

A Systematic Review of Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language in India: Challenges, Opportunities and A Way Forward

Diksha Dashrath Ubale¹ and Dr. Kunal D. Jadhav²

¹Research Scholar, Dept. of Lifelong Learning and Extension, University of Mumbai.

²Professor & Research Guide, Dept. of Lifelong Learning and Extension, University of Mumbai.

ABSTRACT

India is a country with diversity. There are multiple languages, religions, regions, cultures, customs and traditions. Unity in diversity is the specialty of the country. Secondly, education is the combined responsibility of central as well as state government. They differ in planning, priority, providing assistance, schemes, policies, curriculum, training programs, and funding to the great extent. These entire make the teaching-learning process bit complex in terms of planning and execution. Third, English is taught as a first, second or third language as per three language formula. As a result, the respective governments, boards /universities, educational institutions and teachers have to make the customized policies catering the typical requirements of a particular region. Therefore, the present article seeks an answer to the question: What are the best practices, methods, tools, models, approaches and technologies of teaching and learning English as a target language in India? The present article reviews the notable researches published within the domain and analyzes the challenges, opportunities offered in India.

KEYWORDS: English Language, Indian English, English Teaching, English Communication, COVID-19

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most effective & powerful means of social transformation. It enables an individual to explore the growth opportunities. An individual is a part of family. Naturally, he/she becomes a bread-winner for them. When families are stable, independent; they form ideal society with peace, harmony and cordial relationship. Such societies shape the nations defining future success and glory. In short, an individual has a lion's share in the progress of any country. Generally, the progress of an individual is based on 'education'. It simply means education is the foundation of all. Naturally, it is considered to be an investment. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan said, "*The future of India is shaped not outside of the classroom but within the classroom itself.*" The use of English as Medium of Instructions in India is considered to be the best practice. It has enlarged the scope of application in terms of international identity, qualitative framework, employment opportunities and entrepreneurship to the great extent. English is taught and learnt as first, second, third, foreign language in various boards and universities in India. It has been serving the diverse requirements altogether. The present study explores the various methods, purposes, objectives, and practices of teaching and learning English as a second language in India.

Scope and Significance of Study

It is interesting to explore the feasibility of the use of the high-end technology and best practices while adopting English as a second language in India. There are challenges as well as opportunities to teach and learn English language. However, it is the technology which can bridge the demand and supply gap in this regard. It was challenging enough in terms of students' engagement, student-teacher interactions, motivation, recognition, resource availability and so on. The role of advanced technology will certainly minimize these challenges. The researcher aims to explore the potential of educational technology in order to exceed the expectations from all the stakeholders. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), Moodle, Video lecture series, Gamification highlight student-centred approach. These are proved to be fruitful exercises for limited target audiences. It will be interested to substantiate its feasibility and effectiveness if it needs to be applied in Delhi to the great extent, on a large scale. It is a must to examine whether technological revolution will support distance education in order to promote interest, freedom of access 24*7, quality education and great satisfaction. The present study is significant as it covers the wider aspects of teaching-learning practices, techniques, technologies in India.

Problem Statement

India is a country with diversity. There are multiple languages, religions, regions, cultures, customs and traditions. Unity in diversity is the specialty of the country. Secondly, education is the combined responsibility of central as well as state government. They differ in planning, priority, providing assistance, schemes, policies, curriculum, training programs, and funding to the great extent. These entire make the teaching-learning process bit complex in terms of planning and execution. Third, English is taught as a first, second or third language as per three language formula. As a result, the respective governments, boards /universities, educational institutions and teachers have to make the customized policies catering the typical requirements of a particular region. Therefore, the present article seeks an answer to the question: What are the best practices, methods, tools, models, approaches and technologies of teaching and learning English as a target language in India?

Objectives of Study

The present article has the following objectives:

- To analyze the existing trends in teaching and learning of English in India
- To understand the implications while teaching and learning English in India
- To review the notable studies relevant to English language area
- To demonstrate the best practices, tools, techniques to teach and learn English language more effectively

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The research method applied for the present study is the Systematic Literature Reviews (SLR). It is a method used to identify, evaluate, analyze and construe the relevant existing literature. The keywords such as “English Language, English Communication, Teaching and Learning, English as a Second Language(ESL), E-Learning, Online Education, Indian English” etc. are used to collect data in the form of research articles, working papers, industry reports, case studies etc. from reputable databases like Reserve Bank of India, IBEF, Scopus, Science Direct, Research Gate, India Today, Google Scholar and other resources which are relevant and latest with respect to the topic of present study. There were thirty-three articles, working papers and case studies collected. However, after shortlisting, twenty research studies, twelve research papers, one book, one case study, three international reports, one international survey (one Bulletin and one working paper) were reviewed in-depth relevant to topic and publications from 2005 to 2021.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The power of technology has revolutionized the media, businesses, marketplaces, governments across the globe. The blend of globalization and technology influenced the global economy since last two decades to the great extent. Further, it is evolved in the form of information and communication technology (ICT). The industry-academia interface consider the use of ICT to improve the quality of higher education, provide better access, affordable education, transparency, integration etc.

‘The National Policy of Education 2020’ underlines the growing importance of ‘outcome-based education.’ According to *Aspiring Minds* and other surveys, only 20-25% graduates are employable in India. The communication skills are amongst the top 3 most desired skills by the firms (Sangar, 2020).

The use of information and communication technology can bridge the widening gap between industry and academia to improve the English language learning of college/university students. The present study aims to analyze the use of ICT as a tool for English language learning in higher education system in India. It is more relevant in the present context of COVID-19 global pandemic outbreak in ‘The New Normal.’ It is observed that the schools and colleges have prepared variety of English language courses depending on the level, understanding, background boards/ universities and demographics and expected goals of education. The factors such as skills, content, quality, accessibility, flexibility, evaluation are considered in this regard (Golechha, 2020).

Table 1: Thematic Analysis

Sr. No.	Author/s	Title of Study	Type of Study	Key Areas Covered
1]	Anderson, J. and Lightfoot, A. (2019).	The school education system in India: An overview	Report	Growing population and demand for English; use of ICT
2]	Bhat, R., Singh, V. K., Naik, N., Kamath, C. R., Mulimani, P., & Kulkarni, N.	COVID 2019 outbreak: The disappointment in Indian teachers.	Research Article	Stress of teachers in planning and execution, lack of digital infrastructure

	(2020).			
3]	Daniel, J. (2020).	Education and the COVID-19 pandemic.	Research Article	Learn From Home, Online Education, Mobile Learning
4]	Hanus, K. (2016).	Factors That Influence Learning by English Language Learners (ELLs)	Research Article	Gender, Age, Parental Support, Socio-Economic conditions, technology etc.
5]	Hanumanthrao, C.R. (2011).	Teaching English Language: Problems and Remedies.	Book	Defective methods of teaching, overcrowded classes, lack of uniformity, equivalence in evaluation
6]	Kachru, Y. (2006).	World Englishes in Asian Contexts	Report	Use of English as a First/Second/Third/Foreign language; Native and Non-Native varieties of English
7]	Govt. of India-Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020).	National Education Policy 2020.	Report	Expected outcomes: Skill-based, outcome-based education, Education for all
8]	Nunan, D. (2015).	Research Methods in Language Learning.	Book	Research in English-Innovative pedagogies for English teaching-learning: CALL, MALL, Language Laboratories, Surveys
9]	Parel, M. (2008).	English Language Teaching, (Methods, Tools and Techniques)	Book	Communicative Approach, Peer and Group Learning; Synchronous and Asynchronous learning; Group discussions
10]	Schneider, E. W. (2007).	Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world.	Book	Native English: US, UK, New Zealand, Australia Non-Native English: India, China, Japan, Europe; English as a business language
11]	UNESCO. (2021).	India Case Study Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia.	A Case Study	Situational Analysis: Larger than life impact of COVID-19 on Education in Asia; degrading the overall quality, challenges to access online education; social equity at affordable cost for all; digital constraints; minimizing rural-urban divide; innovative approaches

IV. FINDINGS OF STUDY:

- The Indian education system is one of the largest systems in the world. It serves the diverse needs of millions of students in different languages, boards and universities.
- The uniformity, integrity, equivalence can be feasible through the meticulous planning and execution of National Education Policy-2020.
- English is taught and learnt as a Second Language with different approaches, methods and techniques in India depending on the level of students.
- COVID-19 pandemic has larger than life impact on the teaching-learning process of English language like any other subject. The online platforms were utilized. However, they were not as effective as face-to-face classes.
- Technology empowered the teachers to design and deliver online classes of English language with audio-visual aids in lesser time with recording facility.

- English in India is taught as a non-native variety of English. The speakers of English gain competitive advantages in terms of jobs, career opportunities within India and preparing for foreign assignments like IELTS, TOEFL etc.

V. CONCLUSION:

All of the above discussion shows that English is the one of the widely taught and learnt languages not only in India but across the globe. It has gained the momentum since independence due to influence of British Empire and then growing demand in the business world. There are certain challenges while teaching and learning English in India such as lack of quality teachers, mother-tongue influence, absence of research, defective methods etc. While technology offers various competitive advantages such as course creation, accessibility, evaluation, record maintenance etc. COVID-19 pandemic outbreak influenced to the great extent. However, online learning continued with minimum negative impact on students.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Anderson, J. and Lightfoot, A. (2019). The school education system in India: An overview. British Council. ISBN: 978-0-86355-944-0
- [2]. Bhat, R., Singh, V. K., Naik, N., Kamath, C. R., Mulimani, P., & Kulkarni, N. (2020). COVID 2019 outbreak: The disappointment in Indian teachers. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, 50, 102047. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.ajp.2020.102047>
- [3]. Cook, V. 1991. *Second language learning and language teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [4]. Daniel, J. (2020). Education and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Prospects*, 49(1), 91-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09464-3>
- [5]. Golechha, M. (2020). COVID-19, India, lockdown and psychosocial challenges: What next? *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 66(8), 830-832. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0020764020935922>
- [6]. Genessee, F & Hamayan, E. 1980. Individual differences in second language learning. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 1: 95-110.
- [7]. Hanus, K. (2016) 'Factors That Influence Learning by English Language Learners (ELLs)', *BU Journal of Graduate Studie in Education*, 8(2), pp. 19–22.
- [8]. Hanumanthrao, C.R. (2011) *Teaching English Language: Problems and Remedies*.
- [9]. Kachru, Y. (2006). *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*. (Larry E. Smith Eds.) Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
- [10]. Kachru, B. (1992). *World Englishes: approaches, issues and resources*. *Language Teaching*, 25: 1-14. Cambridge UP.
- [11]. Kumar, T.V. and Malekar, I. S. (2017). Difficulties in teaching English to rural students. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)*, Vol. 4(1), Pp. 31-41. DOI: <https://www.ijrar.org/papers/IJAR1903996.pdf>
- [12]. Kapoor K. and R.S. Gupta. *English in India*. Delhi: Academic Foundation, 1994. Print.
- [13]. Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
- [14]. Modiano, M. (1999). "Standard English(es) and educational practices for the world's lingua franca". *English Today*: 15/4: 3-13.
- [15]. Nunan, D. (2015). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. New Delhi: CUP.
- [16]. Parel, M. (2008). *English Language Teaching, (Methods, Tools and Techniques)*
- [17]. Prem Shankar (2003) *Teaching of English*, New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation
- [18]. Ram Avtar Tyagi, *Effective Methods of Teaching English*, New Delhi: Alpha Publications.
- [19]. Rintaningrum, R., Aldous, C. and Keeves, J. P. (2017) 'the Influence of Student Background Characteristics on Proficiency in English As a Foreign Language: Indonesian Context', *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*, 10(2), p. 112. DOI: 10.12962/j24433527.v10i2.3068.
- [20]. Sangar, V. (June 2020). 'Decoding NEP 2020 – The Road Ahead', Published by Macmillan Education (India) in a compilation titled *Embracing Change*.
- [21]. Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.
- [22]. Venkateswaran, S. *Principles of Teaching English*. Delhi: Hindustan offset Printers, 1985
- [23]. UNESCO. (2021). *India Case Study Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia*. DOI: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/16511/file/India%20Case%20Study.pdf>
- [24]. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2021). *Education: From disruption to recovery*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>