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A critical analysis of the contemporary status of English language teaching in India

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Abstract

This Research paper deals with the contemporary status of English Language Teaching in India. This analysis evaluates the past and the present pattern of English teaching. Unlike the vernacular language teaching, ELT requires more of practical approach as it is being a foreign language. Most of the Indian languages have been learnt and taught only where the particular language is spoken. But, English is in demand beyond the boundaries of states. With having a 74% of Literates in India, there is still only 13% of them could read and write the English well. When the country is growing in business revolution, pace up with that in the stream of English has become inevitable. Hence, a critical review of ELT in India is not only going to review the pattern but also the suitability of the sorts.

Keywords: status of English language teaching, pattern of ELT, EAP, EOP, ESP

1. Introduction

English Language in India is a lot more than just an official the field of higher education and research. In this regard, the Kothari Commission referred to the study of English in India a report of study language. It has been the language of diplomacy, higher administration, higher education, superior judiciary and information technology. Besides, English is a language of opportunities and success for life in India. As was noted by the Education Commission of India in 1966, "when a degree holder from India goes to any of the developed countries he is not treated at par with a degree holder of that country" (3). This shows the poor pattern of Indian Educational System which has no great implication on the matter of English language. Moreover, most of our system of curriculum doesn't make the learning of English mandatory. Hence the reluctance about learning or teaching of English language is seen as an inherent quality of Indian Educational System. To eliminate this obstacle of academic growth, our ELT pattern has to be evaluated so as its outcome on curriculum. In this following analysis, we could know about how the Indian ELT has been across the nation and how its impacted the quality of education (1).

India's Status on English Language

It was Lord Macaulay in 1835, who was the first to emphasis English language teaching in India through his "Minute of Education". He imported English on Indians way back in 1835, and had little the how deeply entrenched its roots would become in a country that prided itself in Tamil and Sanskrit, the classical languages of the world (2). In 1854, Sir Charles Wood Stated that English could be a suitable medium of higher levels of education, because a sound knowledge of English was a prerequisite to seek admission into any established university. But on contrary, grass root land response to English language was very pitiable as no one turned their heads towards learning English. English language was adopted as the medium of instruction for fundamental sciences and mathematic science, which resulted in the phenomenal development of secondary and higher education, especially in urban areas. Since from our Independence, the need for English was greatly realized in group appointed by the ministry of education, Government of India in 1964. The study group has supported the structural approach to the teaching of English, which is now extensively practiced in different parts of India. The study group also came up with a detailed syllabus for the study of the English language from class V to XII. Today, in this nation of billion plus population with a literate population of 74% in 2011, knowledge of English guarantees a job across the

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sectors. Be it a hairdresser, a bell boy or a waiter, salutations and courtesies in English are considered so essential that often a minimum skill in the language is non-negotiable with recruiters (5). In case of ELT, effective learning takes place when the learner is able to communicate fluently both in writing and speaking and able to use English for library purposes. Therefore, the promotion of ELT in India in modern times has an impeccable demand and gives a great deal of transformation from the odd ELT approaches.

Approaches of English Language Teaching in India

Indian practice on ELT has been a multi-purpose teaching approach. It differs on the basis of various purposes to learn English language. In that way, there has been three fundamental pattern/approaches of ELT in India, namely

- ≅ English for Academic Purpose(EAP)
- ≅ English for Occupational purpose(EOP)
- ≅ English for Specific Purpose(ESP)

Firstly, EAP refers to the teaching of English language in primary, secondary and common graduate level educational institutions. This approach aims to built-up the students to be aware of basics of English, and encourages the students to have general thought about the basic grammar, pronunciation and the use of English for common purpose.

Secondly, EOP refers to the teaching of English language for professional purpose which in practical requires a basic insight about the concerned profession and its relevance with use of English. The approach of ELT has been a great task for the tutors to educate the beneficiaries as it requires specialized knowledge about the particular occupational jargons.

Thirdly, ESP refers to the teaching of English language for specific need in which the intention of the learners is restricted within the particular use. ESP advocates the designing of special courses instead of one multi-purpose course, to suit the needs of different courses of students. The concept of ESP is said to be particularly adequate for teaching English to students of science and technology (EST). Moreover, English at the undergraduate level of engineering studies differs from English in other undergraduate courses because it has a specific purpose unlike a general purpose in other colleges. It differs from other courses in the three aspects, such as relevance, register and style (10).

These three aspects gain supremacy in material designing because the course must engage the students for both academic and professional purposes. Their academic functions include oral and written communication, comprehension of lectures and books, note-making, note-taking, paper presentations, participation in regional, national and international seminars and taking interviews.

Contribution of Various Institutions for ELT in India

India is having one of most prominent multi-pronged educational systems in the world. To assist various forms of Indian Educational Approaches, there have been too many intuitions with specialised purposes. The institutions, which helped in strengthening the National System of Education (NSE), are University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical education (AICTE), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and Medical Council of India (MCI) and Dental Council of India (DCI). In 1968, the National Policy on Education (NPE) laid special focus on the study of English and other international languages. The NPE

insisted that India must not only keep pace with scientific and technological knowledge, but also should contribute to it significantly. It was for this purpose that the study of English required to be strengthened. As this study concentrates on English in technological and Engineering institutes, it would be worthwhile to look at the profile of AICTE; the body that monitors technical education in the country. AICTE ensures the co-ordination and integrated development of technical and management education. At this level, a lot of thrust has been given to the subjects and little importance is given to English language. AICTE is vested with the statutory authority for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms and standards, accreditation, funding priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintenance of a parity of certification and awards, and ensuring the coordinated and integrated development of technical and management education. A duly constituted Accreditation Board conducts the mandatory periodic evaluation to maintain standards.

Contributions by Indian Researchers for ELT

To the promotion of ELT approaches in India, our researchers have done incredible contribution to ELT field of study and in this paper I brought them close look. However, as this research deals with English language teaching in India, the substantial research works done by Indian researchers in relation with English learning are studied. Most of the works were unique analysis in nature with particular reference to the mistakes made by vernacular user of various Indian languages while learning English as a second language. The following mentions are the sum of those important people, Ganapathy (1968) ^[5] has done a contrastive study on speech pattern in Kannada and English. Agrawal (1970) ^[2] has studied the English tense equivalents of Rhyme of the Hindi tenses. Pramanik (1988) ^[11] has done a study of some affective variables related to learning English as a second language at the post-secondary stage in Orissa Ravi (1998) ^[12] has done research work in the study of the motivational problems with reference to teaching – learning English as a second language. Lalitha Raja, R. (2007) ^[10] has done research work in the syntactic development of Tamil mother tongue children in learning English. Indira (2003) ^[15] has done research on the suitability of course book in engineering colleges for developing communication skills. Ramamoorthy (2004) ^[7] has made a study in multilingualism and second language acquisition and learning in Pondicherry. Balasubramanian (2005) ^[12] has studied attitudinal difference and second language learning with reference to Tamil and Malayalam. Meenakshi Raman (2006) ^[6] has done a study on developing task based language tests for assessing oral skills in English. Sankary (2007) ^[10] has studied the rural-urban divide in English as second language learning. Pushpa Nagini Sripada (2007) ^[13] has studied in the area of second language vocabulary teaching. Jahitha Begum (2007) ^[3] has done research on metacognition and mediated learning experience as language learning strategies. Sandeep (2007) ^[13] has done research on teaching English as a second language to meet the needs of the learners from rural areas. R. Narayanan *et al.* (2009) ^[15] attempted in the of field English language teaching, which is growing day by day in India because of good and dedicated researchers have contributed something to English language teaching and moreover number of linguists have made footprint in the field of applied linguistics.

Conclusion

Ultimately, in this paper various approaches of ELT has been exhaustively analysed. Rectify the reluctance of learning or teaching of English language Indian Educational System, approaches like EAP, EOP, ESP would be valuable measures. To eliminate the obstacles of academic growth, new ELT patterns might be handy to the Indian Educational Curriculum. In the above analysis, we could come to the conclusion that how the Indian ELT has been across the nation and how it should be for the betterment of the quality of education. Besides, it will be worth mention here that the new patterns mentioned in this paper would also been a good experiment to the upcoming linguistic researchers of India.

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