

# PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDIA AND LEARNING DISABILITIES.

## **Introduction**

English holds a place of status in our country, even after more than six decades since Britishers left India. No indigenous language however has come up to replace English, either as a medium of communication or as an official language in India under the influence of nationalistic feeling and emotional hostility, English began to reassert its position. Now a day it is still urgent to discuss, what to teach and how to teach a foreign language taking in to account the objective social and professional needs of future specialists in our country. Besides businessmen, tradesman, engineers, scientists, and scholars all over the world must know English because it is the international means of exchange of information and experience. The students must learn foreign language because student of any subject, any discipline must learn a foreign language, teaching it is necessary to formulate its actual and realistic aims and tasks.

The way English is taught in our schools today is to a great extent responsible for the failure. The aims of English education and teaching are certainly very lofty and there are inadequate means to realize them. The policy makers have forgotten that English is not the mother-tongue of Indians. We must accept that the standard of its teaching has fallen vastly and that is why it is essential to know the problems of teaching English in India at school level.

## **Problems of Teaching English as a Second Language**

There are many problems of teaching English in India. Although the English language teaching institutions at Allahabad and Hyderabad have done a lot to improve the English teaching in India by producing new textbooks; gramophone records; training teachers; popularizing structural approach of English teaching. Yet there are following problems which creates unhealthy conditions adequate for teaching of English in our country.

- **Psychological problems:** It is a widespread misunderstanding amongst students that English is the most difficult of all subjects. The result and the failure candidates act as evidence to prove this fact. Hence most of the students look at this subject with a

prejudiced vision and bear the fear through the year. The psychological depression results in poor performance at the end of the year.

- **Faculty Methods of Teaching:** The methods of teaching English adopted in the schools are quite defective. The teachers do not show any interest in acquiring knowledge about the latest methods of teaching the subjects. They simply enable the students to pass the examination. The teacher feels that his job is finished as soon as he translated something of English into mother-tongue. Then they encourage the students for cramming the material.
- **Problems of Concretizing the Abstract Idea:** The teacher faces a serious problem of concretizing the abstractness of novel, poem, passage words, etc. they face difficulty in creating live pictures. The students find it difficult to understand the abstract idea and so they are unable to comprehend the lectures given by their teachers in English. If a poem on sadness is going on in the class, the teacher should teach it so effectively that the students get tears in their eyes. This type of effective teaching is hardly found in classroom.
- **Mother Tongue Interference:** Most of the problems arises due to interference of mother tongue in speaking English. Both the teachers and the students are very fluent in talking their own mother-tongue, but they forget the essence of pure language.
- **Difference in English:** English is pronounced in a very different way from almost all other languages of the world. Every region of the world where English is spoken has a different accent. When we are teaching English as second language, we must bear in mind that our students will not know the difference between US English, Queen's English, and the Sundry English of the world. This could lead to confusions.
- **Lack of Practice:** Language could be mastered by practicing all the four skills viz. listening, speaking, reading, writing. The rural surrounding does not allow the learner o practice any of these skills.
- **Lack of Audio-Visual Aids:** For teaching English well to the students, there is need of audio-visual aids like linguaphiles, tape recorder, film strips, epidiascope, etc. But usually, we find that these aids are not available in the schools. In the absence of these aids, the sounds of English and correct pronunciation cannot be taught.
- **Lack of Motivation:** In learning a second oral foreign language, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether the learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it and how long he preserves. It is known as complex phenomenon and includes many components, such as the individual's drive, need fir

achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulations and new experience, and so on.

- **Faulty Syllabus:** The prescribed syllabi of English for different school classes are not satisfactory. They are not related to the surroundings of the learners. The students can pass the examinations but in their real-life situations, they can hardly make use of anything learnt by them. In their schools, they learn many essays, stories, letters/applications but in real life situations, they find it hard to write a simple application. Sometimes they can write but their mistakes amuse others.
- **Mistakes in English:** Most of the mistakes are made unknowingly i.e., when making a mistake become habitual, we keep making the same mistake even without realizing it. And students after listening to teachers will make same mistake.
- **Crowded classes:** The size of the classes everywhere is considerably large and thus student's participation in the class work is quite impossible. This is one of the reasons why individual attention is not possible to the students.
- **Malpractices in Exam:** One of the factors responsible for the deterioration in the pattern of question setting. It is easy to predict what questions would be asked on what books in which examinations. The students simply have to memorize.

### **Solutions or Remedies**

The poor standards of teaching English in the schools need immediate checkup. Some way should be thought and then efforts in the right direction be made. A few suggestions for improving the standards of English are given below:

- **Building a Rapport with our class:** When we enter the class for the first time it is very important that you give a welcoming smile to your students and that you give a welcoming smile to your students and greet them. Our assuring smile and greeting them in a familiar manner help them bond with you instantly. When they bond with us, they will find language learning easier.
- **Applying Different Methods of Teaching:** The teacher while teaching English should use the different methods of teaching English to the students. The teacher can also use the language lab. Some of the methods of teaching English are as follows:
  1. The grammar translation method.
  2. The oral approach.

3. Audiolingual method.
  4. Communicative language teaching.
  5. Direct method.
- **Building Confidence among Students:** At the first meeting itself train students to ask some simple English questions and give their answers. Examples are ‘What is your name? Who is your best friend?’ etc. When we train them to ask questions on the first day itself, our students will show off these questions of their folks.
  - **Keeping in mind aims of teaching English:** The teacher should always emphasize on the aims of teaching English. It will help to teach efficiently. These aims are:
    1. To enable the students to understand English when spoken.
    2. To enable the students to speak in English.
    3. To enable the students to read English.

These are the primary aims of teaching English instead of enabling the students to pass in the upper class.

- **Make Students Think in English:** Exhort them to think in English. This is a mammoth task and can be achieved only after some weeks or probably months of teaching.
- **Matching Level with Students:** Being a teacher we know the language and might have got accolades for it but students cannot even frame three sentences in English properly. Students are not native English speakers; they will not be able to even ask us their doubts. We must be patient with them and encourage them to express themselves.
- **Handling Mistakes with Care:** Mistake will happen in the class, and we have to learn how to handle them deftly. If we laugh at the students, they will be too embarrassed to make any further attempts at speaking the language.

## Conclusion

Teaching English as second language is fun if we do it in the right sporting way. We must make it fun for our students too, that's the way they will learn better.