



## Digital Empowerment and Online Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores a personal narrative and reflection on my journey of learning the English language and its impact on my teaching career. As a learner of a foreign language, I encountered many hurdles before becoming fluent and mastering the language, especially through online platforms. The paper discusses the challenges, self-directed learning, and reflections that shaped my personal and professional life as an English teacher.

### Introduction

English is born out of West Germanic language which came in early medieval England and since then, it becomes a globally spoken language. This language was already introduced by the Angles one of the Germanic peoples who shifted to Britain as soon as the Roman rule is over. Therefore English is the most used for speaking and writing language across the world, only because of the global attractions of the former British Empire (succeeded by the Commonwealth of Nations) and the United States. It is the most widely learned second language in the world, with more second-language speakers than native speakers. However, it is important to know that English is the third-most spoken international language; it is after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. Therefore, English has been global language since its inception to various colonized countries as well as to non colonized countries. It attracts many people to speak it out. It has been learned through many platforms by the learners such as school, colleges, social media and other physical platforms where people prefer to speak English though they are more comfortable in their own mother tongue. Once they learn this language, their life style is become like native speakers of English. They change their own culture into England culture. English language of today reflects many



centuries of development. The political and social events that have in the course of English history so profoundly affected the English people in their national life have generally had a recognizable effect on their language. Growth in language is primarily a matter of population. Consequently the most important question affecting the future size of a language. English language has undergone many challenges with the changes of time. The history and development of English from the earliest known writings to its status today as a dominant world language, is a subject of major importance to linguists and historians. Today the tenets of this nineteenth century philosophy of liberalism are almost forgotten. In continental Europe, it is remembered only a few. Such a language has been entering in the minds of village people of India and changing the personal growth of a particular learner in positive manner. English has always playing major role in terms of geography, society and knowledge, if one attempts to learn and speak in public platform. This current paper brings out the empirical journey of how English was entered into the mind of me, who was eager to learn it. In today's globalised culture, for one who needs to cross borders and communicate successfully is essential. There are many spoken languages in the world, but one that stands out and dominates in business and commerce is English. It is frequently used in international trade, business communications, and even the creation of new technologies. It shows that how important learning English is for personal and professional development. It is also a commercial language that lets people with diverse mother languages to communicate with one another. It is spoken by nearly 1.5 billion people worldwide and is the official language of more than 50 countries. This extensive presence positions English as the conduit for international trade, allowing professionals to conduct transactions of ideas, nurture discussions and debate, and build connections with their counterparts.

Growing up in a small village in Tamil Nadu, English was never a part of my everyday world. My parents used to do daily wage workers spoke only Tamil. At home, we discussed the price of rice and the rain that refused to come—never grammar or vocabulary. For me, English was not just another subject in school; it was an invisible wall separating my world from another—the world of opportunity. I took this venture to complete this tedious task or perish it.

In my Tamil-medium government school, our classrooms were filled with enthusiasm but starved of resources. The English teacher, though kind and committed, often struggled with pronunciation herself. We had outdated textbooks with faded pages, and the occasional English period was more about memorizing than understanding. I remember repeating sentences like “This is a pen” and “He is a boy” without truly grasping what they meant. Outside school, there was no one to practice with. In my village, speaking English was seen as something meant for the rich, not for children who helped their parents in



the fields after school. Without an English-speaking environment, I had no way to improve. The television at home only played Tamil channels, and internet access was out of reach.

The differences between Tamil and English made things even harder. English words sounded foreign and sharp compared to the soft rhythm of Tamil. I often confused sentence order and found pronunciation challenging. The fear of making mistakes kept me silent whenever someone tried to speak English around me. But I also knew that English was not just a subject—it was a bridge. I saw how students from English-medium schools easily gained admission into better colleges and secured good jobs in cities. Meanwhile, many of my classmates dropped out, unable to cope in higher education where English dominated lectures, exams, and interviews.

Over time, I realized that learning English was not a luxury—it was a necessity. It was the key to social and economic mobility, a way to break free from poverty. I began to borrow old grammar books, listen to English news, and practice speaking with friends who shared the same dream. Slowly, words that once frightened me began to feel familiar. Today, as I look back, I understand that the struggle to learn English was not just about mastering a language—it was about finding my voice in a world that often overlooks the poor. Bridging the language gap is not merely an educational goal; it is a step toward equality, dignity, and hope for thousands of Tamil-medium students like me who dare to dream beyond their circumstances.

### **My Journey of Learning English**

Having studied all my classes in Tamil medium, I initially found it difficult to understand English subjects and communicate fluently. English was always strange to me in every aspect. However, I was deeply motivated to learn the language and sought opportunities to interact with those who spoke it. When I joined college to pursue a B.A. in English, I expected to find good teachers and companions who would help me improve, but I was not satisfied with my progress. Eventually, I realized that the library could be my best companion. I had read somewhere that “a library is a good friend,” and this idea guided me. I visited the library regularly during my free time.

In the beginning, I struggled to understand books and newspapers, but slowly I realized that English is not a difficult language for Tamil-medium students if one practices consistently. As George Bernard Shaw once said, 'Practice gives you success.' I read newspapers, magazines, and English stories every day, even if I could not understand them immediately. Patience became my greatest ally.



A major learning tool that helped me was the English monolingual dictionary, though I occasionally used a bilingual one. I collected difficult words, learned their meanings, and memorized them. Later, I realized that grammar was the foundation of language learning. Initially, I was unaware of parts of speech, tenses, and basic sentence structures. Once I began studying grammar—starting with nouns, verbs, tenses, and letter writing—I found it easier to understand and construct meaningful sentences. This personal journey reflects how consistent practice, resourcefulness, and self-discipline helped me overcome linguistic barriers and build my confidence in English.

### **Digital Empowerment and Online Teaching**

As I advanced in my career, I became an Assistant Professor in the Department of English. I could now communicate and teach lessons in English with confidence. With technological advancement, I started exploring digital platforms for teaching and learning. Online teaching opened new possibilities for interaction and engagement. I created a YouTube channel where I uploaded pre-recorded bilingual study materials to help Tamil-medium students grasp English concepts more easily. The positive responses from viewers encouraged me further.

Digital platforms empowered me not only to teach more effectively but also to reach a wider audience beyond the classroom. This experience reinforced my belief in the saying, 'Practice makes a perfect man,' as Bacon aptly observed.

### **Conclusion**

My journey from a Tamil-medium student to an English professor represents a story of perseverance, self-learning, and digital empowerment. English learning is not confined to classrooms; it is a lifelong process that can transform one's personal and professional identity. Through dedication, access to digital resources, and reflective teaching practices, I was able to overcome barriers and contribute to others' learning journeys. This experience reminds us that language learning, when combined with technology, has the power to empower individuals and communities toward progress and equality.



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