



## ARE HUMAN VALUES ENCASED IN THE OBJECTIVE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ?

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores English Language Teaching beyond its traditional objectives. Besides LSRW skills, amiability, decency, dignity, compassion, truthfulness and so on, are also essential in conversation, communication and social life. If, either a speech or a piece of writing, runs short of these characteristics, it can not help create a new and better world. Establishing a new better world should be everyone's objective. So, it is the objective of English Language Teachers also. His role includes the imbibing human values in student fraternity. The purpose of this paper is to show that human values are encased in the objectives of English Language Teaching. In order to achieve the above purpose, the Dialectical and Historical Materialistic method is employed. This method helps us study and analyze the objectives of English Language Teaching in the light of rationalism and humanism. This method is a progressive world outlook being propounded by Karl Marx and Fredric Engels.

**Key Words:** Teaching in a new era, Globalization, Change in priorities, LSRW skills, Imbuing human values, Anti social elements in art and literature, Quantitative changes and Qualitative changes etc.

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Change your strategy if priorities change. This is a dialectical and historical materialistic understanding of society and change. Things change over time as everything which exists, exists only in motion. Motion causes change. As such, when we believe that English Language Teaching can no longer be a mere subject of language, which deals only with LSRW Skills and human values are encased in its objective, we should essentially change the curriculum and the method and emphasis of teaching. Because, in addition to technical accuracy of language, amiability, decency, dignity, compassion,

truthfulness and so on, are also essential in conversation, communication and social life. If, either a speech or a piece of writing, runs short of these characteristics, it can not help create a new and better world.

All the aspects of super - structure viz social, political, judicial, and cultural aspects undergo change in accordance with the nature of the base of society i.e production system of a country. Teaching is a socio, political, cultural and ethical aspect. It also undergoes change with the change of economic system. Globalization drastically brought in changes in

the arena of education. It has fetched a great deal of importance, adding craze and glamour to English Language Learning and Teaching. It doesn't mean, English had no significance before the 1990's, instead it is only with the beginning of the process of Globalization, English Language Learning has gained momentum in India. Free – trade of India with other nations created the need of English speaking human resources. In fact, even for communication among various states within the country, English, being an easily learnable common language, is a must. Hence 'English Language Teaching at various levels' has got recognition as a worthy subject to be discussed thread bare.

Generally, the basic objective of English Language Teaching (ELT) is to impart the LSRW skills to the students. But intensity of the process of training up the students is absolutely different from school and + 2 levels to under-graduation level. Because the students of under-graduation are expected to bring out accuracy while using the language which has still been considered the official language in the multi lingual and multi cultural Indian society and the lingua franca in the globalized world. Hence, the teacher's role in imparting Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing skills (LSRW) i.e. communication skills in English, is distinct and central at under-graduation level. Students at this level are capable of understanding and interrogating the complex social milieu. If they are well trained, they surly become well mannered and compassionate individuals but if they are left to the pangs of market culture they turn out to be either the selfish or the frustrated. This is the reason why, 'Imparting Communication Skills' in addition to 'Imbuing Human Values' into the young minds is absolutely one of the prime objectives of a teacher of English who has a great deal of facility and so can achieve it with a considerable ease and convenience. It should, of course be achieved, not at the cost of the former, but as a supportive element to the same.

It is true, that the youth in the new millennium are enwrapped by endless passions

in this 'society - turned – market' where in the use - value of things and relations is looked down. Both fashions and passions undergo rapid and drastic change in free enterprise. No doubt, a considerable proportion of the students have control over their mind and body. Some students are even dreaming about social service after making a good fortune as, they have understood 'earning money and doing social service' is the very purpose of life instead of thinking why a large chunk of population is to survive on the sympathy of a handful of individuals who are rich! But at the same time, the proportion of the perverted is not too little.

Furthermore, the youth is targeted by the greedy anti – social elements in the realm of art and literature. These anti – social elements, perhaps they never accept to be called so, in the guise of artists, help increase excessive individualism in the minds of people by glamorizing drinking, smoking, violence, perversions and so on. Therefore, the youth especially those who are in teens and early twenties are more susceptible to the evil affects. All this is allowed to happen, is just due to the prevalence of 'mere – profit – oriented production system' in the country. It is also due to the conscious attempts (to protect their riches from social and economic struggles i.e. revolutions) made by the exploitative class to disunite people by propagating excessive individualism as the noblest ideal and the ultimate end of human beings with the strategic support of corporate media. Most of the contemporary artists, sport - stars, writers etc. , do not hesitate to propagandize the same. Though some of them might be against to this at heart, they always keep mum, especially when crucial questions arrive in the front yard of society!

In the midst of these chaotic conditions, Alas! the children and youth are enveloped and entangled in the Padmavyuha of market culture just like Abhimanyu, (the son of Arjuna in the Maha Bharatha) who learned how to enter it, but didn't know how to help himself out from this deadly mire. It is in these troubled times, the part of a teacher of English is vital. The

teacher like a friend, philosopher and mentor should take the duty of rescuing them out of such Padmavyuha i.e. the perilous anti – social, and perverted - cultural influences.

Then to ask, why it is the duty of only language teachers. A justifiable answer to this question is that, it is the structure of curriculums and methodological aspects of language teaching, naturally facilitate a language teacher to inculcate such values just in the pretext of teaching a text by presenting worthy allusions and examples from the classics and the progressive works in literature of any community and in any language. It could be done timely and tactfully. Relevant quotations, maxims, interesting passages from the first rating literary and non literary texts should be presented, while dealing with lessons or language lab activities. For example, while criticizing moral degeneration, We may make use of a few lines from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow Out of this stony rubbish? ..."

"What the thunder said? ... DA ... *Datta ( Give)*/ DA ... *Dayadhvam (Sympathise)*/ DA ... Damyata (Self-control)"

"London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down."

And while satirizing wars of imperialists, we may quote a Roman Dramatist's compassionate words, "I am a man; And all that affects mankind concerns me,"

While castigating commercialism, we may quote a few words from Rabindra Nath Tagore's address to an assembly of Japanese students,

"... this commercialism with its barbarity of ugly decorations is a terrible menace to all humanity, because it is setting up the ideal of power over the perfection. It is making the cult of self – seeking exult in its naked shamelessness. Its movements are violent, its noise is discordantly loud. It is carrying its own damnation because it is trampling into distortion. It is strenuously turning out money at the cost of happiness ..."  
(From Bhagat Singh, The Jail Notebook

and Other Writings, Left Word Books,2007.)

But quoting and presenting allusions work out only when the teacher is fluent and eloquent and has no contradiction between his 'sayings and doings'. For example, making lectures against cultural distortion and he himself gets inclined to them will not help bring change in the social consciousness of students. Preaching morals and being immoral, to be simpler, will never help establish a better society. If our endeavors are not aimed at attaining this goal, our existence as humans and our vision will be meaningless. A teacher should be an exemplar, in all aspects.

Some of our colleagues may be skeptic about bringing in change in the attitudes of students. If they really understand the process of change, they won't assume so. Therefore, in this context, it is apt for us to discuss the process of change. Change doesn't occur overnight in anything or anywhere. Change as a process takes place every moment unidentified. Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, the proponents of dialectical and historical materialism propounded that Quantitative changes lead to Qualitative changes and vice versa. The perfect example for it as they rightly quoted in an instance, is the act of boiling water. Water in a bowl on stove is not immediately boiled until it is heated up to 100 degrees Celsius. Even at the 99<sup>th</sup> degree of temperature too, no change is apparent in it. But, when added just one degree, water in the bowl begins to evaporate and this could be visible. Same is the case with human society. The more we intensify our endeavors to help students get rid of the traits of excessive individualism the better the result will be.

Hence, a teacher can never find fault with students in regard to the aspect of change. The perseverant and dedicated efforts of the faculty, the progressive teaching content and the empathetic but balanced teaching approach will certainly assist the students to refine their personalities, in course of time. we can also teach them how to view and comprehend the complex phenomena of Nature and human

society, and how to put an end to the antagonistic contradictions among humans and thus we can contribute to the production of better citizens in society. It is these strong minded and values - driven citizens are the greatest wealth of any nation. This noble task can be achieved by the teacher of English at under - graduation level.

There will be better results when the following aspects are favourable and prevalent in the teaching environment. They are as follows:

1. Text i.e to be imparted should be brief, progressive and interesting, so that the teacher finds opportunity to interact with students on various literary, socio - economic , political and cultural aspects.
2. More Seminar - hall based activities are to be included in the curriculum of English Language Lab. And the teacher should strain every nerve to motivate and train them to improve their communicative abilities in addition to reinforce social consciousness and human values in them.
3. Social service - oriented camps are to be organized. The students are to be encouraged to participate actively in such camps organized in rural and tribal regions. This helps them know about the country and its problems. Moreover the youngsters realize the meaning of country not as mere lump of soil, but as people and humanity.
4. Normal and feasible work load should be given to teachers. Heavy work load inevitably dampens the spirit and enthusiasm in the faculty.
5. Adequate infrastructural facilities to be provided.
6. In - service training programmes like, Workshops, Seminars are to be organized at regular intervals for the faculty.
7. Moreover, the work environment i.e. the socio - economic and cultural aspects should be favorable to the faculty. The

unrest in their minds can't display creativity.

8. Conversing and communicating in English should be made a must on campus and it should duly be followed by both students and the members of the faculty of all subjects.

The points mentioned above are a few which could help us teach communicative skills besides bringing in change in the perverted attitudes of the innocent youngsters. English Language Teaching can no longer be a conventional teacher - centered class, but almost like a joyous and pleasant interaction with the young minds and thus teachers in this kind of ambience can accomplish their dual tasks i.e. Imparting communication skills and Imbuing human values. Hence 'change your strategy when circumstances change' should be our motto. Communication has its purpose. It doesn't happen rightly and reasonably in the chaotic climate in society. Communication should be employed to turn this world to a better place for humans and all beings that inhabit it.

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