

Challenges in English Language Teaching

P. LINUS HERTA

M.Phil, Research Scholar,

Research Department of English,

The American College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India.

8508437852.

Abstract

Language is dynamic and is arbitrary. To teach literature is an easy task while teaching language to a learner is a real hard task. For humans, language is not innate and human language has discrete, distinguishable sounds so they depend on various sources to acquire a language. The only way of acquiring a language is through learning. Learning is facilitated by different factors. A learner acquires the target language from his surroundings, media, from the people he interacts but top of all classroom learning plays a pivotal role in learning a language. Classroom learning is a mutual process in

which both the teacher and the student involve, enhance and enlighten each other. This leads to few challenges for both the teacher and the student in the learning process. A teacher has to keep it simple and make the students get the essence of his ideas. A teacher should know the calibre of the students and teach accordingly. On the other hand a student has to respond correctly and should try to apply the concepts. ELT classroom learning, challenges both the teacher and the learner. My paper throws light on the challenges faced by both of them. The more the challenges are the more the innovations can be made which makes learning not a tedious and a monotonous

task. Challenges in English language teaching will open portals for novel methods of learning.

Keywords: classroom learning, challenges, teacher and student relation.

Introduction

Language is a medium of communication. Without knowing the structure and the proper usage of a language one cannot effectively communicate. So language plays a significant role in day to day life. Acquiring one's mother tongue does not involve much labour but learning a second language gives the learner a hard and a challenging try. Learning or acquiring a language is the ability to read it, speak it, write it and understand it when it is spoken. In the present era learning a language is facilitated by variety of tangible factors like media, e-learning, and with the aid of advanced technology. Recently there mushroomed few language classes which assure the audience of

acquiring a language within thirty days.

With all these progressive methods taking their plight, classroom teaching had taken its stance from the very beginning of our educational and learning methods. The teachers and the students support and enable each other. To quote Bacon, "Language most shows a man: speak, that i may see." This quote of Bacon expounds the essential role played by language. To teach a learner who has been newly introduced to the source language allows high end risks and challenges to the facilitator and the learner. The challenges faced in ELT classrooms pave way for creative and innovative methods to make the learners understand and comprehend what they learn but all the while these methods had not effectively been an ultimate solution to the challenges but had been used as replacing tools which would establish a better way of learning. Challenges have been a part and parcel of the teaching and learning process. Both

the student and the teacher face challenges in their own way. In reference to literature the challenges are comparatively less because literature reflects reality and it is the art of living. On the other hand in the context of teaching a language the teacher has to be objective and has to start from the very basics and a student while learning a language creates a second identity. Language is the launch pad for literature. One has to gain proficiency in language to plunge into literature. There has been a pre-constructed notion that literature classes are lively and make the learner easily relate to the concepts and ideas discussed by drawing examples from real life incidents but language classes are way too boring because it mainly focuses on grammar, structure and the four skills. Being put into this confined notion, language teaching take tough grounds to explicitly express itself to the learner. Therefore English language teaching

involves much challenge for both the teachers and the students.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to expound the challenges faced by both the facilitator and the learner in an English language teaching classroom.

Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses of this explanatory study

- (1) Teachers fail to motivate the students individually and their main objective is to finish the portion
- (2) Teachers focus only on the classroom goals not beyond it.
- (3) Learner's morbid fear to learn English and their lack of interest.
- (4) Learners ego towards the target language.

Research Questions

The following are the questions addressed in the research paper

(1) Why do the English language teachers fail to give the students their desired knowledge? (2) Why do innovative methods in teaching English language one way or the other fail?

(3) Why do learners find it difficult to converse in English even though they are exposed to all skills?

Review of Literature

Rivers (1983) discussed the importance of discovering the student's needs and motivating them towards the goal. Arora (2012) elucidated on the learner centred approaches.

Discussion

Firstly, let us throw light on the challenges faced by the teacher in an ELT classroom. In a bird's eye view Teachers are looked upon as the disseminators of knowledge and the ones who enlighten the students in all aspects of their life. The role of teacher is to teach. Their profession to teach make it look very easy

from outside but a teacher faces many challenges in and outside the classroom. To narrow down, let us discuss the challenges faced by a teacher in an ELT classroom. The language teacher in all cases need not necessarily be a native speaker of the language so the first challenge a teacher faces is to gain a thorough command over the subject because students mostly imitate their teachers. Secondly the teacher should make the students understand the structure of the target language because students are familiar and are thorough with the structures of the source language. A language teacher has to make it clear to the students about the differences first yet this is not an easy task because the students are soaked for years together in speaking, reading, writing and listening in their mother tongue. Next the teacher should be the bright light that shines upon the students to drive out their ignorance and fear. Students face morbid fears in

learning a new language and in case of English it is very intense. Most of the students do not develop a love for English for they find it difficult to learn. The students face an ego in learning a language. The teacher should nourish the students by positive comments and outlook towards learning it. To motivate the students is definitely a hard task for the teacher. Motivation is an abstract factor which will effectively aid the learning skills of the students if it is done in the right way. Motivating a class as a whole will not help effectively but a teacher should find time to motivate the students individually. A teacher's main challenge is in knowing the students culture, background, linguistic capability and their emotional state. The main challenge faced by a teacher in ELT classroom is in knowing the calibre of each student and designing the syllabus and the teaching methods accordingly. A single student's progression does not project the whole

performance of the class. So it is hard for the teacher to implement a lesson plan which will enable the students of mixed abilities. It is difficult for the teacher to get in pace with every students learning speed because as for the class it is an amalgam of both potential students and slow learners. The teacher should make it to the point that he should not bore the high calibre students by repeating the drills and thereby making the class tedious and should not rush up so that the slow learners will find it difficult to catch up. As language is primarily speech it is a challenge for the teacher to make the students pronounce and spell the right word. Since language is ambiguous the teacher should make the students understand the different meanings of the same word. Example: Bank, mobile. As for writing the teacher's challenge is to make the students understand the different audience for whom they write. Teachers should make the students not to mess the

existing inherent structure of their mother tongue with the target language's structure. Since speaking in English is practised only in English class the teacher has to constantly motivate the students to speak in English in every other class. The teacher should not only teach the students but also give them ample opportunities to use the language. Creating such opportunities demand creativeness and tireless effort from the side of the teacher. Since language is taught to students from different discipline a teacher should be able to draw references from their main stream study to expound the concepts in an easy way. There is always a stark line between the language teachers and the subject teachers but they should cross their lines to make the learning process easy in classroom. A language teacher has to be creative and should think out of the box often. Language teaching has to be a balanced mixture of activities and classroom teaching. As for the language

games it is not always convenient. Certain games are impractical to apply in a classroom ambiance so for this kind of inconvenience a teacher should find alternative methods to engage the students. Language teachers should not be like that of the clichéd subject teachers who demand the passiveness of the students in class. The teacher should make the students involve in classroom activities. A language teacher should cater to the needs and wants of the learner. So a teacher should adopt learner centred approaches. English language teacher to the optimum should avoid using the source language in the class but it is really a difficult task because it is hard for the students to understand certain abstract ideas and concepts and in the side of the teacher he would beat about the bush rather than keeping it simple.

The teachers are not the only people who face challenges in an ELT classroom. The students do find it difficult. In an ELT

classroom the student faces the challenge of learning something alien to him. The student is at ease while speaking his mother tongue because he hears it often, listens to it and is used to it but learning a language which is totally new to him subjects him to fear and quite a times makes the student feel inferior. With all these things weighing him down, a student cannot proceed learning a language which will be an ultimate failure. The learners are afraid to commit mistakes because they are shy. This is universal but a learner should be ready to refine himself in the process of learning thereby by to confront all the challenges without any fear. The learner is much used to his mother tongue, the structures of it and how they work it gives them a hard time to imbibe the new structures of a language which often leaves them confusticated. The students use translation to understand English but this will not help them in a long run because if they are asked to speak in English it takes

a whole lot of time for them to think in their mother tongue and translate it and then to speak. So the students must not encourage themselves to think in their mother tongue but to think in English which will improve their learning skills. To think in English by students can be rightly defined by John Keats's quote, "To think is full of sorrow" but a student should practice it. The slow learners in the class should not be discouraged or feel bad for making mistakes in learning process because "Learning is not being successful but becoming successful". A student should always focus on the goal rather than washed out by the temporary failures. A student should try to understand his errors and should not feel hesitant to clear his doubts. Many students concern of learning English is to crack their final exam but they have to downplay the final exams and should focus on the rewards of learning English can fetch them.

Summation

English language teaching in the midst all its challenges has find a way to widen its arena by the innovations made in this field. A language teacher should play the role of a facilitator rather than considering them as the authoritative power and the students should develop a desire rather fears to learn English. The challenges in ELT classrooms pull the student and the teacher out of their own zones and put them in a space to confront it thereby shaping them for betterment.

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