Teaching English as a Foreign Language: An Analysis of the Difficulties and Effectiveness of the Approach

[1]Sushma C R, [2]Vishwaraju S B, [3]Sowmya M N

Department of English
[1]Government polytechnic, Channapatna, Karnataka, India.
[2]Government polytechnic, Krishnaraja pete, Karnataka, India.
[3]S J (Government) polytechnic, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

Abstract-
English has grown and altered dramatically over the past 1,500 years, beginning as a dialect spoken by Germanic immigrants. English is the most prevalent of the world's surviving languages, which number between 6,000 and 7,000. It has not only a significant number of native speakers, but also, in the words of Broghton et al. in their book Teaching English as a Foreign Language; they explore this idea to provide a broader perspective; "an equally widely distributed body of second language speakers, who use English for their day-to-day needs, (which) totals over 250 million." Finally, if we include locations where choices affecting life and welfare are taken and proclaimed in English, we reach one-sixth of the global population". The number of English learners is steadily rising, as is the demand for professional English instructors. The present study will investigate all of these challenges, their causes, and potential remedies, with a particular emphasis on English language teaching/learning for non-native speakers.

Keywords: Native speakers, Foreign language, Teaching English, Effectiveness, Difficulties, Virtual Teaching.

1. Introduction

English brings individuals from all around the world together, regardless of their nationality or native language. "It is often referred to as the modern lingua franca, a language that is used for communication by people who do not share the same mother tongue" (Riddell 2). Everything is in English, including news broadcasts, television shows, pop songs, and podcasts, as well as scientific and academic periodicals. Aside from that, "English has become an important role in national unification in a wide range of countries from Sierra Leone to Malaysia. It is the national language of 29 nations, including the United States, Australia, Lesotho, and Liberia, and an official language in 15 more. (Broughton et al. 3). English is not only used in its original form, but also as a Pidgin (an impromptu language used to communicate when persons who do not speak the same language come into contact), such as Tok Pisin, Kru Pidgin English, and Thai Pidgin English. In the words of Carter and Nunan.

English is becoming increasingly detached from its historical roots as it becomes the vehicle of global communication. In the process, it is becoming increasingly diverse, to the point that the name 'English' may be called into doubt. The term 'global Englishes' has been used for some years, and it is possible that the plural form 'Englishes' may eventually replace the singular 'English'. The growing interest in acquiring the lingua franca has given rise to several ideas, including TESL, TESOL, and TEFL. The notion of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, or TEFL, refers to the practice of teaching knowledge of the English

language to students with different mother languages. It is frequent in areas where English is the predominant language.

Mispronunciation is the most common issue for English learners due to the language's orthographic depth. They have a tendency to transmit phonological rules from their first language to English. For example, Japanese speakers have difficulties pronouncing L and R because the Japanese language lacks a distinct L or R sound, instead resembling a combination of an L, R, and a D sound. Adult learners, unlike child learners, frequently fail to achieve their language learning objectives due to a high level of anxiety and self-consciousness.

Kitano's research on this found that "speaking anxiety correlated with test anxiety: students became more anxious during the oral performance as their fear of negative evaluation was stronger." It was fueled even more by the prospect of traveling overseas and conversing with native speakers (540). The need for perfection is the adversary of language acquisition. According to Kitano, this is because "The majority of students believed speaking skills to be the most important; hence they experienced more self-imposed pressure on being successful in this area, which may have generated an additional amount of fear and tension during speaking activities" (540). Most pupils are continuously translating from their first language. I organized a poll to get the opinions of English language instructors. The data was gathered from 12 English teachers, assistant and associate professors from India, Saudi Arabia, and Costa Rica using a subjective questionnaire. Three out of twelve teachers stated that one of the most difficult obstacles English learners encountered was frequent mental translation from their first language to English. Translating from one's first language has a detrimental influence on language acquisition and is one of the primary reasons why most language learners never become proficient in their target language.

Another common error among language learners is placing too much attention on grammar. In most classes, teachers continue to place too much emphasis on refining students' grammatical abilities at the price of their fluency. Five of the twelve survey participants underlined the need of strong grammatical and lexical understanding. There is no doubting that grammar is a crucial part of the language acquisition process. However, focusing too much on grammatical rules rather than fluency might be confusing for English learners. Beginner language learners, who are still in the phase of learning English by translating from their native language struggle the most with untranslatable terms and phrases in English such as slang words like hillbilly, spam, or cool. Phrasal Verbs and Idioms are another cause of difficulty among pupils. Incorrect use of phrasal verbs and idioms is every English learner's nightmare, given how many phrasal verbs are derived from a single verb. For example, there are numerous phrasal verbs with the verb "put" in them: put off - postpone, put up with - to tolerate, to bear, put down - to humiliate, and put on - to dress. Students frequently employ idioms incorrectly because they deviate completely from their literal meaning. For example, being under the weather does not imply sitting outside in the weather, and these days, saying excuse my French does not equate to actually speaking in French. The majority of English learners struggle with the seemingly unending division and subdivision of tenses, given the number of tense labels available: simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous. Students frequently make mistakes in writing by combining past and present tenses.

2. Obstacles in the Teaching of English

Most English classes are culturally diverse. This causes a number of challenges in language acquisition since language and culture are inextricably linked, and in certain situations, pupils are unable to relate to the culture of the language they are learning. The authors say that "Cultural barriers are considered as those traditions which become hurdles in the path of understanding or teaching/learning completely different languages, among which body language, religious beliefs, etiquette, and social habits are noteworthy" (15). Some students may need time to adjust to cultural variations and nonverbal signals while studying English. Teachers must offer a safe learning atmosphere in which students of all cultures can feel comfortable. Communicate successfully because "communication that lacks appropriate cultural content often results in an odd or humorous situation leading to misunderstanding and miscommunication".

Lack of motivation is the most prevalent impediment to language education. Except for those who live in an English-speaking nation and are driven by the need to converse with the natives, most students lose motivation to continue their language learning journey soon after beginning. An ESL instructor admitted in the study that the most difficult task is encouraging adult learners to attend English courses. Outdated

teaching equipment and techniques, unclear and ambiguous study materials, and a lack of a goal to learn English are the primary causes of poor motivation among students. To inspire students, teachers can instill the three major aspects of motivation proposed by Alizadeh: "a positive attitude towards the L2 community, enjoyment of learning, and external pressures" in them.

Faulty teaching techniques and a paucity of teaching aids are two further issues created by a complete lack of resources and poor teacher training. In poor nations like India, English is still taught using outdated and unproductive methods such as grammar translation. The lack of teaching resources makes it even more difficult to make classes entertaining. One of the most pressing difficulties, according to an Indian survey participant, is a lack of visual assistance in the classroom. In addition, the curriculum in most English classes is out of date and insufficient. Practical English should be taught. Instead of producing graduates who are unable to write an application or communicate in English, the emphasis should be on teaching them English skills that they can use in their daily lives, such as listening to and understanding announcements, reading contracts and articles, expressing their thoughts, communicating with others, and watching news and broadcasts in English.

3. Solutions to the problems and obstacles in the instruction of English

Creating an engaging environment is the first step toward creating a better learning experience. There is no doubting that the classroom setting influences how much students can learn and remember. One of our survey participants stressed the importance of having a dynamic classroom climate. Using gestures, visual aids, and props in conjunction with words will assist instructors in interacting with children while also expanding their vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers should promote peer interaction, particularly during English Speaking classes. This also promotes peace and team ideals among the students. However, the instructor should maintain control over this contact to ensure that it remains instructional. To address the issue of poor motivation among pupils, teachers might implement reward or incentive-based motivation in the classroom. Using the learners' first language to some extent might be beneficial, particularly if the pupils are novice English learners. Frequent examination of kids' language achievements can be tremendously valuable. Bell and Bogan describe it this way: "A strong assessment program and appropriate assessment practices benefit ELLs (English Language Learners) because the teacher is aware of the effectiveness of instruction". Teachers should be prepared to educate based on the needs of their students. Participants in the study stressed the importance of choosing trained instructors who are good at planning and implementation. English courses should be offered to young students too.

4. Several Thought-provoking Opinions About Teaching English

Opinions and Firsthand Experiences in Teaching English, in this research 12 survey participants were participated : The more we teach, the more we learn; we must be adaptable and avoid repeating the same approaches. One should be imaginative when teaching. People often connect mastery of the English language with class and prestige. Encouraging pupils is good. Appreciating their development, no matter how small, helps. Games can help pupils become more interested in learning. Despite recent advances, English is still not accessible to everyone. Having a brainstorming session on Language Skills Development is quite beneficial. Students frequently struggle with good communication, a lack of confidence, losing interest in the subject, and other issues. One can utilize illustrations and instruct pupils to write as much as they can in 10 minutes. This helps them improve their creative and English writing abilities. Classes should be engaging, and students should be allowed to utilize their native language in class to reduce inhibitions. Teachers should be able to offer new topics (even outside of the curriculum) based on the requirements of their pupils. Presentations, debates, theater, pair work, and group discussion are all effective classroom activities. Classes should be more engaging, with an emphasis on encouraging students to speak with one another in English. Plays and stories should be performed in class to enhance spoken English. Knowledge of English is required for professional growth. Advanced teaching software should be employed in the classroom. English is a varied language. One should embrace the many dialects of Indian English without attempting to homogenize them into an abstract concept of "Standard English". Various teaching approaches, such as audio-lingual, community teaching, and direct instruction, should be employed in the classroom. Constant translation from the local tongue is a major difficulty. To avoid this, English should be taught at an early age. Teachers should provide a better atmosphere for teaching and learning, use a variety

of teaching strategies, expose students to as much English as possible, minimize native language contact in class, and encourage learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. As instructors, we may break down these barriers by introducing our pupils to the cultural meanings of terms that are beyond their grasp. We may create confidence in pupils by having them practice and encourage them. The attraction with English stems from its status as the language of the colonists, and we continue to carry the baggage of colonization. Our passion with the Western world translates into a fascination with the English language. We may make the English language more appealing to non-native speakers by infusing native cultures and experiences into the language, bringing it closer to the local experience. Students generally find it entertaining to hear their classmates' different accents and pronunciations. This lightens the mood in the classroom but also makes some pupils excessively self-conscious. The solution, I've concluded, is to teach them that English is simply another language and that they should stop thinking of it as elite and magnificent. Students' inferiority complexes over their lack of English proficiency must be addressed. A psychological approach is effective in ELT. Students become interested by subjects and motivated to study when syllabus-based games and interactive activities such as role-playing are included. English language instruction must begin at the primary level, with a standard syllabus for all students and qualified instructors. Interactive teaching sessions are essential. Students should be taught to enunciate words with silent letters to reduce pronunciation errors.

5. Benefits and Drawbacks of Online Learning

Gone are the days when in-class learning was the sole choice and online education was deemed "limiting". According to Palloff and Pratt, "the demand for "virtual schooling" is increasing at a rate of about 30 percent per year, and with that comes the demand for experienced teachers who can teach online". Online learning programs, although being a relatively ancient and frequently despised method of education, are gaining popularity as a result of the spread of the fatal virus. As Gilbert points out, "Online learning appeals to diverse populations of students with ranging academic needs that traditional education classes are deficient or incapable of meeting". Online courses provide unparalleled flexibility in studying and teaching; "Online learning allows students to work at a time and place that is compatible with their learning needs". Online education saves a significant amount of money spent on transportation and other costs. Learning and teaching from the comfort of one's own home is significantly more convenient. Online classes are simply recorded in case students desire to learn later on. Aside from that, online classes are available to nearly everyone with an internet connection and a device to access them. e-learning programs provide "workable alternatives to a variety of potential learners, including school-phobics, people in hospitals or at home due to illness and injury, dropouts who want to go back to school, expelled students, single parents, and students in other states or countries" (Chaney). In general, online courses are less expensive than traditional in-person classes. Students save money on both tuition and transportation costs. Furthermore, online classrooms provide learner-centered individual sessions in which students can freely ask questions and communicate with the teacher without fear of humiliation in front of their classmates. Teaching online allows for more personalized instruction.

6. Conclusions

Despite the many benefits of online education, there are some drawbacks. The most pressing issue that arises in the context of online learning is the lack of necessary technology. Students in underdeveloped nations and rural regions cannot afford mobile devices or laptops, and even if they do spend their hard-earned money on them, there is no fast, dependable, and affordable internet connection. Learners frequently complain about the absence of peer connection in online programs as compared to regular classrooms. A vibrant and active social life on campus may "used to explain both high persistence and learning satisfaction".

The online learning environment does not give students with the necessary peer contact, resulting in an extremely repetitive learning environment. Maintaining motivation throughout the learning process might be difficult in the context of online education. Students with poor motivation suffer the most from online learning since there is less interaction with the teacher and other students. Online learning frequently causes students to feel isolated; as Gilbert explains, "Another hurdle that some learners struggle to overcome is the absence of an instructor in a given place and time throughout the semester" (13). Online learning provides

too much independence, which many learners cannot handle, resulting in procrastination and inability to meet learning objectives.

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