



INVESTIGATING THE BARRIERS OF TELUGU MEDIUM STUDENTS IN BETTERING THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS AT RGU IIIT - TELANGANA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at exploring the influential factors, linguistic barriers and difficulties of engineering students to improve their language skills at Rajiv Gandhi University, Basar in Telangana State. Six thousand (6000) rural students have been educating in well-equipped digital classrooms with internet accessible individual laptops. They have all kinds of facilities to acquire the language skills, but their output is not to the expected level. Further, this study aims at knowing the psychological factors, attitudinal problems in bettering their productive skills. Generally, Telugu medium students have many defects in acquiring a second language such as accuracy, syntax and vocabulary. Though English will always be the language of opportunity, most of the students are found to be Anglo-phobic. Teaching language skills without solving these attitudinal problems is a futile task; this study tries to throw some light on some possible remedies to overcome attitudinal barriers in learning of English as a second language.

Keywords: *RGU IIIT-Crowded Classrooms -Unable to speak – Barriers.*

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INTRODUCTION

David Graddol, a British linguist, mentions that young people in countries like India will have an edge, since multilingualism will be valued as a professional skill. At the same time, India needs to be more aware of the evolution of English elsewhere in the world, as this will have an impact on its competitiveness. People of the twenty first century are very close to reality despite of inferences of the technology which has its own media to propagate improper messages. The intake of the employment has been decreasing by advent of technology, in particular, upcoming artificial general intelligence technology is going to replace humans in every stream of employment. This is the era of technology that have been grabbing the employment in all spheres of employment. It is still a truth versus hype to discuss that employment only through communication skills. The world has been moving neck to neck to competition; it is quite difficult rural engineering students in superseding with theoretical knowledge. Most of the private engineering colleges have been looking down upon the importance of communication skills as they do not aware of the employment that depends on communication skills. Only seven percent of engineering graduates are employable in India (Times of India). An investigation of the needs and incorporation of study skills components in a heterogeneous classroom in India. (Amit Kumar, 2015). Every student aspires, dreams, loves to speak in English language, when the moment comes to show their spoken ability, they cannot utter a single sentence. There is a necessity to stress on psychological problems of rural engineering students of RGU IIT who do not spend much time in language learning. There is no exaggeration in saying that they cannot speak/practise in English for two minutes in a day. On the other hand, the importance

to English Language teaching has been lessened in a technical academic calendar which gives around 20 hours in semester of 180 days. In general, the unemployment has been increasing in technical stream due to inefficient skills of the students; our universities have been lessening the importance to English language learning in an academic calendar. The faculty English language teaching are treated just like software that need to bring drastic changes in an electronic device. As a matter of fact, students are not machines or micro-chips to reboot with English language teaching app or a better software. The working group of the university grants commission 1978 has advised English has the advantage in publications and reference materials over regional languages and employment prospects of students educated through English medium are better. Although the shift from Regional Languages to English in universities is a problem, English continues to be the status of symbol in society.

As an ordinary teacher, it is essential for me to be familiar with several of the researches and areas of research to help my students and also to keep myself abreast of the developments in this broad field. (MohanrajSathuvalli, 2015). No previous study was not taken place on campus to overcome these problems. It is a known fact that the betterment of any second language depends on the quality amount of time that we spend the time in the language learning process. The more we spend our time to listen and speak, the better we get the outcomes in the process of any language learning. Language is the combination of words and sounds which can keep on changing as long as human beings exists. The aim of the present study is to investigate the barriers in bettering their language skills of RGU IIT – Basar.

		Total	EM	TM	Girls	Boys
1	PUC 1	1047	863	177	540	507
2	PUC 2	997	779	217	450	547
3	E1	868	750	118	415	453
4	E2	871	650	221	479	392
5	E3	952	750	202	465	487



IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

English is not only official language but also a lingua franca in a multilingual country like India. Nilekeni highlighted the evolution of English since independence and the reasons behind a change in perception which means English is no longer viewed as a foreign language. He cautioned that "the demographic dividend that India enjoys could turn into a demographic disaster if we don't give opportunities and access to our people. (The guardian) I am not quite sure whether it's good or bad luck to the most populous country, after it threw out the coloniser, stuck to English more or less as its official language. Usually, Indians love to imitate foreigners without taking into the consideration of the ground level reality. If any kind of novel course is being run on foreign campuses, we tend to follow the same in our universities. Imitating the education system of the developed nations need to encourage our courses and curriculum on the contrary unemployment has been growing leaps and bounds. The cultural and psychological roots have been missing in the current education system as a result unemployment ratio has been growing in this country i.e. agriculture and medicine are needed to be developing in our country like India, but we encourage Engineering education much as result we have uncountable engineers that have been unemployed. There is an imbalance of considering the importance of the courses in All Indian Council Technical Education. Though even so it is now rapidly switching to some other foreign languages some of its major cities, like Mumbai and Delhi . . . However, English may become more and more important in future, with the explosive development of communications networks and computerised databanks.

Well before the 21st century only 15 years away the information revolution made possible by the ubiquitous microchip will have transformed our lives. Already it is possible for anyone sitting at a video display unit to gain access to gigantic electronic libraries, and to request automatic searches for any specific subject. The other day I came across the case of a Telugu medium students who had spent his entire free time hang out with the struggle to improve the

spoken English, digging out all the folders in his computer to some grammar books hoping to get improved spoken English. When the laptop is opened that has been stored in terabytes of movies, various sources of entertainment, their concentration is on only those movies that to be watched. The computer consumed the five hours of time free slots of the students in a day without making them to think about life skills which are very essential to be independent in their lives.

The world of technology has been interlinked with English language. There are now thousands of electronic data banks in existence, covering every field of human knowledge. Indeed it's difficult to see how some professions like Law and Medicine can possibly continue to function without computerised storage and search facilities. I have not seen the statistics, but I strongly suspect that most of the megabytes entered every day maybe every hour will be coded in English. This alone may determine the linguistic pattern of the next century. At the moment, these data banks are only accessible through the telephone system, and hence at considerable expense when intercontinental connections are involved.

HYPOTHESIS

The overall aim of this paper was to explore teaching-learning practices in Teaching English to Rural Engineering students of RGU IIIT – Basar in Telangana State aged 15-21 from macro and micro perspectives. The Department of English has Mentors at PUC (8 Mentor in English) with 1:250 teacher -student, Assistant Professors on contractual basis at Engineering level (6 Contractual Assistant Professors) with 1:500 teacher -student. Teachers have been maintaining day wise lesson plans, teaching diaries. However, there are no previous studies to examine how the teachers of RGU IIIT go about their everyday practice of teaching English to Engineering students, their attitudes to this teaching and the challenges they face.

KEY AIMS

1. To discover the barriers of the Telugu Medium students in bettering their language skills by taking into consideration of the syllabi, video modules that RGU IIIT practises



2. To explore the learning strategies of the students and the major pedagogies that teachers use
3. To understand teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities, including the challenges they face
4. To identify possible solutions to pedagogical issues that to be made effective and how these may support for the betterment of students' communication skills

This report first reviews some of the existing literature on policy and practice at RGU IIIT as this relates to the project. We describe the project design and the data collected before summarising the key findings. Finally, we present our recommendations for future action to support teaching English to young learners.

CONTEXT

The present study was performed in the school of language at RGU IIIT Basar campus which locates in Basar, Telangana State, where 6000 students are from the regional medium background. The students are aged 15 to 21. Most of the students had studied English as their second language in schooling where they had a time of 500 hours of teaching for 10 years.

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE TECHNOLOGIES, BASAR

(RGUKT-Basar) is an autonomous, technical university constituted under the Act 18 of 2008 by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, located in Basar, Telangana, India. The university offers Undergraduate, Post Graduate and Ph.D degree in various programmes. The college comes under autonomous Institutions specialized in teaching and research sector in Information Technology and engineering. The institution follows the norms and regulations of Government of India, University Grants Commission.

COURSES AND DURATION

RGU IIIT has been offering different kinds of courses for PUC and Engineering. Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) is a six (6) year undergraduate programme, total six (6) years of study in the campus after SSC offered after 10th class examinations which includes two years Pre-University Course equivalent

to intermediate degree followed by four year degree course in engineering course.

PRE UNIVERSITY COURSES 1 & 2

Interactive English of Board of Intermediate is being followed with the system of two semesters (160 hours).

ENGINEERING COURSES

Engineering First year main course for one semester of 40 hours with university three monthly test and One End Semester Examination system.

SUPPLEMENTARY COURSES

Communication Skills 1 & 2 for Engineering First year. (40 hours)

English is for Competitive Examinations for Engineering Second year. (20 hours)

Soft Skills for Engineering Third year. (20 hours)

METHOD

It uses a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative along with audio recording for data collection. Audio recording is initiated to reduce the paper work.

RESULTS

After discussing with 5000 students in an each semester for 5 years, the results are found satisfactory. They have spent a reasonable amount of time in their free slots, but they could not get the satisfactory results in bettering the Spoken English. Engineering has these branches ECE, CSE, EE and ME of RGUKT Basar campus.

DISCUSSION

Based on the collected data, it is quite common to have some barriers in acquiring English language. Generally, regional medium students do not experience English as a language course, they study as a subject. These are found among teachers and students community.

NEED BASED TEACHING IS NOT REACHABLE TO THE STUDENTS

On an average ten to twenty percentage of the students have been taking classes along with the English medium. Generally, Telugu medium students do not have basics in English and they were taught an average 1000 at their schooling. They need to be taught by taking extra classes as they are not equal with the skills that the students of English medium have. It was highly impossible to make to speak in the class because English medium student will be taking



the opportunity all the time to speak in English. The role of the teacher in identifying the students who came from Telugu medium and concentrating on them to speak something in the class is incredible. Unfortunately, English Assistant Professors do not have the data of the seventy students of each class along with the medium of their schooling. Hence, the university management needs to look into these issues by allocating special classes for Telugu medium students, providing the needed information for their teaching.

INFLUENCE OF MOTHER TONGUE

It is quite natural to have mother tongue influence on every learner who has been learning English as a second language. It has been staggering the students with the same common problem of spoken English. One of the Professor of English opined that Telugu learners have a tendency to apply the rules of mother tongue grammar to English and there starts the problem. It is true that we can think best in our mother tongue and not in English. If we can bring about some change and help our students to think in English to some extent our difficulties will get reduced. There are a host of other problems related to pronunciation, use of wrong vocabulary, wrong collocations, errors of agreement, mixing of genders, difficulties in mastering the strokes of English orthography etc.

HETEROGENEOUS CLASS ROOMS

Most of the RGU IIIT class rooms have been with huge students because they were planned for the online teaching and learning process. The traditional classroom is entirely different from these classrooms with well-equipped furniture. The same plan has turned into a disaster by making to sit together in 70 to 80 in spacious classroom. No other college has this kind strength in India. All students cannot be given opportunities to speak a little bit, participating in a Group Discussion. Thus, Assistant Professors do not get any overall understanding on their levels in spoken English.

How does a teacher try to bring some change in their spoken English? It is not an ingenious statement, as long as these students are busy with memorizing the theory of engineering subjects they do not get time to be in a language classroom with complete interest. Firstly, the classroom is over

crowded with 70 to 80 students, it is highly impossible them to control who are with individual laptops with headphones. Second thing is each student cannot get a single minute of time to speak in the classroom. Experts say that an English teacher must be like a great motivator to bring the students under his/her control. It is highly impossible to be innovative in bringing them to his teaching. At least, the management needs to understand this genuine problem of overcrowded classrooms.

INFERENCES OF TECHNOLOGY

The fact cannot be denied that E-learning is a great supplementary resource to the students as they enroll for online tutorials to get the complete command over the subject. Many engineering students are moving away from the process of learning from books to tablets, with the help of ed-tech platforms that can give better solutions ranging from online tutorials to career guidance. The first and foremost responsibility of an English teacher is to control the students not to get addicted to the gadgets. It is not to blame anyone either technology or the gadgets, it is about the fascination of the youngsters with the technology. One can forget his/her time one we hold these modern gadgets of Android with Jio besides a laptop. Usually, students of engineering want to be modernized with technology as they came to study engineering. It is too optimistic to think that a teacher can get the students to his teaching with a complete presence of mind without longing for the Instagram, Telegram, Facebook and Whatsapp. A single beep sound of any one of these apps can spoil the five minutes of valuable teaching among 70 to 80 students who generally sit together in a single classroom. A language teacher cannot teach the class without suggesting them to open the laptops as teaching material (PDF), video modules of the English contents are in the laptops.

INSUFFICIENT TIMINGS

This is one of the biggest problems both for teachers and learners on campus. Generally, language teachers do not get much time to be with students as they have electronics, civil engineering who usually complete their slot with five to ten minutes of extra time and English teachers need to take care of online attendance that takes five to ten



minutes. On an average, an English teacher can spend 30 to 35 minutes of valuable time to complete the syllabus for monthly tests and End semester test. It is not an exaggeration in saying that English teacher must make them to speak within those 30 to 35 minutes of time besides completion of the scheduled syllabus.

LACK OF BASICS IN ENGLISH

More than 70% of the students are from Telugu Medium background who studied for their examination purpose. This is cannot be the problem of Rgukt students only; most of the Bachelor of Technology students face the same problem in entire the state of Telangana. 90% of the Government Schools have unskilled teachers in English, they may good at clearing the examination system. Students were taught English language as a core subject like Maths, science and social studies because they have to score well in the Common Board Examination. Teachers and students never bother about acquisition of language skills; students complete their SSC with 8 years of English language course without uttering a single sentence in English. They will be taught common intermediate board examination syllabus at pre university level on Rgukt campus. They need to get the basics, but they ability is not enough in grasping the Grammar at once besides appearing for the traditional examinations. Engineering students have to be taught with basics once again the moment they come to B.Tech. The university doesn't have enough teacher student ration 1: 500 basis.

ATTITUDE OF THE STUDENTS IS A BIG HURDLE

All engineering students have been influenced by technical gadgets in this 21st century. They have two kinds of gadgets always with in the class room i.e. Well configured Laptop and a Jio connected Android mobile phone. 90% of the students are terrible busy with the internet and gadgets. English classes can be allotted either inconvenient timings of the students either in the afternoon or early in the morning. Moreover, students have a strong desire to speak in English, but they cannot talk at least a minute of time in English on campus. They might be feeling very bored in every English class due to improper exercise in the classrooms.

NO IMPORTANCE TO ENGLISH

The university management feels that English language classes are not that much important as students need to be trained to master core subjects of Engineering. Having experienced the same kind of academic problems, the teachers of English have requested the management to allot some more classes, but they are too busy with the same core subjects. This is not quite astonishment that every engineering student wants to become a CEO like SathyaNadella, SundaraRajanPichai; nobody tries to enrich the language that they have been using to communicate globally.

ANGLOPHOBIA

Fluent English can make Engineering is a revered course with a promising future, otherwise, it can be called a pass port for unemployment in India. The prime motto of teaching English is to make Learners to have command of the language to express their emotions and experiences in a particular context. Students need to come out of the fear that making them to mumble with improper utterance. However, the teaching staff would encourage them to use the language in the classrooms; the students ought to take the initiation to speak in English. They need to love to speak without concentrating on their mistakes.

CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS OF ENGLISH

Having noticed above mentioned problems from the teachers point of view, one can predict how the condition of the curriculum. There is no proper funding to design and publish the syllabus once in at least three years. Neither teachers can spare some time to design what the students need nor university take the responsibility. The university has three language labs with Clarity English and Tense buster software designed by Young India, but students are not receiving it properly. There must be a committee to investigate the problems and design new syllabi to all students on the campus.

THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

It is observed that the role of language laboratory is not playing a crucial role among students as they feel it burdensome. They visit the lab in one semester where a single software is installed with grammar, pronunciation, comprehension and writing. The length of the



modules is not enough to engage the students in allotted schedule. The aims and objective of AICTE are not being implemented in using the language laboratory. They need to make Lab as a Dias of tutorials for students in supplementing their language skills. Experts opined that teachers need to aim at preparing students for interviews, group discussions and debate for the campus placements. There are Telugu medium students whose skills of English are not satisfactory. Consequently, they are unable to crack job interviews and other competitive examinations. Lab should be used to drill the sentences and words to improve their pronunciation. As per its norms, lessons and exercises have to be made by the teacher based on classroom. It is not good to depend on only the software that has been designed for global marketing. Their sessions have to be recorded on a weekly basis so that students are exposed to a variety of listening and speaking drills. The language laboratory sessions will have to include word games, quizzes, extempore and debates. The labs need to have spacious rooms and a faculty who is proficient in English. Each laptop must be connected with full internet that accessible at least some useful links that can make them to grab the knowledge from all sources. Continuous teaching cannot make students to improve spoken english on the other hand they feel bored with teaching.

CONCLUSION

In order to bring expected results among students, these above mentioned barriers have to be addressed with a proper study. They need extra teaching hours to get proper exposure to improve spoken English. Their phobia speaking in English can be decreased when they are encouraged by classmates who are able to communicate better. All classrooms have both English and Telugu medium students sitting together, hence, Telugu medium students have to be concentrated much with special teaching techniques. Students can come forward to participate in classroom based activities when they have peer encouragement. Student-teacher ratio is not expected with such a low, university management needs to curb the gap among student and teachers by recruiting at least 1:100. As we all experience that crowd is not a company, especially,

the lesser the strength, the more they can get the time to participate.

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