



## **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AT COLLEGE LEVEL**

**YOGESH S. KASHIKAR**

Head & Assistant Professor

Department of English

Shriram Kala Mahila Mahavidhyalaya,

Dhamangaon (MS) INDIA

### **ABSTRACT**

*Education is an engine for the growth and progress of any society. It not only imparts knowledge, skills and inculcates values, but is also responsible for building human capital which breeds, drives and sets technological innovation and economic growth. English, the official language of the entire world is a very tricky language to teach. In fact every language varies to teach. English Language Teaching is now at a crucial juncture as a number of methods, approaches and innovations have been discussed in series of seminars and conferences arranged at various colleges and universities in India. There are four skills of language learning i.e Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking and to fulfill these skills one has to take constant and arduous efforts until the goal is achieved. The present paper is aimed at to find out certain problem and solution in teaching English at college level. Though some of the problems are discussed here, the main intention is to provide certain clues for better teaching –learning process.*

**Keywords:-** Education, teaching –learning process, problem and solution in teaching English, Approach, methods, technique etc.

#### **I) Introduction**

Education is an engine for the growth and progress of any society. It not only imparts knowledge, skills and inculcates values, but is also responsible for building human capital which breeds, drives and sets technological innovation and economic growth. English, the official language of the entire world is a very tricky language to teach. In fact every language varies to teach. English is a very old language and has undergone many forms changes from Proto English derived from the Latin and the German culture to the Modern English which was established after in the post Renaissance period. Each version was simpler than its previous. Present day English is the simplest adaptation of a very old Language and yet it is still difficult to teach this language effectively especially to those who speak English as a second language.

English language teaching has acquired greater attention and importance as never before in the context of its position as a global language. As an immediate offshoot of this scenario, the demand for Communicative Skills in English has been on the rise in all fields. Obviously the demand has brought a lot of pressure on English teachers to perform and produce good results. Consequently English Teachers and class room practices in teaching English have come into sharp focus for the assessment of the state and stage of teaching English in Indian classrooms. English Language Teaching is now at a crucial juncture as a number of methods, approaches and innovations have been discussed in series of seminars and conferences arranged at various colleges and universities in India. A few of them have already been in practice for a considerable time but found to be short of expectations in improving the language skills of the stakeholders. It needs a lot of motivation, innovation and commitment on the part of all concerned to sincerely and seriously take a new approach, an experiment or a theory through the process of practice from a superficial level to a deeper one.

Mostly English is taught in a very orthodox manner. English is the '*Lingua Franca*' of the world. With the IT Revolution and most of software and operating system being in English Language, a new utility for written and oral communication in English Language has emerged. English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. English is used all over the world not out of any imposition but because of the realization that it has certain advantages. A very important reason for regarding English as a world language is that the world's knowledge is enshrined in English. It is a progressive language. It is dynamic and flexible. Over and above English is universally renowned for its power of expression and its rich literature. As far as the teaching English at college level in rural background is concerned we teacher have to suffer from many and uncounted problems those are very challengeable and hard-nut to crack. This research paper is aimed at to bring into light the various factors which affect the teaching process and create hurdles simultaneously. In modern time there are so many methods and materials available for enhancing the language ability of students and also it has become necessary action to learn English due its importance and global nature. It is no longer be a foreign language but has got the status of second in every nook and corner of the country. So to understand the difficulties in teaching English at college level we should go through the approaches and the heterogeneous background of students. To understand the teaching and learning process we have to look into the method of teaching, there are so many methods invented by the linguistics they are as follows.

### **1.) Grammar –translation method:**

This method stresses the teaching of formal grammar along with translation. In this method rules of grammar are learned, along with groups of words. The words are then put together

according to the rule, hereby giving practice in the application of rules. The features of this method are as follows.

A) The focus is on the use of formal grammar.

B) Text related vocabulary is used.

C) The teaching includes rules of grammar, isolated vocabulary items.

D) It involves practice in translating texts of increasing difficulty, first from English into mother tongue and then method tongue into English.

## **2. The Direct method:**

In this method the oral approach gets prominent importance because Language is a means of communication. It is a tool to express ideas and exchange thoughts. This Direct method tries to establish direct connection between experience and expression.

## **3. Dr. West New method:**

Dr. West's New Approach emphasizes a reading knowledge of the language. Reader occupies the central position in this context and it covers different sections.

## **II) Problems in English Language Teaching:-**

The above discussed methods are used in teaching English to the students living in rural background. Let us see the problems faced by the teacher while teaching, interacting, drilling etc. There are four skills of language learning i.e Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking and to fulfill these skills one has to take constant and arduous efforts until the goal is achieved. The problems are as follows:

### **1. Heterogeneous nature of classroom:**

This is the major factor to affect the process, the students are of different abilities and background. It becomes difficult to manage with such class, and for the purpose of teaching English the teacher has to keep rapport with the class which is by many ways a very difficult task. As it is clear that this is not the learners first language, and not foreign language as well but it has got the status of second language in our region. A very few students are capable and understand the core value of English language but rest of the students those are in large number are quite unable to understand and manage with the learning English. Even the regularity of students affect the learning process most of the students belong to the village

area where there is no scope for developing any language skills. Thus the heterogeneous nature of the students is the prominent and major reason in the path of language development.

## **2. Ignorance about Technology:**

After the advent of new technology the language teaching –learning process became soft, smooth and comprehensible. With the help of this teacher can bring the unknown and new topic to the senses of students. Colleges which have rural background are not aware of the new technology. Even though many colleges have established language laboratory and running communicative courses there but till the students are unaware the real use of technology. As this paper focuses on the teaching –learning of English language then it becomes necessary to explain in a few words about the negligence by the students. Most of the students never turn-up to the language laboratory until they are compelled to do it.

## **3. Lack of interest and fear:**

One of the major obstacle in teaching English is students lack of interest and fear which do not permit them to take initiative role in language learning and automatically shyness is imbibe in them. This shy attitude of students restricted to use the communicative approaches i.e. communicative language teaching, cooperative language learning, task-based language teaching etc.. Suffice to say that when the teacher asks the questions or trigger-off the discussion on any simple topic the students cannot bear it and then wish to bunk the next period. When the drill is taken a very little response is got in return thus the whole purpose is defeated. Even the use of TPR method that built around the coordination of speech and action is failed. Asher states that **“most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of imperative by the instructor”**. But, due to the lack of interest on the students’ part it is useless.

## **4. The social use of English Language:**

English is a second language in our country as well as official language, but as far as its social use is concerned it has a less importance. In day to day life it is not useful except official use of it. The lots of social communication is taken place in concerned language i.e. mother tongue. Due to its optional or secondary role students could not make use of English language. Till it is library language and not the language of common people but if we take the importance of English in this global era into consideration then it is our prominent duty to make the our students well equipped with the various skills of English language so that our students would survive in this fast growing world which gives no place for non English speaker.

### **III) Solutions:-**

Undoubtedly there are many hurdles in English language teaching but “where there is will there is way.” There are certain other ways/methods which a teacher should adopt for better results. Let us see them.

#### **1) Enacting The Stories:-**

Stories form a very integral part of teaching a language. These stories help teach the students about the formation of sentences and how to express their thoughts and a lot of other things and plus they help in keeping the students interest alive.

The students can enact the stories or the plays. In this way the students are personally engaged with the stories. They can bring their own interpretation of the character to life. It is interesting for the students to understand the characters and put themselves in their positions. It engages their creativity by allowing them to create the entire set, assign the characters and play it out according to what they had imagined. It also helps them understand other people’ s interpretation of the story and helps them have a healthy conversation about it which again helps them in learning the language. For example if Julius Caesar was taught using the traditional methods of questions and answers the student would never understand the deep emotions of Brutus, the cunningness of Cassius, the loyalty of Antony, the tragedy of war, the brilliance in Antony’ s speech and many other such aspects of the story for which the story of Julius Caesar was written by Shakespeare. On the other hand if such stories are enacted then every intention of the story becomes clear. The students have to immerse themselves into the atmosphere of the story and they have to put them in their positions. This entire process has many benefits besides being a very effective method of teaching the language. This method brings about the total learning experience that was meant to be provided by the story and in the end the student will definitely be able to answer questions without even preparing for it as an exam, besides the entire process is fun and not at all boring. Hence it ensures the learning process is complete.

#### **2) Teaching Through Conversations:-**

Conversations are by far the most useful ways of teaching the language. When a child learns his or her mother tongue it is by the conversations that takes place between them and others or by listening to the conversations made by the others. Hence conversations form a very important part of the teaching process. The sentence construction and the grammar is not something that can be entirely taught by rules. They have to be taught intuitively. That can only happen through a lot of reading and a lot of listening. This can be taken care of easily as every conversation needs a topic. The topic can be given to the students in form of written

documents which they have to first read then form an opinion and then have a conversation about it or it can be spoken out and then they can listen, understand and also take part in the conversation. The participation and other aspects of the conversation can always be evaluated through points which will also push the students to take part in the conversation. These conversations have to be general. They have to happen as if friends are talking to each other. This way the students are comfortable in expressing themselves in the best possible way. This process may take some time but in the end it would be the most efficient one in teaching the language.

### **3) Teaching Through Games :-**

This is a very interesting method of teaching. Students and children generally tend to like games and want to play them more and more. The games part of learning would help the students keep their interest as the desire to win is very strong. It keeps us going and when included with different aspects of learning the learning process would continue almost throughout the day without the children getting tired or bored of studying.

### **4) Word Games :-**

The most important part of any language is the vocabulary. To understand the meaning of the words and to use them in day to day life is a very difficult task and games can help the students overcome this difficulty. Games like scrabble, housie etc. have been designed for this specific purpose. These games are just based on words and help the students develop their vocabulary.

### **5) Competitions :-**

Most of the times competitions like debates and elocutions also help the help the students a lot in learning the language as the aspect of the competitions keep them at the best in conversations. It forces them to use the best possible construction of sentences to put forward their opinions and to use good vocabulary etc. This is a very important tool in helping them learn the language. Also these competitions help them address large crowds which is again is a very important part of personality development.

### **6) Creative Assignments :-**

Assignments help the students learn something on their own and most of the times they have to research on something then write something up on it.

### **7) Help From The Multimedia:-**

Multimedia sources like songs, movies, TV series, magazines, newspapers play a very vital role in improving our language. The teacher uses multimedia to modify the contents of the material. It helps him/her to represent in a more meaningful way, using different media elements. These media elements can be converted into digital form, modified and customized for the final presentation. By incorporating digital media elements into the project, the students are able to learn better since they use multiple sensory modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better. It is very helpful as it does not feel like education. This is something that the students will do in their spare time. The songs are the best way to communicate how to use a language to express our feelings. Movies are a very common past time but apart from that most of the times they are also very instructional and educational. Also this method appeals to the students as most of the times they are able to connect with the songs and the movies which help them understand the meaning of expressions, usage of tools of the language like comparisons, personifications etc. These sources help them understand why such tools are necessary and also help them understand their usage. Hence this method is again very effective in teaching the language. Traditional methods of reading newspapers and books, novels are also very good methods to teach the language. When the traditional methods are modified along with some innovative ideas the entire learning and the teaching process is enriched and guarantees a success in efficient learning. These are some of the innovative and creative ways of teaching the English Language.

#### **IV) Conclusion:**

The above all discussion make us clear that the prime importance of English language and the role of English teacher and his or her duty and the problems faced by them. However, the problems discussed, here, in language teaching have solutions. It is not the fault of either teacher or student but the various stumbling blocks are stated. If these methods are used in teaching – learning process, certainly the current scenario will be changed.

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