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THE JOURNEY OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDIA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Abstract:

India is a land of various hundred languages; commonly spoken languages are Hindi, English, Punjabi, Gujarati and many more. English officially has a position of assistant language, but the fact is that it is one of the most prominent languages in India. Being one of the imperative languages, the use of English has become a necessity in India. It has been given the main importance as children have been taught English right from kinder garden to middle school and higher education. English represents in Indians minds better culture, better education and superior intellect. The use of English language in India was limited before the incursion of the British. Gradually, people started taking interest in learning and teaching English as a second language because of its use in financial, legal, business, corporate and education in India. Further, the future of learning and teaching English is essential for the reason that it is a world language and universally spoken and written. I believe that English will maintain the lingua franca of the world for next 25-30 years as the numbers of learners are increasing. Thus, the present paper will focus on the journey of teaching and learning English as second language in India emphasizing on its past, present and future.

Keywords: English, language, India, lingua franca, world

Introduction

In broad-spectrum, the language which has been considered society's most noticeable accomplishment, is now so much a part of our lives and day to day activities. For example, like the air we breathe, that number of times we take it for granted and we usually are not acquainted

with its characteristics. English Language is very vital for communication and is a set system as it is been used in financial, legal and businesses in India. It has been accepted that English has a standing of associate language, but in fact, this language is considered to be the most imperative and one of the important languages of India. India is a society where many languages are spoken, after Hindi, English is the most commonly and widely spoken language across India and undoubtedly the most read and written language in all states of India. The language being the most prominent mode of communication, English language in India is accepted not only for communicating with outside world and global market, but also for inter-state and intra-state communication. For Indian's minds, the English language symbolizes better culture, higher intellect, and more importantly better education. Commonly, Indians who knows English often mingle it with the languages spoken in India in their conversation. English language also considerably serves as the communicator among Indians and its society who speaks different languages.

English language in India

Teaching English in India is the world's biggest popular business of its own part, a prolific necessity and India have realized that they have the benefit of English over many countries like Japan and China. Today, India is the third largest English using country in the world after the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Teaching English in India has become a globalization process.

The Journey of Teaching English in Past

During the arrival of Britishers in India in the 1600s they established trade posts in the number of cities in the East India Company. The influence of the company has grown to the extent that Britishers started ruling the most part of the country. During the tenure when the Britishers started ruling provinces of India, they have created their own colonies. The English language was considered as the means of business, governance, and education. The range of English language was the outcome of technological developments which gave growth to the industrial revolution. The scientific knowledge and applications were excelled by the Britishers and gave the shape of the practical affairs in the industry during the 18th and the 19th century. It gave the birth to the multi-ethnic and therefore multi-lingua cultural colonies which also serve as lingua franca and a unifying force.

With the passage of time, the importance of English went on increasing, in the different part of the country, the great demand for English education commenced. The Hindu College was established in 1817 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to fulfill the need of teaching English in India. Later on, the great demand and the number of schools and colleges were open which taught English and was given the sheer significance.

During the 1830s, the demand of teaching and learning English was increasing. Educating English to secondary school students was proving to be very effective and helpful to secure future in government jobs. Therefore, private schools started providing the education of English to students. This practice was proving significantly helpful and a good business, especially in Calcutta, Bengal province. This province was now set for the big moment and to create a history of English language teaching.

Lord Macaulay, in 1835 mentioned the awareness of Western languages could only be possibly taught with the English language. It was only in the year 1835 that the medium of instruction of English was formally introduced.

The teaching methodology in the past was very conventional and quite simple as compared to present day teaching in India. The teachers normally use chalk and talk method and an only theoretical portion were given important rather than practical. The insufficient material to teach was also one of the barriers for the teachers; with the limited books and journals the knowledge was given. The teachers were only the instrumental in giving the awareness of the language. In past days, all the English language aspirants and students have to meet their immediate subject teachers for resolving any language difficulties if compared to present day technology. It was also observed that teachers were least bothered about the classroom activity and the value education for the learners. Further, the teaching pattern was solely based on the syllabus completion and conducting examinations. The proficiency skills in communication English was competent.

The journey of teaching English in Present

After the independence of India, the government had decided to initiate new policies and agendas for teaching English in universities and schools. By the joint decision of Government of India, the Hindi language is declared to be the nation's official language. Of all the provinces of India and their regional languages were considered and have given the status of national

languages. In all new learning and implementations of policies, few states have decided to make English as the associate official language. The business for providing better education and promising bright future, the number of schools and universities were started to increase rapidly in India. The race to learn the English language in various states has aroused and people came forward to learn this language from the neglected societies. As the number of educational institutes has increased, there remained few colleges and schools where the level of English is not to the mark and are not providing the quality education. Hence, there had been complaints came up from such institutions regarding the standard of English being taught to students and aspirants. Therefore, major steps and provisions took place by the government to improve the standard of English. Many commissioners were appointed to keep the track on the syllabus and the areas where the education is required.

The Secondary Education Commission has also articulated the importance of English education in today's world. According to the University Education Commission, the education of English should be provided constantly to the aspirants and learners. The language should reach to all the individuals and be literate in their own way. The Commission mentions the language to be as rich in literature. It provides wide knowledge on scientific, humanistic and technical aspects. Many renowned scientists and educationists of India have then strongly raised their voice towards not to sacrifice the benefits and advantages of English studies.

In current market and life, India has grown globally because of substantial command over English and its education. It had helped many Indians to approach organizations internationally and have taken the Indian economy on continuous growth. The fluent command over the English language has then helped India to deal with foreign commissions to develop foreign relationships. For example, India is now independent to deal with a range of countries for import and export purposes. India has vast agricultural fields and is rich in growing grains and many food items. Private organizations and companies have taken their foot forward to export our agricultural foods in various continents on the planet. This constant rise and growth of India in the international market is quite significant in last few decades.

In present scenario, the training of English language in schools and universities has been improved significantly in various aspects. With the globalization of studies, the college and schools have introduced smart classes consists of computer laboratories with modern tools and equipment for learning. With the advancement of internet, the communication has also become

very fast, smooth and easy. With the aid of the internet, every student can access their study prospectus online and are able to manage their subject submissions online. The universities have advanced their communication to students through students online portal, where a student can obtain lecture notes and submit assignments during semester submissions. These all practice and activities have made the teaching of English in India remarkably easy and efficient.

The journey of teaching English in Future

With the advancement of the technology and the impact of globalization, the need for teaching and learning English would increase worldwide. All the professionals like diplomats, politicians and business people who travel worldwide would prefer to communicate with computer aided communication and with latest or advanced communication. There are several International languages like Spanish, English, French and Arabic which serves as the mode of International communication. The future is unpredictable but the surety lies that English will be one of the extensively International languages being taught and learned. The significance and the use of English will serve as global lingua franca which will be driving force to establish institutions to accelerate the use of English. It is also predicted that the spread of English and the English learners especially young learners will increase in many countries across the world. Particularly, if we talk about India English will become a basic skill which would be a driving force to succeed. In the future, the teachers will be expanding the circles with the native speaking community to accelerate the proficiency of English. The professional and the linguistic knowledge would be mandatory in all the professional disciplines.

Conclusion

Teaching English to the bilingual and the multilingual in India would be based on strategies and a set process. The different opportunities for teachers for teaching English as a second language would be a paradigm shift. It seems to be that in India the field of learning the second language internationally would be advanced and would be different from the conventional classrooms. Teaching English and learning English would be a set process of growth and the interaction among the complex system of the human mind would be minimized. It is imperative to understand the role of English in the lives of the learner as the language will able to make them successful in the profession they pursue their careers.

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