Students need to learn to write assignments with the information from non-verbal to verbal forms such as from tables, charts and maps to into write-ups. It is also about learning to fill application forms like admission form and bio-data form. Thus, Language learning is not just a matter of acquiring the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing but it consists of developing a communicative capability where these skills are often used in a cohesive manner along with several other abilities that help in conducting a dialogue.

Learning English is not merely an educational concern, but it is also a production of social change, personal advancement and national development. English in India has become a symbol of people's objectives for quality in education and a complete participation in national and international life through jobs. The growing demand shows that English language has acquired an important and a comprehensive place in the Indian consciousness. It is now a known fact that the English medium schools have become popular and many parents want their children to study in these schools. Providing English education has become the contemporary necessity and primary list of every state. So, the importance of introducing English has now become a matter of state policy responding to people's objectives. This has made many states complying to establish on the demand as early institution of English in state schools from primary schools, upper primary schools and secondary schools. David Graddol says that:

"English education has made a very interesting observation on the role of English as the language of prestige and power. Throughout India, there is an extraordinary belief amongst 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." (Graddol, 2010:11)

The Study on Teaching of English in Government Schools at the Primary Level in India is commissioned by MHRD during 2009-10 to NCERT; it is an apex body for school education in the country. The study is conducted by a research team from NCERT, on the basis of the objectives of the study specified by the MHRD and the research design prepared by Technical Support Group for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Some of the factors which help to increase the use of English language in the recent years are growth of the middle class, rapid urbanization, changing employment trends, outsourcing of jobs to India in the IT sector, privatization of higher education institutions, widespread use of internet in daily life,

popularity of India as a tourism destination, growth of hospitality sector, popularity of English TV channels and films as a whole resulted in increasing

admission of young children in English medium schools.

References:

1. Dr. Dasari Kejiya, Ch. Nageswararao, Communication Skills In English Steers To Employment: A Case Study; English Studies International Research Journal : Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015) Issn 2347-3479, Pg 44-49
2. Aggarwal, J. C. Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education. New Delhi:Vikas Publishing House, 1984.
3. Bailey, K. M., & Savage, L. (Eds.). New ways in teaching speaking. Alexandria, VA: Teachers British Council. English for progress; Third policy dialogue: From Policy to Practice; Conference Report, 2009.
4. Graddol, David. English Next India, British Council, Page -17, 2012.
5. M.Kiranmai, The Theme Of Identity Crisis In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "The Mistress Of Spices" ; English Studies International Research Journal : Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015) Issn 2347-3479, Pg 32-34
6. Krishnaswamy, N. and T. Sriraman. English Teaching in India. Madras: T. R. Publications, 1994.
7. Lindsay, C. and Knight, P. 2006. Learning and Teaching English. Oxford: OUP.
8. Nunan, D. Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge Nunan, D. Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. University Press, 2001.
9. Uppu Jyothirmai, A Study Of Localization As Intra Semiotic Translation; English Studies International Research Journal : Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015) Issn 2347-3479, Pg 35-38
10. Raimes, Ann. Techniques in Teaching Writing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
11. Report of Indian Education Commission, Pp.22-23, 1883.
12. M.Vanisree, Dr.G.Mohana Charyulu, Teaching Vocabulary In Language Classroom Through Literature; English Studies International Research Journal : Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015) Issn 2347-3479, Pg 39-41
13. Report of the Radhakrishnan Commission. Vol.1. New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, p.325, 1941.
14. Report of the Radhakrishnan Commission. Vol.1. New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, p.325, 1941.
15. P. Mattaiahayadav, The Reception Of The King Lear In India; English Studies International Research Journal : Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015) Issn 2347-3479, Pg 42-43

Gudige Chandraiah

Doctoral Scholar, Centre for ALTS

School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad – 500046.