Present Scenario of ELT in Technical Institutions: A Status Study of Engineering Colleges in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

As far as India is concerned, imparting knowledge of English in India has always been a degrading task, because of the diverse nature of the social and cultural values. Moreover, individual commitment of the learners in acquiring the English language skills is widely lacking, as they lose their flexibility in both body and mind at the age of or early twenties at the time of joining colleges. These learners are distracted in so many ways which drag them away from academics. They don't remained focused and prepare for exams only at the eleventh hour; as a result, they don't learn anything worthy, apart from getting some aggregates and certificates. These young learners, when they switch over from schools to colleges, they continue the same style of learning. In schools, the contents are memorized and repeated in the examinations, whereas after coming to colleges, they should at least try to change their learning style. But, this is not happening since even in colleges, the English language is taught as a subject. This also de-motivates the students and develops disliking towards learning. This is the reason that the professionals are still lagging behind in accurate speaking and writing. In order to prove the above point, the present paper is an attempt to compare the curriculum and pedagogy followed in two different state of India i.e. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. This present study will also make the recommendations to overcome the same.

Keywords- *ELT, Engineering Colleges, Curriculum.*

Introduction

Language is a means to express the behavioral notation of a human being. The science of language recognizes the expression and communication to or from human beings by the way of speech and hearing. This is to say that this communication and expression of emotions, feelings and desires should be from man to man by means of speech and hearing. The other meaning for language is – what carries a message from one human mind to another" this definition makes language far more inclusive. If it is so, language is not only speech, it is also writing, pictures, symbols that catch the eye, etc. But speech is the most common and wide spread form of language, so that, for too many people, language and speech are one and the same. Prof. H.B. Allen said that a language system is primarily observed as speech. In producing this speech, an individual has to utter some sounds; these sound should be "combined in systems evolved, conventionalized and recognized by common usage". (Russel and Allen, 1972) This is the social aspect of language. Language is not automatic or instinctive to man as walking is. Language is an acquired social activity. A body does not know a language when he sees the light of the world". He learns it over a period of time. Learning starts with mewling, crying, gurgling and then producing isolated sounds. This process goes on and a stage comes when the language is learnt. A child separated from society will learn to walk, but he will never learn to talk without society. He picks up the language of his environment. Thus one learns a language from other people. It begins in infancy and continues throughout his life" Language is a combination of three elements, viz, the sounds, words and structures, (Phonology, Morphology and Syntax). Like any other system, language is also a system. The system of a human body works through organs like heart, brain, legs, hands, eyes, ears, etc. In the same way, language also functions through its elements. If we take "school" as a system, students, teachers, H.M., building and infrastructure all work it. In the same way, in language the sounds, words, sentence patterns work for it.

Scenario of English Language in India

After six decades of Indian independence; Hindi has not replaced English completely. The major factor is the growing feeling, that English no longer belongs to the English alone but to all those who speak it as their first or second language. As a mother tongue, it ranks second only to Chinese. All over the world there are 300 million people who are communicating in English, either way, moreover it is very right to state that it is a second language at international level. Randolph Quirk (1962) talks of the importance of English in Indian jobs. Knowledge of English is considered as a successful passport for employment. An English speaking Indian is invariably preferred to a non-English speaking Indian in almost all jobs in a Government department.

English is not only a national language of Englishmen, it is an international language. It may be called the language of the civilization, its richness, elegance, beauty, flexibility and dignity made it universally popular. Gandhi Ji, in "Thoughts of National Languages" said, "I hold its knowledge as a second language to be indispensable for specified Indians who have to represent the country's interest in the international domain. I regard the English language as an open window for peeping into western thought and science." (Gandhi, 1956) In this connection, let us just have a look at the remarks of Education commission (1964-66). The key points that are explained here below tell us clearly about the place of English as a second language in India and its importance in the changed circumstances. All English knowing people in a state can easily communicate their needs and desires to their brethren living in a different state. A social link is established only through the English as a medium of communication.

English is the key that would unlock the store house of knowledge. Keeping in view its importance, we can say that every graduate and research scholar must acquire a reasonable proficiency in the language if he/she desires to maintain the established standards of education and knowledge. F.G. French rightly said that, "every advance in science, in engineering, in trade, in politics, in every branch of human thought is discussed, printed, determinate and made available in English". (French, 1997) In recent years, there has been an explosion of knowledge in all fields especially in science and technology. Most of this has been recorded in English. If our students cannot equip themselves with the language, they reach nowhere in this competitive world. So long as English continues to be the important library language. Its place has to be strengthened at secondary level.

Review of Literature

Jagtap S.S, (2010) This research was based on secondary data, the researcher has taken all the precautions to gather the data from different official sources, as the result of the study she stated that understanding of a language is essential for decoding the information which is in written form and it depends on the ability of a person to read and understand the text in his or her own sense. She also stated that for the educational purposes this level of understanding becomes even more important, because a student will become the part of work force in future and contribute in the development of the country. In this sense the understanding of the language is very important.

Shinde J. (2013) This study was based on the primary data and cross sectional approach was followed for the purpose of research. This study was important in the sense that it establishes a relation between the theories and prevailing facts based on the same. Convent and missionary schools were surveyed for the purpose of study, the study revealed that at the school level more thrust is given on written English, there is a need to focus on spoken English and understanding of the same. The

findings of the study revealed that in most of the schools, students are just repeating the same statements all the time or they are reciting the lines written by their teachers.

Patil Pawan, (2012) This study was based on primary data, the researcher has conducted a study on the level of learning in the students at the junior level i.e. up to class VIII. This study was conducted to find the gaps in the teaching methods and suggesting new and improved methods for the same. The researcher suggested that inductive and deductive methods of teaching are suitable for the sake of learning and junior level. The researcher found that the inductive method is more suitable to enhance the level of thinking. This method includes the learning of Analysis, Synthesis and application. The result of the study found that inductive method is more appropriate against the traditional method of learning.

Debata, P.K. (2013): The researcher found that writing is the active part of the language and comparatively reading is the passive part of language. The Knowledge of the language makes us to know the meaning of isolated words or sentences or the rules of grammar. Talking about the language does not mean knowing language and using it. If we consider language as speech, as the linguists do, then knowing a language means to use its grammatical patterns as well as proper usage."

Farjana, (2014) In case of any language, grammar of the same becomes very important. This is because of the reason that grammar is the soul of communication and is understood by all in the same sense by all of the people who are in the loop of communication. Knowledge of Grammar helps to understand the difference between right and wrong form of communication. This were the findings of the study conducted in the selected engineering colleges of the Maharashtra, the sample size of the study was 500 students and inferential statistics is being used to analyze the data.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the need of teaching communicative English in institutes offering technical courses,
- To know the effectiveness of the curriculum of English being followed in technical institutes of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh,
- Give suggestions to improve the present situation of teaching communicative English.

State of ELT in Engineering Colleges of Rajasthan

In most of the universities or colleges, English/Communication Skills is taught for minimum of two semesters. In a state like Rajasthan where people prefer speaking Hindi or the local language, the condition of English both in spoken and written skills is pathetic and in a state of utter gloominess. While competing for a job, it becomes even more challenging for the students who have come from Hindi background schooling to compete with the candidates from other states. Besides the pressure of

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proving excellence in the subject knowledge, they have to compete with others in the area of communication skills also, where they definitely lack and scoreless. Language teaching process has the following inherent elements and these should address the needs of the students and be made relevant to the job requirements in question.

The teaching of English in India today presents a quick contrast to our surging economy. The state of teaching and research in most of elevated education is intensely appalling. Lack of ample infrastructure, dearth of quality as a crucial principle of academic life, growing interference of political process, and an absence of suitable investment have put the teaching of English in the method of disintegration. To make English teaching an agent of incentive for removing a climate of increasing disproportion in a developing economy like India one has to look at it both as a strategy as well as an ideology. English in India today is more of a prerequisite and stipulation than a luxury or exceptionality. The changing role of this language in India marks a grave paradigm shift where the power relations in the country have grown more and more reliant on the relative currency of the languages used here. English has superseded the regional languages in annex, currency, usability and cross-cultural communication. With the multinational corporate houses extending their business and employment opportunities to densely populated countries like India. English is quickly alleged as a language of better opportunity and a brighter outlook for the fortune – hunting youth, the globe-trotting academics or businessmen. We can say that communication skill is the heart and soul of corporate world including the knowledge of English, ignoring the same can result in high losses to the job aspirants.

State of ELT in Engineering Colleges of Madhya Pradesh

One poignant issue that a teacher undergoes is the curriculum design. Particularly in Madhya-Pradesh most of the engineering colleges are affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi Technical University. This university has included English as a compulsory subject in the syllabus of first and second semesters. In the first semester students learn the four skills of communication i.e. LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), with equal emphasis on all these skills. In the second semester the syllabus focuses mainly on enhancing the spoken skills. The syllabus tries to target the placement of the students.

In order to qualify for a good job and then survive in the corporate world, the student needs to master English language along with good communication skills. In 2015, RGPV has introduced the choice based credit system (CBCS). The new system gives an opportunity to enhance Reading and writing skills. In this audit course (Communication-HU-111) the student is supposed to read literary work and present a review on it.

Skills like book analysis and criticism are refined. But, the students hardly seem to get any benefit of the newly designed syllabus. The reasons are many. First of all according to the academic calendar of the university, there are 90 working days in a semester. With all the ups and downs considering the late admissions in private engineering colleges, low attendance at festive seasons, unexpected holidays, loss of teaching days due to Mid-terms etc; the teacher gets limited time to complete the syllabus. Over all that the disparity in the level of intelligence of the students makes his job Herculean.

Completing the exam oriented syllabus; practical teaching of the communication skills; developing sound knowledge of English language; preparing the student for the corporate world etc. Coupled with these tasks there are the expectations from the teacher. If the institute is owned by a private management, the teacher withstands a lot of pressure from the higher authorities. This pressure includes good result and good performance in the campus drives by the students.

Pedagogical Issues

As compared to the responsibilities, the rights and privileges enjoyed by the teacher, including the salary, appraisal, teaching load, working conditions etc., are minimal. Most of the times the teachers are over-burdened with teaching load. Apart from the load of teaching, the teacher is delegated with other clerical jobs as well. The number of students in each class is so high that it hinders the individual approach. Also, the management lacks in providing motivation to the teachers. In engineering institutes the language teacher is always on the margin. He/she is considered inferior as compared to the so-called technical fraternity.

The case is same with the norms of technical bodies like AICTE or UGC which has a clear line of discrimination between the Humanities and Applied Sciences, and Technical Departments. The demarcation can be seen in the pattern of the examination paper and valuation as well. Due to these and many such elements, even the students are reluctant to invest their time in the subject of Humanities. This leads to their dependence on Question-Banks, Guides and Made-Easy books.

All of these factors combine together and make English teaching all the more fractious. Barriers and hurdles in the path of an English teacher are manifold, but they can be overcome with conscious and genuine approach. Not one but all will have to take steps in order to make the task of English teaching rewarding and beneficial.

The main aim of the teacher should be to make the student a good communicator rather than merely a good English speaker. For this implementation the teachers need to be trained with a specific motto. Other than the training, constant motivation is also very vital. This motivation is required from the management, if the institute is a private one; and also from the governing bodies. Some specific

norms should be framed relating to increments, promotion etc. The morale of the English teacher should be elevated by both monetary and non-monetary measures so that their place can be shifted from the margin towards the centre.

Comparative Analysis of Engineering Colleges of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh

Table 1: Sampled Colleges of Rajasthan

S.N.	Name of College	Allowed Intake/ Actual Admissions	State of ELT	Duration
1	Swami Keshwanand Institute of Technology, Jaipur	1160/1120	CALL	For All Years
2	Govt. Engineering College, Bharatpur	360/417	WALL	For All Years
3	Jodhpur Institute of Engineering and Technology, Jodhpur	780/577	WALL	For 1st and 2nd Year
4	Global Institute of Technology, Jaipur	1440/1165	CALL	For 1st and 2nd Year
5	Govt. Engineering College, Kota	390/305	CALL	For All Years
6	Arya Institute of Engineering Technology and Management, Jaipur	420/215	CALL	For All Years
7	Govt. Engineering College, Ajmer	480/470	WALL	For 1st Year only
8	Rajasthan Institute of Engineering and Technology, Jaipur	449/170	CALL	For 1st Year only
9	Rajasthan College of Engineering for Women, Jaipur	420/90	CALL	For 1st Year only
10	Govt. Engineering College, Bikaner	631/405	WALL	For 1st Year only

Table 2: Sampled Colleges of Madhya Pradesh

S.N.	Name of College	Allowed Intake/ Actual Admissions	State of ELT	Duration
1	Acropolis Institute of Technology & Research, Bhopal	780/690	CALL	For All Years
2	Mahakal Institute of Technology, Ujjain	600/600	CALL	For 1st and 2nd Year
3	Mittal Institute of Tech., Bhopal	600/478	WALL	For 1st and 2nd Year
4	Ujjain Engineering College, Ujjain	456/456	WALL	For 1st and 2nd Year
5	Vikrant Institute of Tech. & Mgmt, Indore	670/216	CALL	For All Years

6	Malwa institute of technology, Indore	480/316	CALL	For All Years
7	Madhav Institute of Technology and Science, Gwalior	360/234	WALL	Stick to the Curriculum
8	Samarat Ashok Technological Institute, Vidisha, M.P.	480/409	WALL	For 1st Year Only
9	Jabalpur Engineering College, Jabalpur	320/254	WALL	For All Years
10	Vindhya Institute of Technology and Science, Satna	630/498	WALL	For 1st and 2nd Year

Interpretation

In order to compare the state of ELT in the engineering colleges of both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, ten (10) engineering colleges from each state have been selected, the selection is made according to the QIV grading system of respective Technical universities for the year 2017. As it can be seen from the table given above that in case of Rajasthan, the institutions are more inclined towards the teaching of English at all levels i.e. for all the years of the course, only five institutes are carrying it for the 1st and 2nd year of the course. Here the term 'CALL' refers to the teaching of English by the use of technology like computers software, audio visual aid, etc. and 'WALL' refers to the basic classroom teaching with chalk and duster or markers. So, in case of Rajasthan 6 colleges are following the 'CALL' system, four are using 'WALL' system.

On the other hand, in case of Madhya Pradesh, only 4 colleges are using the 'CALL' system of teaching and other 6 are using 'WALL' system of teaching. In the same manner only four colleges who are using 'CALL' are taking care of English for all the years of the course and the other 6 colleges following 'WALL' are doing the same only for the 1st and 2nd year of the course.

This type of mix and match approach of the colleges is being reflected on the learning of the students and can be witnessed in the form of successful placements and all other activities in which students are involved and English is the medium of communication. The colleges, who are taking care of the same for all the years of the course, were found to be more successful in different dimensions and others are not. This shortcoming of the students is being witnessed in the long term i.e. by the end of fourth year of the course, but till then it is too late.

Suggestions

- The first remedy is to make the engineering students understand the importance and vitality of the subject. This can be done by various moves. First of all the move should be taken by the higher governing bodies like AICTE, UGC, DTE, RGPV and RTU etc. the authorities should have its eye on the pedagogy, in terms of marks and mandatory activities. However, the

university (RGPV) has taken some good moves in the form of Language Lab in the curriculum; and increasing the internal marks, but still it has a long way to go.

- In order to bridge the gap between technical subjects and the subjects of Humanities & Social Sciences, the definition of technical subjects needs to be re-framed. English is as technical as the other hard-core subjects.

- Without proper communication, without a global approach all the technical knowledge of a student is futile. This approach needs to be understood by both the students and the Management.

- However, problem of disparity in the level of students is hard to cope with, yet some efforts on the part of the teacher can prove useful in filling this lacuna. To overcome this, the teacher should use some innovative teaching methodologies. The stress should be on practical aspects of communication skills. Role plays, Debates, Group Discussions, Oral Presentations, Object Description, and Conversation Practice etc. are some activities on which the teacher should pay attention.

Conclusion

Till the time, a person is a student, he doesn't realize the hardship of life and the actual challenge starts as and when the course is completed and he/she is on his/her own for the same. This is the time when an Engineering student crosses the threshold of the college and enters into professional life. In this process had to go through with various entrance tests and interviews. Verbal ability forms a major portion of these tests. Without sound language/communication skills, the student with engineering background find him/herself almost under- prepared for such tests and interviews. Thus to become professionally successful, It becomes imperative for the students to be technically proficient in handling the language skills. This has to be understood clearly by the respective institutions, as they are the mentors of their students and the responsibility lies with them. In the due course of this study the researcher found that institutes are charging for the teaching of English (other than the curriculum), according to researcher this is a positive approach, but then again institutes are liable to make use of best available tools and pedagogy.

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