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## **Pedagogical Proficiency in ELT: A Historical Study from Indian Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper will highlight the importance of English Language Teaching (ELT) around the world, and emphasizes the fact that while teaching English, one should focus on pedagogical competence rather than the language parameters laid down by native-speakers. This perspective should be taken into consideration even during the induction of teachers in English streams as foreign language (EFL) and as second language (ESL) teachers.*

*The study establishes the fact that being a nativespeaker of various regional and vernacular languages, an English teacher should consistently strive to reverberate the radical changes taking place in ELT and update the technicalities of language both in content and delivery. This combination not only creates a competent speaker but a competent teacher of English language.*

*The paper will also explore the facts that on many grounds like economical, technological, socio- cultural, and corporal changes that are evident in the world, during the past two decades, the nations observed radical changes in the status of English as*

*official and national language in many post-colonial regions. The study will strongly proclaim the fact that the distinction between native and non-native speakers is no longer a valid point of discussion in many parts of the globe and the boundaries seem to be merging gradually with the development of English language.*

## **Introduction**

The English language teaching (ELT) has in the past several years become a major trans-cultural, cross-cultural, and worldwide initiative. With the globalization, the fading of many national boundaries, and the prioritization of regional and trans-national economies, forecast for widespread lingua franca, English users have tremendously increased. English, having spread under variable conditions to diverse regions of the world predominantly, Crystal (1997: 139) observes that "there has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English. Therefore are there no precedents to help us see what happens to a language when it achieves genuine world status." What influence does this spread have on native speakers of English and others for whom English is a vital but not a native language or mother tongue? This question, from social and attitudinal standpoints has often been interpreted, and highlights the distinction between native and non-native speakers, which now appears to replace professional training in ELT and proficiency in the language. This difference has also created a strong preference for the historical (by virtue of origin) native speaker over any other professional – generally a historical non-native to the so-called native English countries. Though, in black-and-white the distinction in itself is valid, it has, in the case of English, concluded to be reliable given the great changes in the economic, technological, physical and migratory trajectories of the present era and, above all, the permanent status of English as national and official language in post-colonial regions. These regions also have native speakers of their own diversities of English, who, as the case may be, contribute equally to the global evolution and extent of the language as well. Furthermore, English arose and evolved in these contexts through an ecologically different itinerary from the so-called native regions.

It has been observed that most of the Indian English teachers are nonnative-speakers, teaching natural English as it is spoken in real conversation. The general conception of the (historical) native speaker as the dependable or perfect teacher of his or her language, which this paper seeks to compensate, certainly influenced the above statement. Such a

conception clearly indifference other determinant factors in ELT such as Teaching with understanding, language proficiency, sociocultural implications, educational qualification, professional training and experience. These pedagogical factors add a more related dimension to any meaningful ELT programme than just the status of a native speaker.

### **English as Global Language**

English seems to be constantly attracting the international arena from the centuries. There has been since the mid-1990s a strong inclination towards English in business, publications, scholarly journals, technology, and international relations and law. For instance, in 1966 Dickson and Cumming (1996) discovered that English was the most fascinating modern language studied in the world.

From a survey of foreign languages taught in the Russian federation, they found out that 60% of secondary school students chose English, 25% went in for German, and 15% took French as foreign language. These students, like many other people, see English as a means of associating with the rest of the world, which has mostly shifted towards English expression. In the academic world this shift is also seen and ranges from the award of certificates in English and the pursuit of degrees in English in non-English speaking countries to the publication of scholarly journals in English. In many countries, English occupies a leading position in (English as a) second language (ESL) or post-colonial countries where it is the official and national language on which national identities are built. It is also the medium of education and/or a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. This is the case with India, Singapore, parts of West, South and East Africa, and most of the other former British colonies. English is now part of the sociocultural set up of these countries.

Apart from the above mentioned, another important domain of English, is the publication of books in which it has gained international fame. According to Graddol (1997) over 60 countries in the world publish books in English. In a survey of world annual publications in thirteen languages, Graddol (1997: 9) discovered that English has the highest percentage of publications (28%). This discloses that even countries that have no historical or colonial links with native English countries (particularly England or America) have adopted the language to benefit from ever-increasing international readership and its international wealth. There is likely to be a drastic growth in the number of books published in English

especially in the areas of Asian sub-continent due to the rising strength of the economies. The variations in speech patterns have rendered English tongues, in the 1990s and the early 2000s, which show that whether native or non-native, very distinct and that some parts of the vocabulary are peculiar to particular regions – India, Australia, West Africa and Britain. However, Strevens (1992: 39) upholds truly that "two components of English are taught and learned without [extensive] variation: these are its grammar and its core vocabulary." This means that native speakers have just the same intelligibility and communicative challenges to cope with as non-native speakers.

### **English in India**

English does not figure among the eighteen languages of India listed in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. However, the Constitution of India grants English, the status as an official language of the Union, by Article 343, for a period of 15 years (since 1950). The status as an official language was extended to English, along with Hindi, for an indefinite period of time, through the Official Language Act, 1963 (along with Hindi). The constitution also assigns it the specific role to function. The states are to determine their official languages and English is always an option open to them. Some states such as Nagaland and Mizoram in the northeast have designated English as their official language. Regarding the orders and the rules the Constitution states that the rules, regulations, bye-laws shall be in English and that the language of the High Court and Supreme Court should be English.

After Independence, there were several commissions established to look into the educational matters. In this regard, Pingali (2009:112) observes, Ideologically, English was not favoured, but it was seen as necessary. In 1986, the National Policy on Education recommended the three-language formula at secondary school level. In brief, the languages to be learnt were the native language, Hindi and English. If the native language was Hindi, another modern Indian Language was to be learnt preferably one from the south. Though the central government has accepted this formula, in many states it was not observed in toto. Tamil Nadu resisted Hindi, the north resisted English. Officially, the three- language formula still stands, for school education. Each state determined what actually happens independently. (Pingali 2009:112) The place of English in three Language formulas and the status as associate official language, made English a lingua Franca, a common link language in the Indian linguistic scenario. Thus, the use of English and Hindi (also an official language), along with other Indian languages, presents a complex picture of the linguistic

heterogeneity.

### **Language considerations of the native speaker**

The language use of the native speaker has a long history in all sub disciplines of linguistics. The native speaker occupies a basic position as a foundation for the judgment of language production and evaluation. Many linguistic schools of thoughts have based their findings on native- speaker judgments and performances. In transformational-generative grammar, the native speaker is the backbone of Chomsky's (1965) "ideal-speaker hearer"; in context grammar, van Dijk's(1977) "P-system" is built on it; in politeness theory, Brown and Levinson's (1987) "model person" is the native speaker; and the bilingualism theories of Bloomfield (1933) and other American linguists focus on native-like competence in two languages. These theories believe on native-speaker instinct or spontaneity to familiar or strange constructions, well- formed or ill-formed utterances in his or her language. This is accepted as authentic because native speakers acquire their languages at childhood with no other language interfering or influencing the acquisition process. However, some linguists have used the native speaker as pace setter of standards even for varieties of the language s/he is not familiar with. In (Trudgill 1998: 35, see also Mufwene1997) "While the native speaker may be deemed ideal for ELT, it is far from saying s/he is infallible, as Hocking wants us to believe. This is because "most native speakers of English in the world are native speakers of some nonstandard variety of the language". On this ground, they like the non-native speakers (especially those for whom English is an official language) have similar proficiency, professional, and sociocultural stages to deal with.

On the other hand it is expected that while teaching English, one should focus on pedagogical competence rather than the language parameters laid down by native-speakers. This perspective should be taken into consideration even during the induction of teachers in English streams as foreign language(EFL) and as second language (ESL) teachers. Although one might not be perfect in certain language but for English Language Teaching Pedagogical competence is required now a days. For English language one should make communicative competence as the goal of language teaching. Develops procedures for the teaching of four language skills (LSRW) that acknowledge the independence of language and communication. Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of

language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. Communicating competently will help to know how to use language for a range of different purposes/functions, how to change the language according to formal and informal atmosphere, how to produce and understand different types of texts i.e., narratives, reports, interviews and conversations etc., how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (through using different types of communication strategies).

### **Conclusion**

The need for good communication should be realized by one and all. Also, fluency in English being a pre-requisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in today's world, the demand for an appropriate teaching methodology is therefore as strong as ever. Obviously, when communicative competence is the essential requirement in the global scenario today. Finally, being a nativespeaker of various regional and vernacular languages, an English teacher should consistently strive to reverberate the radical changes taking place in ELT and update the technicalities of language both in content and delivery. This combination not only creates a competent speaker but a competent teacher of English language. On the basis of the above arguments, the distinction between native and non-native speakers is no longer a valid point of discussion in many parts of the globe and the boundaries seem to be merging gradually with the development of English language.

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