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Introduction

English language is the world's common language and is spoken by quarter of the world's population (Al-Qahtani, 2013). It is being spoken and learnt to a great extent by the non-native speakers. English language has gained significant importance as it drives growth and international development (Dr. Khan, 2011). The language enables the nation to create more jobs through business deals, economic opportunity and wealth creation, which are very critical to stability (Morita, 2009) . English Language Learners (ELLs) who learn English as second or third language face challenges when they move to places where English is the primary language (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). This report critically analyzes the challenges faced by the English Language Learners while interacting with the communities in Australian context. The report also discusses the government initiatives to overcome the challenges. The report analyzes the challenges faced by the population from Arabian nations in the Australian context and its impact on their life.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

There is increased demand and need for English in developing and emerging economies to boost employability, stability and prosperity (Andrade, 2006). Increasing globalization and economic development has made English language very important and it has become the language of opportunity and a key driver of improving an individual's prospects for good employment and growth (Morita, 2009). The emergence of internet as the global communication channel has reduced boundaries and has been encouraging rapid and constant exchange of ideas and innovation across the globe and it has resulted in single market in ideas

and knowledge in various sectors (Al-Qahtani, 2013). English has become the common language and aids dialogue, trust, understanding and establishing of business deal. Emerging economies and developing nations have recognized the need for learning English and also realized the economic value it brings with it (Morita, 2009). The nations with low proficiency in English have low levels of exports per capita and by learning English language from pre-school and primary years enables the nation to attract foreign investment from developed nation, strengthen export sector in services, which in turn helps the middle class to increase their earnings, strengthen spending and enhancing the national economy (Andrade, 2006).

Due to increasing number of immigrations and refugees over the years to the developed nations such as United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, there is a growing population of English Language Learners student population (Morita, 2009). ELLs according to some reporters are heterogeneous and complex group of students with diverse educational needs, backgrounds, interests, goals and languages (Dr. Khan, 2011). ELL come nations where English is not spoken at all and some come from nations where only English is spoken to others and are exposed to or use several other languages (Morita, 2009). ELL students and adults might have strong sense of multiple cultures or identify only with the culture of the nation where English is the native language such as U.S, U.K and Australia. ELL face different challenges in different areas and require support in those areas.

Communities and ELLs

Kachru (1985) proposed model of functions and roles that English fulfills across the globe (Zhou et al., 2008). The model consists of three concentric circles wherein the circle, which is in center is referred to as inner, then the next circle is referred to as outer and the next is referred

as expanding (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). The innermost circle in the model contains nations, where English is native and primary language and the teachers or speakers are perceived by all the learners as standard-providers of English (Zhou et al., 2008). The nations belonging to this circle include U.S, U.K, Australia and New Zealand. The second circle refers to nation where English is used to some extent as the language was enforced on them due to Imperial rule (Zhou et al., 2008). In such nations, English language is an official, state or associate language. The nations belonging to this circle include India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and many others where English is used as second language and they have developed their own varieties of the language based on the standard varieties of inner circle and also by their own experiences (Al-Qahtani, 2013). Such nations use English language for various purposes such as social interaction, educational, literary, administrative and entertainment. The expanding circle is one which involves nations where English is learnt as a foreign language and who refer to norms set by speakers belonging to inner circle (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). The English language to nations in expanding circle is an international language and is used only in limited functions. The nations include some of the European and Middle East nations along with other nations (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011).

Australia is one of the multicultural nations in the world and there is high percentage of population who do not have English as their first language or second language. There are many people from across the world who arrive in Australia with no knowledge of spoken or written English (Harvey & Mestan, 2012). All the systems of the nation work towards providing English language skills so that the immigrants, refugees and students are able to access all areas of life and participate fully in the community activities, get employment, gain educational degree irrespective of age, nationality, wealth and any other factors (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). In academic communities, the teachers and institutions and the students face increased challenges with students coming from non-native English speaking nations (Al-Qahtani, 2013).

In one of the studies carried out by University of Technology, Sydney, it was found that international students very little improvement in English language proficiency throughout the course of the university degree (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). This not only affects the career aspirations of the student, but also impacts the image of the University and affect the domestic students. The survey carried out by Australian Graduate highlights that the English Language Learner students are more likely to seek full-time employment as compared to English-speaking students (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). The application of non-native English speakers is twice as that of domestic students and the command of language is one of the important factors from employers' perception making it difficult for them to make their choices and train the non-native English speakers (Harvey & Mestan, 2012).

In Australia, the international students find it difficult to understand Australian English, which leads to the students and the graduates feel psychologically distant from host society and deal with the language shock (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). According to Sawir (2005), the ELLs and students feel isolated and lose confidence and most of the time feel confused, lost or embarrassed that directly affects their focus and they lose the energy and enthusiasm to learn the second language effectively (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Crystal (2003) states that even though the outer circle and expanding circle manage to communicate via English language, the communication is likely to break down due to different levels of English competence and misunderstandings due to pronunciation (Fareh, 2010).

In one of the studies carried out in the year 2009, the students studying in Australian Universities were interviewed un relation to their communication in English and personal security in Australian context (Al-Qahtani, 2013). It included international male and female with non-native English and diverse cultural backgrounds who were doing their Master's degree in Australia (Al-Qahtani, 2013). The participants belonged to different nations, which did not have English as their first or second language. The findings of the study highlighted

that students experienced barriers in understanding Australian English when they began their course in the University (Al-Qahtani, 2013). It was found that Australian lecturers always tend to be speech maintainers while speaking English and maintained own original speech style. They did not make efforts to make lectures and class discussions easier for the English Language Learners as they focused more on projecting their own image or identity rather than considering the linguistic and cultural differences while communicating (Al-Qahtani, 2013). The international students viewed Australians' speech behavior as negative and made them feel uneasy and unmotivated to participate in any of the classroom activities (Tananuraksakul, 2012). It is also found that there was no mutual speech convergence among non-native English speakers and Australians in the two-way interaction between them (Andrade, 2006). The ELLs required the native speakers to repeat often, which according to them was not preferred as it will build the perception in the minds of the Australians about linguistic inability and identity negotiation incompetence leading to poor confidence and lack of interest in communicating with each other (Harvey & Mestan, 2012). The poor linguistic and cultural understanding of the ELLs arriving in Australia led to lack of establishing intergroup communication, which in turn impacted the ELLs' self-worth, identity and motivation.

Role played by Government to Support the ELLs

Australian government has implemented Language policy in order to meet the needs and demands of society (Tananuraksakul, 2012). The government has established the policies based on four guiding principles, which include competence in English, maintenance and development of languages other than English, provision of services in languages other than English and opportunities for learning second languages (Harvey & Mestan, 2012). Around 83% of the population speak only English language and hence it is the widely used in official

and co-official functions (Tananuraksakul, 2012). English used in Australia is modified by writers and speakers to adapt to the changing demands and needs of environments. In Australia, there are several challenges with respect to language use as there are limited social, economic and educational opportunities for Australians and international students and population if they are not proficient in English language (Tananuraksakul, 2012). The different regions in the nation have various services such as English Language Learning Improvement Service, which is aimed at providing assistance with various aspects of the language, assisting with advice to the ELLs with respect to pronunciation and understanding Australian idiom (Gill, 2007). Using the Commonwealth Government funding, the schools conduct English Language teaching programs wherein English is taught as Second Language to refugees, immigrants, students on temporary protection visa and permanent and temporary residents of Australia (Tananuraksakul, 2012).

Issues faced by ELLs from Saudi Arabia in Australian context

English is taught as Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia and learning of English in Saudi has a limited purpose and the learners have less opportunity to practice the language outside the classroom (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Teaching of English begins only from middle school and does not have an important place in the curriculum as is in most of the developing nations (Al-Seghayer, 2014). As the language is taught to the students at a very later stage in school and by the time they start with English language they have strong hold on Arabic language, which differs in many aspects from English language (Fareh, 2010). The students face increased challenges in learning the language as the alphabets, writing style, pronunciation and grammar differ to a great extent (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). In Saudi Arabia colleges, the English teachers are of three kinds, which are native speakers, bilinguals and teachers from

India, Pakistan or from other nations, which fall in the outer circle (Alrabai, 2016). Each of them has specific characteristics and faces specific challenges in teaching the language. English language learners in Saudi Arabia often make linguistic mistakes of pronunciation and syntax due to the interference of their first language of Arabic (Morita, 2009). The English language learners in Saudi Arabia are not able to learn the language effectively due to several factors, which include lack of good English language department curricula, lack of target language environment, teaching methodology and learners' motivation (Al-Seghayer, 2014). The dominance of Arabic as an official language of country and main medium of communication among the Saudis has undermined value of English among Saudi students and adults.

Arabian students and population in Australia is increasing and research show that they give preferences to Arabic cultural norms against Australian norms (Morita, 2009). The researches show that interaction, which occurs between Saudi ELLs and Australians it can be either superficial or limited to certain topics as the Saudi individuals find it difficult to joke, converse on personal interests or matters and express their true feelings due to lack of proficiency in English language (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Saudi and the Arabic population engage passively with the local community by carrying out repetitive tasks and low-level dialogue (Alrabai, 2016). They only do listening-to and observing environment rather than actively participating in it as there is increased cultural difference and lack of understanding of the English language, the meanings and lack of understanding of the pronunciation (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). The low-level language use, misunderstandings and lack of connection between Saudi population and Australians has led to impact on language learning. The drive towards learning English language for the Arabians depends on their identification with home community versus integration and acculturation in host community (Tananuraksakul, 2012). The Arabic students and population believe that learning the English language through different service models provides them greater access to community and better sociocultural

adaptation to the situation (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). The Arabian population and students believe that learning the English language in Australian context enables them to have transformative experience and increasingly affected their own view about how they perceive themselves in the Australian context in relation to their own culture (Alrabai, 2016). They emphasize that English language enables them to get involved within the communities and get their support in various aspects of life. The transformed identities enable the Arabian population to become empowered with independence and confidence and change their view about certain practices and have more inclusive approach to rights in the host nation. English Language learning has impact on participatory experience of Saudis and Arabians the in the English language communities across Australia (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

Conclusion

English Language Learners are the ones who are not very proficient to the language but have certain basic knowledge of English language. There is increased need for the developing and emerging nations to develop English if they aim to look for job prospects beyond their home nation. As per the Kachru model there are three concentric circles and nations fall in to one of them and use English language at different levels. Australia fall in the innermost circle wherein English is the primary language whereas Arabian nations fall in to the expanding circle where English is used as second language and is used in minimum areas. English Language Learners from these nations find it challenging to cope in Australia as they fail to understand the accent, fail to pick up the pronunciation and use of words making it difficult for them to integrate in the local communities. Students find it difficult to perform well in the courses and get employed due to lack of proficiency in English Language. The Australian government has established several services for the ELLs so that they become proficient in the language but due to strong

cultural influence it is challenging for the people and students from expanding circle to adopt the same accent and pronunciation and use of language as the local people do. But the Arabian students and population find it essential and make efforts in learning the language as it enables them not just to integrate themselves effectively in the communities but also change their perspectives about their home culture and practices and adopt practices, which encourages growth and equal rights.

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