



English Language Teaching and Placement Woes: The Problems of Rural Engineering Students in Andhra Pradesh.

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Abstract

This paper is a study about the present scenario of English language teaching in the rural engineering colleges of Andhra Pradesh and its role in connection with the placements. The problems existing area are not only with the teachers teaching to engineering students and students but also with the managements and the infrastructure. It predominantly focuses on: how managements of engineering colleges treat language teachers as secondary employees; Lack of competence among many teachers and their unwillingness to update themselves are some more hindrances. The major endeavor of this paper is to discuss the mismatch between expectations of the corporate sector and the students' achievement level, especially in terms of proficiency in English. At the end of the paper, the authors have proposed some

remedies for overcoming this rift in order to enhance the placement prospects of the young technocrats.

Key Words:

Curriculum, proficiency, problems, placement, solutions

Introduction

In the twenty first century, communication skills, placements are interconnected buzz words. The expeditious growth in the software companies has brought these words into limelight because BPO sector of any software industry requires these skills from the aspirants so as to negotiate with the foreign clients of their companies. Even an illiterate parent of an engineering student utters these words now a



days: Without communication skills, his son/daughter may not be getting job in the software company irrespective of their branch of study. Here in this paper certain issues related to English language teachers, English language teaching and learning process in the technical institutions and its flaws are explained comprehensively and the importance of English language for the technical graduates for getting the jobs and the role of language teachers as well as language learners. This paper also discusses how the language laboratories are used to impart the skills involved in communication by using English language along with non-verbal communication.

Attitude of Managements towards English teachers

It is embarrassing to refer to the attitude of managements towards English teachers when something is discussed related to English language teaching and learning, but it is inevitable in this juncture. In many technical institutions, English teachers are treated as second rate human beings and marginalized people. If we do not presume that it is an exaggeration, English teachers are highly discriminated comparatively with the other faculty members working in the same organization not only in terms of their

emoluments but also in giving approbation. English teachers are rendering their services to the best of their levels to their esteemed institutions under humiliation. English teachers are nobody's concern and everybody's concern. When every management is well aware of the significance of language for their stake holders, at the same time they must try to be aware of the role of language teacher to make their stake holders to be ready for employability. But this kind of subjugation and maltreatment effects not only on his productive teaching and on his career but also on the student prospective endeavors.

In our further discussion, no management comes forward to proceed with the positive attitude because they are purely businessmen in the academic institution rather than the academicians. They are not ready to encourage the English teachers in case of anything. English teachers are not encouraged to resume their research, not even to participate in either a work shop or conference so as to boost up their knowledge and be up date. TEQIP, a World Bank agency also partially is funding the English teachers in the technical institutions under TEQIP. When English is part and parcel of engineering curriculum, it has to be funded to all teachers usually without any bias. It is crystal

clear to state that English teachers have to work for meager salaries with unbearable work load under lots of pressure by the hierarchy. After all these unfavorable circumstances, at the end, the entire blame is thrown on to the English fraternity for the short fall of placements which is a great technical myth.

Corporate requirements and the process of recruitment in the colleges.

Intake of students in every academic year and Survival of every engineering college purely depend on its placement record. It is a known fact. Every engineering aspirant also opt the college for his B.Tech study based on its placement record. So every institution has to be very much particular about attaining the good number of placements by having MOUS with number of well established and well known companies and has to ready for inviting those companies for recruiting the students in every regular intervals of semester end.

But what happens in the name of recruitments is unknown to the many educated people also. All most of all the recruiters of the companies require certain skills such as communication skills, soft skills which are a modern term for communication skills, aptitude and the technical skills of the aspirants. This

happens mainly in the case of recruitment in software companies. There are certain phases conducted of which the first phase is written test in which some questions on fundamentals of language, general aptitude and technical round. Student may fail at any phase, some in the first phase, due to lack of fundamental knowledge in English language, some other in other rounds. But finally it is propagandized that students are not able to get qualified or succeed in the recruitment only because of lacking English language skills.

So the so called critics who are always ready to blame the English teachers for everything should look into the facts and try to know what is really happening in the process of recruitment. The management should be able to recognize such people who are always eagerly waiting to blame others for their defects. It is also important to know that such people are unproductive people to the organization and it is burden to the organization to bear them who direct indirect reason for the downfall of the organization.

Making English teachers as scapegoats for their unwanted faults is really unethical. It would be very nice and grateful to them, if they would try to be aware of the reality instead of



throwing mud on the others. English teachers' community who teaches in the technical institutions appeal it would not be the problem with them. In fact we must try to make out one thing about the recruitment process. Employers are predetermined and it is preexisted the number in their mind before the actual process of recruitment, accordingly they proceed for further rounds. Sometimes students get disqualified even though they get good marks in the written examination. It happens because of sudden increase in the cut off marks of the exam. Sometimes candidates get good score in the English but not in the aptitude. There are many cases where candidates of computer sciences utterly fail in the technical round in which one has to write a programming code.

Teachers' competency in handling language laboratories

Certainly it has to be accepted that there are not many competent English teachers in Andhra Pradesh which is a predominant problem in the process of train up the students to be ready for industry. Many English teachers adopt this profession for their survival without any passion for language teaching. The ultimate object may not be fulfilled until and unless English teachers should have the strong zeal of teaching English.

There are many reasons can be said for the lack of competency in teachers. But a few for our consideration, lack of experience and their academic background. Basically many English teachers are the post graduates in the English literature. They studied literature and came out with their degrees. It is unknown to them that what they studied is no way useful for their career. Here no poetry, no literature is taught, only language. They have to train the students to be competent enough of acquiring the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. So one should have to expertise in the facilitating these skills among student community. Then only they become very good trainers of the language.

Moreover every modern English teacher should have the ability to handle the English laboratories which is the right platform for the English language learners. Well planning and preparation are the prerequisites to the English teacher when he is about to deal with the students for three to four hours. If it is not done so, they cannot be efficient and successful teacher to teach engineering students. Every English language teacher must have basic knowledge of handling computers and advanced teaching learning materials and tools as huge varieties of software are available in market



which leads the learning process alive and purposeful and goal oriented and student centric learning.

Sluggishness is another barrier for the unproductive teaching of the teachers, such kind of teachers absolutely unfit for not only teaching but also to be the teaching profession. Every English teacher should have the habit of knowing innovative methodologies to be implemented in his classroom by participating in the international workshops and presenting the papers in the conferences. Moreover every English teacher should be a broad minded and extrovert so that he would do his duty well.

Language proficiency of the students

The fresh admitted candidate in a rural engineering college has many drawbacks in the proficiency of the language. There are different categories of the students found in the rural engineering colleges. The first category belongs to very poor English speaking ability despite their 12 years of English medium study but this category is little bit good at grammar. The second category belongs to English speaking means their proficiency levels are up to the mark but the accuracy is the biggest problem for them. The third and last category neither good at spoken nor at grammar, unwilling to learn.

Their primary concern is marks. They remain passive both in the class and in the language laboratory without any further improvement. Moreover B.Tech is a four years course in which English curriculum is found in only two semesters of first year which is not suffice to improve the language skills. Language learning is a continuous process. If this continuity is missing, there will be no appropriate out come.

Suggestions and recommendations to the progress in the placement records of rural engineering colleges.

- a. Attitude of the management of engineering colleges towards English teachers has to be changed. They must be equally treated along with the faculty of other department not only in terms of emoluments but also due reverence given because teaching is a matter of complacency and self esteem.
- b. English language teachers who are rendering their valuable services to the technical institutions should have the learning attitude for which they are required to promote research in the field of English language teaching. They have practical bent of mind to do experiments with his students every day. Participation

in workshops nationally and internationally, presenting papers in the conferences related to ELT will help language teachers to be a successful teacher.

- c. Every English teacher should have minimum one professional body membership to know the current trends in the ELT and which are applicable to his students besides for publication of his ideas related to methodology, techniques, and approaches of teaching.
- d. Classroom management is another important element which has to be known by every English teacher. Each class has to be divided into some four groups according to their language standards.
- e. The sophisticated language laboratory to be provided with well equipped and advanced computers with internet access because internet is the vast source of learning language by self. In addition to that good number of available soft ware's to install in every system consulting the ELT exerts. The language laboratory should remain open all the day to be utilized by the language learners.

- f. Environment influences every human being in every aspect. Create English language environment is the responsibility of English teachers in the premises of the institution which leads to inculcate the language skills in the student community.
- g. Language learners should have access to the English language laboratory and teachers regularly to improve the fluency.
- h. Provide autonomy for the language teachers to prepare curriculum for their subject according to the standards of the students.
- i. Managements should see that English is mandatory course in every year such way they make plans for the curriculum instead of thinking it is a great burden.
- j. Every English teacher should go to his class with well plan and preparation, especially for the language laboratories. Otherwise three hours of lab is merely waste. He should go with possible handout prepared beforehand.

Role of the Government



However the government should provide language laboratories in every school where the language learning is really possible for the young kids because the identified problem is with the gross root level. If the student is well trained here, things would be well in future. If at all the government is very serious about the career of the younger generation, it has to see that there must be some good English teachers in every school right from class one to twelve. The conventional examination system has to be changed. In the place of paper based test, computer based testes to be introduced for the testing of the skills of the student learner. It is really appreciated to the government of Andhra Pradesh for having taken an initiation to train up 100000 students with the collaboration of British council. In this process, one hundred and fifty masters' trainers got trained and 2500 trainers also completed their training program for two weeks by higher education in collaboration with British council. The most important phase is 100000 targeted students, they must be trained and make them employable. Let's wait and see how far this pilot project will be successful and let's hope this would be successful.

Syllabus Design

Syllabus framing plays vital role in enhancing communicative competency of the rural engineering students that will lead to employability also. Ironically it is not in the hands of English teachers to decide how many courses should be in the engineering curriculum, it is decided by the people who are unaware of all these things. So, complete autonomy should be given to the language teachers to decide how many courses to be followed in the engineering curriculum. Of course this is some extent possible in the autonomous colleges. But in the non autonomous colleges, this practice is not followed. There should be minimum two theory courses and two laboratories in the engineering curriculum. Especially, one advanced communication skills laboratory should be in the third year engineering course so that all the aspirants can get an opportunity to enhance their skills and get them ready for their campus recruitments.

Teachers should be very serious while preparing syllabus. They must keep most important aspects of the English language teaching. Syllabus should be communication skills oriented. Standardized text books prepared by



the ELT experts should be prescribed which contains all the language elements like grammar, vocabulary which are very much useful for their placements. Moreover it should be task based so that all the learners can be involved in language learning with ease and comfort.

Ambience for Language Teaching

According to the rules and instructions of AICTE, in every laboratory session two faculty should be there to run the lab purpose oriented. But unfortunately majority of the colleges do not bother about the necessity of the two faculty and one teacher has to handle the entire lab session for three to four hours which is very hectic and unlawful panorama of the language teacher. At the end of the semester, the language teacher would be blamed by the management that the so called language teacher has failed in enhancing English communication skills to the students. But they never introspect themselves about the root cause to inefficiency of the students in terms of communication skills.

Conclusion

It is concluded that it has to be understood both by the managements and teachers community to enable the rural engineering students in terms of

communications skills which leads them to be employable for the industry. It is also found in this paper that language learning is not possible overnight. It requires proper plan of action by the teachers by taking the help of ELT experts as well as good exposure to the resource persons who have been working in the preparation of syllabus, conducting workshops to enable the teachers' skills first. There should be cordial relationship between the English teachers' community and the managements to understand the original problems instead of blaming and pressurizing unnecessarily. Then only appropriate results will come.

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