

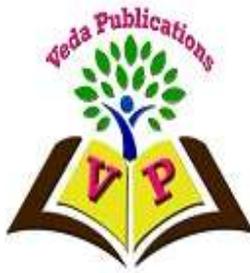


TEACHING ENGLISH FOR RURAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF TELANGANA STATE

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ABSTRACT



This paper aims to investigate the demand for English language and its role in making engineering graduates employable. It also focuses on a theoretical study of English Language teaching in India. It also gives an overview about English language use in technical education and also the skills to enhance the language proficiency of students from Telugu medium background. It also talks about the necessity of teaching effective English to engineering graduates for filling up the gaps of skilled manpower to our nation needs.

Keywords: *English Language, Engineering Graduates, Collocations.*

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English has a status of associate language, but in fact it is the most important language of India. After Hindi it is the most commonly spoken language in India and probably the most read and written language in India. English in India is used not only for communicating with the outside world, but also for inter-state and infrastructure communication. Because of the great ethnic and linguistic diversity found within our nation, English acts as an indispensable 'link' language. English symbolizes in Indians' minds, better education, better culture and higher intellect. Indians who know English often mingle it with Indian languages in their languages in their conversation. English also serves as the communicator among Indians who speak different languages. English is very important in some systems-legal, financial, educational and business in India.

Charles Wood stated that English could be a suitable medium at higher levels of education, because a sound knowledge of English was a prerequisite to seek admission into any university. However, at low levels, English was not felt so necessary, and Indian languages could still continue as the mediums of instruction.

In order to enhance the overall status of education in India, the Kothari Commission stressed on the quality of teachers and increase in the strength of teaching staff at all levels such as school education, medical education, scientific education and research.

Thus, English was adopted as the medium of instruction for natural sciences and mathematics, which resulted in the rapid growth of secondary and university education, particularly in urban areas. Effective learning takes place only when the learner is able to communicate fluently both in writing and speaking and is able to use English for library purposes.

To meet the rising needs of English language teaching, variants of general ELT have paved way—English for Specific Purposes(ESP), English for Academic Purposes(EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes(EOP). In all the above-mentioned variants, the nature of the purpose involved is self-indicative.

In country like India it is very difficult to teach a foreign language to the student community of heterogeneous whose native language is different from one other. But the efforts of learning and teaching English from the two folded aspects teacher-learner are quite harmonious. We find the most of the teaching fraternity of English are striving to teach better English skills to the students.

It is really a wonder if you see the growth of engineering colleges in Telangana State right from 1994 to 2013 from 212 to almost 720 colleges established. Many educationists have founded colleges to give the benefit to the students who aspire for their bright career with engineering as main stream.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To get rid of the fear, Telugu medium learners face while communicating in English.
- (ii) To enhance the confidence level of students from Telugu medium background.
- (iii) To improve the language proficiency of the students in English with emphasis on LSRW Skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The employability percent decreases with increase in the number of engineering colleges in a particular state, clearly establishing that opening more engineering colleges shall not solve the problem of quality in number of Colleges in State of engineers in the country.

So, to solve this problem teaching techniques should be improved to teach Telugu native learners.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

It is worthwhile to note that effective written and oral communication of a general nature in English might be relevant to general learners but a specialized kind of learning would be of relevance only to a few. Therefore, according to Dr. S. Prakash Rao it is necessary to develop all the language skills in order to improve communication skills especially for Telugu native learner.

METHODOLOGY

Researchers carefully investigated the syllabus and curriculum of different universities and colleges of engineering in the state of Telangana. The TS state has around 360 engineering colleges



functioning as deemed, central institutes, aided, private under various universities. Each university frame their own curriculum framework for both technical and non-technical subjects and it varies from year to year. For example, the researchers did a lot of extensive study under two universities namely Osmania University and JNTU Hyderabad.

They find a lot of variation in the course syllabus of English language but they aimed for unique aspects like stressing on four basic skills i.e., LSRW and functional English.

The curriculum frame work of JNTU Hyderabad of language with an introduction of ELCS(English Language Communication Skills) Lab in B.Tech first year and AECS(Advanced English Communication Skills) Lab for B. Tech third year for the students were observed. The researchers found that most of the engineering colleges do not have effective and functioning language labs both for ICS (Interactive Communication Skills) and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Lab) Lab.

HYPOTHESIS

Government of Andhra Pradesh has initiated a scheme for the beneficiary of the poor but intelligent and clever students claim "fee reimbursement" in 2007. With the launch of this scheme many students have joined in engineering, medicine, pharmacy, other technical and vocational courses rather than traditional courses. Increased students in take in the field of engineering led to problems related to teaching-learning issues. Most of the colleges do not have sufficient faculties and proper infrastructure to cater to the needs of the engineering graduate demands.

Now in Telangana state almost 100 engineering colleges faced a typical problem of zero intake of B.Tech first year admissions for the academic year 2016-17. If this continues for next two years then the future of the engineering colleges is unknown and unpredictable.

Based upon all the issues, the engineering colleges are not in a position to pay attention to the utmost criteria of constituting an engineering college according to NBA i.e, Vision, Mission and Goals, Objectives, teaching-learning process, infrastructure, HR-staff, students and non-teaching etc are not maintained properly.

The researchers found varieties of answers for the question, what are communication skills? The answers for this question are varied but most of the students answered the following only one sentence: "Speaking English".

(a) PROBLEMS FACED BY TELUGU NATIVE LEARNERS

Communicative competency can be either verbally or non verbally done. As native speakers of our own language we do use appropriate non verbal clues with the words we speak. It applies to any spoken language so we have to be very careful while we speak English as second or foreign language according to the situation. Most of the engineering students in AP state have Telugu as native language and they should know the dialect and rhetoric appreciation in English, which are highly skilled for them but progressively they learn and use as the native speakers of English.

Minimum requirement for any engineering graduate is proficiency in speaking and writing, firm self esteem, etiquette, cultural transmission, proper body language, adequate decision skills and of major importance excellent presentation skills in order to become employable.

(b) LACK OF SOFT SKILLS

However, if we continue drilling into Communication skills, the issue will become even more complex. In the English speaking world language proficiency is the ability to speak, read, and write standard English in a businesslike way. One may have the "HARD" skill of knowing what usage is correct and what is incorrect, but the "SOFT" skills of knowing when to use only standard forms and in what tone to use them is lacking among the students. The main aspect of this research is to talk about the demand for English in engineering education as the job market and its opportunities are constantly changing. For this as language teacher we should fill up the gaps of students drawbacks in terms of teaching English viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing standard English.

(c) REASONS BEHIND POOR PERFORMANCE OF TELUGU MEDIUM BACKGROUND STUDENTS

- ❖ Lack of communication skills.
- ❖ Lack of speaking skills.
- ❖ Frighten to speak in English.



- ❖ Lack of confidence level.
- ❖ Unable to ask for queries in English language.

(d)SKILLS ACQUIRED BUT UNABLE TO SPEAK IN LANGUAGE

- ❖ Not good at logical thinking.
- ❖ Not good at creative ability.
- ❖ Not good at handling difficult situations.

(e)HOW ENGLISH IS TAUGHT IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES

- ❖ It's direct method of teaching.
- ❖ It's a lecture method.
- ❖ It's taught only in I B. Tech & III B.Tech II SEM.
- ❖ Number of periods allotted are less in number.
- ❖ It's taught only for a semester for III B. Tech
- ❖ Time period is less.

(f)MANAGEMENT RELATED PROBLEMS

- ❖ Management hinders BH&S department in spite of its key role in engineering.
- ❖ Approximately the ratio of teacher and student should be 1:30 but it's not maintained.
- ❖ In most of the colleges a single lecturer manages all the language classes.
- ❖ They don't give preference to Language compared to technical subjects.

Many students are from rural areas who were lagging behind in speaking and communication skills. Since many of them till 10+2 standards are from Telugu medium they find it difficult to cope up with today's technical scenario.

COLLOCATIONS AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Collocations play an important role in developing communicative competence in rural learning students, "knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community". Yorio (1980: 438) claims that conventionalized language forms, including collocations, "make communication more orderly because they are regulatory in nature" Likewise, Channel (1981) indicates that knowledge of collocations is a very effective way of heightening their communicative competence. Additionally,

Cowie (1988) maintains that lexical phrases and collocations serve communicative needs and allow learners to reuse and produce the institutionalized units, and Lewis (2000) affirms that learning chunks or strings of words aid language learners in improving their communicative competencies better than merely learning words in isolation. The great added importance to knowing a large number of collocations and other longer expressions is that we learn the stress pattern as a whole when we meet them, Hill ' (2000). The longer lexical items learners know, the better their stress and intonation will be learnt.

CONCLUSION

It is the professional development component of the engineering education that awaits a great concern. This engineering education requires its student to possess the ability to speak, write and comprehend English well, and effectively communicate both verbally and nonverbally. It also focuses on generic skills, adding not only communicative skills but teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking skills to make an engineering graduate all round professional skilled man. Firstly, it has been noted that a great deal of language knowledge is a collocation knowledge, in the sense that a great deal of our speech and writing consists, in addition to grammatical rules, a readymade two or three word expressions, that always come together. Secondly, collocation knowledge helps in enhancing fluency in speech, through using ready-made expressions in true. Third, collocations play an important role in communicative competence to make our speech more orderly, through using the appropriate collocations in appropriate social situations. Finally, when learners recognize collocations they will be able to use the correct stress and intonation, hence collocations help in developing pronunciation.

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