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1.0 Introduction

Language is a tool used for communicating and expressing a number of things. It is an extremely important means of interacting with people around us. We use language to let others know how we feel, what we need, to ask questions, etc. Humans acquire language through social interaction in early childhood and that is the age when most of us generally learn how to speak. Over a period of time we learn how to modify our language to suit each situation. For instance, we talk to children with words and a tone that is different from how we talk at a business meeting. For everyone, language is an inevitable element of everyday life. It is probably the most important medium by which humans communicate with one another. Without language, society would be a topsy-turvy mess of miscommunication, confusion and chaos.

Language has many social and cultural uses, such as signifying group identity, social stratification, as well as social grooming and entertainment. The relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted as language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. It is all the way from a child's birth. When an infant is born, it is not unlike any other infant. It is so until the child is exposed to the surroundings forming a cultural group. From birth, the child's life, opinions, and language are shaped by what it comes in contact with, the surrounding atmosphere using different forms of language. An individual learns a language but the interactions between persons or groups vary widely from place to place though all are made of three common things, flesh bones and blood, i.e. ideas, structure and expressions.

This is just because everyone's views are dependent on the culture which has influenced them, as well as described using the language which has been shaped by that culture. The understanding of a culture and its people can be enhanced by the knowledge of their language. However, the truth is that in India people from different regions speak different languages, whereas people living in England, Canada or America follow different religions but speak one common language, English. There are occasions when people share one culture but speak different languages. Still, language is rooted in culture and culture is reflected and passed on by language from one generation to the next. Therefore, when a person migrates from one state to another or one country to another, s/he can experience that learning a new language involves the learning of a new culture.

Learning a new language means learning about a new set of customs, concepts and life styles. If one learns a language without learning about the culture in which it operates, s/he learns empty or meaningless symbols or may attach incorrect meaning to what is being learnt. Therefore, while using the newly learnt language, s/he may use the language inappropriately. For instance, in Gujarat, guests are often asked 'Khadhu' or 'jami lidhu'? This, loosely translated into English, would be "Have you taken your lunch/dinner?" This shows care and consideration for those around. Even in affluent families this piece of linguistic etiquette remains constant and people still ask the same question on meeting someone. If someone from the western society were greeted in such a manner, s/he would find it awkward or that you are getting rather personal. On the other hand, 'eat' is a very prominently used verb in the Gujarati language. Apart from eating food items, a large number of things are 'eaten' while using Gujarati.

Phrasal verbs in English are problematic for most learners in India. Majority of learners of English in India, for example, are not able to distinguish uses of 'give in, give up, give away, and give out'. Similar is the case with 'take and put' as phrasal verbs.

Growing up in a particular society, we informally learn how to use gestures, glances, slight changes in tone or voice, and other auxiliary communication devices to alter or to emphasize what we say and do. We have been learning these culturally specific techniques over many years, largely by observing and imitating. Language communicates through culture and culture also communicates through language. Therefore, language is culture and culture is language. In other words, language and culture have a complex, homologous relationship. Language is complexly intertwined with culture as the two evolve together; influencing each other in the process, ultimately shaping what it means to be a feature of human civilisation. Thus, to communicate effectively in one particular language, we send a message with words, gestures or actions, which somebody else receives, interprets and responds to as required. Communication is, thus, a two-way street, with the recipient of the message playing as important a role as the sender. Therefore, both speaking and listening are important for communication to take place.

Through language we can connect with other people and make sense of our experiences. Language helps us understand a person or situation better and enables us to resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create environments where creative ideas, problem

solving, affection, and caring can flourish. People can better connect with their spouse, kids, friends, and co-workers. Thus, language helps people to establish personal and professional relationships, carry out social and business transactions and thereby make one feel comfortable even in a foreign land. Thus, it is up to us to create a warm and comfortable environment in which we can grow to learn the complexities of language. Communication skills that we learn early in life are the foundation for our communication abilities for the future. Hence, strong language skills are an asset without which a sense of helplessness and alienation is felt.

The problem lies in what happens when cross-cultural interactions take place, i.e., when message producer and message receiver are from different cultures. It is obvious that if we try to communicate with others who do not speak the same language as ours, we might find it difficult to get our message across in the manner intended by us. In other words, it is generally believed that when people go abroad where English is the main language of communication, they face multiple problems. Although English is not the most spoken language in the world, it is the official language in a large number of countries. It is even estimated that the number of people in the world using English to communicate on a regular basis is over 2 billion. Moreover, English has gained a dominant position as a business language and has become almost a necessity for people to speak English if they are to enter the global work force for business communication is often conducted in English. Its importance in the global market place therefore cannot be understated.

Many of the world's best movies, literature and scientific books are published in English. Therefore, learning of the English language can lead to access to a great wealth of entertainment and education, which in turn, can be a great help in widening one's perspective on life. When people move abroad for varied reasons, they are sure to make use of the internet where most of the content produced is in English. Thus, knowledge of the language allows the people going abroad to be in sync with people and happenings around.

A working knowledge of English has become a necessity in a number of fields, occupations and professions such as medicine, computing, hospitality industry, education, engineering, communications etc. As a consequence, all those who intend to migrate to the West make it a point to gain a sufficient level of proficiency in the language. Though learning English can be challenging as well as time consuming, it can be certainly said that it is valuable to learn the

language for it can create multiple opportunities for one's personal and professional development.

1.1 English Language: The Origin and Spread

It can be stated that the birth of English as a language was largely unplanned. For the sake of discussion, the development of the English language has been categorised into two aspects: English as a World language and English in India.

1.1.1 English as a World Language

The British Empire had conquered and colonized various territories all over the world since about 1600 A.D. The British Empire was at its largest territorial expansion after the First World War. At its zenith in the 1920s, it controlled nearly 500 million people. The empire covered more than 33,700,000 kms. It is striking that when one looks around the world at the most successful countries, many of them have British Colonial roots: Canada, United States, Australia, India, Singapore, and Hong Kong along with various other Caribbean islands. However, after 1949, the British Empire was replaced by Commonwealth of Nations. However, English continued to be the language spoken as the first or second language across the Commonwealth and spread to other areas, too.

The Commonwealth is a group of 54 countries, spread all over the globe. Over one and a half billion people (a quarter of the world's population) live here and represent nearly every religion, race and political system on the planet. Those who use English as a common working language have similar legal and education systems, as well.

Many regions, especially Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, Brunel, Singapore and the Caribbean have developed their native varieties of the language. Even though there are varieties within the spoken language, written English as used in the Commonwealth generally favours British as opposed to American spelling, with some exceptions in Canada where there is a strong influence of the neighbouring American English, as well as Australia.

1.1.2 English in India

Around 1600, the British started spreading their base in India through the establishment of East India Company. Before 1800, English education was imparted only to the children of the

European employees of the company and some Anglo-Indians. It was then that Lord Macaulay said, “To trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages”. This statement provoked the British authority to introduce English education in India.

The first blueprint of English education in India was prepared in 1792 by Charles Grant, a representative of the East India Company. With the passing of time, things changed and between 1815 and 1840, a number of Christian schools and colleges were established in different parts of India. People in India thought this was the Renaissance in India and everybody rushed to these English classes with a lot of enthusiasm and earnestness. The demand for English education gave a new twist to the story of English. Moreover, education in English had already become a premium commodity. By 1857, three Universities were started by the British in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The World Wars had their effects not only on the global economy but also on the linguistic scene. During that period, in India, a number of local varieties like – Cantonment English, Butler English etc. were heard, particularly in the military-occupied areas. In the course of interaction, Indians borrowed English words from the soldiers’ usage and the latter borrowed words from Indian languages. During the same period came India’s struggle for freedom from the English rule and English education. Indians asked for freedom through the European knowledge gained by them. Moreover, Indians even projected their identity in English. Most of the freedom fighters from Mahatma Gandhi to Shaheed Bhagat Singh made use of English. Moreover, writers starting with Swami Vivekananda to pioneering litterateurs like R.K. Narayanan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand used English as their identity.

When India became free, the White rulers left but the English – educated brown Sahibs, as they were called, took over. The Indian administration, the judiciary, the network of railway, post and telecommunication, transacted their business in English. After Independence, India became a nation state and it was intended that English would gradually be phased out as the language of administration. But there was no simple solution as to which language should replace it. At first Hindi, one of the most widely spoken languages in India, seemed the obvious choice. But following violent protests in 1963 in the state of Tamil Nadu against the imposition of Hindi as a national language, opinion has remained divided. In a country with over 1.32 billion people and more than a thousand languages, it is difficult to choose a single

national language, as the native speakers of that language would automatically enjoy greater social status and have easier access to positions of power and influence. Even Mahatma Gandhi, a proponent of a native variety as a national language, accepted that his message was most widely understood if expressed in English. So, although English is not an indigenous language, it remains as an 'Associate Language' in India, alongside Hindi, the 'Official Language of the Union of India'.

Despite continued opposition from nationalists, English remains at the heart of the Indian society. It is widely used in the media, in higher education and government and therefore remains a common means of communication, both among the ruling classes, and between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages. David Graddol in 2010 stated, "Approximately 4% of the Indian population use English. That figure might seem insignificant at present, as the percentage has reached to 10.35% out of the total population and can be stated as one of the largest English-speaking community outside the USA and the UK". In addition there are speakers of English in other parts of South Asia, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where English plays a similar role. English is virtually one of the first languages for many educated South Asians, but for the vast majority it remains a second language. This means there are speakers whose spoken English is heavily influenced by the speech patterns of their first language, alongside those whose speech reveals nothing of their racial background and some who are ranged somewhere in between.

Now, in the 21st century all countries depend on others to exist either for raw materials or products. And most of the cross border communication happens in English. It is the opinion of many that English, in a short time, will become the universal language. It is not limited by parallels of latitude, or meridians of longitude. In Asia, people follow the British variety. However, the major English-speaking countries viz. the UK, the USA and Australia are disseminating it across the world.

There is an urgent need for adoption of English so that people can cooperate with each other through communication despite differences in terms of their cultures, races, religions and ideologies. No doubt, communication in English has greatly improved due to widespread adoption of mass media, especially radio, television, computers and mobile telephones. Moreover, internet is quickly emerging as the preferred information highway to meet our daily communication needs as well as for conducting important business transactions. It is

now almost problematic for people to fully participate in the global village that we live in, without communicating in English.

1.2 Need for the Study

In India English is important for a number of reasons. First of all, people speak different languages across the various states of India, and it is difficult for a Malayali speaker to understand Hindi and Gujarati and vice versa. In this situation, English creates a bridge. Secondly, a huge store of knowledge in science, technology, medicine is available in English. Thirdly, results of the latest research conducted abroad come to India through English. If we give up English we will lag behind in research and development. Fourthly, owing to the heritage of the language, a large number of Indians are already very comfortable using the language which gives them an edge in competition with other Asians like the Chinese and the Japanese. English is even one of the languages of the Constitution of India, the High Court and the Supreme Court. Due to such reasons English is an official language of India, along with Hindi, and is widely used in both spoken and written forms as well as common (routine) and literary contexts.

People have been moving from one place to another since the beginning of time. When Asians started moving to the monolingual countries, where English was the only language heard in the streets, they realized the importance of learning the language. India is a multi-lingual country, where English is learnt as a second language at school. Most immigrants know exactly how important English is, not only to succeed but even to survive in such countries. Moreover, the situation becomes worse when they realize that the English they have learnt is not much useful for communication in a foreign country. Although English is taught in our schools and colleges, the courses are such that they fulfill only the certification criteria rather than providing genuine communication skills. Twelve years of education at school does not equip students with the required mastery over the English language. One major reason for such a sad state of affairs is use of the mother tongue for interaction in English language classes. There are long lectures in the English class, along with a tendency to translate everything. It nullifies even the students' efforts towards learning the language for it deprives the learners of opportunities to listen to and speak the language in genuine, authentic situations. In the name of English, students learn only grammar for the purpose of passing examinations and not to face any real life situation. There is no adequate practice

provided to the students to learn the authentic language which they can use for communication in real, day-to-day contexts.

This is the main reason why students face numerous problems when they migrate to an English speaking country for higher studies. Those who migrate for other purposes as well face similar problems. Many such aspects lead to the present condition of inadequate proficiency in the use of English.

The present research study aimed at creating opportunities for learners to listen to and speak English in natural situations. The program developed by the researcher aimed to help the people migrating to an English speaking country by enhancing their English language skills, especially developing their oral competence.

1.3 Selection of the Problem

Having given a deep thought to the challenges faced by people in communicating in English, the researcher selected this problem for investigation. The investigator has been running an institute where he trains students for International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Spoken English for general use. Students for IELTS in Academic or the General module face difficulties especially in the speaking module. The same is the case with the students appearing for TOEFL. During the course of his work, the researcher had witnessed confusion and frustration of the participants when there used to be a situation calling for use of English, whether in the classroom or outside.

Most Gujarati speaking young people who plan to move abroad need a special skill-intensive, use-based program in English focusing on some specific features of the contexts of the use of English. In Gujarat, especially the central part of Gujarat, there is a huge interest, verging on craze to go and settle abroad, especially in one of the English speaking countries. Therefore, a large number of them seek help of tutors to develop sufficient proficiency over the language as it is very necessary to carry on their transactions in the alien country. This is also an opportunity for the ELT professionals to test their mettle. With such groups of potential immigrants in focus, the researcher had undertaken the present research as stated below.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Development and Implementation of a Program to Enhance Oral Competence in English for Potential Immigrants

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of the study was to make students comfortable with the language so that they could use the language independently in English-speaking environments: work places, neighbourhood, educational campuses, market, etc.

The specific objectives of the research were as stated below.

- To prepare a program for potential immigrants to enhance their oral competence in English
- To implement the program
- To measure the level of effectiveness of the program

1.6 Operationalisation of the Terms

1.6.1 Development and Implementation of a Program

There are many programs available to improve oral skills in English. ‘Program’ here refers to the tasks and activities prepared by the researcher to develop competence of learners in oral skills in English. The program is developed for and implemented on potential immigrants to English speaking countries.

1.6.2 Oral Competence

Oral Competence refers to listening and speaking skills in English.

1.6.3 Potential Immigrants

The term ‘Potential immigrants’ refers to the people aspiring to visit and/ or settle down in a country other than their own. In case of the present study, the expression refers to all those young people between the age group of 18 and 24 years who aspire to go to English speaking countries for higher studies or for business purposes.

1.7 Research Questions

1. What are the linguistic needs of an immigrant?
2. What kind of situations need to be provided to these individuals for exposure and practice in terms of learning English?
3. What kind of situations are these individuals likely to face on the university campuses or places of work abroad?
4. How can the interaction and language inputs be made more authentic?
5. What are the possible sources of teaching learning materials?
6. Can the age of learners make any significant difference on their learning?

1.8 Research Design

This is an experimental study with a single group pre-test post-test design.

1.8.1 Population of the Study

All potential immigrants of the Kheda district form the population.

1.8.2 Sample of the Study

It was a convenient sample wherein those who had joined the classes between 1st June 2013 and 31st July 2013 were included for the study.

1.8.3 Hypotheses

The study was conducted with the following major null hypothesis in view.

Ho: There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the group.

Keeping in view certain variables, some supporting hypotheses also were formed.

- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of male participants.
- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of female participants.

- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of Gujarati Medium participants.
- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of English Medium participants.
- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of participants of the age group of 18 to 20 years.
- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of participants of the age 21 years and above.

1.8.4 Tools

The following tools were employed at different stages during the research.

Tool for Data Collection

- Diagnostic Test: Pre-Test
- Achievement Test: Post-Test
- Participants' Feedback
- Researcher's Observations

Tools for Data Analysis

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The descriptive statistics such as 't' value and level of significance of pre-test and post-test were used for data analysis.

1.8.5 Content Analysis of the Participants' Feedback and Researcher's Observations

In each session the researcher took the participants' feedback so as to help them do better. Simultaneously, the researcher also noted down his own observations about the sessions. These (participants' feedback and researcher's observations) were analysed through content analysis. Finally, on the basis of the analysis, interpretations were arrived at.

1.8.6 Research Procedure

After the selection of the group of participants, a pre-test was administered. On the basis of their performance in the pre-test, the participants were categorised according to their level of proficiency. Further the participants were given training through the intervention program. The entire program had 25 units spread over 50 sessions of 2 hours each. Thus, the program

comprised 100 hours of teaching, followed by a post-test. The data collected through the intervention were analysed and interpreted, both numerically as well as descriptively.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on a novel area of ESL in the sense that such a program with this kind of participants has neither been tried out nor it is available for ready use. Although tried out with a small sample of participants, the program will help any ESL speaker to communicate in English in an English speaking country.

1.10 Scheme of Chapterisation

1.10.1 Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

This chapter gave an over view of the research on hand.

1.10.2 Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

This chapter focuses on English for specific purposes as an important branch in ELT. It refers to the concepts on the development of an ESP program and presents the genera of English for potential immigrants.

1.10.3 Chapter 3: Review of Related Literature

This chapter focuses on the related literature reviewed in order to understand the problem and prepare the program, that is, the teaching learning materials.

1.10.4 Chapter 4: The Intervention

This chapter gives details of the intervention conducted to try-out the program so as to test its effectiveness. The intervention comprised of exercises, activities, tasks and the tests administered in detail.

1.10.5 Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter gives an account of the data analysed and interpreted so as to arrive at the outcome of the intervention.

1.10.6 Chapter 6: Overview, Findings, Discussion, Implications, Suggestions and Conclusion

The final chapter of the research presents gist of the research and draws implications for the teaching of English. Based on the findings of the study it offers necessary suggestions for those in the field of ELT: teachers, management, policy makers, etc. suggestions have been also forwarded for further research. Finally, the report closes with a conclusion drawn from this piece of research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter is an introduction to the research work carried out by the researcher. It discusses the status of English as a global language and its importance for potential immigrants have been discussed. Technical details of the research also form a part of this chapter.