



OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH THE LANGUAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Today, English languages has been playing various roles as lingua franca, language of computer and Information and Communication Technology, library language, language of trade and commerce, global language and so on and so forth in all over the world. It is a language of the globe. It is a language of the elite. But moreover it is the language of opportunities. It has created several opportunities for its learners all over the world. While stressing the importance of English, Randolph Quirk and H. G. Widdowson have rightly observed, "English is the language on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep." (qtd. in N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 1) Again K. R. S. Iyengar in his monumental book "Indian Writing in English" has said, "English is the veritable Suez Canal for intellectual intercourse between the West and the East." (15) Today's era is considered as the age of Information Technology.

INTRODUCTION

English language has played a very significant role in the development of computer and Information Technology. P. Shailaja's opinion in this regard is worth-mentioning here. In the Foreword of the book entitled "IT Revolution, Globalization and the Teaching of English" she writes, "the relation between English and IT may be described as symbiotic, each



benefiting from the other.” (2) While discussing the importance of English, N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy have recorded the following observation:

Much like oil or the microchip, English, today is used globally. Life will become paralysed if petrol and computers are not available anymore. Similarly, we may find it difficult to function if we do not understand or speak English. It is not without reason that English is called the global language. (1)

Such is the importance of English in all over the world. But most of all, it has emerged as ‘a language of opportunities’. R. B. Tasildar’s following observation in this regard is remarkable:

In the last decade of the twentieth century it gained importance as the *language of opportunities*. There is hardly any domain where the use of English has been restricted. The rise of English as the *global language* has led to a greater demand for it in the twenty-first century. (2)

It has generated lots of opportunities for its learners. It is the language which plays a very vital role for the students of any faculty and discipline to get a job. In short, it has created lots of employment opportunities in India as well as in foreign countries. Indian software engineers have been doing their best in the English speaking countries like America and England. It will not be exaggeration if one says that Indian software industry has bloomed because of English. However, Indian software engineers can scarcely bag jobs in China, Japan and Germany for these countries have not accepted English as their language. It is a ray of hope that aforementioned countries have realized the significance of English and have started teaching of English in their schools and colleges too. In India, too, the knowledge of English is the first requisite to get a job in local, national and multi-national companies.

Unfortunately, learning and teaching of English has always been considered as a challenge in India. It is the most coveted language. Parents aspire for giving education through English medium to their wards. They get ready to pay any heavy cost for that. Every pupil desires that s/he should have command over English. As a result, English medium schools have been mushrooming in urban and rural areas too. English is always considered as a language of opportunities by both parents and students also. It is necessary to discuss how English is the language of opportunities in India:

English as a Global Language:



English is the language of the globe. It is the first language of the developed countries such as America, England and Australia and the second language of the developing countries like India. N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy estimate that "Out of the 1.5 billion who 'know' English, about 337 million use it as their first language (L_1); about 350 million use it as a second language (L_2) in countries like India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Nigeria; in addition, there may be about 100 – 1,000 million people who are actively learning and trying to use English with reasonable competence in countries like China, Japan, Russia, and in other countries in Europe and South America." (1) Thus, English has acquired a global significance. Hence, it creates a sense of pride in the mind of the teacher to get a chance to teach the global language.

Language of Computer and IT:

English is the language of computer. Today, computer is used in every walk of life. It has become an important tool everywhere. Even literacy is being counted in terms of knowledge of computer field. If a person does not know how to operate a computer, he is supposed to be illiterate. English is the language of computer. All the operating systems developed by various software companies all over the world basically use English. Moreover, if the learner knows English, he learns computer faster than others. He understands computer applications quite easily. Because of knowledge of English, he can operate computer easily and skillfully. Therefore P. Shailaja observes that the relationship between English and computer is "symbiotic" (2) one benefitting from another. Hence, the teacher of English gets benefitted in the learning and teaching of computer.

Language of Commerce and Trade:

Today, most of transactions in business world have been done in English. English is a language of business too. Companies, banks and other business firms prefer English for business transactions. They want their personnel know English. Some of the companies even arrange for training sessions for their staves so as to develop their communication skills in English.

Rich Language of Rich Literature:

English literature is very rich. There is not a single country in the world where English literature is not read. Perhaps, there has not been any country where there is not a writer in English. The most prestigious and coveted awards - Nobel Prize and Booker Prize are given so far to those writers who have written in English. The English writers - Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, Hardy, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot and many others have been read by a



large number of public in all the countries with the great literary taste. All these writers have enriched English literature and ultimately English language. English is the language which has adopted and adapted words from all the languages in the world. Consequently, it has become the richest language in the world.

Language of the Elite:

In India, speaking English is supposed to be prestigious. Mostly, people from upper class society speak English. The speakers of English are treated with respect and admiration. They are considered as the most educated persons in the society. Hence, English is the language of the elite in India.

Opportunities in the Teaching of English:

Service to Students:

Today, English is a master-key to success in India. Dhanappa Metri rightly observes that: “English is a passport for the career.” (5) Its users can easily bag jobs in national as well as in international companies. Knowledge of English is a prerequisite in the Indian corporate sector. Indian corporate sector needs very efficient, active and dynamic managers and leaders to face the cut-throat competition at global level. They must be well-versed in English communication skills. The students of English can pursue professional courses like MBA, MLS, MSW, etc. to cater to the needs of the corporate sector in India. The teacher of English can motivate his students to complete these courses. He can help them improve their communication skills in English. The teaching of advanced types of communication skills – Group Discussion, Presentation, Interview, etc. needs competent and devoted teachers. If English teacher is competent and devoted, he can help his students acquire these skills. If the students can use these skills effectively, he can surely get success. In this way, English teacher can render his service to his pupils who are pillars of the nation.

Service to Society:

It is well said that ‘a teacher is a social engineer.’ He can make a very substantial and remarkable contribution to build a new society. An English teacher has tons of opportunities to render his service to the learner and thereby to the society. He can develop good human resource equipped with good knowledge of English language and literature. He can inculcate moral values among his pupils so as to build a new society. English literature is a treasury of moral values. He can bring out that treasury for its learners and inculcate them on the would-be citizens of the society. In this way, he has good opportunities of serving to society.



Service to Nation Building:

It is obvious that a teacher plays a very crucial role in building a nation by making engineers, doctors, scientists, officers, leaders, so on and so forth. Language is a vehicle of communication. Communication is a soul of society. A society without communication is impossible. Therefore, a language teacher has a greater responsibility towards society. An English teacher also can play a very significant role in the making of engineers, doctors and scientists who can lead our nation at internal level. Dhanappa Metri's observation in this respect is worth-mentioning here. He says: "The teachers have the opportunity to contribute in the nation building by inculcating the life skill of communication skills of the global language among the learners." (5) Thus, an English teacher can substantially contribute to build a nation.

Job Satisfaction:

Teacher's is a holy job. Perhaps, there may not be more monetary gains in it. But there is a tremendous mental satisfaction in it if done with interest and devotedly. Today, parents aspire to give English education to their wards. Students also aspire for career in English language as it has a tremendous market value. Most of the professional courses are available in English only. Students can complete these courses if they have enough knowledge of English. In this context, English teacher's responsibility is greater than the teachers of other subjects. An English teacher can build a career of aspirants and thereby get much job satisfaction. As a teacher of international language, he enjoys high status in the society also.

Opportunities in Using Technology:

It is a common phenomenon that if a learner knows English, he can harness the frontier technologies easily. If the learner has good command over English, he can learn computer earlier than other learners. The same is the case with android mobile phone. Therefore, English teacher can handle technological tools like computer and android mobile phones more efficiently than others. He can effectively make use of this technology in order to teach English also. He can make teaching easy and more entertaining with the help of technologies. Besides, he can enjoy benefit of language laboratory also. In short, an English teacher can become techno-savvy earlier than others.

Opportunities to Become a Member of International Associations:



There are so many national and international associations working for bringing English learners and teachers together. ELTAI, FCT, TESOL, etc. are a few to mention here. An English teacher has an opportunity to become a member of such organizations so as to update his knowledge in recent trends and developments in his subject.

Opportunities in the Field of Research:

There is a tremendous scope for research both in English language and in literature also. An English teacher can contribute to the field of English education through his research and thereby earn name and fame at international level. His research may easily reach every nook and corner of the world as its medium is a language of the world.

CONCLUSION:

It is explicit that English is a language of opportunities. It is a master-key to success in all walks of life. In the words of Dhanappa Metri, "English is a passport for the career." (5) According to Quirk and Widdowson "English is the language on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep". (qtd in N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 1) From all the observations, it is explicit that English is a language of opportunities. Hence, an English teacher has tons of opportunities to teach this language of opportunities. He can render his service to learners, society and ultimately nation by working as a devoted teacher. By teaching English to the learners, he can build career of the learners effectively. He has opportunities to develop engineers, doctors and scientists. English literature is rich in moral and social values, he can simply inculcate all these values among the learners of English. Moreover, the sky is a limit to the research in both English language and literature. His research literature can bring him name and fame at international level. It could be easily available in the libraries across the globe as its medium is global language itself. However, the teacher may get much job satisfaction. But he needs to be devoted and upright for that.

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