

## CHALLENGES IN 21ST CENTURY ELT CLASSROOMS: WAYS TO OVERCOME

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### **Abstract:**

*The paper analyses ELT class room and its shift from pre pandemic days to post pandemic period. New opportunities have been created in teaching English in the online classes due to pandemic situation persisting all over the world. It created chaos in the teaching learning process. Pandemic times have opened new doors for challenges, whereby the quality of attention during the sessions, assessment as per parameters and physical attendance have not been quantified accurately. Eventually it leads to dilution and gradual drop in the effective communicative potential of majority of learners. Even now the offline class room has difficulties in engaging and motivating learners to enhance various skills. The limitations of students exposure towards technical tools in learning language is another chief concern. Language learning in general is unfortunately given less importance and taken for granted by a section of the student community especially during pandemic times. Improper weightage in the form of credits that determine student career is another challenge. Lastly the mode of examination pattern mostly written also poses a threat to language learning(spoken). This paper brings out most effective ways and rubrics to mitigate and nullify the existing problems and issues from root level exploration and provide tools to overcome in a acceptable manner. It gives an insight and best means to promote speaking skills overcoming MTI and inhibitions, which were multiplied post pandemic days due to lack of personal supervision.*

**Keywords:**ELT class room, teaching learning process, MTI, post pandemic scenario, challenges, effective ways.

### **Introduction:**

Needless to say, English language has been elevated to the status of ‘global language’. Many countries in the world speak this language and also many learners strive to achieve incredible proficiency for different levels of communication. To fulfill this desire, a learner has to focus on three main technical areas of the language. Here they are: vocabulary, grammar and sounds.

It can be observed that different roadmaps that suit learners to acquire the relevant language skills in order to meet the demands of various needs of the institutes, workplaces and societies. To serve these purposes, educated elite is approachable; also advanced technology, and other facilities are readily accessible to the learning-conscious. However, a typical learner is often ambiguous at the beginning and sometimes fails to get positive results. This paper discusses the challenges and problems of the learner and concludes with sound recommendations to achieve sure learning outcomes.

### **Background and Brief History**

My topic is drawn from the insights of ‘Post Method Pedagogy’, an approach to ELT proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2003). This approach focuses on moving beyond methods. It considers three main parameters that take into account the social context of the classroom and teacher’s understanding of what leads to learning. These three parameters aim at enabling the teacher to first persuade the student’s social needs otherwise they cannot satisfy students’ pedagogical needs.

### **The parameters are as follows:**

1. **Particularity:** By the notion of Particularity, Kumaravadivelu suggests, “any language pedagogy, to be relevant must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a

particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in particular socio-cultural milieu.” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.34)

It means that the sort of techniques teachers use depends on where, when and to whom they are teaching. In fact, the situation determines how of teaching, yet the socio-cultural and political issues affect the kind of teaching; therefore, the teachers should have a high understanding of the situation.

2. **Practicality:** According to Kumaravadivelu, “the teachers who try to derive a theory from their practice can understand and identify the existing problems; and therefore, they can opt the best way to teach”. (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.35)

So the method should be applicable in real situation; otherwise, the practice-theory relationship cannot be approached; in other words, a theory is of no use unless it can be applied in practice. Thus, this characteristic motivates teachers to make theories from their practices and then practice what they have theorized.

3. **Possibility:** The last parameter Kumaravadivelu mentions is Possibility, which means that the method should be appropriate socially, culturally, and politically. The teachers and students attend the classroom with all their beliefs and thoughts and it cannot be stated that their personalities inside the classroom is separate from their personalities outside the classroom in their everyday lives. These three dimensions of postmethod pedagogy are interwoven and “each one shapes and is reshaped by the other” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.37).

#### **The Post Method Teacher:**

There are several people involved in the whole process of education, namely, administrators, policy makers, curriculum planners, teacher educators, textbook writers, and teachers. However, the most important one who shapes and reshapes the learning outcome is the teacher. In fact, failure and success of an educational enterprise depends on the teacher. Thus, teachers should know their noteworthy and supreme roles in education (Richards and Renandya, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

#### **Process Syllabus:**

Developing from moves towards communicative language teaching, recent innovations in classroom practice have emphasized the value of collaborative learning, learning centeredness, autonomy, and shared decision-making in the classroom. The developments in this area have come from a desire to create forms of classroom interactions that give responsibility to students in the management of their learning.

An important characteristic of the process syllabus is that it does not provide a pre-selected learning content. It provides a framework for teacher and learners to create their own syllabus in the classroom, thus allowing for changing abilities, learning needs, and perceptions in the learners, without specifying particular content, methodology, lexis, structure, or grammar. The teaching-learning process therefore provides significant lesson content, and it is unnecessary and unrealistic to plan content without consulting the participants.

Breen (2000) explains that instead of the teacher representing the centre knowledge and the student revolving on the periphery like a satellite, process syllabus had started to see learning as interactive, negotiated, and reflective. A process syllabus addresses the overall question: ‘who does what with whom, on what subject matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what learning purpose?’ (Breen, 1984, p.54)

Negotiation provides a context for learners to articulate and refine their prior understandings, purposes and intentions for new learning. As the humanist psychologists discovered, learners work harder if they can explore and articulate their own ideas, ask their own questions and seek their own answers.

Learners need time and space to think things through and to talk, read, write and act themselves into new understandings. They need to confront willingly the risk of the problematic and to identify uncertainties. They also need a sense of continuity and progress. This requires reflection. None of these requirements is likely to occur by a learner without support and feedback from others. Negotiating with a group of other people who are the sharing learning experience can clearly provide such support.

Being an active agent of one’s own learning in a classroom provides the collective resources of gathering of people, including a teacher who probably has greater experience of helping people to learn than others in the room. Agency in learning in such situations also involves contribution of a group of learners engaged in shared decision-making. This situation can also provide mutual support. From this Point of view, negotiation is not strictly a characteristic of what is commonly referred to as ‘learner-centered’ long pedagogy. In designing a Process Syllabus, a student takes responsibility of his own learning. Teachers would benefit by getting feedback about their own teaching during the course.

Thus, the Process Syllabus focuses upon three processes: ‘communicating, learning and purposeful social activity of teaching and learning in the classroom’. (Breen, 1987, p.166)

#### **Role of Attitude and Motivation in Second-Language Learning**

Second language learning depends on two social psychological variables - attitude and motivation. This has a direct impact on learner’s self-esteem. In order to comprehend and link self-esteem with language learning, it is important to understand the Role of Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning.

Attitude is defined as a set of beliefs developed in a due course of time in a given socio-cultural setting. Although it necessarily so not determine behaviour but can have some impact on it. It is studied that positive attitude facilitates learning. If the learner is reluctant to learn or he/she does not have a positive attitude, he/she

does not produce any result. Language learning is affected by the attitude and motivation. Motivated and demotivated students have different perceptions of their class, teacher and curriculum. Their perceptions are responsible for their attitudes. An individual's perception of the class, perception of the teacher, peer group, syllabus and his/her awareness for future needs affect his/her attitude to language learning.

There is a need to study Teacher's attitude towards the students and the student's attitude to learning.

Motivation according to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary (2004) is:

(i) The reason or reasons behind one's actions or behavior

(ii) Enthusiasm (p. 587)

Gardener (1985, p.10) defines 'motivation' as 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity'.

Gardner, Lambart and Smythe (1979, p.10) have done extensive research on attitude and motivation and their correlation with linguistic performance of learners. They suggest that an L2 learner needs to be psychologically prepared to acquire a second or a foreign language, as it is a part of different ethno-linguistic community. An L2 learner is required to impose elements of another culture into one's own life space (Khanna & Agnihotri:1994). Therefore, he needs to be psychologically prepared. There are other factors like age, anxiety, aptitude and amount of exposure responsible for the language learning. The present investigation is also being done to study the influence of these factors on the target group learner. It is also being observed how the classroom environment and teachers' attitude influence the attitude of target learners.

**The challenges of a learner while enriching vocabulary in English:** In the event of learning vocabulary for second language acquisition, a learner especially a newbie encounters many experiences but, some cannot achieve the expected results though they invest their time and efforts. If this is deeply examined, some notable reasons will appear on the screen:

**Unable to get right words that convey speaker's expressions clearly:** At the outset, a learner feels difficult or inconvenient to find right words to translate his visual content into speech. Lack of organized/ well-planned practice is the source of this problem. Some speakers do not know the other forms of the word what they use blindly. For instance, the word 'water' is a noun and can be used as regular verb (water-watered-watered-watering-waters). Besides, when aspirants do not maintain familiarity and relation **with the lexical items**, it leads loss of natural flow of spoken content. To illustrate, if an engineering graduate has to speak on a political topic in a group discussion, he must have an ability to use the relevant vocabulary of the topic. This is possible by maintaining acquaintance with political related articles, news, debates etc.

**Enough-attitude:** After acquiring little knowledge, some learners stop inquiring about new words or phrases since they feel that limited collection of vocabulary is sufficient to manage their communication. Also, it can be observed that some individuals whose medium of instructions is English come to conclusion that further exploration is not-necessary. These kinds of learners generally write their action plan only to certain destination and leave the pleasure of the rest of journey. As a result, the speaker loses efficacy to communicate with all walks of life.

**Learning vocabulary only for the specific purpose:** it is generally seen that many professionals with relevant academic degrees also have poor language skills to draw the attention of listeners or audience when situation demands. These people think within the box and learn limited vocabulary that serves only the immediate purpose. For example, if a tour guide may pronounce beautiful expressions (like: thriving city, picturesque view, breath taking, heaven-like) to discharge his duties on regular basis. When the same employee is given an opportunity to represent his state or country at a seminar on tourism, he has to address the group of people with utmost confidence. Satisfying with limited vocabulary makes the learner less-confident keeps him away from game-changing opportunities.

**EMI English as a Medium of Instruction:**

- English must be the medium of instruction to habituate learners towards learning all subjects in English language.
- As a part of any subject English becomes a link language to acquire knowledge and wisdom.
- It enables to shed away insensitive towards comprehension in due course of time
- Subject discussions in English become more advantageous for their examination and written communication.
- Seminars and paper presentations competitions add more popularity along with medium of instructions.
- Teacher student conversations in English as well as doubt clarifications make English an integral part of their life.
- It leads to CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning

Technical Solutions to ELT(English Language Teaching) class room short comings :

As per the above information and data we can come to a convincing conclusion that language learning is a laborious task. But the viable resources and simplify the task with the following ways and by adopting a unique approach to various classes. The following are effective ways to overcome the flaws in language teaching

1. CALL : Computer Assisted Language Learning
2. TBLT : Task Based Language Teaching
3. ABLT : Activity Based Language Teaching
4. P-D-F Assessment and grading and observations of changing proficiency.

**Tailor Made Listening And Reading Tips For Effective Learning And Advanced Learning To Meet The Global Needs In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Listening Module

**IELTS LISTENING TEST (Paper Based Test)**

**Duration : About 40 Minutes**

**Number of Questions: 40**

In the test, four audio files (a dialogue, a monologue, a group discussion, and an academic lecture) are played and the examinee has to listen to them attentively to answer the 40 questions. The audio files fall in 2 categories: 2 Academic Recordings and 2 Social Recordings.

Question types:

Filling the form

Map completion

Multiple Choice questions

Completing the sentence

Complete the summary

Short

answer

questions

Read the Instructions carefully especially the word limit since all numbers are words.

Example: ' in 1980' is a two word phrase. Every number consider to be a word.

Do not divide the compound word. For example craftsman, Riverside (not 'crafts man', Not 'river side').

Notice the speaker's accent and pace at the beginning and get habituated to that till the section ends.

It is better to give answers in capital letters because it doesn't create any confusion and also you can avoid the mistakes in punctuation. For example 'Mr. Brown' is a proper noun and "brown" is a common noun. Similarly, Hamlet and hamlet.

Do not repeat any word which is already placed before the blank.

For example: the question is "Place: at \_\_\_\_\_", to which answer is **super market**. Write only 'super market' not 'at super market'

Don't try to understand everything, spoken by the speaker always be ready to catch the answer.

Sometimes answers come quickly and sometimes answers can be heard with longer intervals.

Example: though the answer to the question number-3 comes immediately after question number-2; but for the question number-4 the answer you may come after a long interval. In the case, don't think that you have skipped the answer.

Sometimes the answers are changed. In that situation, don't fall in the trap because the speaker apologises and gives the correct information. So it is suggested to write the later details.

Ability to paraphrase helps you score good marks especially in Multiple Choice Questions, Summaries also to complete the sentence.

Example: Let the incident be 'X killed Y'. You may find 'Y was assassinated by X'. According to the context, this is the right answer.

Since this test has no negative marks, do not leave the blank unanswered.

Use pencil. Write the answer on a rough page and carefully transfer the answers to the answer sheet.

Very Important Tip: when you practice the listening every day, you will develop your own strategies to clear the exam with maximum score.

Always be familiar with latest test recordings on Youtube. This helps you know the latest changes. (Example: Example answer may not be done for you; 4 Sections are called 4 parts etc.)

Practice all the tests from the book, sent by British Council or IDP, after you get your name enrolled for the IELTS Test.

It is quite obvious that languages skills, test taking strategies, and presence of mind equally contribute to the success of a test-taker.

**Reading Module :**

**Reading Tips to Comprehend Passages**

**Time : 60 Minutes**

**Number of Questions: 40**

**3 different passages**

**Types of questions:**

Match the heading to the paragraphs(List of Headings)

True / False / Not Given

Yes/ No /Not given

Sentence completion

Filling the blanks in the paragraph

Multiple Choice Question

Match the Information

Diagram completion

General Tips for reading comprehension:

At the outset, understand the main heading of the passage. If you are not familiar with it, leave it and proceed to read the passage.

Strengthen the ability to skim and scan the passage. As a result, you can know what is discussed and where is discussed. Do not read slowly.

When you read quickly read the first two lines of every paragraph because they may be followed by examples or elaborations.

Don't be panic when you do not understand the meaning of the first paragraph. Without further delay, start reading the next paragraph and so on.

Know whether question type follows the order.

Read the instructions carefully especially number of words.

Do not spend too much time on one question.

Based on the question, you have to understand overall idea of the paragraph or complete meaning of a sentence.

When you search for the answers, sometimes, you have to locate the particular sentence and there may be a need to paraphrase that. Also, there is a need to search for a specific phrase or a word.

Maintain familiarity with the keywords in the passage throughout your reading.

Since a passage consists of number of words, phrases and clauses and you must be smart enough to identify the useful information according to the given question. You can acquire that by the habit of reading different contexts.

It is quite obvious that languages skills, test taking strategies, and presence of mind equally contribute to the success of a test-taker.

The most important tip is: when a learner practices more tests, he or she can develop their own test-taking strategies. it is generally expected that learners have to have shortcuts in their mind to achieve the task accurately in the given time.

The above mentioned modules can be accessible to ever Second Language Learning Situations as per Gardeners Observations.

English is the second language in our curriculum to promote and enable the learners to understand its significance and relevance throughout their academic journey. In a Telugu speaking State, Telugu becomes the First Language. The student has the choice of choosing the Third Language. Other than their Mother Tongue, every student is bound to learn the Second Language i.e. English. At the Plus Two level the situation is different. The students generally focus on their core subjects through the medium of their state language. English learning has been less prioritized as a result at graduate level the level of comprehension and ability to listen and grasp the content becomes a herculean task. As given in the table every teacher has to promote listening and reading as input skills. Later they become output skills like speaking and writing.

It is observed that these learners do not read anything outside the classroom. They do not have many opportunities to use language both inside and outside the classroom. This is due to the fact that the languages are considered to be curriculum subjects, in the sense that they are mainly content based and even the testing is content based. This is the reason why most students are not motivated to read newspapers, magazines, short stories, books etc., in English.

In most of the Colleges, many students do not come forward to use English for all communicative purposes. Most students remain silent as far as English is concerned mainly because of the lack of exposure to language at School Level. Besides, English is generally treated as a subject in which they have to get pass marks. Since there is no emphasis on learning English, the students are not encouraged to read anything outside the class. Because of the proliferation of local channels on television, the students do not show any interest in watching English News, Shows or other Programs in English.. Therefore, the exposure to language outside the classroom is minimal.

**Access to the Internet:**

The rural sections of the society have scanty access to the internet. They do not seem to use the computer or the internet. At least the urban society accesses the internet and involves themselves in web reading activities. But the rural section cannot, because of limited facilities available to them. As a result, they are far behind their Urban counterparts as far as using the language is concerned. Hence, the rural section is diffident; anything written in English frightens them.

Nevertheless, these students somehow manage to pass the examination by mainly memorizing large chunks of texts without actually understanding what they have produced. The students fail to understand and get adequate information mainly because of their inability to use English effectively.

As a result they are neither able to write nor speak. They do not notice the written symbols or the mechanics of writing as their vocabulary is poor because they do not use the language. They are the poor users of language because they literally read nothing in English outside their class. Even if a few read newspapers, it is in their own language. A majority of them depend on television for both information and entertainment. Television might keep the learners aware but it cannot help the learners improve their reading, writing or speaking skills.

The same situation prevails in all the Academic Courses viz. Engineering, Medicine, Management etc., The gap between the rural and urban proficiency in English is increasing alarmingly despite the effort made by the Government, Educationalist, Academicians, Researchers, Employers etc., in promoting language courses for these students.

There is a lot of lacunae despite the proliferation of Indian as well as western material in the market. An average Indian learner is not benefitted much from such material. Primarily because of language teaching in a General English classroom has become more mechanical. Teachers and learners are working with instrumental motivation passing out in exams.

Hence, it is felt that unless there is a change in their attitude and approach to language learning, the situation will remain the same. My study aims to highlight certain aspects pertaining to the reading habits of the ESL learners, their attitude and approach towards English. My focus is on developing the academic skills i.e., reading and writing, in order to develop learner's self-esteem and make them confident users of language.

If we, the teachers, complain that our students are non-writers, it is precisely because they are non-readers. It is only when they read confidently they will be able to express their thoughts in writing. Reading and writing have a natural connection between them. The thrust of my argument is on the importance of reading as a major academic skill. Moreover, 'Reading', alone can facilitate development in writing skills and will help them communicate effectively in writing or speech.

#### **Aim of the Study:**

Most of the UG Texts are predesigned and extracts are taken from popular texts of different cultures, which are predesigned and prescribed. The learners may or may not be interested in the material already chosen.

The aim of this research is to negotiate with the learners in selecting reading material and reading strategy the learners are comfortable with and work with a process or syllabus where the learners can choose, modify, evaluate the material and methods.

The material will consist of short stories, comic strips, culture specific material. I also intend to bring in the audio-visual and computer based module which will help the learners use the language comfortably. This study aims at developing a syllabus in Academic Skills, which will really help the students to build confidence in using English. It will also enable them perform well not only in English but also in their other academic subjects.

My research aims at shaping up self-esteem by promoting reading habits by giving the learners at the Undergraduate Level a proper material that interests them. This material should consider their socio political economic background and the learners attitude towards learning language should be taken into consideration.

When a deep brain storming takes place as per different linguistic needs of learners we need to work on sequential observations and tailor made activities to promote them. Holistic learning is the crux of English Language pedagogy which can be accomplished through list of activities and engaging learners beyond class room. Technical aids are supportive and turn the learners more proactive. Every ELT survey and research brings out pathbreaking results through action research and hands on application of ELT techniques.

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