



PRESENT SCENARIO OF ENGLISH TEACHING

Dr. Reshma Hafeez

(H.O.D.) Deptt. of Teacher Education, Halim Muslim P.G.G College, Kanpur

ABSTRACT

Language is one of the most important and characteristic form of human behaviour. It is out through language that we are able to think, feel and express ourselves. Language is a means by which a person expresses his thoughts and feelings in such a way that others are able to understand him. Thus it is a means of communication. Communication may be spoken or written. Language is a system of symbols, every word, phrase or sentence represents some object, or idea. When we utter a word or a sentence, we associate immediately it with the object or the idea connected with it. Speech mode is more powerful than writing mode.

KEYWORDS

Teaching of English in our educational pursuit from school to undergraduate level has not received the attention that it needed. A number of factors responsible for it, ranging from dearth of qualified, experienced and dedicated teachers to adoption of faulty and outdated techniques of teaching in the absence of audio-visual equipments. In the present paper an attempt is made to discuss the challenges facing by the teacher of English language and the techniques which can be adopted to make the situation better.

One of the important characteristics of human being is his ability to communicate his ideas to his fellows. He communicates all kinds of messages related to every aspect of his life. Thus language has a very important place in human life. As it is said that, communication may be spoken or written but the medium of speech is more important than that of writing because a child speaks first, then writes. The spoken mode is used much more than written mode. In every language a letter or an alphabet represents a particular sound. In English language letter of alphabet may represent more than one sound.

The accuracy and effectiveness of language depends on correct writing, correct spelling and correct speaking with correct pronunciation. The correct pronunciation makes the speech effective and meaningful. The effective speaking skill depends on correct pronunciation. To make teaching-learning process effective, techniques are important but a good tool also fails in the hands of a bad work man. In other words the whole system of education revolves around the teacher. Teaching is an educational behaviour which varies from individual to individual. A teacher not only provide knowledge but also inculcate habits, interests, attitudes and skills. The teacher who teaches English is different from other teachers. A good English teacher must have mastery over the language. In India English is a foreign language and it is taught as a second language, situation is this, that when a teacher teaches English in India he/she has to impart a new set of linguistic habits into the speakers who already have acquired a set of such habits in their own mother tongue. When one is born, one naturally acquires the language of one's own environment as one's mother tongue. So, the organs of speech are conditioned for the pronunciation of sounds of that language (Adeyanju and Egwuogu 2003, p. 8). Therefore, for him to speak a new language, is a tough job, and to acquire proficiency in that language and be able to communicate in the language in effective manner requires formal learning settings.

The major function of a language is communication. English language teaching is not taken holistically, means the teaching of all the basic language skills of which pronunciation is one. Speech consists of sounds produced in systematically structured strings (Egwuoger, 2008). Every language has its own sound system but many share similarities with other languages. In teaching English

as a second language, the differences and similarities between the sound systems of English and that of mother tongue should be pointed out. English has twenty vowel sounds which comprise twelve pure vowels and eight diphthongs. There is a difference between the English sounds and the Hindi and Urdu sounds. These languages are main spoken languages in Northern India. Most of the time speakers of these languages try to substitute their mother tongues sounds for English language sounds. This often happens.

Ogunsiji (2004, p. 21) said that language teaching is not a fragmentary process. The four basic language skills must be taught. These are : listening speaking, reading and writing. Listening and speaking are primary and natural. Every child acquires them naturally without any formal training. But when it comes to second language learning situation, he has to take a formal systematic learning, regarding grammatical rules and their usage in that language before speaking the language effectively, the learner has to learn the phonology, structure of sound system, how do they are used in combined form, articulated and produced. Speaking is a way of encoding information which is being transmitted to another person, so it becomes necessary for the listener to know the sound system of the language in which the information is coded. (Akinjobi 2004). For a meaningful communication both the persons, speaker and listener must share the knowledge of pronunciation of sounds, formation of words, construction of sentences and interpretation of meaning in that language.

World is changing in all respects whether it is socially, economically, politically and in this changing scenario English is also transforming its form. We need to focus on those features that distinguish native speakers from non native speakers. India is multilingual country here more than 700 languages are spoken. 122 languages are official languages which are spoken in India. These languages serve as mother tongue to their speakers who must have internalized the sounds and how they are produced. So their organs of speech have been conditioned for the production of the sounds of these languages whose phonological systems differ from that of any other languages that may serve as a second language to them. Therefore learner has to acquire a new set of linguistic habits. A student who aspires to speak English proficiently must be taught how to pronounce the English sounds. This is the task of English teacher that how many of them can be able to pronounce the English sounds well enough. Bright & McGregor (1982) have focussed that the primary or initial level of education is the best time when pronunciation is taught.

Many teachers of English at primary and secondary level are not knowledgeable in English pronunciation. The way English is taught today from primary to undergraduate level is to a great extent responsible for the failure. The policy makers have forgotten that English is not our mother tongue that is why it is essential to know

the problems of teaching English in India. In this paper an attempt is made to trace the problems faced by teachers and students in the process of English teaching and learning. It is of great importance that teacher should know what his task is, and for what purpose he or she is appointed in the school or college, what is his objective as an English teacher? What he is trying to achieve by teaching English. We go on with our jobs of teaching English without knowing the difficulties of learner. Normally we teach English language as literature there is hardly any difference in teaching method, teaching style of language and of literature. An overall practice which is found everywhere to use artificial method or indirect method instead of natural method of teaching language. We all learn our mother tongue very easily without putting any effort. First the child listen then speak then read and finally acquire the skill of writing. This sequence i.e. from easy to difficult one but in learning English we reverse the entire sequence i.e. from difficult one to easy one and follow 1. Writing 2. Reading 3. Speaking. 4. Listening. It is obvious when we start anything with the difficult one, the chances of success are lessor.

Language is a means not the end, it is a means to develop one's power of expression. Comprehension is a thing which can be achieved after mastery over the stylistic content of language. That is neglected everywhere. Most of us do not pay attention on concretization of abstractness of the novel, poem, story and passage. We mostly fail in creating a live picture in the classroom. In fact the teacher is always in hurry to complete the syllabus and feels a waste of time and energy to arouse emotion contained the content and in interacting with the students.

In urban areas teacher of English mostly teach by using translation method it is helpful to the learner in understanding the content but not in the learning of language. As a language teacher our aim is to develop the skill of understanding English language not the theme. Any language could be mastered by practicing all the four skills, unfortunately rural environment does not provide ample of opportunities to the learner to practice.

There is also a psychological fear that English is the most difficult subject. Hence most of the students look at English with this prejudice. This psychological depression results in failure. The whole academic year they concentrate on passing the exam. They do not care for learning the language as a tool of communication. Teachers do not create motivation amongst the learner, if it is created then created only to get marks in examination not in terms of drive, desire and curiosity for acquiring new knowledge in the field. For less practice the factor which is most responsible is the over crowd class rooms. The size of the class everywhere is large, it does not allow every student to practice.

I have gone through the newspapers that those 72 students who were expelled from IIT first semester for not securing a CGP aggregate-5. These students are from Hindi medium though they bagged top ranks in entrance exams. In interview they expressed their views, that fluency and understanding of English language is the biggest reason of their below performance.

It is an alarming situation. We should pay extra attention towards teaching of English.

Suggestions :

1. A welcome smile and greeting gesture is the asset of a teacher. Smile creates a bond with students when the learner finds a bond with the teacher they will find the learning of English language easier.
2. We can adopt different methods for different content like for teaching grammar direct method can be used it is a natural method and helpful in developing speaking skill. There are different variation of direct method. Audio-lingual method is the appropriate one for Eng-teaching by this method learner first listen then speak.
3. The most important thing that English teacher should keep in mind that what is his objective. His/Her objective is not only enable the learner to pass the examination but enable the

student to understand English, when spoken, enable them to speak in English fluently, enable them to read effectively and enable them to write in English. These are the objections of English teaching.

4. English teacher should make a firm rule that there will be no other language spoken in English class other than English. Motivate the students to think in English. This is very challenging task but not impossible.
5. Do not try to teach, always speak with them. Talk with them about their daily activities, day-to-day happenings, share your feelings with them in simple English, encourage them to tell about their plans for future in simple English and make corrections and improvements skillfully. Mistakes will happen very often but we have to learn how to handle with them. Try to hide your amusement when they commit silly mistakes in using tenses, if we laugh they will be too embarrassed to make any further attempt. Very important to remember that we are teachers we have expertise over language but our students cannot even frame three correct sentences in English properly. It is our perseverance that helps them to do it. Sometimes students are unable to clarify their doubts even, so be patient with them and encourage them to express them freely.
6. Modeling is a technique which can be adopted. It involves imitation of good models. It is a method of teaching to go through demonstration. The students pay attention and will imitate. Modeling can be done live or by using audio-visual graphic representation.
7. Debates help the learner to acquire speed and fluency as well as confidence in speech. The teacher should provide topics or asks learner to suggest topic of their interest, for eg. boys are more honest than girls, mothers are better than fathers etc. They debate while teacher listens and make correction. Improvised speeches can also be organized to encourage thinking habit.
8. The teacher can give a written passage and ask the students to memorize and then recite or read before the class, in this way students will internalize the structure of the language in both the way phonologically as well as grammatically. This also can be done that teacher call any student to come in front and ask him to tell how he spent his holidays or how will he celebrate his/her approaching birthday. This method also helps them in achieving fluency.

REFERENCES :

1. Adejobi, A. (2004) Speaking Skills. In Alo, A. & Ogunsi, A (Eds) : English Language Communication Skills. (56-69). Ibadan. General Studies Programme Unit.
2. Ekwuogu, C.B. (2003) Strategies for teaching Spoken English. In Babatunde, O.T. and Deyanju D.S. (Eds.). (pp 129-139). Language, Meaning and Society. Ilorin, Haytee Publishers.
3. Ekwuogu, C.B. (2008). Basic English Phonetics and Phonology. Ibadan. Powerhouse.
4. Omoniyi, A. (2004) Developing the Basic Language skill for communicative Competence in Learners of ESL in Nigeria. In Ibadan Journal of English Studies Vol. 1, no. 1.