Adversities and obstacles in learning English as a second language in Indian context

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Abstract
First language is the language a child acquires from his/her birth through the interaction with his/her family, surroundings and culture. But a second language is a language that is learned in addition to our mother tongue, or first language. It has different culture, structure, style etc. Normally one gets start to learn second language in his schools. It is not easy to learn like the first language, it needs additional training and practice and also it has so many obstacles to overcome. Most of the Indian schools are facing difficulty to inculcate the skill of second language among students. The ambiguous educational policies, the bias attitude towards English, the behavior of parents and teachers, the adverse policies of the Government, the unavailability of modern teaching technology to the public sector, the shortage of language teachers especially in the remote area, the flawed syllabi and examination system, the lack of teaching training and the deprived position of teachers are the major factors that are arising obstacles in learning English. Second language learning can be better influenced by the involvement of a qualified teacher. The article focuses on the obstacles of learning L2 in Indian context and remedies to overcome the language learning barriers and also explores the perspectives of future language classroom.

Keywords: obstacles, learning, second language

Introduction
English language plays a vital role in India, so learning English language becomes a relevant factor in the life of each and every Indians and they are well known about the significance of English even though; no one can completely accept the cultural and language differences of English language. Our anxiety towards English language started from the beginning doesn't overcome till now. Many circumstances and related factors are responsible for creating obstacles in learning English. It results, stand like a barrier on the way of students for developing language skills. So we have to eradicate such factors from the way of learners for constructing better future of this language in Indian landscape. The vague educational policies, the prejudice outlook towards English, the attitude of parents and teachers, the unfavorable policies of the government, the scarcity of modern teaching technological gadgets in the public sector, the lack of trained language teachers especially in the rural area, the unsuitable syllabi and examination system, the lack of quality teaching training and the deprived position of teachers are the major factors that are arising obstacles in learning English. There are some other factors affecting the process of second language learning such as well-equipped classroom, availability of competent teachers, attitude, motivation, self-confidence, duration of exposure to the language, family background (Verghese, 2009) [7].
Regarding the function of a language, each language has four skills as Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The disability or competency over a language varies as the diversity of the socio-linguistic division in this world (Khan, Tahir Jahan & Khan, Nasrullah, 2016) [2]. The question that should be raised here is from where learners usually get their beliefs about language learning. Different scholars view beliefs differently. Some consider beliefs to be socially constructed, while others deal with as being mental and individual

phenomena. Within the field of language learning, beliefs are thought to be of social nature which are constructed and shaped through interactions between groups in a society. Hence, the society's general vision about language learning, the learner's past educational past and personal experiences influences the formation of learners' beliefs and language learning culture (Gabillon, 2005: 240) [6].
From the period of introduction of English education to the present period, both teachers and students are facing the challenge in English as second language. There are so many obstacles; students are facing to acquire the target language at the maximum level. However everyone must aware the need of learning English for the well-being in their future life, it is a huddle but, have to overcome.

The concept of Second language
A person's second language or L2 is a language that is not the native language of the speaker, but that is used in the locale of that person. In contrast, a foreign language is a language that is learned in an area where that language is not generally spoken. Some languages are used primarily as second languages. More informally, a second language can be said to be any language learned in addition to one's native language. A second language is a language that is learned in addition to a person's mother tongue, or first language. English is the second language learned by most people worldwide. These languages may be acquired by absorption, because it is spoken in the home, or actively pursued by taking courses. The more the language differs from a person's mother tongue in terms of alphabet and grammar.

Indian schools and English language
India is the only country with different languages and culture. The language and culture are depending up on their social

group. The people in Tamil Nadu speak various dialects of Tamil likewise in Kerala; people are speaking variety of Malayalam dialects in the different part of the state. Apart from the Indian languages and its dialects, our school students are compelled to learn English as a second language. When we compared with any other Indian languages, English language has different structure, words, grammar, pronunciation etc. most of the students are confused to learn the foreign language. Each and every child have their own cultural background, from itself they are acquiring their mother tongue from different context. They face difficulty to cope up with the new language. The main reason is it implies divergent culture and structure.

A child acquires first language or mother tongue from his / her family. The most of the students in Indian school are from rural background. Their parents are illiterate or uneducated. The parents have only limited expectation about their children that drag them from a wide open world. Those students lack motivation and support from their family to learn second language. So they are not willing to learn a new language and also show a tendency to stick on their own language and culture.

One of the barriers in second language learning is most of the students; do not get better language experience from their primary classroom. Teachers are failed to set a language acquisition atmosphere so the students learn the second language not like a language but like other theory subjects. From the primary level itself students have to understand the difference in learning a language and other subjects. Teachers also take care about to make the learner to differentiate the difference in learning style of a language from other subjects. The main purpose of language is for communication i.e. encoding and decoding the message. While learning a language, should give prominence to skills of the language rather than the content. Unfortunately our teaching-learning process is restricting to do so.

Another important problem is students are not aware about the need and scope of learning English as a second language. Both parents and teachers are failed to make them understand about the scope of English language. So students intentionally avoid learning the English language. In second language classroom students are confronting many obstacles to learn the target language. The obstacles are mainly because of adjustment problem with the new language and unknown culture. Students start learning different alphabet, rules, words, pronunciation etc. without any objective.

Major threats in second language learning
Apart from above discussed problem there are other threats faced by the students to learn second language properly in their classroom.

i) Limited learning environment
Learning materials refer to items that aid in the learning process. Books may be a necessary material, but books are not enough by themselves. Audio tools are also needed. The fact is, students of English Language never getting to hear the correct pronunciation by a native speaker.

Most of the language learning is imperfect. Students have books to read but they don't know about the right pronunciation of a particular word. How would a student get idea about pronounce a word? He/she must get the opportunity to hear the right pronunciation from his/her teacher. The most

language classrooms have only dependable resource is a teacher. There is no other source to hear the right pronunciation for students. Sometimes they watch or listen through unauthentic resources which may cause wrong interpretation of syntax (sentence structure) and pronunciation of words.

ii) Influence of mother tongue
Students tend to learn pronunciation by comparing with their mother tongue. Language transfer designates the interference of the mother tongue in second language learning. Learners apply knowledge from their native language to learn a second language. This can help in understanding and using the target language in some extend, but this can also become a huddle to the proper acquisition of the L2 (second language) rules, syntax (structure), vocabulary, and pronunciation. Krashen (1981) [5] has quoted that "syntactic errors in adult performance" occur due to the use of mother tongue in the life of a learner and this impact remains for a long period in the mind of a learner. Learners are influenced by their L1 (mother tongue) in the following manners:

- They apply their first language grammatical knowledge onto the second language which leads to mistakes as a result of structural differences between L1 and L2.
- They pronounce certain sounds incorrectly or with difficulty as a result of the difference in phonological systems. For e.g.: the actual pronunciation of the word 'forget' is /fəget/ but the students from Malayalam language background used to pronounce like /fərget/ because there is no concept like silent sound in Malayalam.
- They confuse vocabulary items because they are misled by the words or phrases that look or sound similar in both the mother tongue and the target language, but differ significantly in meaning.

Linguistic interference can lead to correct language production when the mother tongue and the target language share many linguistic features. However, the transfer can result in errors when both languages differ. (Rhalmi, 2014) [17].

iii) Cultural diversity
Culture is to humans what water is to fish-that which surrounds us and that we are only aware of when it is gone. Culture as a process undermines the idea that culture can be learned through superficial aspects like food, costume holidays. It is experienced through language, because language is inseparable from culture. Learning a new language while living in the culture involves coming to terms with the new ocean you are swimming in. This is acculturation which can have two meanings. The general meaning is just the process or act of adjusting to a new culture. (Spackman, 2008) [9]. Learners' culture can be a barrier to second or foreign language learning. Cultural differences may cause confusion and cultural misunderstandings. Learners may have problems communicating with target native speakers because of cultural differences. (Rhalmi, 2014) [17].

The obstacles arise when there is lack of understanding between a context where a learner lives and the difficulty of a language task given to the students. Most of the obstacles arise because the unconsciously the use and interference of L1 occur. The learners are in habit of using their mother tongue, so in this way they face a lot of obstacles in learning English as a second language during their educational career. Learning a

second language means learning to speak and comprehend it. But learners can't reach a high level of proficiency unless they are able to use the target language appropriately in the context of the target culture. To reach a pragmatic and socio linguistic competence, learners should be able to make correct assumptions about what interlocutors are saying. When the L1 and L2 cultures share similar features the assumptions made contribute to the learning. However, when both cultures differ in so many aspects learning is at risk.

iv) Untrained teachers
Most of the teachers do not know about how to introduce a new language to the student according to their interest. Teachers are confused to make them understand about the features of second language, especially when the teachers those who are from different subject background are taught English in the classroom. In our secondary classes, the teachers who are teaching English are not from English as subject background. This always creates problem among students.
The pupils, whose school is in rural area, perceived more, the 'Attitude' and 'Teacher's Competence' as the cause of problems in learning ESL than urban pupils (Dharma Raja & Selvi, 2011) [8].

v) Interest and Motivation
Lack of interest and motivation are the most important obstacles in learning English. Most students are not interested in learning the language and just think about passing the course, thus because they are not interested, they do not listen to their teacher and do not learn anything, even if they learn something they will forget it quickly, because they are tired of its repetition. English teacher should encourage the students to learn the language by repeating. This encouragement should not be verbalized, but some awards should be considered to increase the motivation and interest in students. Students should be encouraged to repeat the language, because the language can be learned only be repetition.

vi) Limited proficiency
Unfortunately, most high school teachers are not fluent in English and they are unable to teach the English language orally. They teach English in the form of written language to students and this is not a hundred percent learning. English teaching is best done when the teachers teach the language orally in the classroom. It is one of the opportunities of the students to hear the target language. Therefore the student will be obliged to speak English and he/she can learn it better.

vii) Practice of Students
Since students are not interested to learn English, so they will not be tired of repeating and practicing the language. If the language is taught by the use of audio and video, then the students will learn it within a short period of time. We should use the specific methods which are from the experiences of teachers in order to motivate the students in learning English.

viii) Poor vocabulary
Students are not interested to learn new vocabulary. Teachers are also failed to introduce new words in front of the students. Both students and teachers are stick on the mother tongue. Teachers are rush to complete their syllabus thus students don't get exact aim of second language learning. Poor vocabulary is the result of lack of oral practice in the classroom.

Remedies to enhance learning environment
i) Enrich the vocabulary
Students must enrich their vocabulary through various language activities. In the normal classroom the student can develop their vocabulary only through reading their course materials and absorb few words from the teachers. So it's imparting only limited vocabulary to students. Teachers must be motivating the learners to read various literary works, novels, newspapers, journals, articles and magazines. Other than this, enrich vocabulary through various classroom activities such as debate, discussion, role play etc. One of the best and fastest ways of enriching vocabulary is to learn the root words. Such as, ambi (both) is the root of the word ambiguity; art (skill) is the root of artistic etc. There are innumerable games available at the internet that can aid you greatly in the process of your vocabulary building.

ii) Motivate the learner
Gardner was one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) to focus on motivation. He chose to define motivation by specifying four aspects of motivation:
- A goal
- Effortful behavior to reach the goal
- A desire to attain the goal
- Positive attitudes toward the goal (Gardner, 1985, p. 50)

A goal, however, was not necessarily a measurable component of motivation. Instead, a goal was a stimulus that gave rise to motivation.
Make the learner goal oriented and make them aware about the need of second language learning thus enhances his/her learning.

iii) Proficiency in second language
Teachers those who are handling second language (English) must be either graduate or post graduate in the specific subject along with the teacher education. And the second language teachers must have the total language proficiency such as listening proficiency, speaking proficiency, reading proficiency and writing proficiency. Second language teachers give emphasis to develop fourfold skill of particular language among students rather than learn content material. Course materials in language must be aimed as to inculcate the communication skill.

iv) Appropriate use of target language
Most of the language teachers are failed to communicate in English in the classroom. Even the second language classrooms are dominating the mother tongue over target language. Teacher makes the opportunity to students not only speak in target language but also listen the target language. Provide a space to interact with native speaker in a real situation or with the help of internet.

v) Opportunity to use of different sources
Most of the language classrooms, resources are limited with the text book. Apart from the text teachers must be provide other sources like online language learning, learning through mobile device, learning with help of games, communicate in real context etc.

vi) Language acquisition than learning

There is an important distinction made by linguists between language acquisition and language learning. Children acquire language through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules. This is similar to the way they acquire their first language. They get a feel for what is and what isn't correct. In order to acquire language, the learner needs a source of natural communication.

vii) Technological assistance in second language

Make language classroom more interesting with the help of technology. Guide the students to make use of technology properly. It will provide enthusiasm among students. Make classroom active and interactive rather than passive. Acquire second language with innovate technology will make better result.

Apart from the above points, teachers must take into considerations the strategies learners use to learn a second language.

- Learners tend to use their linguistic knowledge of the mother tongue (and may be knowledge of other languages they have learned.)
- Learners try to transfer their cultural knowledge to make assumption when communicating in the target language.
- Teachers must spot and highlight those shared features that may contribute to the target language learning.
- Teachers must be cautious in error correction because errors may be the result of negative language transfer or incorrect assumptions held about the target culture.

Perspectives for future language classroom

In the 21st century, each and every sector can be changed. But our classrooms and teaching-learning process are still standing in the same position. So we should change the attitude to lean in the past and also search the innovation in the field of learning second language.

- **More than one mentor:** Language classroom should not be limited with a language teacher. Open the maximum sources to hear the target language.
- **Text less classroom:** Prescribed text book for second language learning has to wipe out because the language teachers are stick on the textual content only and busy with lecturing and taking notes thus limit the skill acquisition in L2. It also avoids the facilities to develop the L2 in natural settings.
- **Technologically equipped:** Classroom must be equipped with the mobile devices like laptops, palmtops, smart phones, tablets, MP3 players, and notebooks for making the language classroom more lively and interactive.
- **Communication:** Apart from the classroom communication, give opportunity to communicate with experts and peers through social medias like Facebook, twitter, whatsapp etc. for enhancing language efficiency.
- **Creative classroom:** Most of the classroom activities limited with remembering and understanding. But the language classroom must give prominence to applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.
- **Activity oriented**: Make the learner engaged in creative activities like post their poem, short stories, essays in the social Media. Encourage them to write creative blogs about their passion or hobbies.

- **Monitoring:** In every classroom teacher monitoring is happened. But students never get the chance to self-monitoring. Self- monitoring will help to communicate in the target language without any fear.

Conclusion

In order to develop second language acquisition among students in Indian setting, we need well-equipped learning environment it includes mentors and materials. Encourage, motivation and reinforcement, not only from the part of teachers but from parents and society, to the learner for acquiring the target language. Once they got inspired to learn an additional language from his / her mother tongue because a child starts knowing the magic of language from his/her mother tongue. So encourage the learner to learn the target language with the internal and external support.

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