

English Language Teaching in India: Challenges and Trends

Lakshmi Subramanian

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Science, Greater Noida Institute of Technology, INDIA.

Corresponding Author: mynameislakshmi@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT

The 'English-speaking culture' is deep-rooted in India and its dominancy initiated when language imperialism started along with the aggressive colonial rule. India is a land of diverse cultures, heritage and languages with about 19,500 regional languages and dialects. Various regional challenges associated with the process of teaching English have been discussed in this paper.

Keywords- English-speaking culture', aggressive colonial rule, diverse cultures, heritage and languages.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Learning and teaching the English language in the Indian subcontinent has always been a huge challenge for both the students and the teachers. English is widely spoken all over the world and in India, this language has taken over other Indian languages because of colonial rule. Later this language became a part of the curriculum in various academic institutions and also became the primary language of communication especially among the elite class (Alam, 2020). Despite its popularity, the language experienced a few challenges in Punjab and all these challenges were created by the native ruling power through opposed the idea of making this language as a medium of instruction and a primary language of communication.

In our country learning English symbolizes better culture better intellect and Ina way better education and living. For most of the matters of Judiciary, education, literary and administration English is mostly used. Undoubtedly English is the most significant language in the country. English has the power of national language which makes people all around our multilingual nation to communicate with each other with ease and convenience besides that it's the link language for international communication. Despite the fact that English is not even the most spoken languages in the

world it still remains the official language in more than 53 countries and also spoken as the first language by 450 million people across the globe besides that English is the most common second language around the world.

Learning English language is important as helps in your overall growth, gives you access to news and information, and provide apt career opportunities and communication skills in modern world. It's considered the global lingua that which allows people from across all countries to connect and communicate with all. 50% of internet content is in English thereby proving its supremacy over other languages.

The Government of India uses English for most of its communication and this language and shrined in our constitution. Besides that, English is also the official languages in more than seven union territories seven States and official language in seven other states and one union territory. This language bridges all the communication gaps brought in by our regional languages and effortlessly evens out the differences thus enabling effective communication. English also serves as the official language in more than 45 countries of the world.

It's very important to know this language if you want to enter the Global workforce as this is still the dominating language and its more of a necessity than choice to learn this as cross border political, business, economic and cultural communication happens in English. Among the million movies produced and books

published in the world most of them are in English, hence knowledge of this language gives you access to a wealth of information and entertainment.

II. ASPECTS OF ENGLISH SPEAKING

Incomplete, improper, incorrect or inaccurate use of English even if it is not a hindrance to communication can cause irritation to people who can speak good English. Mostly people judge others by their capacity to express themselves in English. Subsequently those people who are poor in English are treated infernally by others and consider them as people who did not get any quality education.

These days in the age of globalisation proper use of English language is considered a crucial part of any job. Several terms and expressions are blatantly misused by random English speakers who haven't learned it systematically. This language serves as an indispensable tool in our lives and careers. English language has evolved through centuries, adapting to various cultures and has eventually emerged as the lingua franca despite his humble origins.

Undoubtedly English language is thoroughly established and has gained unparalleled importance. It's indeed the symbol of globalisation through its continued evolution. Just as it has its advantages it brings in an array of challenges as well. English being the primary source of communication not only of former English colonies but also others who were untouched by British imperialism. It's the dominant language of Banking sector, entertainment industry including Hollywood, and in global business. While for some it serves as a useful language for others it's a necessary one. In the field of education, it stands out the most as students are most comfortable in this language as this is most accessible to students and teachers at international level.

English still remains the primary language of press as books, study material, brochures, manuals, are all written in English. It's simply a passport to any global community. Multinational companies prefer employees who are proficient in English and the command over the language is a pre requisite. English language lifts the barriers created by other languages and cultures helping us gain access to opportunities, people and careers. Being the most dominant language it has its impact in every conceivable field of work.

III. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Among several challenges associated with teaching English language the foremost problems faced by English teachers is phonetics and pronunciation. To a great extent primarily understanding the language is also

a challenge just next to rules of grammar, confusing sentence structures, complexed tenses and slangs. The speech pace, accent, colloquialism, sound detection also prevails partially. The existence of complicated rules and exceptions of a few makes it more complicated and the mastery of the language is quite challenging. At times English spoken by a nonnative speaker becomes a challenge as its hard to understand as it will be heavily accented. Learning idioms and phrases is also an ordeal as the same words if they are out of context or it's practical meaning does not mean the same. Lacking a conversation partner is also another challenge for the ones who they know may not English.

Aim

The aim of this study is to learn about the latest trends and challenges associated with teaching and learning the English language in India.

Objectives

- To examine the significance of teaching English in India.
- To analyse the importance of colonial rule in making English predominant in India.
- To evaluate regional challenges associated with teaching the English language in India.

Questions

RQ1: What is the significance of teaching English in India?

RQ2: What is the importance of colonial rule in making English predominant in India?

RQ3: What are the regional challenges associated with teaching the English language in India?

Significance

The majority of commercial and private institutions have made this language compulsory and they play a major role in sensitizing this language. Teachers of these institutions have normalised conversing in this language and they also focused on the personal growth and development of the students by establishing an 'English-speaking culture' (Kumar and Agrawal, 2020).

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of teaching English in India

English is spoken known and read by most educated people all over the world. The majority of children in different parts of the world speak English in their schools or educational institutions either as their mother tongue or as a foreign language. Al-Mutairi, (2020) opined that there are many countries in this world including India where English is not spoken as a mother tongue and consider this language as a second language for its utilitarian values and culture. Mahatma Gandhi also accepted the importance of this language and he mentioned this language as the language of diplomacy and international commerce. The following figure shows the percentage of Indian people and their English content consumption trends. English consumption trend is higher among students.

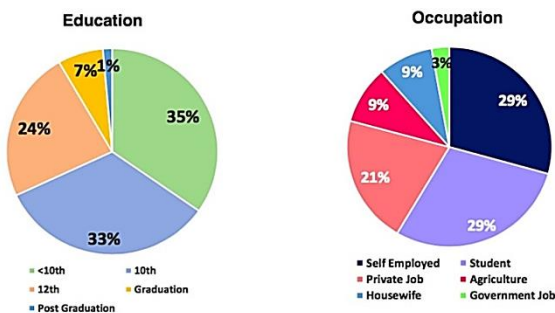


Figure 1: English Content Consumption Trend in India

(Source: Trak.in - Indian Business of Tech, Mobile & Startups, 2018)

The importance of colonial rule in making English predominant in India

The dominance of the English language in India is believed to be related to the direct influence of British colonial rule. India was one of the most powerful states and it was under British influence for more than 200 years. According to Attanayake, (2019), the dominance of this language can also be signified as language imperialism as British people encouraged international trade and businesses using this language and as a result, this language became superior in this country. In the following year language provided the citizens a way to escape from the controversial social class system and for this reason, the majority of the upper-class people adopted this language. Male literacy is higher in India as compared to female literacy and for this reason, English proficiency is higher among males.

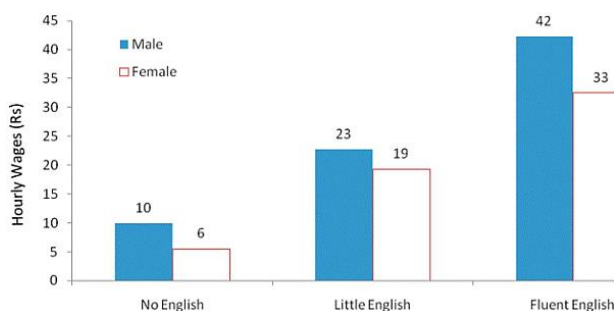


Figure 2: Gender Wise English Proficiency in India
(Source: Trak.in - Indian Business of Tech, Mobile & Startups, 2018)

Regional challenges associated with teaching the English language in India

Translation difficulties can be regarded as one of the most prominent challenges which have been created because the majority of the children speak different languages and they find it quite difficult to translate phrases and words from their mother tongue to English. In rural areas, there are not English-speaking environments which has created many phobias and misconceptions. According to Mukherjee and Bernaisch, (2020), Problems related to limited vocabulary are

common as India has about 19,500 different languages and dialects and only 121 languages have been chosen as major languages. Huge linguistic diversity has developed serious challenges for both the teachers and the students. Regional vocabulary and grammar rules are also very different from English and hence direct translation is also not possible. In addition to all these, grammar issues, peer pressure and mother tongue impact are other major regional challenges (Kumar and Agrawal, 2020).



Figure 3: Regional Challenges Associated with Teaching English

(Source: Adhikari, 2019)

Literature Gap

This study has not focused on analysing the difference in position and importance of the English language in both the colonial period and the modern world.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To conduct detailed research to understand the latest trends and challenges associated with teaching English in India, an interpretive research philosophy, an

inductive research approach, and a descriptive research design have been chosen. All the secondary data will be collected from authentic databases such as Google Scholar and Direct Science. After collecting data they have been analysed thematically (Newman and Gough, 2020).

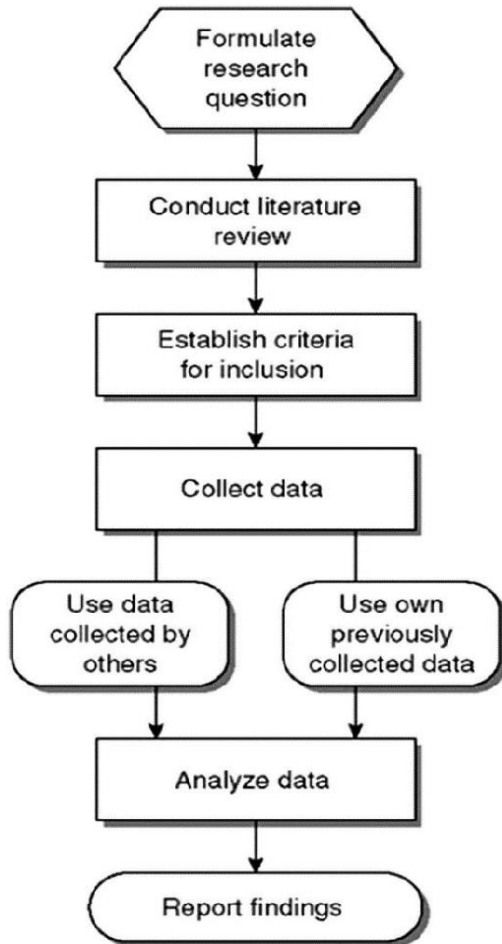


Figure 4: Framework of Secondary Research
(Source: Newman and Gough, 2020)

VI. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Analysis

It is believed that this language has many rich literary treasures. For this reason, English holds a special position in the Indian education system. By teaching this language teachers can also modify their own skills and remove their personal knowledge gaps (Tschurennev, 2019). British missionaries also played a major role in incorporating this language into various universities and colleges throughout India. The British people also established this language as the blueprint of industrialisation to achieve economic supremacy. The number of urban English speakers is higher than rural English speakers and this figure can be supported by the fact that the tendency of teaching English is higher in urban areas (Figure 4).

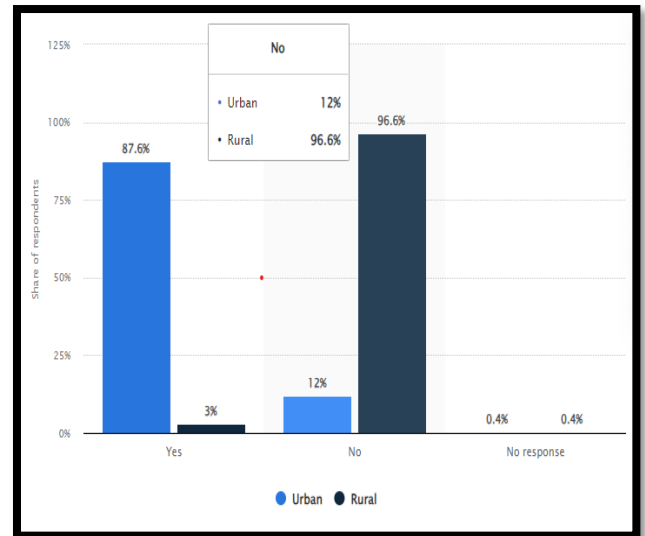


Figure 5: English Speakers in India in 2019
(Source: Trak.in - Indian Business of Tech, Mobile & Startups, 2018)

Discussion

Due to resistance like regional challenges and opposition from various Indian states, this language has still remained complex and they have developed a phobia when it comes to the idea of learning English (Attanayake, 2019). This tendency has made teaching difficult and teachers may also find it a little difficult to communicate with people due to the existence of multiple regional languages and dialects.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

After considering the significance of the English language in the modern world the tendency of the government to make this language compulsory cannot be denied. The language has exhibited immense credibility in conducting international business and hence this language is often regarded as a ‘professional’ medium of communication by the majority of the government and non-government and international bodies. Teachers with a B.Ed degree are more accustomed to English and hence their proficiency is also higher (Adhikari, 2019).

Recommendation

- To eradicate fear and timidity surrounding speaking in this language, all the students need to be encouraged to try conversing in this language.
- Teachers need to arrange fun activities, workshops and exhibitions to make this language common among the pupils.
- More resources should be allocated by the educational institutions and more opportunities must be created so that both the teachers and students can complete their tasks successfully.

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