



PREDICAMENT OF RURAL STUDENTS IN LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

Language is the instrument which can be helpful to share information with one another. In ancient time, people used gestures and symbols to transmit information. The symbols were written and spoken form in the following days. Thus, the language was developed with the help of each period. Many languages are created by human in different places of the world for communication. Today, nearly 6,500 languages are spoken by people all around the world. Among this, English language is considered to be the very important language by the majority of people. English language has a great impact on all fields because of that mass dominant language in the world. Especially it is an undeniable fact that English has a huge impact on education. In many countries, English is taught as a second language. Learning second language is a highly challenging for rural students in comparison to urban students. English language proficiency is negligible in rural students. There are many factors that make rural students lagging in the English language. This paper throws light on the obstacles caused to the rural students in learning English as a second language and the effective remedies to enhance their English language proficiency.

Key Words: Rural students, ESL, LSRW, Obstacles, Remedies.

Introduction:

English is the widely spoken language by over millions of speakers in worldwide. There are three hundred million native speakers (those who speak English as first language) and seven hundred and fifty million non-native speakers (those who speak English as second language). English language is spoken in hundred and eighteen countries across the world. It is recognized as an official language of fifty-nine countries. English is the dominant internet language, compared to fifty-four percent of web content is in English language. It is also the language of scientific and technical periodicals. More than fifty percent of the world technical and scientific periodicals are in English. Besides English is the common language in which people living in different countries communicate to one another during their travel, business or in other contexts. Thus, English language is unique as the popular language known by the majority of people all over the world. So, learning English as a second language is the essential one for today's period.

Second Language:

A second language is any language that a person uses other than a first or native language. Contemporary linguists and educators commonly use the term L1 to refer to a first or native language, and the term L2 to refer to a second language or a foreign language that is being studied.

English as a Second Language (ESL):

English as a Second Language is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. That environment maybe a country in which English is the mother tongue (e.g., Australia, the U.S.) or one in which English has an established role (e.g., India, Nigeria).

ESL Learning:

There are various advantages of learning English as a second language. Learning English is easy to communicate with anyone in the world. A person can increase self-confidence and courage by acquiring knowledge in English. Besides the personality increases by learning English. Learning English takes a high value in society as the dominant influence of English language overcomes the world. Furthermore, the people can brighten in any field if they learn English well.

Significance of the Study:

English is spoken fluently by several of the people living in different places of the world, although learning English as a second language is difficult for many. Particularly the rural students are highly stumbled in learning English as a second language. Many of the rural students do not understand the importance of English language. So, they are not interested in developing their English language skills. Such students are learning English only for the purpose of examination. With the result, after they complete schooling and go to college, they cannot understand, speak, read and write English without any confusions or errors. Even if they have various talents but being weak in English, it is difficult to express their talents. This causes them to feel inferiority and fear. So, they leave quietly without revealing their ability. Due to this, there is stagnation in the development of students' education. In this context, this study will be useful to English faculty working in rural

areas to understand the leading cause of problems in learning the ESL to the students and solve those problems with improve their standard.

Obstacles Cause to the Rural Students in Learning ESL and their Remedies:

Illiterate Parents:

Many of the rural student's parents have not completed their school education and many others do not know how to read and write. There is a little awareness about English, the second language. Thus, it is impossible for the children to discuss English with her parents at home. Hence, the rural children mostly speak at their homes only in mother tongue. Moreover, the rural students are not able to get rid of the doubts in English lessons to ask their parents. Illiterate parents are not able to pay attention to the level of their child's educational developments, the ability of their children to do homework and that the school subject portions are being studied by their children on a daily basis. Such parents do not go to school and discuss with teachers about their child's educational status. Rural areas are also less encouraging as proper motivation from the illiterate parents for the improvement of the students. Teachers can focus as much on student's welfare. Teachers can create awareness for students and their parents on the importance of education and the second language. The teachers can immediately communicate with their parents about the student's activities, discipline and educational level in the classroom.

Insufficient Income:

Many of the students in rural schools belong to backward family in the economy, wage earners. Their income is adequate to meet daily housing needs. Such parents do not have the opportunity to improve their child's English language skills. For example, buying English newspaper every day, sending their children to special training classes which are taught to speak fluently in English and taking drills for English language improvement via the websites. Besides there are some students' family situation that cannot even meet the essential education needs of their children. Thus, the economic atmosphere of the family is a great barrier to improve the student's English Language skills. Teachers can know the economic situation of students and take appropriate measures. For instance, English newspapers are now provided to promote English language proficiency of students in all schools. There are only a few students who are best able to use this opportunity.

Residential Areas:

Educational facilities in rural residential areas are limited. For example, public library, tuition centres and etc. In addition to these, the number of educated people is also limited. This makes students to ask for their doubts in English subject from their neighbours and the situation is low. Students who are growing in that environment are always speaking only in the mother tongue and are denied the opportunity to speak English at other times except at the time of school. Moreover, the technology and internet are the essential for students to perform their projects, assignments and other educational activities. These are something impossible for rural students. Because here a few who know to collect educational resources with the help of technology and the website. To prevent this, teachers can conduct special classes in the school and train deprived students in English. The students 'doubts in the English subject can be cleared in the classroom by the teacher. Teachers can encourage students to speak English as much as possible not only in schools but also in other places.

Student's Fear and Inferiority:

Generally, inferiority complex is more in rural students. They compare themselves with urban students. Hence, there are some wrong opinions about them in their minds as the urban students are better than themselves and they are more intelligent and industrious. Besides, there are also misunderstanding that urban students have the only ability to speak English. They underestimate their capacity that they cannot excel in English like urban students. This type of inferiority complex in the rural students is a barrier to their development. Besides, the fear of the students also gives them a barrier to English language. Many of the students are reluctant to speak in English, fearing that the teacher will be punished by the mistake of speaking in English and others will ridicule the way of speaks. Such inferiority and fear are barrier to the development of English language skills by the rural students. The teacher can also try to develop such inferiority and fear which is naturally seen in the students. The teacher can explain well that English is only a language and not the knowledge. The teacher can be creating well aware to the students that they do not need to develop fear and inferiority about the error of speaking a language. The teacher can give confidence to the students that they can learn the second language in the same way how they learn the mother tongue.

Influence of Mother Tongue:

Influence of mother tongue is one of the factors that hinders learning second language. Mainly rural students are suffering greatly because of this. Usually, every one speaks in the mother tongue, thinking about the words also in their mother tongue. They use same language whenever they gathering words in thought and then they speak sentences. So, they can speak easily and fluently. In contrast, when they try to speak the second language, they change this method. They use mother tongue for gathering words in their thought then they try to translate the words from first language into second language for speak. So, they are struggling to speak in second language. Influence of mother tongue also due the cause of spelling error and pronunciation error. For example 'iskool', 'istudent', 'plezar' and other such words.

The main reason for influence the mother tongue is the lack of vocabulary. Students can avoid these kinds of problems by improving their vocabulary. Teachers are advised to give students the instructions to improve their vocabulary. For example, teachers can create the habit of reading on students. The habit of reading will help the students to improve their vocabulary. Even if the students improve the vocabulary, their English-speaking ability will increase. Next the errors in pronunciation, in the rural areas there is a lot of pronunciation errors committed by the students. If the teachers try, they can easily correct this. Teachers can teach tongue twister to students so that students can practice enthusiastically.

Role of the Teacher:

The English teachers working in rural schools keep teaching the subject in their mother tongue rather than teaching them in English. In English class time, even teachers talk to the students in their mother tongue. The teachers also fail to advise the students to speak only English in language period. Because of the untrained teachers, English as a language is prevented naturally in school. Apart from these factors, many teachers teach English only from the Exam perspective. Their aim is to make high score for students. They fail to care enough about the knowledge and language skills of the students. The role of teacher's less contribution is mainly due to the students lingering in the English language.

Therefore, teacher training can be given to the students to excel in all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. To improve the language skills of students, teacher can arrange some programs and encourage the students in English classroom such as essay writing, elocution, quiz, spell bee, book reading, debate and etc. Furthermore, teachers can be kind and caring towards students. Only then will the student respect the teachers and they will voluntarily come up to ask the teacher to clear their doubts without fear. Also, their desire to learn English will naturally generate them. Thus, each teacher can be guided to the improvement of the students.

Teaching Methods:

The teachers do not greatly focus on the teaching methods in rural schools. If they complete the portion, they think their duty is over. In some schools, the teacher handles two classes for students studying in Tamil medium and English medium together. English medium students easily understand but the Tamil medium students are unable to compensate for the teacher's velocity. English is the second language for such students; the understanding of the subject knowledge is in question mark. Thus, the students with low learning skills and the students with high learning skills, the teacher use the same teaching methods for both of them.

Lack of Academic Facilities:

Academic facilities are very undeveloped in rural schools. Some schools do not even have such facilities classrooms, seats and libraries. Library, English language lab, ICT lab and audio-visual room are an important role in developing the English language literacy of students. Such educational facilities are not available for rural students. Though the educational facilities are set up in some schools, they are not in use for the improvement of students.

The qualities of the academic facilities in two ways affect the students. Firstly, a lack of resources restricts a student's ability to pursue different learning opportunities and extra curricula. Second, a lack of facilities has a negative impact on the satisfaction of a teacher's job which undermines their motivation to teach. Libraries, English language lab, computer lab, audio visual room and auditorium are essential facilities for English language learning.

Conclusion:

Mahatma Gandhi said, "If village is destroyed, India too will be destroyed". Hence, the development of rural people is a very important one. Mainly the quality of education of the rural students should be raised. In many classrooms, the teachers are the active speakers and learners are passive listener and this scenario needs to be changed. Students should be encouraged to take part in communicative based activities. The teacher can enhance their English language proficiency by gradually improving listening, speaking, reading and writing skills which four are considered the more important skills in English language. The teacher needs to upgrade themselves. The syllabus in English need to challenge and updated, and cater to the academic and professional needs and requirements of the student community.

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