

Problems of Teaching English in India

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Definitions of “Language”

1. According to Sapir, “Language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols”.
1. According to Trager, “a language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which the members of a society interact in terms of their total culture.”
2. According to Chomsky, a language is “a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements”.
3. According to Hall, Language is the “institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols”.
4. According to Webster’s Dictionary, language is “a systematic means of communicating ideas or feeling by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks having understood meanings.

Functions and Purposes of Language

Language does several functions and is used for multiple purposes.

1. Communicative function
2. Non-communicative function
 - i) Emotional expression
 - ii) Social-interaction
 - iii) The instrument of thought.

Fourfold Objectives of Teaching English

English is an important international language. According to Thompson and Wyatt, there are four aims of teaching English to Indian school children. They are:

To understand simple spoken English.

1. To understand simple written English.
2. To speak simple, correct and idiomatic English.
3. To write simple, correct and idiomatic English.

The Objectives of Teaching English

The main objectives of teaching grammar are enumerated as follows:

1. To develop students' insight into the structure of English language.
2. To develop a scientific attitude about the language.
3. To enable the pupils to express their ideas logically and correctly in speech and writing.
4. To teach grammar as a rule-governed behaviour and not as mere rote learning.
5. To enable the pupils to develop their understanding about the rules of English grammar through use and practice of its structures.
6. To develop their mental abilities of reasoning and correct observation.
7. To enable the students to assimilate the correct patterns of the language without rote memorization.

In order to test the comprehension, some questions are asked. F.G. French has stated the following purposes of comprehension questions:

1. To ensure that all the pupils have grasped the general meaning.
2. To make a special study of the vocabulary used.
3. To use the passage for practice in language work and
4. To enliven the wits of pupils through intelligent questions and puzzles.

Problems of Teaching English in India

The teacher of English in India faces various problems and has to teach despite various limitations. Some of these constraints are:

1. Poor class room condition, the physical environment itself is not conducive to learning with poorly ventilated rooms. The classroom equipment is also inadequate.
2. The strength of the students is quite huge and teaching a language becomes quite difficult. No individual attention can be paid.
3. No audio visual aids are provided and English is taught like any other information-oriented subject.
4. The purpose of teaching the language is not clear. No clear objectives of the teaching of English are conveyed.
5. Different syllabi for different schools and at various levels of the teaching of English result in irregular results.
6. Poorly designed textbooks which do not use realistic situations from the students' life also contribute to the poor quality of English education in the country today.
7. Faulty methods of teaching are adopted. Instead of following the structural and situation approaches, the translation-cum-grammar approach is followed. The natural learning of the language and absorption of the structure and situational use of the language does not happen.

How to solve Problems of Teaching English

1. Oral work with the student reading and speaking the language has to be done. Textbooks should follow a graded vocabulary.
2. Should be appropriately illustrated,
3. Subject matter should be relevant, should have good language and style, an extensive glossary and well devised exercises.
4. Textbooks should be accompanied with students' workbooks, teacher's handbook, supplementary readers, and the necessary audio-visual aids like charts, records and tapes.

French permits the use of the mother tongue with students' explaining the meaning of the words, provided the teacher immediately gets back to English. Total translation of the English textbook is not permitted.

The aim of teaching the language is that the students should speak, read and write English perfectly to this end any written work done by the students should be corrected thoroughly and mistakes should be corrected.

The examination system should focus on the concept of mastery of the language shown in the skillful use of vocabulary and sentence structure rather than on rote learning. Fluency in spoken English should also be evaluated.

Suggestions for Improved Teaching of English

1. The three language formula should be followed with the regional language as the first language, Hindi being the national language, being the second language and English being as a third language.
2. Teachers to be trained. Summer schools, crash training programmes, workshops, seminars at regional and national levels could be held to periodically to upgrade the language skills of the teachers.
3. Orientation programmes, workshops, refresher courses for inspection staff should be conducted frequently
4. Textbooks should be written by experts and supplementary reader, workbooks, handbooks, audio-visual aids should be provided with them.
5. Evaluation of the students' language skills should focus on vocabulary, sentence structure, word-order, use of prepositions, degrees of comparison, verb forms and tenses and on spoken language and pronunciation.

Problem Stated

What is the extent of problems faced by teachers in teaching of English at High school level in Madurai District?

Significance of the Study

There are serious misconceptions among students towards learning English language. The students generally feel nervous while learning it as it is a foreign language. Our educational system, the teachers, parents and the methodology we follow in our English classrooms are collectively responsible for this. Something should be done to make the teaching learning process of English language interesting and joyful without any anxiety. Many researchers and teachers have already tried out the solutions to the current problems in the field of English language education.

Everyone is aware that (a) English is a foreign language in India, (b) yet, it is an internationally accepted language of the modern world and (c) the area involves a lot of challenges and scope from both teaching and learning point of view.

It is a well-known fact that language is the medium for transfer of knowledge. First-hand experience is always superior to linguistic experience. There are many limitations to take first-hand experience. And, in this global world, where everything has been commoditized (whether it is good or bad, is another issue), our rich experience can be brought to 'knowledge market' only when it is packed in beautiful linguistic wrapper. The inability to communicate in the knowledge-market alienates the individual from society and he is deprived of the benefits of globalization and liberalization. This has become a grave and serious issue in a country like India wherein languages of varied groups exist.

Language acquisition consists of four fundamental skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing. And communication in any language is a performance of the speaker wherein he displays meticulously his mastery over all the four skills. Every skill is equally important in enhancing one's linguistic potential. We do agree with Chomsky's concept of innate grammar that every human being is empowered to acquire any language as he biologically possesses the innate grammar imprinted on his cortex.

Teaching of English at high school level is done mostly by teachers who haven't got their masters degree in English. They are not expose to various techniques of teaching English. So there are some inherent difficulties which the teachers have to face in the classroom. This prompted the investigator to undertake a study on the problems encountered by the teachers while they teach English.

Objectives of the Study

To find out the extent of Problems faced by teachers in Teaching of English at high school level.

Hypothesis-3

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers working in Aided school and the teachers working in Corporation school.

Table 3 Difference in Mean Scores of problems of Teaching English - Type of Institution

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Aided	40	86.25	7.58	1.36	NS
Corporation	40	88.75	8.80		
df= 78		t _(0.05) = 1.96		t _(0.01) = 2.58	

Reference

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers working in Aided school and the teachers working in Corporation school.

Hypothesis-4

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of gender.

Table 4 Difference in Mean Scores of problems of Teaching English - Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Men	60	88.50	8.37	0.78	NS
Women	60	87.323	8.27		
df= 118		t _(0.05) = 1.96		t _(0.01) = 2.58	

Reference

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of gender.

Hypothesis-5

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of qualification.

Table 5 Difference in Mean Scores of problems of Teaching English - Qualification

Qualification	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
High	60	82.90	7.45	6.04	S
Low	60	92.02	8.96		
df= 118		t _(0.05) = 1.96		t _(0.01) = 2.58	

Reference

There is significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of qualification.

Hypothesis-6

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of experience.

Table 6 Difference in Mean Scores of problems of Teaching English - Experience

Experience	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
High	60	83.38	6.65	5.37	S
Low	60	91.38	9.39		

df= 118 t_(0.05) = 1.96 t_(0.01) = 2.58

Reference

There is significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of experience.

Findings

1. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers working in Government school and the teachers working in Aided school.
2. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers working in Government school and the teachers working in Corporation school.
3. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers working in Aided school and the teachers working in Corporation school.
4. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of gender.
5. There was significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of qualification.
6. There was significant difference in the mean scores of problem of teaching English among the teachers in terms of experience.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are as follows

1. This study was limited to the teachers working in Madurai District.
2. The experimental was limited to a period of a few months.
3. Exhaustive analysis was not attempted.

Educational Implications

Identification of problem faced by the teachers in teaching of English may be helpful in importing education to the students. Proficiency in English is a must for all he

studentat tertiary level. Moreover students who pursue professional courses must attain mastery over English to get themselves appointed. Besides good number of people go abroad. In India where Hindi is the national language everyone ought to learn English which is the link language in India. Hence teachers should exert themselves very much to improve the skills of English Language among students.

Conclusion

The scope of study pertained to construction of a tool to identify the problems faced by the teachers in teaching of English at high school level. The levels of problems faced by the teachers have been identified. It has been found that teachers do not differ much in facing the problems in teaching of English. Irrespective of type of institutions and gender. Teachers with high experience and high qualification do not face much problems. Teachers with less experience and less qualification need exposure to different methods