

Role of Translation in Teaching English in Indian Classes

A. Alis Sofia

Assistant Professor of English

Sadakathullah Appa College, Tirunelveli – 627 011

=====

Abstract

Teaching English in India is an interesting experience. Known as the Lingua Franca of the world, English in India is either a second language or foreign language. Ever since the arrival of the British, there have been very many methodologies, strategies and notions to comprehend, produce and teach English across the world in general, and India in particular. The use of one's mother tongue to teach English is one of the strategies, by and large, followed in India. There are notions that English could be learned or mastered only by students studied under English medium streams. At this juncture, translation acts as an effective chain, link and tool between English and the student aspirants. Translation is an ever growing entity that helps people in a great deal. This linguistic aspect of language has helped civilization tremendously. Teaching English using translation in Indian classes results in that students' grasping power and understanding of the given task go up. This article deals with the importance and role of translation in teaching English in Indian classes, especially classes in Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: English language, translation, medium of instructions

Translation is Manna from the heaven to mankind. This linguistic phenomenon is a universal one that helps mankind in terms of civilization, globalization and cultural entity. Translation paves the way for the fact that knowledge is universal and spread across the globe. It is disheartening to imagine a world sans translation.

In imparting knowledge from language to language, the role of translation is colossal. It has eased the way enormously to people across the world gain knowledge, wisdom and sophistication. The great ideas, philosophies and rationale thoughts are spread by the entity called translation. Its part played in spreading religion is tremendous. One of the reasons how the tenets of the religions such as Christianity, Islam and other religions spread is translation.

It is no exaggeration that Indians are, with their everyday routine, bilingual with the available languages in India. It is not a hyperbolic statement that India hardly moves forward or develops without the phenomenon called translation. This is because translation is done consciously and unconsciously by almost every Indians irrespective of their literacy ground. Indian literature was dominated by translated works in different forms till the nineteenth century. One of the various

positive aspects about translation is that it brings or takes languages across the world much closer to one another.

With regard to English language teaching, translation plays an important role in spreading the space and opportunities of language. Translation paves the way for coinages or vocabulary enrichment that helps language grow. To shed light on this aforementioned fact, *idly* is an Indian origin word. Colonisation or globalization has brought this Indian origin word *idly* to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary. Language grows by means of translation. One must keep in mind that the modern world is dominated by translation and the scopes for translators are growing day in day out.

Teaching English is ubiquitous. Day in day out, new trends, methodologies, techniques and strategies emerge throughout the world to teach English effectively. In spite of finding different ways and means to teach English, the attempts, by and large, have not attained its fruition completely. The reason for the aforementioned issues related to teaching English is that there are learners with different needs. There are aspirants who want to master spoken English while some others want to learn written English.

Using English to teach English language sounds, by and large, not suitable in all contexts irrespective of nationality. There are learners throughout the world who neither know nor understand about English language. Such learners, mentioned in the preceding passage, need to be taught English with the support of their mother tongue or a different language.

In the Indian context, especially southern India, teaching English using the learners' respective mother tongue is essential. It is not an exaggerated fact because students have not only the notion that English can be learned only by English medium students, they also find it very difficult to cope with English teaching throughout the class/period. Adding fuel to the fire, there are students who feel bore in the class when teaching is only in English.

In order to sort out the issues mentioned earlier and encourage or turn students towards the actual learning in the classroom, students' mother tongue and translation should go hand in hand. Taking one's mother tongue as an aid and English teaching are inextricably linked. When translation plays its role in teaching English, learners/students find it easy and they feel at home throughout the class.

Students, moreover, understand what is taught when sentences or words are translated in their respective mother tongue in English teaching. Translation is a great tool to teach English to L2 learners. In fact, translation acts as a stable link between English and L2 learners. The absence of this link in language transaction or classroom teaching results in stagnation across the board within the classroom set up.

In Indian classroom teaching context, translation is a boon that the L2 learners benefit from it hugely. The teachers on the other hand, find translation as a congenial vehicle to transport the taught knowledge/language to the students concerned. Here, the teacher is bilingual in teaching English. In teaching English, the teacher is very much expected to be bilingual. The students, when the teacher is not bilingual, feel fish out of water in English classes. The teacher concerned should translate into Tamil what he teaches in English. Translation eases students' way in learning English. Students get hold of a kind of grip by means of translation in English classes.

Besides the above-mentioned, all said and done, issues and perspectives, teaching English in southernmost Indian classrooms poses a challenge. This is because teaching English to Tamil students involves cultural context/background both in English and Tamil. There are many customs present in Tamil and English culture. When learning or teaching English is the target or goal, bilingual by means of translation is a welcome one. When the teacher used translation in Indian classes to teach English, in fact, it bears fruit. Students pay heed to what the teacher says or teaches.

References

Cook, Vivian. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. Hodder Education Publishers; 4 edition 2008.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 9th Edition; Oxford University Press. (2016).

Verghese, Paul. *Teaching English as a Second Language*. Sterling Publishers. 2016.

Dr. A. Alis Sofia

Assistant Professor of English

Sadakathullah Appa College, Tirunelveli – 627 011