

ELT: Status and Challenges at Under Graduate Level in Rural North Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Face of English language teaching has changed dramatically after globalization. Indeed, it is not only changed the perspectives of the language teaching but also focused both English for academic purpose and English for specific purpose. This is the reason why techniques of teaching and classroom delivery has shifted from teacher centred to learner centred. This philosophy of learner centeredness has strong links with experimental learning and also encourages for task based language teaching English is playing a pivotal role in Indian system of Education since its inception. Gradually sea change has taken place both in teaching and learning even; it is observed people's mindset that without English there is no bright future in the fast changing world. This is the reason why importance of English language has increased ever than before. At present English is being taught in India as a compulsory subject at under graduate level. In spite of this having learnt English as compulsory subject, students are not competent to communicate and interactive with people, paradoxically majority of students show good performance in the examination by scoring distinction in English.

Key terms: Competent, experimental, effective strategies, Planning and preparation

Face of English language teaching has changed dramatically after globalization. Indeed, it is not only changed the perspectives of the language teaching but also focused both English for academic purpose and English for specific purpose. This is the reason why techniques of teaching and classroom delivery has shifted from teacher centred to learner centred. This philosophy of learner centeredness has strong links with experimental learning and also encourages for task based language teaching. In the fast changing world English language is standing in the forefront

in providing employment opportunities and helps to explore knowledge in a globalized world. This panorama has directly or indirectly enhanced the importance of English language in the changing scenario. It is the language which provides an ample opportunity in every stream because; it is considered as an official language in globalized world.

Education is foremost foundation in moulding career of students. To achieve these objectives it has to restructure itself in terms of updating the curriculum from

time to time to gain momentum in both pedagogy and students in general. Indeed, in the fast changing world English language has become one of the significant tools in enhancing and enriching skills of students. Indeed, transition is truly encouraging them for effective and meaningful training of students in English classroom; technology is motivating and directing the teachers for their role in educating the students in learning English Language with expertise. At the same time the language teacher has to encourage students to interact and raise questions during classroom sessions. This kind of congenial classroom atmosphere will motivate and guide the students to communicate in English with the teacher. This initiation will certainly become a launching pad for learners to overcome from fear and mistakes while speaking in the English classroom. As **Kahlil Gibran** rightly pointed out that if a teacher is indeed wise he doesn't bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind, in addition to this meticulous planning, preparation and effective strategies of teacher plays vital role in developing intelligible skills among students. This could be achieved through lesson plan and teaching plan, which leads to enrichment of academic learning ambience. As Tricia Hedge has aptly pointed out that the design of classroom procedures for effective development of language skills, the respective roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners the relationship between the content of teaching and the context of learning; the development of critical pedagogy; the successful

management of interactive learning, and the development of innovative teaching materials will help to provide insights into the relevance of ELT classroom practice.

Status of English Language Teaching in National Scenario

English is playing a pivotal role in Indian system of Education since its inception. Gradually sea change has taken place both in teaching and learning even; it is observed people's mindset that without English there is no bright future in the fast changing world. This is the reason why importance of English language has increased ever than before. At present English is being taught in India as a compulsory subject at under graduate level. In spite of this having learnt English as compulsory subject, students are not competent to communicate and interactive with people, paradoxically majority of students show good performance in the examination by scoring distinction in English. The main reason behind that students are preparing English subject only examination point of view rather than acquiring skills and proficiency in English, it is a matter of great concern for the academia. In other sense, it is observed that present English language teaching in India doesn't focus about approach and preparation while teaching, majority of the teaching fraternity reliable on prescribe text and who don't go beyond the given content. Often teachers are interested to complete the syllabus rather than making students to acquire language skills. Because of this the proficiency and competency of students in English language has not been observed

in the expected level. It is a known fact that present scenario is expecting language proficiency in every field. To fulfil this task teacher has to play an exceptional role in building language competency of students. But it is a matter of great concern that in most of rural colleges in India English is being taught in the mother tongue and students and teachers have adjusted with this atmosphere of the classroom; it is not a matter of exaggeration but fact of the matter.

It is observed that many teachers in the days of globalization still feel that the learners are dependents and they are doing favour by teaching them. Completion of topics and preparing the learners to pass the examination is their first priority. The curriculum, the pedagogy, and different evaluation are rarely questioned and changed by the faculty at the grass root level. Ignorance of objectives of education in general and functional English in particular is rampant among the majority of the faculty.

“The fact of the matter is in India teachers’ battle for completing the syllabus for the learners even not possessing the texts. They are hijacked by the private classes promising the Queen’s English and sure passing marks in the written tests. The committed faculty is handicapped by the poor vocabulary, unclear concepts of grammar, Anglophobia of the learner. The faculty teaching the language of opportunities in their mother tongue is the popular teacher. As a result teacher follows the easy and examination oriented teaching methodology to maintain

the results rather than language competency”

As matter of fact crowded classroom in India may not give enough space and freedom for the language teachers to experiment innovative ideas in the classroom, at the same time language teacher has to complete the syllabus within the time bound. This compels the teachers to fulfil the task rather than improving the language skills of the students. “Sometimes teachers of English are more interested in completing the syllabus than making the students acquire good language skills”

Thus, the need of English to the Indians in the globalized world is two ways namely ESP, English for specific Purpose and EAP, English for Academic Purpose. To achieve this task effectively and successfully, teachers of English has to keep abreast in their respective arena in order to create learning ambience and language competency among students.

Status of English Language Teaching in Karnataka

The status of English language teaching in Karnataka is not different from national scenario. Majority of teachers focus in traditional teaching method and a few teachers who would like to explore with innovative teaching approaches and methods to develop language skills among learners with the help of modern gadgets. This kind of atmosphere can observed in metropolitan colleges but, the overall panorama of the English language teaching is given importance to complete the subject

for the examination point of view rather than focusing language skills of the learners, main reason for such kind of development in the present circumstance in English language teaching due to lack of extra care by the English language teachers and ineffective learning ambience in the classroom. This atmosphere has created stumbling blocks among students in developing competency in English. "It is observed that the present English language teaching in Karnataka at the college level doesn't talk about any kind of methodology. This indifference to methodology leaves the English teacher in a chaotic condition but also encourages the teacher to follow what appears good to him/her like vernacular language teaching, English language teaching requires more of practical approach. This emphasises the need for reorientation to the teachers of English to deal with an average general English classroom" Even it is an open secret that majority of teachers of English are more interested in completing the syllabus than making the students to develop language proficiency. "In the post independence era English language teaching in Karnataka has seen many changes. However despite the recommendations of various committees and commissions it has not been possible to attain the anticipated standards in the use of the language by our learners. Many undergraduate and post graduate still find it difficult to speak in English due to huge gap between the needs of the learners and teaching objects and disproportionate importance given to the prescribed textbooks"

Status of English Language Teaching in Rural Karnataka

After over viewing the status of English at national level the investigator doesn't find major differences in teaching and learning of English in rural part of Karnataka. Indeed, English language teachers focus to complete the prescribed text rather than improving the skills of students. The only difference is observed that at national level students are exposed to the modern world which has directly or indirectly compelled the students to develop language skills marginally. The status of English language learning and teaching at rural is similar in entire country and Karnataka is no exception. Most of the rural colleges are unable to cope with changing trends in English Language teaching which is also one of the reasons for mediocre and incompetency in English language teaching and learning in general. Most of the rural colleges in the state are unable to enjoy the facilities of modern gadgets sometimes teachers are unaware of the facts, knowledge about the technology. In other sense the condition of English language teaching in rural parts of Karnataka is not encouraging. Motivation problems of the learners, ineffective classroom strategies, and substandard infrastructural facilities are some of the reasons for the decline in standards of language.

By all accounts change is the constant and natural process in every stream and teaching is no exception. Every now and then things are changing at the rate of knots in a globalized world and one has to

rejuvenate the skills and perspectives to explore innovative ideas in the respective arena. Indeed, English has become the guiding force in the fast changing world and situation is demanding effective communicative skills in every walk of life and has become the root of shaping one's career in a better way. Developing language competency is gaining momentum in the present circumstance, in other sense enhancement of language competency of students' lies on the shoulder of language teachers. To achieve this task effective classroom delivery plays an important role in improving language skills and learning ambience of English language. Teachers' methods and approaches in the classroom help to develop effective communicative skills among students. Majority/ most of the experts and researchers opine that the condition of English language in rural colleges is not effective and sub Standard, English language teaching is handicapped with a number of active problems in India such as crowded classrooms, lack of adequate qualifications on the part of teachers, deficiency of good training facilities to teachers, dearth of instructional materials and supplementary, both for teachers themselves. In addition, a large number of teachers of English confine themselves mainly to prescribed text books and methods of teaching that are out dated and ineffective at this juncture. Considering the problems and conditions that exist in the classrooms, English teachers professionalism in India needs to be examined carefully and hence the need for this study.

As matter of fact the learning condition of English language is hardly observed in rural colleges, due to various reasons and challenges are faced by the both English teachers and students in general. It is common observations of teachers that students are not comfortable with the basic skills in English particularly in grammar and proper sentence formation; focussing these aspects at college is always challenging one, due to time constrain in the semester system. At the same time most of the teachers engage English class without structure and planned that has further widen the gap of learning atmosphere in the rural colleges.

Teachers' impression on Status of English Language among Rural Students

During my interaction with the respective faculty members to gain information and status of English language in rural parts of north Karnataka and their experiences, the discussion was cordial and friendly; the faculty members shared their experiences and grave concerns with open arms.

- ❖ Majority of students don't have basic foundation in English grammar. They expect translation method to teach English and force the teachers to explain entire theme in mother tongue. After this they are reluctant to listen in English because of, these teachers are unable to focus for development of language skills and innovative practice.
- ❖ Students are unable to write simple sentence and it is quite challenging to handle such of kind of students at under graduate level

- ❖ Some of the teachers are willing to walk an extra mile but sub standard of infrastructure pushed their potentialities into back foot and succumb their aspirations and initiations.
- ❖ Handful of students in rural colleges is aware of the importance of English and communicative skills but due to time constraint teachers focus to complete the syllabus within the academic calendar.
- ❖ Large classroom hardly motivates language teachers to walk an extra mile and improve the language skills of students.
- ❖ In few colleges two guest faculty each one visit thrice in a week and no scope for enhancing the language skills of students. But they focus to complete the given portion.
- ❖ In one of the colleges' guest faculty who visit thrice in a week shared his experiences that more than 90% of students are from Marathi medium, who don't understand simple sentence and teaching English for such students are challenging and daunting task to make them to write and understand English. At the same time students appeal to the teachers to focus English only on examination point of view.
- ❖ Students would like to focus English language only on examination point of view rather than acquiring competency in English language. Even though teachers show interest to develop language skills by conducting extra classes but handful of students turn at the beginning and due course remaining students stay away from the classes.
- ❖ Teaching English language at under graduate level is not possible even if we do, teachers are unable to complete the portion within the time bound
- ❖ Creating learning English ambience at rural college is challenging because the base of rural college students in English is not effective and encouraging one.
- ❖ Even astonishingly, at under graduate level students are unable to write accurate alphabetic it is not matter of exaggeration but reflect in the classroom!!
- ❖ Students expect at the outset to explain the entire theme in mother tongue rather than in English.
- ❖ None of the faculty is expressed positive impressions about students learning and English classroom.
- ❖ Majority of the teachers visit classroom without approaches and proper strategies, but they blame the previous teachers for the poor English of the students. They neither prepare the classes nor focus to improve language competency of the students.
- ❖ Some of the teachers shared their innovative measures to develop language proficiency of students, like conducting group discussion, debate, and paper presentation. At the same time teacher

also revealed that only handful of students turn for such activities.

- ❖ A few faculties have taken steps to conduct add-on courses in English and they have partially succeeded in improving the language skills of learners. Sometime they may not able access the modern technologies like internet facilities, and overall infrastructure facilities.
- ❖ In rural colleges teachers hardly focus grammar in detail, which is one of the reasons for ineffective English of the students. Teachers are often covers the grammar part in the English classroom.
- ❖ Majority of the teachers are unaware about the term- **English for Specific Purpose**.
- ❖ Teachers don't find much difference in the syllabus of Arts and commerce.
- ❖ Normally students expect from teachers of English to help them to pass English in the examination without any difficulties. Beyond who don't expect anything from teachers of English. They also appeal to teach English through translation methods.
- ❖ It is observed that majority of the faculty members squarely pointed out their fingers towards students/ learners but, they never revealed their classroom planning, preparation and strategies for effective classroom deliver and approaches for improvement of language competency of students. Indeed, their

observations were unstructured and dearth of ideas for classroom preparation.

- ❖ Handful of teachers walk an extra mile to develop language skills among students by conducting extra classes but, only a few students attend at beginning and after few classes they also become irregular to the class. The reason behind is that students would like to pass exam rather than improving their skills, which has enhanced the grave concerns of the teachers.
- ❖ Majority of the students don't have strong basic foundation in English. Meanwhile students are not comfortable with direct method of teaching (English to English) and switching on to different methods in one class is always challenging to the teachers particular to teach in mother tongue. Indeed, teachers are putting their efforts but unable to get concrete results.
- ❖ Teachers are not happy with availability of resource and infrastructure in college premises.

Mentor needs to walk an Extra Miles in the Classroom:

- ❖ Teacher has to asses language status of students through diagnostic test where he would be able to understand language competency of learners. Through this he can prepare strategies to improve language skills
- ❖ Diagnostic test will help to identify slow

learners and advance learners that will assist to develop peer learning atmosphere in the classroom

- ❖ Provide enough space and freedom for learners to communicate in English and encourage them to ask questions during interaction that will guide students to overcome from stage fear and inferior complex
- ❖ Execute L.S.R.W skills effectively in the classroom which is the base and root of developing language proficiency among learners
- ❖ Teach English through activities and interaction methods which will help students to open up and to share their impressions on the given topic
- ❖ Conduct sessions of book review and presentation skills every fortnight which will guide to improve language skills and vocabulary
- ❖ Creative write up should be encouraged and the same should be highlighted in the classroom which motivates others to perform and write
- ❖ At the outset simple and common topic should assign for creative write up like **Mobile, and its features** etc gradually learners feel comfortable with language learning. This approach will guide for advance level of learning
- ❖ Effective use of modern gadgets will help to develop language competency among learners

- ❖ Make learning fun and focus involvement of learners

Conclusion

Indeed, mentor plays a pivotal role in effective classroom delivery. He needs to prepare strategies and planning for effective classroom. This methods and approaches become a guiding force for mentor in enhancing and enriching language proficiency of learners. to achieve this task mentor has to walk an extra mile to develop academic learning ambience in the classroom, it is the strong conviction of the writer that academic learning ambience will motivate the learners to develop articulator skills in English language. As matter of fact English has gaining momentum in a globalized world hence, it is the need of the hour to focus on building language competency among learners irrespective of rural and urban.

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