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ABSTRACT

The process of teaching and learning English in Iran is not satisfactory. The goals of teaching English as a foreign language have not been achieved and the programs have been suffered by some known and unknown problems. Most of the Iranian students, who have passed seven years of learning English (from junior to secondary school) fail to acquire expected level of proficiency in English. They are not able to communicate fully either orally or in written form.

In the Indian context also, a high percentage of school dropouts leave their schools as ignorant of English usage. In general Indian students are taught English for about six periods per week for six years.

This study basically aimed at identifying and specifying the existing problems and deficiencies in teaching and learning English as a foreign /second language in the secondary schools of Iran and India so as to take advantages of the Indian findings for improving the quality of ELT in Iranian secondary schools. The data needed for this study were collected with the help of two types of questionnaires, one for students and the other for teachers. The sample of the present study consists of 400 randomly selected government secondary school students, 200 from Iran and 200 from India, and 20 English teachers of the same schools, 10 from Iran and 10 from India. The questionnaires mainly focused on language usage, language skills, teaching/learning strategies/methods and styles, medium of instruction and English textbooks.

The findings opted from the results of the both students' and teachers' questionnaire highlighted some problems, advantages, similarities and differences of ELT in Iran and India at secondary level. In order to organize the data and specify the problems, the frequency analysis was done.

Major problems observed in Iran are: lower access of the students to audio-visual aids in English; lower usage of English media by the students (English newspapers, magazines, TV and ...); lower usage of speaking skill among the Iranian students; boring English course and English textbooks and lingual problems of textbooks and high usage of mother tongue along with English as medium of instruction by the Iranian English teachers.

Problems observed in India are: lingual problems of English textbooks; high usage of mother tongue along with English as medium of instruction by the Indian English teachers and high preference of the Indian students on using English along with local language (mother tongue).

Some major findings of both the Indian and Iranian studies were revealed as follows :The Indian students have better access to audio-visual aids in English; The Indian students read English newspapers and magazines more than five times as much of the Iranians; The Indian students' usage of English TV programs for Indians is higher than the Iranians; Extent of speaking in English with teachers and other students in English class by the Indian students are higher than the Iranians; Majority of the Indian students find the contents of their English course and their English textbooks interesting; As a method to improve students' motivation, the Iranian teachers put more emphasis on establishing a friendly and communicative state of competition in classrooms among peers; Holding a competition in teaching methodology was appreciated more among the Iranian teachers.

At the end, some recommendations were presented as some solutions to overcome ELT problems and develop English learning in the both countries.