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Problems of Non-English Medium Students to Learn English at Graduate Level- A Few Solutions

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ABSTRACT

‘The never quitting attitude and keep on doing motto’ are the two instrumental factors behind the progress of the world for which we are the real eye witnesses. Human being, the creation of the almighty, has created a world of his own furnished with full of luxuries. In fact, this couldn’t have been possible without the stubborn nature of human being. A learner, a student of any country in a list of more than 180 country world, has a language of his own either diametrically similar to a few countries or different from a many. Technology, the reason behind the progress of the world, a promoter in bringing all countries of the world together, has to be understood by all human beings for which we are in need of a common language. English, the global language, the king of all languages, has already sprinkled its seeds round the world paving a path for one common language. We cannot deny the significance of the local language, the mother tongue considered equivalent to mother, which has been carried out by the fathers and forefathers of the region. The local language should not be an obstacle for the development of any individual. Trying his/her best, everybody should learn the global language for the survival and well-being. This paper makes a mention of a few problems faced by the learners for whom it is not the mother tongue and offers a good number of solutions to help those learners learn the global language easily and effectively.

KEYWORDS: Mother tongue, English medium, Communication Skills, Classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

The best gift that our country India was handed over by British country after a ruling of more than two hundred years is *English Language*. It is not a surprising thing if anybody says that English language is enjoying the status of ‘the king of all languages’. The country Britain had the status of conquering major part of the world in the past. Now its superiority is seen in the world with its language being accepted by all the people of the world with a warm welcome.

‘Expressing feelings properly to others’ has been the major concern of all human beings, of all countries, of all continents since the beginning of human civilization. In fact, a proper way of expressing feelings can be the best solution for many problems in the world. We, human beings, the most intelligent social animals as the Greek philosopher Aristotle said, are the only creature on this entire planet Earth who can express feelings with the medium of *speech* which no other animal can do.

Since we get familiarity with the words that we listen from our parents, neighbors and relatives, we start speaking repeating what the people around us speak. This is the method, in short, how a human being learns ‘speaking’ and becomes familiar with the language called ‘the mother tongue’. As the years pass on, the boy/girl reaches school going age. This paper doesn’t highlight much about the people whose mother tongue is English and who have their entire education in the similar language. In fact, this paper brings up the problems experienced by many non-English medium students who, at one stage, should take up the language for their employability or their survival in the society in the present scenario.

THE NATURE AND ATTITUDE OF NON- ENGLISH MEDIUM STUDENTS

Trust, a student, with any language in India as his mother tongue, gets a chill in his spine the moment he starts thinking about the process of learning for which he is completely new. Having been taught for many years by different background teachers during his primary or secondary level, the student feels a great difficulty to get adjusted with the new system of learning process through a language for which he is completely new.

A student from non-English medium in primary and secondary will be flabbergasted if he thinks about the magnitude of English language. Since he is tend to learn things through his mother tongue, knowledge gets a halt as he enters into a course which is ought to be taught in English language.¹ Feeling stress, comparing himself with fellow students, the students develop inferiority complex which lead them to the bizarre situations. Sometimes the students may put an end to their studies or even to life thinking of their inability to speak in English language. The students start

comparing themselves forgetting the universal fact that every human being is a 'Unique piece'. We learn things from others. However, we don't have to be like them always.

A LIST OF PROBLEMS OF NON-ENGLISH MEDIUM STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Students' inability to understand concepts during lectures:

The subject taught in 'professional courses' is almost done in English language. The major concern of the student to learn the concepts gets affected by their inability to understand the concepts. The students from non-English medium background will be a mere group of sitting statues in the classroom throughout the lecture hour. The students do not know that mere physical presence is vain in understanding the subject.

No inquisitiveness in non- English medium students

Indeed it is amazing to know the fact that a child aged about 4 to 6 asks a minimum of around 300 questions. When it comes to the students of non- English medium, the teachers do not expect any questions. Despite the fact that the teacher utters a phrases at the end of his every lecture 'do you have any queries?' the response from students is ultimately 'silence' – the same silence may be treated as good comprehension.

Inferiority complex – a good friend of non- English medium students

If there is anything that stops a human being achieve something it can be called 'inferiority complex'. The non- English medium students are very much optimistic in the aspect that 'they know nothing'. It is like poisoning one's own body. Unless they come out of this pessimistic view, the students can never experience a good change with themselves.²

Poor academic grades in exams

In a country like India where a great importance is given for the performance shown in the annual examination or semester examination, every student strives hard to reach the magic figure that is considered minimum percentage for attending interviews. The students of non- English medium usually do not perform well in the first year of their graduation which yields them a bad result in the years later on. Language learning is not possible with the theoretical knowledge and without the practical involvement. Swimming, cooking, riding and learning a new language especially English come under one tree where a mere theoretical knowledge cannot enable learners do well rather the practical touch. Since the spoken form of language is restricted to 'English' in many schools and colleges during their stay in the campus and the lectures being delivered only in English language, the screws are tightened for the non – English medium students to score better grades in academics.

Pursuing a professional course: A must for their career growth and survival

There is a possibility in almost all the countries to have education in their local language medium upto 10 or intermediate. In fact, the courses are the basis for any graduate level professional course which can make the students employable realizing their dreams go getting a job they like very much. We seldom see a professional course being taught entirely in a local language rather than English, the master of all languages.³ It becomes a mandatory for every student to get onto the ladder, the so called English language, to get a job.

Poor communication skills from student of non-English medium

Knowing English language well and having the ability to speak well give a great confidence to every student with which he can get a job. Communication skills, the primary requisite for any job seeker, are given a high priority by any company.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

A number of observations and findings have been made during my 8 year teaching journey for engineering students. Students who had their studies from the mother tongue medium and the students who completed their primary and secondary in English medium were the part of my classes.

The observations and findings with regard to the non- English medium students are listed below.

- No communication skills
- No competitiveness
- Inferiority complex
- No involvement in co-curricular activities
- No self-confidence
- Poor English language proficiency
- Lack of oral and written communication skills
- Lack of proper presentation techniques

In fact, we should have an idea about the problems of an area to find out solutions for them.

A FEW SOLUTIONS TO NON-ENGLISH MEDIUM STUDENTS TO BE GOOD AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT GRADUATE LEVEL

Be a voracious reader

Reading, one of the four language skills, helps them a lot to get the basic idea of the structures which are important for the process of writing and speaking too. If students can read an English newspaper at least 20 minutes per a day noting down the meanings of unknown words, they can see a great change with themselves.⁴ The progress that happens in a person's language capability is not

visible the very next day. It is a gradual process in which students became very confident of the language they speak and write.

A helping hand from the English teachers

English faculty have a great role to play in making the students communicable. Apart from teaching they have another role to play for the well-being of the students. They should be very empathetic towards the students. However, some teachers may be quite different paying attention for their increments leaving the students in a bizarre condition. Such teachers should have a self check now and then and dispose the duties effectively.

Oxford 3000 list of words: A boon for non- English medium students

The great dramatist and playwright who lulled the world in the imaginary world, Shakespeare knew not more than 30000 words which would be an amazing fact for many people. The students from non- English medium may be unaware of the truth that the Oxford 3000 list of words will enable them speak and write good English.

Watching movies with appearance of dialogues

'The situational learning', an important aspect helps students remember things forever. Students can watch English movies, cartoon network channel where the dialogues of the characters appear on the screen helping them understand the situational expressions. This kind of practice makes them good at speaking.

Be the part of co-curricular activities

Students should come out of the feeling that all learning takes place in the classroom. In fact, 80% learning happens outside the classroom. Keeping this in mind, the students should always be the part of co-curricular activities.⁵ This practice helps them get rid of their stage fear. The total amount of knowledge and experience they get by attending to classes for more than a month is felt by participating in one or two activities relating to co-curricular area including paper presentation, association activities, elocution competitions etc.⁶

CONCLUSION

Since we cannot go with amendments of the things that happened in the past, the students should remember that feeling sorry for something will not get them a solution. Instead, they should tighten up their screws in the process of learning the language at the earliest. The students should also remember that no one would help them as much as they can do to themselves in learning English language.

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