



Grammar-Translation Methodology Weaken Inequity in India

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Abstract. In India, English is considered as the symbol of a better life with a high group, pursued by the majority of Indians and used for any opportunities, power, and personal social status. Because of the peculiarity of the English language in this country, it is used as a tool for class division. In current India, education is stratified. Under this circumstance, racism, patriarchy, and class discrimination create a repressive social environment. Also, English seems to be contributing to these social problems. Thus, there is a lot of pressure on English teaching in India. This paper reviews previous studies on Indian studies and found that the relatively fair teaching method of Grammar-Translation Methodology can weaken the inequity of the education system and society.

Keywords: Grammar-Translation Methodology · Inequity · English · Indian education system

1 Introduction

In India, English is not just a language like any other foreign language. It symbolizes in Indians' minds, better education, better culture, and higher intellect [1]. The reason why Indians attach such importance to English is correlated with the fact that India was a British colony, the only teaching medium in higher education, and the symbol of power and personal social status. That can explain the problem of stratification, sexism, and racism in Indian education systems, which has been deepening.

While in these years, self-respect in the nation is awakening, and the desire for an anti-colonial becomes stronger [2]. Even some policies have been proposed to call on people to pay attention to Hindi, which accounts for 66% of people spoken in India. In terms of the conflict, education is always the critical way to change the situation from the origin. Education is essential in any society. It is a source of growth and development to shape the lives of other individuals and achieve a better society [2]. Also, in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the Grammar translation teaching methodology is also the key to alleviating the additional labels for English.

2 Stratification in India Educational Systems

The phenomenon is that the majority of poor students with low social status have problems in getting the right to learn English, and students who do not master English

cannot get higher education. Thus, people at the bottom of the social ladder have trouble in achieving the opportunity to climb up, whereas the generations of elites can still have a promising position relatively. In such a vicious circle, English seemed to be an accomplice.

In terms of this problem, two parts should not be sneezed at. One is the status of English in India, and the other one is the education system.

2.1 Status of English in India

The fact that India was a British colony is one of the critical reasons why Indians attach such importance to English.

India was under British rule for more than 100 years, during which English became the official language and worked as the teaching medium in the education system. While in 1947, when India gained independence, the status of English remained unchanged. In 1965, though Hindi became India's first official language, with English relegated to second, English has still played a critical role in India up to now.

The language growing like a massive star has a special place, status, and importance in India. English which came from a foreign land, rose to a great height on Indian soil [3]. It experienced the journey from being just a foreign language to the Associate Official language of Administration.

Only Indians attach importance to English and make it a trash can for senior positions and society. As Rao and other writers have pointed out, English has created a new class of English users who think they are superior to those not fluent in English [4]. Therefore, a person's socioeconomic status in Indian society is approximately in direct proportional to their fluency in the language, namely, English with racialism. Also, it is the symbol of higher education, power, and personal social status, which is not as pure as any foreign language in India.

2.1.1 Higher Education

In India, English is regarded as a medium of instruction for high-level communication in daily social communication [6].

The committee's observation of both the status and role of English is of great significance from the perspective of language planning and how policy planners view English. The committee points out that English will continue to enjoy a high status as long as it remains the primary educational language at the university level and the administrative language of the central government and many states [5].

Students entering universities for higher education should have sufficient English language skills to meet the needs of English as a medium of higher education. They will be asked to listen to English speeches and take notes. They need to read and understand the topics in the books designated for study or recommended reading, and take notes. In addition, they must write all their homework and exams in English. They will also be asked to speak on specific topics [6]. It means that English is considered the essential ladder to getting higher education, namely only the people who master English have the right to be educated. Thus, the more educated intellectuals are, the more attention they pay to learn English, which raised the status of English in India.

2.1.2 Power and Personal Social Status

English is regarded not only as a helpful skill, but also as a symbol of a better life and a way out of poverty and oppression.

In the year of 1600, the English stepped into the Indian subcontinent along with the British people who came for trade. They established the British East India Company. Slowly, the company began to take part in politics with the help of the British Government in England, starting to sign business deals with the native Indian rulers and kingdoms. Then the company succeeded in widening its horizons in India and establishing its colonies. By the beginning of the next century, almost all parts of India were a part of the British Empire [3]. They are looking for Indian mediators who could help them to administer India. Therefore, at that time, people who could speak English earned the opportunity to rise to the top and get an absolute fortune.

The view of many Indians on this language has shifted from linking colonialism to colonialism to economic progress [7]. Therefore, India seems to have more opportunities to gain benefits from foreign capital.

Thus, both in the past and in the present, mastering the English language is always regarded to hold the key to the upper class in India. It is also a pathway to earning wealth, power, high personal social status, and respect.

2.2 Education System

In India, just a few of the public schools for the poor with low social status have used English as a teaching medium since upper primary school. While at that time, in private schools for the upper class, teachers paid more attention to the cultivation of students' listening and speaking abilities, namely English is regarded as the medium to adapt to the teaching model of the university. Giriraj Bagla grew up speaking and studying Hindi. The complex mathematics equations he had to solve for the course were not stiff. But he struggled with an unexpected ordeal: the course was taught entirely in English. Of the 10 million students taking the final high school exams in India, 65% come from non-English speaking medium schools. However, higher education in India is currently almost entirely based on English. For students, learning a language that's an unfamiliar language adds a challenge that may be impossible for some, leading thousands to drop out of premium institutes every year. The language barriers are more severe among marginalized communities, where the dropout rates even go up to 60% [8]. This means that the students from the upper class will still get a better education, while the poor ones will still be illiterate in low social status. Thus, the education system, to a large extent, is unreasonable, which contributes to the stratification.

3 Class, Gender, and Race in India

The world is becoming a global village. People belonging to different races and identities are getting closer, and they are becoming more aware of their rights and suppression, etc. Their isolation and exclusion from the concepts of high and low and established beliefs and ideas about race and nationality are no longer effective. Only by accepting diversity and difference can we respect human in the most appropriate way [9]. While,

in India, the problems of class, gender, and race the relationship among which remains intact and shows no sign of dissolving [10]. It still exists in both society and TESOL.

3.1 Inequality in Indian Society

It is generally recognized that the patriarchy and racialism in India are particularly serious. Women face many challenges, the most important one among which is to realize that the ideological principles of the caste system and patriarchy (Brahmanical) are so intertwined that the oppressor and the oppressed are divided into many internal divisions [10]. India is the only large country in which the death rate of girls is higher than that of boys, and girls are also more likely to drop out of school. In addition, India is ranked the most dangerous country for women in the world because of sexual violence and human trafficking [11]. The death rate of girls is higher than that of boys.

In addition, according to the World Inequality Report 2022, India, which is “poor and very unequal, with an affluent elite,” the top 10% of people own 57% of gross national income, of which 22% are owned by the top 1% and the lower half accounts for 13% [12].

3.2 Inequality in TESOL

Even in our own profession, in the field of TESOL, access to and distribution of resources may be at times gendered and racialized. Several recent studies indicate that many young women worldwide consider English to be intrinsically linked to feminism and are motivated to learn it as a language of empowerment [13]. Thus, inequities in terms of class, gender, and race need to be corrected not only in the classrooms but also in ‘imaging’ ESL cadres and recruitment and promotion. Moreover, the proper teaching methodology in the process of teaching English is exceptionally significant as well.

4 Grammar Translation Methodology

The Grammar Translation Methodology means teaching a target language by translating it into the mother tongue. In class, teachers translate each word and sentence into the mother tongue. It is one of the traditional and most straightforward ways of teaching a foreign language and popularizing it. Facing the social issues in India, the benefits of the Grammar Translation Methodology contribute to solving these, and the goal of this methodology is suitable for the college education system in India.

4.1 Advantages

In Grammar-Translation Method, the first language is used as a frame of reference for second language learning. Translation from one language to another plays a unique role in language learning. It is helpful for students to understand better the meaning of abstract words in the translation of two languages [14]. In India, government officials have proposed that the new policy advises mother-tongue education. Considering that just about 30% of people in Indian master English, Grammar-Translation Methodology

is a relatively easy way to teach students English with the help of their prior knowledge of their mother tongue.

The Grammar-Translation Method puts few demands on teachers, and children's comprehension of texts can be tested easily by this method, which is an excellent favorable factor in terms of the teachers' high dropout rate.

The systematic study of grammatical rules plays a vital role in cultivating students' ability to read, comprehend and produce grammatically correct sentences. Understanding and manipulating the morphology and syntax will develop students' knowledge of analysing and solving problems. The emphasis on understanding literary texts provides the situation in which reading and writing skills are well trained. This methodology gives students a fair learning environment. Regardless of gender and race, the teaching material is almost the same, so the students' future depends more on their efforts than class privileges.

4.2 Goals

In India, the goals of the Grammar Translation Method are to enable the students to read literary works in English and memorize the grammar rules and vocabulary of the English language.

Grammar teaching is deductive, that is, habitually practicing rules and principles through translation exercises in specific texts. The text is taught systematically with the help of grammatical rules. The mastery of this skill enables students to understand passages well and face the challenge of English-based teaching in higher education. In addition, in a fair learning environment, learning English, to a large extent, alleviates and even avoids the interference of many inequities like sexism, patriarchy and class division.

4.3 Critical Thinking

Language is the carrier of cultural inheritance, the bridge and the bond of friendship, and the expression of the soul's expression. But when a language becomes an accomplice to stifling a country's gross national happiness, it dramatically diminishes its essential value. In India, the mastery of English has become the standard of class division, which is not the right to belong to one language. Thus, stratification, sexism, and racism are perplexing society with the assistance of the language of English. English is a valuable language, and it creates too much injustice and inequity as well.

Grammar Translation Methodology also has some disadvantages, like the focus of the grammar-translation method on the memorization of grammatical rules and the skill of translation, and the lack of concerns about the development of comprehension and speaking proficiency; namely it is a challenge for students to practice and master the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) thoroughly [15]. While the shortcomings of Grammar Translation Methodology are inevitable, it solves the problem of teachers' high dropout rate. It offers a level of fairness that is in relatively short supply in Indian society. Therefore, the merits of Grammar Translation Methodology outweigh its disadvantages.

5 Conclusion

English, just as one of many foreign languages, should not be utilized as the accomplice causing the stratification of Indian Educational Systems and enhancing the phenomena such as racialism and sexism. However, Grammar Translation Methodology is an equitable teaching method by which a fair learning environment can be created, and opportunities can be offered relatively equally to students. If the proper teaching methodology can be implied to English teaching, the severe problems in India will be mitigated someday.

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