English Language Teaching in Rural Area

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Teaching of English over ages

Even after 40 to 50 years of teaching of English, learners in India lack competence in this language. The teaching of English in India at all three levels i.e. primary, secondary & tertiary level is still fraught with a multitude of difficulties & obstacles. Realizing the demand & importance of English, in almost all the states of India, English is taught as a compulsory language & from the very first standard, even then the outcome is unsatisfactory. Here I am not questioning on the intelligibility of our learners, they are intelligent enough as showing good result in other subjects, but feel uncomfortable with English language & those who show excellent result, is totally based on cramming & rote learning.

Reasons are many. I am channeling some to portray a picture how English is being taught in India basically in Haryana where I belong to. When a child enters in school at primary level, he is taught English language as a subject not a language. Stress remains on formation of alphabets not on speaking or listening. To enhance vocabulary they are forced to crème a long list of words. When these learners enters at secondary level they are competent enough in writing & understanding English language but this is cramming based not on creativity. At tertiary level situation becomes more pathetic.

Apart from a lack of instructional resources-a general problem in a numbers of developing countries-many more has often been the bane of the Indian education system. Class size is most often very large comprising with a wide range of initial proficiency & learning needs. Over centralization of educational policies, academic inflexibility of the system not only stifle innovative & pragmatic deviation but also create a flow with the current, pacificist resignation among resourceful & well motivated educator. Teachers have very little to say in designing the curriculum, choosing the materials & textbooks or developing assessment technique. The only assessment that matters is the year end examination & students typically study for it by cramming answers to likely questions. Such questions & answers can be readily found in guidebooks or crib schools for which there has been a flourishing market, or the answers are abstracted from notes dictated by teachers in classes. Some students especially the ones from vernacular medium schools, insists that they find the study guides more useful on tests & exams than the class room instructions or studying their text books.

The English was introduced in colonies like India basically for the study of the literature and culture, the market value for literarily study has gone down steeply in the present day world. English for professional purposes like facing interviews, writing resumes, writing reports, conduction campaigns, writing letters, participation in meetings, seminars, conferences and discussions is demanded; English for communication is the mantra everywhere. English literature which was once centering of the cultural enterprise of the empire has lost its hold on English as a technology-oriented communicative tool. But unfortunately the university system of India is not sensitive to the changing needs of the society outside. Departments in English in Universities and colleges have not cashed in on the changes that are taking place in the world. When the outside world is using English for international and intercultural communication and technology purpose, universities and college in India still follow the Macaulayan syllabus and teach texts like The Spanish Tragedy (16th Century) Everyman in His Humour (1596) The Alchemist (1610) or some ancient texts that neither the teachers nor the students understand or are interested in. What shall we say? Is a tragical or comical?
Overall English teaching situation is not much different from what it was 40 years ago. A very few teachers can fully understand or mentally related to what they teach or even wax eloquent about. A cursory examination of the literary college students reveals that they are still studying many of the same authors popular in post colonial time: Oscar Wilde, H. G. Wells, Somerset Maugham, O’ Henry, A G. Gardner, Milton, Shakespeare, Shelley and so on. The randomly chosen questions from some of the recent university examination demonstrate how English syllabi are still dominated by selections from literary classics universally taught in the days of yore.

1. What is Shelley’s message in his Ode to the West Wind?
2. How does Emily Dickenson present death?
3. Justify the title Great Expectations?

Both Ramanathan (1999) and Lukmani (1992) comments that

“... the content of the literature based text books is often unrelated to the lives and experiences of the students studying them, resulting in ‘students’ feeling of cultural dissonance between themselves and the topics portrait in the literature [and ] feelings of alienation from text with overly western theme”.

( Ramanathan page 225 )

The lack of any significant changes in the English language curricula, teaching methodology, examination system, persistence of the Herculean task of teaching English in very large classes is truly saddening. The overall picture in the post modern India of today seems hardly any different from the post colonial yesterday. There seems to be three strands of student in higher education sector.

1. A majority of students graduate regional – language – medium school with some books or rote knowledge, but little communicative ability in English. They then enter English medium institution of higher education and struggle with varying degrees of success to cope with the English language requirement of higher education. Most managed to develop English largely formulaic and cliché – ridden, to meet the English related demands of their education and of the career they have been forced to choose.

2. A small segment, having graduated from English medium school (in Indian jargon “convent schools or expansive public schools ” ) enter in colleges with a glib fluency in English and enjoy an initial advantage as well as some social power over their peer group. Most of these students have acquired their English proficiency at the cost of alienation from their native language and culture &to dissociate themselves from their native language is even a matter of perverse pleasure &social self importance for some of them.

3. As for the much large group of students from regional language schools who enroll in colleges where all subjects are taught in the regional language &where English is only one of the subjects, they can &often do, go through college with very little use of English & end up pursuing career which requires only a minimal use of the language.

Teaching in rural area

Rural students are very much affected by this diseased ELT system. There is great mismatch between urban & rural students. Urban students somehow manage to learn & use English quite well in the context in which the language is used in India in spite of this deconstructing English language teaching. They are third generation learner having spot &co-operation from parents, environment &atmosphere. But rural students are first generation learner who takes English as foster language &through out life not able to cope with it in spite of their best efforts. However they might be able to write as per requirement but speaking remains out of their range. They learn without knowing what they are learning. Linguistic research says this is why a feeling of backwardness itself embosses among these learners. Most students find it difficult to understand the substance of the prescribed literary selection. The typical method of teaching consists of the teachers reading of the text in the small portion, explaining its meaning &allusions &figure of speech in simplified English or in regional language &an occasional discussion of grammar points with a question or throw in. The teaching is rarely student centered &most students have neither the chance nor the motivation to actively participate. English is taught as an academic subject – as a medium or mode of active, constructive communication & intellectualization.

Many other factors make the learning of ELT more diverse in rural area
ROLE
of
TRANSLATION
in
NATION BUILDING

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Chapter 7

Role of Translation in National Integration with Special Reference to Works of Premchand

We are on the threshold of the 21st century. In the present context of national development, translation is considered as an important aspect & component of language learning. As the world has become a global village and internet has further facilitated a better communication system, the role of translation has been widened beyond our expectation. At the national level, translation helps in bringing out national integration and at the international level it helps in improving good bilateral relations among neighboring countries. In a multi-lingual and multi cultural country like India, translation holds a paramount importance for exchange of ideas and thoughts among people belonging to different regions, languages & cultures.
Amitav Ghosh writes,
"...and the thing translation is that there is no way around it. In a country as multi-lingual as ours, unless you have really good translation, you are doomed."

Translation is not only a vehicle of reaching out the general people but it also serves as a bridge between diverse linguistic groups of India.

The translation of literature in India has assumed a special status. The ancient Indian literature heritage which is to be found in languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbransha, etc. can be preserved and even rescued only by common people. In fact in the modern world, the need for translation is greater than ever before. It is translation which traces new trends in literature. The two great epics of India - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been translated into almost all the regional languages of India and this helped in unifying the philosophical vision of India. Episodes of Krishan and Radha, the touching story of the vow taken by Bhisma Pitamah are some of the examples that have stirred the minds of Indian masses and it is through translation that these stories are available to all.

G.N. Devi classified literary translation into three categories:

- Those interested in preserving the ancient literary heritage.
- Those interested in westernizing Indian language and literature.
- Those interested in nationalizing literature in modern Indian language.

Role of translation in pre-independence period

Translation has been playing its critical role since very beginning. With the advent of British power in India and promulgation of English education, a new value structure
emerged in India. In this value structure everything British was considered to be inherently good. In literature, the most obvious consequences of this colonial value scheme was an indiscriminate institutionalization of English literature. During the 19th century it was highly fashionable in India to translate all the sundry works of English literature. The basic idea behind. The role of translation in nation building cannot be underestimated.

**Translated works of Premchand**

Munshi Premchand, who is hailed as the Shakespeare of Hindi literature, originally wrote in Hindi & Urdu. He covered many burning issues of his time in his works. All these issues became a matter of consideration not only at national but international level when these were translated not only in English but in Japanese, Russian, German, and many other languages. His novel **Godan** was first published in 1936 and is considered as a great Hindi work translated into English in 1957 by Jai Rattan & P Lal and in 1968 translated by Gordon C. Roadernel. It is now considered “*a classic*” and is prescribed as a textbook at various levels in Indian universities.

This single work would have carved out a place for Munshi Premchand in the hall of fame of Indian literature. However, this is only one star studded in the crown of his glory that constitute of great novels like Godan, Seva Sadan, Nirmala and the list is vast.. it is further intriguing to guess whether anyone ever thought as to how this one book would go on to become the benchmark of any work of fiction in Hindi and, above all, as a touchstone of social commentary in a work of fiction in India. The story of **Godan** is of epic proportions that cannot be summarized easily. Hori with his family consisting of his stoic yet shocking assertive wife Dhinia, his rebellious son Gobardhan and his daughters Sona & Rupa go through the ups and downs any peasant would go through. They are starved,
yet optimist, unlettered, yet experienced, unsophisticated yet
know the ways of the world.

The story begins with their desires to own a cow. Prem
Chand takes us through the domestic clashes between Hori and
his brothers, the ambivalence of the Zamidar, the tragic-comic
lives of the journalists, stock-brokers, and urban laborers
which are all very much relevant even today. The experiences
of Hori are quite common to millions of farmers of India. In an
age when feminism is trying to find a new definition for itself,
one can find the same strife going on in the women of Godan.
The lives of Dhaniya, Selia, Jhunia and Malti and Govindi
resonate with those of the true unsung heroes of India, i.e. its
women. Godan is a tale of many farmers in India and all over
the world who traverse through a path of pathos, momentary
joys, ups and downs - always hopeful that things will fall
in place one day. To call Godan purely a rural epic would
be a misnomer. It is as much about the lives of the society’s
intellectuals and urbanities as it is about the Zamindar, Pandits
& rustic villagers.

The treacherous money lenders, the dogmatic priest and
debt-ridden farmers are all the hallmarks of any typical novel
about rural India. But what sets Godan apart is the striking
realism, the dexterity with which Premchand portrays
the situations of human life and its double standards. The
characters also reflect a number of contradictions. On one
hand we see Dhaniya being beaten up by her husband Hori
and, on the other, we see him standing helpless, when she
uses foul language for her neighbors and her own husband.
In fact Godan can be seen as a tale of transformation. The
dogmatic Matadan goes to accept his low caste wife, Malti
who is completely cut-off from realities, becomes conscious
of the plight of the country she lives in, Metha, a doctrinaire
understands the meaning of life from Malti, and Hori accepts
the illegitimate child of Jhunia.
Nutan Yadav

Describing Godan Mulk Raj Anand said: "nervous like a knife Prem Chand cuts clear through hypocrisy and falsehood in his last novel Godan so that this work throws up strongly contrasted characters seldom seen in any precious book of his surpassry the chaos of the still feudal village with its courageous belief in future renewal". The small and big tales of Godan have outlived the test of time. After having been translated in many languages, these issues became national concerns and many reforms took place in this field.

Not only Godan but even his other novels like Nirmala, Seva Sadan and many others raised the issues of national concern. They revolutionized many minds. As they were translated into many languages as Hindi, English, Russian, Japanese, etc, they succeeded in raising the consciousness of society.

The novel Nirmala entirely deals about the life & activities of Nirmala as a protagonist as well as a victim who conveys a sensitive issue of tragic and ethical concern. Moreover, though Nirmala is perceived as a progressive indictment to the debased patriarchal society, it enables the readers to have an insightful idea into the backgrounds of feminist thinking in India.

Therefore, it is apporipate to say that Premchand shines out as a gem on the diadem of literary figures not only through his irresistible spell of story-telling but also by dint of the abiding and contemporary relevance of his themes. Not only Premchand but many others

Tamil writers like Meera Kandasamy are also doing the same miracle in national integration with their works & translations from Tamil into English and other languages.

An outspoken feminist and one of India’s foremost Dalit poet writing in Tamil & English, Meera Kandasamy voices the plea of Dalit people in Indian society. It is only due to
translation of her works that the problems of this section of society have drawn the attention of the entire nation.

Her first collection of poems Touch, with a foreword by Kamla Dass, has been published by Peacock Books in August 2006. Her poems have been published widely in India and abroad through journals like The Little Magazine, Indian Literature, Kavya Bharat, Celebration, Indian Heritage, etc. She has translated more than a dozen of voluminous books of 500-1000 pages. Significant among her translations are the writing & speeches of Viduthurai Chiruthaigaal (Dalit panther of India), leader Thol Thirumavalavan (Talisman:Extreme emotion of Dalit liberation 2003), The fiery voice of the liberation panther 2004. She has also translated the poetry and fables of Tamil Eelam poet Kasi Anandan.

Her poetry and translation is not only in the reach of Tamil people but all over the world as she voiced colonial oppression in her poetry. She believes that "Poetry can attack structures and it has an enormous political power which I try to use."

Feminist and Dalit activist Meera Kandasamy also explores the caste system in India as well as the issues of love, gender discrimination and general violence in society. She thinks that writing and translations are ways in which she can confront and reconcile with her feminine spirit, her Dalitness and her Tamilness.

To conclude, there are a number of writers and translators who are doing valuable jobs in the field of translation. By translating literary works in regional languages into English and vice versa they make many issues to be discussed at national as well as international level and thus bring the whole nation as a unit. These issues become the core of national integration. So translation truly helps a lot in national integration.
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Technology in English Language Classroom

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Victor Hugo once said:

"Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come."

The twenty first century is a revolution in the field of education, particularly in English language teaching. ELT in India is vibrant and dynamic today. English language classrooms have undergone transformation over the years because of the change in the environment of the learner.

Now English is not taken as a subject or portion to be covered in the classroom but for communication and to hone four skills of language. English has emerged as a global language, and the result is that there is an increasing tendency and scope for it. This remarkable change in ELT is due to the use of technology in English language teaching. Researches suggest that appropriately implemented network based technology can contribute significantly to experimental learning, motivation, greater interaction, individualization and global understanding. The use of technology inside the classroom tends to make the class more interesting. It breaks the monotony of traditional classroom where teachers adopt lecture method and students’ participations remain nil. Basically language learning strategies seek to enhance students’ autonomy and control over the learning process.
Learning must take place in a stress free environment in which students can be exposed to considerable and meaningful input, are stimulated to active practice, oral skills and can receive immediate feedback of individual error. Pertinent and comprehensible feedback should be provided individually and with minimum delay and should focus on those segmental and supra-segmental aspects that affect intelligibility most. CALL, CALT, Internet, Tape-recorder, LCD Projector, EDUSET, Television, Radio, etc., are different equipments in technology that can be used in English language classroom to create learning atmosphere.

CALL

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is the wonderful technique that is being used in English language classroom. It is a virtual library of information that includes dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and links for teachers-students, chat rooms, pronunciation tutors, grammar and vocabulary quizzes, games, puzzles, etc. It promotes motivation in students by personalizing information by integrating with student's name or familiar context, providing practice and activities that incorporate challenges and curiosity. Although it provides a context that is not directly language oriented, one obvious benefit to increase motivation is that students tend to spend more time on tasks and more time is frequently cited as a factor in achievement.

Literature can be very effectively and successfully taught by CALL as compared to lecture method that is traditionally applied by teachers. Macbeth by Shakespeare is very difficult to explain but easy to teach through Internet. For example, a group of students of a class can be asked to collect the pictures of the play Macbeth. Other group of same class can be asked to record the dialogue of different characters of Macbeth, other group can be asked to collect details of the period to which Shakespeare belonged. Some others can be asked to summarize the play. Other groups can be asked to make power point presentation on some other aspects. In this way the whole class can be engaged in some activity. CALL provides exercises related to poetry, plays,
grammar, fiction which students can practice any time individually or in groups. This is an effective way of learning second language as this is the process by which a child learns his/her mother language. Recitation of poems and rendering of dialogues involve students and leads to the learning of English language through play way method. Students do not speak English when they are asked to partly because of hesitation and partly because they have another option in which they can express their views, i.e., their first language. So an English teacher has to create an atmosphere in which his/her students speak and this can be easily built through the use of technology.

**EDUSAT**

The other recent technology in the field of English language learning is EDUSAT (Education through Satellite). On September 20, 2004 India successfully launched EDUSAT, becoming the first country in the world with a satellite exclusively for education. The aim is to create interactive virtual classroom all over the country to augment education at remote and rural level. The main purpose of this is to provide education to all people, primarily children from remote areas of the country who cannot go to school or colleges. The lectures in EDUSAT are conducted by various state education boards, NCERT, CBSE, Universities, etc., in a studio environment using power point presentations as well as common blackboard by large number of competent teachers and televised to the entire nation. Students attending these classes are able to ask questions to the teachers through SMS, e-mail, micro-phones, etc.

It is a revolution in the field of English language teaching as programmes are being telecasted with schools and colleges connected to it at a time. The lectures telecasted on EDUSAT are by experienced and competent language teachers. It is beneficial for students as well as for teachers. It can be used to find out different methods of language teaching. A teacher can evaluate his/her method of teaching by comparing it with others. There are many more technological tools that can be used by English language teachers to make his/her class lively and interesting but technology has its own limitations.
Limitations in the Use of Technology

The affectability of technology in English language classroom is no doubt out of question. However, Postman (1992) provides a more accurate assessment of the realities of technology when he wrote that:

“It is mistaken to suppose that any technological innovation has a one sided effect. Technology is much more complex providing both benefits and challenges in various degrees.”

Despite the influx of large amounts of money being spent on technology, specifically on information, computer and Internet technology, the result of this investment continue to be uneven. There are many hindrances in the successful use of technology.

- The first is the limitations of technology, both in its ability and availability. There is problem with cost and simple availability of technological resources like Internet and digital language labs which follow the traditional language format such as teacher monitoring.
- Computer based material can be used directly in the classroom but managing such a centre requires knowledge of various equipments. More ever most computer programs tend to be strong on presentation but weak as far as pedagogy and interaction is concerned. The simple existence of computer in laboraties does not automatically lead to students learning independently. Significant investment of time is essential.
- Face to face interaction of teacher and students in classrooms is comparatively more effective than leaving students completely dependent on technology.

Why Technology Fails at Times in English Language Classrooms?

The fact is that there has been a large financial investment in bringing technology to colleges, there has been little commensurate investment in preparing teachers to implement it effectively. Such disparity complicates the issue of technology’s efficiency in the classroom. Often technology is not implemented unless it is required even if training is offered to teachers.
Technology in English Language Classroom

- One reason for this is that from 1960s to the 1980s technology was limited mostly for the science, creating a real psychological distance for English language teaching. As a result English language teachers feel more comfortable using the text books because they are completely dependent on it.

- Teachers may resist CALL activities as they can be more difficult to evaluate than traditional exercises. Even teachers, who may otherwise see benefits in use of computer and internet, may be put off by the time and efforts needed to implement it well.

- However, the most crucial factor that can lead to the failure of the use of technology in language education is not the failure of the technology but rather the failure to invest adequately in teachers and the lack of imagination to take advantage of the technology’s flexibility.

  Graham Davies states “Technology is seen as a panacea, especially by administrators and the human components necessary to make it beneficial is ignored.”

Solutions

But all these problems do not decrease the importance of technology in modern virtual classroom. It can become the part and parcel of teaching learning process. What requires is the proper use of technology for the best results. In order to cultivate the kind of technology literacy in our students, it must simultaneously be cultivated in our teachers. Sensitization regarding the use of technology in English language teaching is prerequisite. In fact, they should themselves assess the potential that technology might hold for them in enhancing instructions and honing four skills of English language. As such it has dramatically changed the face of ELT in 21st century and will continue to do so. However, it is up to the teachers how and in what direction they might develop and use technology for language teaching.

  Technology is in fact as Garth Boomer (1985) and Eleanor Kurtz quote ‘unquiet pedagogy’ one with power to transform.
“It is about exchanging silent language classrooms for talking fill one, about the role of language in the classroom; it is about how students can be encouraged to question; it is about how teacher can build on the language & knowledge of social experience that their students bring to their classrooms. For it is through language that we make sense of the world—that we make the world.”

Almost all English educators share a vision “...that computer can have a strong positive impact on the quality and scope of their work in teaching English and language arts”. In order to reach to this fruitarian of the vision, an educator must realize that technology holds powerful enactments of cognitive and social theories of reading and writing and for this as Kajder wrote:

“Focus has to be placed on learning with the technology rather than learning from or about the technology.”

Although technology alone may not be the saving grace of English language teaching, there are important ways in which we can use it to support and enhance our teaching practice in the English language classroom—a key which is developing a critical perspective that inform our pedagogical approach.

“We choose the text we want our students to enjoy and explore, we choose the challenges and exercises, we want them to experience as writer, now we need to choose the most efficient tools for our students as learners....”

Conclusion

It is up to the teacher how she/he makes the best use of technology. It is true that technology cannot take the place of teacher but it can become a complement of teacher that can take teaching-learning process to a long run more successfully. The fact is that teacher’s role has been changed. He is no longer only a source of information he is a facilitator who can actively interpret and organize the information given to the students for filling the bridges and gaps in their English language skills.

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