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Challenges In Teaching And Learning The English Language

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Abstract: The study is about the complicated problem of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language, in particular, in the non-native backgrounds. It highlights the linguistic, cultural, psychological and socio-economic hindrances that rob the success of linguistic acquisition. The issues facing the teachers are lack of training, outdated manner of doing things, overcrowded classes and on the other hand, the learners have issues of being lowly motivated, full of anxiety and are not exposed to the use of real languages. The study follows a qualitative and exploratory study because it involves the synthesis of secondary information to provide a general picture of these challenges. The findings indicate the need to invest more in teacher training or development, use learner-centered pedagogies and enhance access to resources when breaking through the barriers. An overall solution to all three issues has the potential of facilitating improved communicative competence and widening academic, professional, and social opportunities of learners in the globalized world.

Key words: English Language Teaching, Language Learning Challenges, Teacher Training, Socio-economic Barriers, Communicative Competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language has been adopted globally as lingua franca which has been vital in international communication, education, business and technological areas. This is supported by the efforts of governments across the globe to maximize the English language proficiency as it forms components of the rising economy, education, and politics (Brooker, 2018). Consequently, teaching and learning English is gaining emphasis across the world, more so in the non-English speaking world. Nevertheless, various problems are common in this process involving teachers and learners including limited resources and outdated methods of teaching and learning in addition to the large classes of learners who lack the motivation and exposure to real language use. These problems may be a great impediment to the process of language acquisition and teaching performance (Jon & Wadi, 2021).

One of the problems that are pointed out in the literature is the insufficiency of teacher training and professional development. Fareh (2015) argues that a large number of English language educators in developing countries have poor levels of proficiency in the language and most of them use traditional, grammar-translation based forms of teaching that do not foster communicative proficiency. Also, another issue that commonly affects learning achievement among learners is the lack of exposure to native speakers, low motivation, and anxiety (Ahmed, 2015). These longstanding challenges suggest that teachers, approaches based on learners, and access to genuine English materials and immersion experience need more pragmatic training.

Being an ESL teacher is a demanding yet fulfilling profession. The ability to adjust one's teaching style in response to the changing demands of one's ESL students is an essential skill (Kissau & Rodgers, 2019). Dealing with a wide range of issues in the classroom is often a necessary part of this job. Recognizing these

typical issues and striving to discover solutions are essential skills for an effective ESL teacher. Making even a minor adjustment to the teaching style can lead to a more relaxed and fruitful classroom setting (Mirzaevna & Abdukarimovna, 2019).

Improving students' writing abilities is a challenge for faculty at universities that do not specialize in philology (Abdilakimova, 2024). In their pursuit of more efficient methods of instructing pupils in writing, methodologists, teachers-practitioners, and inexperienced educators are taking a keen interest in this issue. The most apparent aspect of effective language instruction is the need for students to have strong essay and personal writing skills. However, these abilities should actually start developing during the first stages of language acquisition, when students are laying the groundwork for communicative competence (Rotaru, 2024). Another problem is that, without thinking about who would teach it, English is frequently made mandatory in elementary school. There seems to be a critical scarcity of qualified English language instructors for elementary schools in certain nations. To make matters worse, some educators may not have received sufficient preparation to instruct students of all ages in the English language, much less those studying the subject at a young age. Particularly hard hit are low-income and rural communities (Copland & Burns, 2014).

It is not easy to teach English to elementary school students since teaching young children is very different from teaching adults. There are a lot of obstacles as well. Both internal and external causes contribute to the problems. What do you mean by "the internal factor" are things like identity, motivation, and pedagogy. The textbooks, learning materials, instructors' English proficiency, and the number of students in a class are all examples of external factors. Because children have varied motives, it is difficult to motivate them to learn the language. It is possible that some of them have difficulty understanding English and others do not. Furthermore, evaluations of students' development are infrequent. This is problematic because evaluations of student learning are essential for effective instruction (Cahyati & Madya, 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adam & Bantulu, (2021) analyzed that one of the four abilities that language learners should strive to develop is the ability to write in the target language. Teachers should make every effort to ensure that their students appropriately use the language they learn when writing this skill. Findings from the study aim to shed light on the difficulties encountered by a number of Indonesian ESL instructors while instructing students in the art of writing in English at VHS, a vocational high school located in Gorontalo, Indonesia. Interviews and participant observation were used to gather data, which was then analyzed using a theme analysis method. The results revealed four main areas where the teachers faced difficulties when instructing students in the art of writing in English.

Solak & Bayar, (2015) examined the present difficulties in teaching and studying English in Turkey from the viewpoints of high achievers and poor achievers. The study was qualitative in character and the participants of the study were twenty-two students attending at various departments of a state university in Turkey. According to the study's findings, English course goals should be practical and taken into account holistically throughout all levels of schooling. Instead of focusing on theory, English classes should be structured around practical application.

Mohammed, (2018) analyzed strategies for overcoming challenges in ESL language acquisition. The purpose of the study is to draw on the experiences of educators in order to identify the challenges associated with ESL students' learning English and to provide broad recommendations for overcoming these challenges. Proper time and good management are necessary for EFL students, but the results also show that teachers' roles, learning strategies, and methods are vital, and that students' linguistic and communicative competence can be enhanced through the use of authentic materials.

Rintaningrum, (2023) sought to collect evidence of the many advantages of incorporating technology into ESL classrooms, identify potential problems and their solutions, and assess the efficacy of these approaches. In this study, let's look at the pros and cons of using technology to teach English in Indonesian classrooms. In order to understand more about the pros and cons of using technology for language acquisition, the study uses qualitative analysis. Seven people are taking part in this research. Several factors can hinder the smooth integration of technology into educational settings, including the nature of the technology itself, the rate of

technological advancement, the quantity and size of classes offered, the budget, the time available, the age of the instructors, their proficiency with technology, and the accessibility of the necessary tools.

Hasanah & Utami, (2019) examined that the right approach and strategies to teach English to students, especially those who don't speak English natively. In this way, every educator faces unique difficulties. The purpose of the study was to provide light on the growing difficulties encountered by ESL educators hailing from countries where English is not the national language, including Cambodia, China, Thailand, Japan, Senegal, and Laos. The study uses the qualitative method to interview seven educators on the difficulties they've faced in the classroom. Students' lack of desire, overcrowding in the classroom, and inadequate course materials are the three key issues highlighted by the findings. To combat these difficulties, certain initiatives are launched.

Cahyati & Madya, (2019) study up on How well elementary schools are prepared to teach English and how proficient their pupils are both play a role in this area of education. Schools can only begin teaching English if they have enough resources, including qualified instructors, media, and textbooks. Reason being, that's when kids are the most impressionable (6–12 years old), which is when primary schools cater to. It conforms to the fundamental premise that states that younger students can acquire English more effectively. There are advantages and disadvantages to teaching English in elementary schools. The study takes a look at the problem, lists the pros and cons based on theories and research, and then suggests a few solutions that schools can use as a guide to teach and learn English well.

Irimiea, (2016) investigated EFL. When Teaching English, What Difficulties Do Teachers Face? The study sets out to propose strategies for teaching English as a foreign language in light of the fact that English is now spoken in many different geographic locations around the world. According to David Crystal, "the greatest challenge for the teachers" is that "they must keep pace with the language change, given that languages change so fast" (2013). Another important factor is the need to ensure that classroom language does not differ from native speakers' or professionals'. Languages to be taught, cultural context, pronunciation, and textbooks are the main topics of this research.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative research approach to delve deeply into the complex and multi-dimensional problems of ESL instruction and student performance. Researching on the subjective experiences, views, and environmental factors that may be easily measurable but are crucial to comprehending language acquisition is where this approach really shines. Since they are both directly involved in the process of teaching English, the chosen group includes both teachers and students of the language. Educators can discuss classroom dynamics, student engagement, curriculum limitations, and instructional issues; students can talk about their struggles, motivation, and support systems. The study includes a fair representation of the issues because it involves two groups.

The study is both descriptive and exploratory in nature because it aims to discover deeper trends and causes of potential factors that can affect the quality of English language teaching, in addition to describing current situations and obstacles. Classrooms and learning environments can be better understood through descriptive design, and new or less well-known problems can be better investigated through exploratory design. The planned research relies on secondary data collection techniques, such as a survey of relevant literature, academic journals, reports from relevant government agencies and institutions, and previous studies on the topic. By using this method, the researcher can avoid the time and money limitations associated with primary data collection while still drawing from a large body of information. The study creates a detailed picture of the socio-cultural, linguistic, psychological, and systemic issues affecting ESL learning and training that is based on numerous reliable sources.

4. FINDINGS

Obj 1. To determine the significant linguistic, cultural and psychological impediments to learning English as a second/ foreign language by the students.

H1: Linguistic, cultural and psychological barriers have a great influence on the capability of the students to learn English as a second/foreign language.

- Linguistic barriers: Language proficiency varies greatly in many cases, and learners encounter complex sentence structures and other language-related challenges (Ali and Ali, 2023). Another daunting aspect of learning English is the sheer volume of vocabulary and expressions that students may come across, many of which may lack direct translations into their native tongue (Izsak and Greta, 2023). Pronunciation is another problem; because English and other languages have such different sounds and intonation, it can lead to misunderstandings or even complete incomprehensibility in conversation (Tiwari, 2023). Learners may also experience difficulties and setbacks in their progress due to structural differences between English and their native languages, such as differences in word order, tenses, and syntax.
- Cultural challenges: One source of cultural barriers is students' ignorance of the values, customs, and practices that are intrinsic to English-speaking societies (Ahmad, 2015). Common idioms, jokes, and cultural references in everyday speech and writing may be difficult to understand if one is not familiar with the language. Misunderstandings or uncomfortable social situations can arise from different communication styles, such as the level of candor or politeness expected, etc. (Miehle and Ultes, 2018). In addition, students may struggle to adjust to the social mores of English-speaking environments, which could impact how they approach conversations in a natural and appropriate way.
- Psychological barriers: Learners emotional and mental attributes impact their readiness and capability to use English, which is known as psychological barriers (Ahmed, 2019). Students who feel uncomfortable speaking and write are usually afraid of making mistakes and being criticized by instructors or peers. Teravainen-Goff (2025) notes that a number of students fail to have motivation to learn English since they fail to recognize short-term benefits as well as the applicability of the language in their lives. Learners are not confident with their language skills hence they find it even more challenging to risk and take things new which is essential in enhancing their English skills.

Obj 2. To examine how socio-economic background, learning environment and access to resources are factors that contribute to acquisition of the English language.

H2: The socio-economic background, learning environment, and resource access play a major role in the acquisition of English language among students.

- Students' socioeconomic status greatly influences their English language acquisition. This is because the availability of supplementary learning resources, such as language schools or private tutors, is contingent upon factors like parental education and family income. Students from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to interact with native English speakers, watch more English-language media, and travel more frequently, all of which increase their exposure to the language outside of the classroom (De Wilde, & Eyckmans, 2020).
- Language acquisition can also be affected by the learning environment. Students gain from teachers capacity to give them personalized attention in small classes with a good teacher-student ratio. Students also benefit from more opportunities to practice and comprehend the language through the use of interactive teaching methods. Developing fluency requires a positive and supportive peer group that encourages communication and collaborative learning (Alrayah, 2018).
- The availability of resources, such as textbooks, audiovisual materials, and language laboratories, is crucial; schools with these things tend to provide better learning opportunities. Further aiding learners with interactive and flexible learning opportunities is the accessibility of technology, such as computers, the internet, and language learning apps. Practicing with authentic English-language resources, such as books, films, and conversations with native speakers, is crucial for improving language skills. In all these aspects,

the socioeconomic and learning environment of students, as well as their available resources in their acquisition of the English language are emphasized (Holozsai and Jozsef, 2024).

5. DISCUSSION

Teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language presents significant challenges (Brining, 2015). Learners encounter linguistic barriers, including different grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Hossain, 2024). Additionally, a lack of cultural experience related to idioms, social norms, and communication styles in English-speaking cultures can lead to misunderstandings and disinterest. Psychological factors such as language anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence can also contribute to learner reluctance and non-participation (Bourezzane, 2014).

Socioeconomic differences have great influence on English language acquisition in that students with low-income background do not have access to quality teachers, resources, and technology as much needed to ensure that they can practice English outside the classroom (Collins, 2012). Unreal learning conditions, which include congested classes, incompetent teachers, and inflexible curriculums hinder the interactive and communicative learning experiences that are vital in the acquisition of a language. Although resources such as language laboratories, multimedia applications, and natural materials are effective means of increasing motivation and competence, they are not fairly distributed (Kukulska-Hulme and Gaved, 2023). Educators also report dissatisfaction with professional development, which limits their ability to implement innovative strategies. A comprehensive approach integrating psychological, social, and linguistic aspects, alongside improved educational infrastructure and teacher training, is crucial for addressing these complex issues (Karim and Ahmed, 2024). The absence of such strategies results in uneven progress and limited future opportunities for students in a globalized world.

6. CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning English language still remain a challenging phenomenon especially in the situations where English is a second or foreign language. There are linguistic, cultural, psychological, and socio-economic barriers that are profound in impeding both the teachers and the learners in a bid to reach effective communication and language proficiency. The most prevalent concern amongst the teachers are the untrained training, outdated methodology, and the number of students, and the most prevalent among the learners are anxiety in the language and lack of motivation, and exposure to the real-life use of the English language. There are other factors like poor learning environment, inaccessibility of learning materials and disparities in socio economic status among others, which further escalate the gap in the language acquisition achievement.

The solution to these problems should be inclusive and holistic in nature and should involve improvements in the teacher training workshops, applying the pedagogy of the learner and communicative approach, utilising technology and real-life sources and allocating resources equally to all learners. Through understanding the factors underlying these barriers, stakeholders, among them the educators, policymakers, and institutions should be in a position to develop measures that can be applied to enhance the overall quality of the English language education. Eventually these obstacles eliminated that's not only develop competency in language but offer the learners greater academic, professional and social opportunities in a world that is increasingly becoming global.

7. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- **Teacher Training and Curriculum Development:** More important is that the teacher should be better trained in methods of communicating with the relevant curriculum development on the needs of different learners to fulfill the needs of the learners.
- **Resource Availability and Interactive Learning Environment:** In the quest to do away with socio-economic disparities in learning English language, it is paramount to enhance the accessibility of learning resources and offer enabling/discussive learning environments.
- **Psychological Support:** Financial support: Psychological support significantly helps in addressing the anxiety, motivation and confidence of the learners, thus helping to increase engagement and learning outcomes.

- **Research Limitations:** Recent studies tend to use secondary sources, are not based on direct field work and are not always able to involve more diverse cultural and regional backgrounds which restricts their ability to generalize the results.
- **Future research directions:** In future studies, primary data collection should be incorporated, and the effect of digital technologies needs to be studied, more comprehensive stakeholders, and attention should be paid to psychological and socio-economic determinants influencing language learning.

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