

Impact of Globalization on English Language Learning Through Vernacular Medium

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Introduction

‘In an increasingly globalized world, knowledge of the English language has given India immense leverage over other developing nations. As a result, English has become, even more so than before, a vehicle of empowerment and upward mobility for Indians. Thus, from being a language of the elite, English has now become a language of business, international trade and commerce’.¹

India is known as the country of villages. It is well known for its dynamic, more divergent and richer culture and heritage. People of India follow various religions and castes, customs, traditions and speak different languages. The foreign cultures too have become a part of the Indians with the passage of time. India has not only happily accepted the western culture but also utilized English language as the official language.

But we find a large number of Indian youth who have completed their basic education in regional languages; trying to cope up with this official language. Rural Indians have lagged behind their more-privileged urban counterparts in terms of overall development and knowledge gaining.

Background

Factors like mother tongue, socio-economic background and medium of education influence communication to a great extent. Also, the quality of teachers make a huge difference in the way a student gets acquainted with English as a way of communication. An interesting observation in the research paper of Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Swaleha Pathan and Dr. Shirin Shaikh points out that ‘Students coming from the schools of vernacular

language experiences psychological disturbance and find themselves difficult to get adjusted to English medium college. Further it is also noted that such students feels shy, nervous, less well mannered, underachievers and gets easily distracted which in turn gets affected on their overall personality characteristics'.²

Students of vernacular medium have less chance of constant exposure to English language. As a consequence of the absence of good foundation, they lack proper grammar and appropriate expressions. Though spoken English is possible through minimum vocabulary, a majority of these students lack the minimum words needed for spoken communication.

As Dr. T Murugavel states 'They avoid using English and hardly interact with their English medium peers or faculty for they probably believe that they may be getting into embarrassing situations and see their errors as threats to their egos.'³

Most of the vernacular medium new generation youth point out parents' mistake for not admitting them in English medium school when they were small. And blame parents throughout their lives for not developing English Communication Skills. In fact, they ought to show gratitude to their parents for providing them with the best education afforded in their times; while the old generation weren't fortunate to avail. Vernacular studied youth needs to come out of this misunderstanding of blaming their near and dear ones and understand their responsibility to self development in English communication skills. With ever-increasing prevalence of English in day-to-day transactions in business, 'working knowledge of English' has now become an integral part of the jobs in India. Many youth after completion of their professional education realize the ditch they have fallen into; due to their lack of English speaking skills in their work place or day to day conversation. To fulfill their desire the youth willingly join 'Spoken English Classes' paying high fees. Trainers do teach faithfully and students do listen to it sincerely. But after few days, students start losing interest due to usual teaching and learning process. And the outcome is negative. Their wish to converse fluently remains merely a dream. Due to all these reasons, the youth doesn't get enough command over English. Many talented persons are losing wonderful career opportunities due to lack of good English communication skills. It has become a 'Hanging sword' for vernacular studied youth.

Problem related to Industries

Mr. A D Shahane, Vice President, Corporate Training – Technical, Larsen & Toubro, Mumbai put emphasis saying, Engineers play an important role in nation building by contributing to the organization. With changing industrial scenario, organizations now need fresh graduates with not only good technical skills but also with good English language. They become job ready much faster and with minimum support. They also achieve higher levels of success as entrepreneurs. As English Language Teaching was not covered in colleges, bigger organizations who had infrastructure and facilities used to put their fresher's through training, while others who could not do so, suffered.

Many organizations plan to collaborate with other countries for projects. They need to meet the client and present the organization. It becomes very difficult for an individual to express himself with mere technical knowledge. If he is not able to put up well with the English language skills, clients won't feel enthusiastic to join and work in collaboration. Hence, many organizations are losing the client and revenue which India would have got otherwise. The Indian engineer is not able to present their products and services properly to its clients.

Aspiring Minds, a leading employability credentialing firm has revealed that only 18.43% of all engineering graduates are eligible for a software engineer's job in India. And the worst part is that such incompetency has nothing to do with their engineering skills: it's their proficiency in English language & soft skills which make them lose out on opportunities.

As per their study, 97% of Indian engineers cannot speak English, which is one of the mandatory requirements for working in any software or IT firm. In fact, **67% of all engineers do not possess any English language skills** (reading, speaking, comprehension), which are required for a high-end job in business consulting, software, IT and other knowledge economy jobs.

Analysing the shocking results, Aspiring Minds CEO & Co-founder Himanshu Agarwal said, "The low employability among engineering

graduates is a **cumulative outcome of poor education standards** and **higher demand of skilled employees** thereby creating a drastic skill gap in the country.”

UB Desai, director of IIT Hyderabad said, “Over the years, the focus in the education system has shifted to Chemistry, Maths and Physics. Focus on soft skills has reduced. Students may lose out on good job prospects as many companies come to campuses for global positions.”

Challenge in Teaching English Today

In the past, teachers used conventional method to teach English like Grammar Translation Method, Bilingual Method and Direct Method.

Another limitation seen in Indian teachers is that many of the English teachers are not familiar with the latest developments in ELT. The challenges before the English Language teachers in India are enormous and apparent. They should be able to cater to the practical needs of learners, to make them competent enough to interact with one another and also to retrieve information all over the world.

With the changing scenario, the new generation needs to be imbued with innovative techniques in teaching English.

Four skills of English

- ▶ Research studies show that people use their communication time as follows:
- ▶ 45% Listening
- ▶ 30% Speaking
- ▶ 16% Reading
- ▶ 9% Writing

Keeping in mind the opportunities for new generation, we are taking only 1 aspect for our study. i.e Speaking skills.

Methods Adapted to Improve Spoken Skills

1. Group Discussions

Now due to the world wide growing trends in English, teachers give more emphasis to communicative approach rather than the lecture mode. Their main goal is to make the students effective communicators in English both inside and outside the class room.

To achieve this, they involve the students to participate more in classroom activities so that they will acquire adequate command over speaking skills. To create this environment, teachers can conduct group discussions, where students are supposed to speak only in English. Here, they can give their views, ideas and thoughts in English due to which they develop the habit of speaking fluently in English like they do in their mother tongue.

Various types of discussions also help students to improve their general awareness and understanding about current affairs. It gives a lot of scope for good imagination and deep thoughts. This type of discussions helps the students to listen to the views of fellow students which in turn helps them to gain knowledge and enrich the vocabulary also.

2. Public Speaking

A speech is a formal talk with an audience conveying the speaker's ideas, emotions, facts and arguments. Managers, businessmen and industrialists are often required to make speeches at company meetings, inauguration, seminars etc. The skill of being a good orator reflects leadership qualities. Students are given easy topic to speak and increase their confidence level during the practical hours of Communication Skills. This helps them to gain self confidence in improve their skills.

3. Role Plays

Role-plays are another important task that can improve the basic colloquial English of the learners. In role plays, the students assume themselves as one of the characters and behave and speak accordingly involving in the given character completely. In these types of activities teachers have to play a vital role as instructors and guide the students properly so that they can act appropriately to meet the situation. They should help the students now and then to understand and take up the role given to get a grip on the tone of voice.

4. Presentations

It is a brief talk addressed to a particular audience to share specialized knowledge in a stipulated time. Presentation skills have become an essential ingredient of managerial success. It has become important in every industry to make a project presentation. This adds to the success of the organization. The teacher acts as facilitator who motivates the students to talk freely. As each person gets their own unique thinking it helps to sharpen their thinking process.

5. Interview Techniques and mock interviews:

Any graduate looks for good placements. In order to increase confidence level in the new generation, the English teachers ought to teach them how to face interviews. And prepare the students to face the outside positively.

6. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Now-a-days computer has become a part and parcel of our day to day life. It plays a vital role in the process of teaching and learning. It can be used to learn a foreign language like English. Computers have made language learning easy and also made the language learning process interesting and enjoyable for both teacher and student throughout the world. CALL has reduced the burden of the teacher whose teaching methods will be out dated to teach language to present day generation of the world. It is described as one of the interactive methods that can help a learner according to their own ability to learn, which enriches their language skills. CALL enables the learner to look beyond the conventional mode of learning and encourages self learning.

Improvement through English Examinations

British Council has introduced various certificate exams for English like BEC (Business English Certificate) and PET (Preliminary English Test). It covers the language and skills required for English Communication for business. It also helps the students in testing their skills.

To get more opportunities to complete Masters, Indian students have to appear for:

GRE (Graduate Record Examinations), TOFEL (Test of English as Foreign Language) etc.

It is a standardized test conducted by ETS(Educational testing services). ETS, GRE scores are accepted by most of the top graduates level schools for masters.

The practice of such examinations will definitely help the new generation students to deal with such grading exams.

Conclusion

Today's English faculty should update their knowledge, skills and should acquire thoroughness over their syllabus to meet the demands of globalization since English is seen as a key educational investment in this world.

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