

**COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION ON CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

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Abstract

The English language has been crucial in every phase of India's struggle for independence, as well as in the establishment and development of its own national identity. English has historically served as the primary language for diplomatic, administrative, educational, judicial, and information technology purposes. Its role has expanded in meeting the current demands of generating opportunities. Due to the evolving and crucial significance of English, the current situation of English education in India is lamentable. The Education Commissions and think tanks have stressed the significance of instilling appropriate skills in students to meet the current employment demands on a global scale. The challenges associated with teaching English in India can be attributed to the misguided decisions of policy officials, as well as the country's high poverty rates and large population. The issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the teaching and learning of English in India include the absence of a well-defined policy, limited exposure to the language, insufficient availability of appropriate materials, a shortage of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching methods, lack of motivation, an unfavourable teacher-student ratio, and a flawed examination system.

Keywords: Spread; Progress; Problems; Prospects; Phonology; Harmony; Diphthongs; Flash Cards.

Introduction

In 1920, Bloomfield reported that the number of native English speakers was 170 million. In 1965, Bloodworth determined that over 3 billion individuals worldwide are fluent in this language. Do more persons than this number currently speak English? This language is rapidly proliferating across the globe. The primary factor for this phenomenon is because the indigenous speakers of this language were formerly the dominant authorities over a significant portion of the globe. Another factor is that the English language possesses certain distinctive features [1-3].

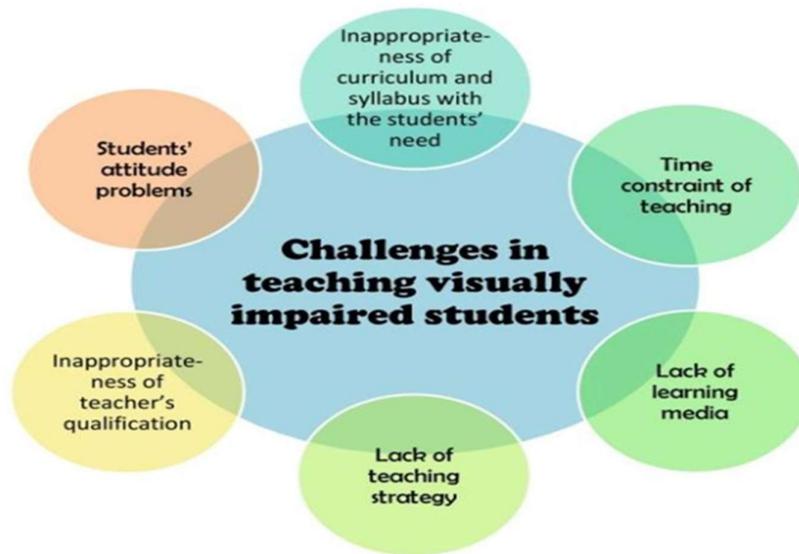


Figure 1: Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English Writing skills

Characteristics of English Language

A language is considered progressive if it encompasses the concepts of past, present, and future. English is considered a progressive language due to its historical and ongoing evolution, which aims to enhance clarity.

English is a highly desirable language. An ideal language achieves consistent expression of ideas, and to a large part, English accomplishes this. • English possesses its own framework of vocabulary, phrases, and sentences.

The phonemes, morphemes, and syntax are inherent components of a language's structure.

English possesses its own distinct set of grammatical rules.

English utilises its own writing system.

English possesses an extensive reservoir of literature that encompasses all aspects of life.

As per Otto Jespersen, a living language possesses the subsequent attributes:

A living language undergoes change as it strives to achieve perfection.

As the level of development of a language becomes more advanced, its ability to express abstract or general ideas increases.

A multitude of subtle nuances can be effortlessly conveyed.

In a living language, the relationship between sound and meaning is perfectly balanced.

English is considered a living language due to its possession of several qualities.

Language in Its Relation to Society

It facilitates human existence within a community.

It serves as an indicator of an individual's character.

It re-establishes the connection between humans and their surroundings.

Literature utilises this medium.

This language holds significant global significance. English possesses its own phonological system. Phonology is the scientific study of the sounds used in language. English exhibits two phonological characteristics: The English language consists of 26 letters, which represent a total of 45 distinct sounds. (b) The English vowel sounds are categorised into two groups: pure vowel sounds and diphthongs. Consonant sounds are categorised into two groups: consonant sounds and consonant clusters [4].

The English grammar has the following salient characteristics:

- In English, a sentence can consist of either a single word or a series of words. A sentence consists of two components: (i) A subject that serves as a theme. (ii) A predicate is a statement that is connected to the theme. As an example, consider the line "I am going." The subject of the sentence is 'I' and the predicate is 'am going'. The subject typically comes before the verb and is consistently in the nominative case from a grammatical perspective.
- There are two categories of sentences: (i) complete sentences, such as "you are singing," and (ii) small sentences, such as "Thank you." English sentences adhere to specific grammatical structures. Sentence structure - Subject followed by Verb (S.V) The sentence structure known as Subject-Verb-Object (S.V.O) is being discussed. V.S.O stands for Verb-Subject-Object, which is a sentence structure where the verb comes before the subject and the object.



Figure 2: Top 10 Characteristics of Effective Grammar Instruction

- The grammatical structure adheres to the notion of placing the most essential concept first.
- Certain prefixes, such as 'the', lack semantic significance. In English, verbs are gender-neutral. The situation is identical for both males and females, for example, when a person of either gender is eating. She is consuming food.
- Interrogative sentences are formed by placing either an auxiliary verb before the subject or an interrogative word at the beginning, followed by an auxiliary verb. Example: Is he consuming food? What is your current activity?
ii) The auxiliary verbs in English can be divided, however in Hindi they cannot [5].

Problems of Teaching English In India

Teaching in India faces numerous challenges. Despite the efforts made by the English Language Teaching Institutes in Allahabad and Hyderabad to enhance English teaching in India through the creation of new textbooks, gramophone records, flashcards, pictures, teacher training, and the promotion of the structural approach to teaching English, there are still several problems that hinder effective English instruction in our country:

Neglecting the Aims of Teaching English:

The instruction of English in India does not align with the objectives of English instruction. Oftentimes, both the teacher and the student are unfamiliar with English. The teacher desires that his students only achieve a passing grade on the examination. The primary objectives are disregarded in this manner.

The role of English in the school curriculum

The issue of incorporating English into the educational curriculum remains unresolved.

The following inquiries require responses:

At what grade level should English instruction commence?

Until which grade should its study continue?

Should English be mandatory?

If the answer is affirmative, till which grade should it be mandated as a compulsory subject?

Class conditions: The following circumstances pertaining to classrooms impede the seamless instruction of the English language.

- a. Classes that have too many students,
- b. Insufficient number of buildings.
- c. Absence of furnishings.

As a result of excessively large class sizes, the teacher is unable to address individual issues. As a result of a scarcity of buildings and a deficiency of furnishings, pupils frequently experience inconvenience and their focus is diverted from learning.

Traditional Approach to Teaching English: Indian schools continue to employ the outdated and flawed "Translation-cum-Grammar" teaching approach. Our professors are not fond of the new structural and situational methods. Consequently, our students are experiencing the drawbacks of the Translation-cum-Grammar method and are not benefiting from the advantages of newer and more effective methods and approaches.

Absence of Standardised Policy: Our schools lack a standardised policy addressing the commencement of English instruction. Currently, the instruction of English is introduced at three distinct phases.

a) The early stage of education, which typically occurs between the ages of 6 and 9, begins in certain regions of West Karnataka, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and in public schools. In other cases, it may commence in either the first or third grade.

b) Middle Stage (about the age of 11 or 12 years) - In certain regions of West Bengal, Kashmir, Orissa, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, English is incorporated into the curriculum at the start of secondary education.

c) During the later stage, which typically begins at the age of 14, English is taught in some states, such as Gujarat, during the last four years of secondary education.

Inadequate Quality of Written Material - Books: The English textbooks must meet high standards. Prof. V.K. Gokak has highlighted this issue, stating that a reader who is a part of one series may be included in another series due to the distribution of patronage or the fear of being accused of favouritism. Books are assigned that have no relation to the specific needs of students in their current stage of education.

The English textbooks require enhancement in the following areas: a. Careful selection and progression of vocabulary, b. High-quality printing, c. Authentic illustrations, d. Appropriate subject matter, e. Refinement of language and style, f. Well-designed exercises and glossary, g. Relevance to the context, h. Adaptation of English stories to suit Indian circumstances.

The quality of textbooks can be enhanced by having them authored by English teachers who are actively teaching in schools. According to Guy Boas, the only individuals qualified to select these textbooks are school teachers who have a deep understanding of the material that is appropriate for their students.

Insufficient Utilisation of Audio-visual Aids: In our educational institutions, there is a significant lack of utilisation of audio-visual aids. Teachers do not utilise affordable aids such as pictures, charts, models, and flannel-boards, despite the inability to purchase pricey aids due to insufficient funding. Only during the training phase, a certain level of enthusiasm is observed among pupil-teachers on this matter. Upon assuming the role of teachers, they immediately avoid utilising audio-visual aids. The English language can be considered superior [6].

Audio-visual aids are not given proper attention in our schools.

The absence of competent educators: According to Prof. V.K. Gokak, the critical period for teaching English in schools is entrusted to instructors who lack sufficient knowledge of the English language and are not acquainted with the most recent and significant advancements in English pedagogy. This is indeed accurate. There are four primary factors contributing to the absence of effective and qualified teachers:

Insufficient training provided at the B.Ed. level.

A teacher who did not provide instruction in the English language at the B.Ed level.

Teachers' lack of initiative and originality.

One issue is the lack of proper motivation among teachers, who are primarily focused on helping their students pass exams. According to Prof. R.L. Mehta, his only objective is to help the students pass the examination, regardless of whether it is done ethically or

unethically. The outcome is a graduate who is unable to construct a grammatically accurate statement in the English language. The conventional examination system, which incorporates both oral and written assessments, is not employed by teachers. They persist in adhering to the conventional approach of assessment. Furthermore, there is no effort made to achieve the true objectives of teaching English through examination.

Inadequate Teacher Education: The teachers receive insufficient and inadequate training. At the B.Ed. and L.T. levels, there is a greater allocation of time to mandatory subjects compared to teaching methodologies. Simultaneously, the training duration is exceedingly brief. Additionally, the provisions and facilities for in-service education are extremely limited.

Insufficient Suggestive Correction: The exercise books provided to pupils do not offer enough guidance for improvement. It is necessary to meticulously review and correct all of the students' exercises, ensuring that the appropriate corrections for any faults are provided. As an example, the student has written the word 'sitting'. Mere traversal of the term is inadequate. In order for the pupil to recognise their error and learn the correct form, the teacher should write 'sitting'.

Here are several primary challenges associated with teaching English in India. Prof. Ronald Mocking has enumerated them in the following manner:

"The outdated style of benches and desks that limit movement; the poor lighting; the noise from neighbouring classrooms that may only be separated by a bamboo screen; inadequate resources for their subjects in the schedule; lack of educational materials; interference from parents or a controlling, traditional Head-Master; and lastly, the demands of an examination system that values written language and therefore appears to favour those who focus solely on grammar." Hence, there is a significant amount of work that needs to be undertaken to enhance the quality of English instruction in India.

Conclusion

Language classes should not be solely led by one person; both the students and the professors should assume multiple responsibilities. Occasionally, it is necessary for students to assume the role of passive observers, while in other instances, they should actively engage and contribute. The language class serves as a means to build essential abilities, acting as both a stress reliever and a source of rejuvenation for students. It equips them to effectively compete, endure, and excel in the competitive world we live in. The advent of new and evolving technologies has made it feasible for learning and teaching to become pleasurable experiences.

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