

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT of

P.Srinivasa Rao,
Lecturer in English, VSR & NVR College, Tenali

“Inculcating extensive reading habits in English for students who have done their schooling with Telugu as their medium of instruction”. Vide UGC,SERO, Sanction Letter: F.MRP-4665/14(SERO/UGC) Dt.March2014.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By the time students join degree colleges; they are supposed to have been in touch with English for more than five years, if they are Telugu Medium students and twelve years, if they are English Medium students. They are expected to have some standards, but unfortunately, most of the students are novices to English and their performance perturbs the teachers. .Most of the students fail to read, speak and write English properly. It is more so with the students, who have completed their schooling with Telugu as their medium of instruction. Choosing “Inculcating Extensive Reading Habits in English for Students, who have done their schooling with Telugu as their medium of instruction’ as his research project, the investigator has probed into the matter to find out the reasons for their poor English.

By the time they complete schooling and join colleges, they are expected to have some grip over the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing English. Whatever the reasons may be, the emphasis in the schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and not on the LSRW skills

Teachers are busy completing the syllabi, ignoring the primary functions. Neither the teachers nor the students have any idea of globalization and its consequences. Unless one is good at the four skills, he/she cannot face global competition and get a good job. The teaching community has to realize it and concentrate on this aspect. Irrespective of the medium of instruction, English is

being taught as a subject. No doubt, Student of English medium performs better than Telugu medium student as far as English is concerned.

This project aims at finding the reasons for the failure of students to master LSRW skills in English. The survey made in that context brought forth several points, which have to be taken into consideration to rectify the defects.

Most of the students, who join Degree colleges, seem to be without any basics. Teachers have been teaching without knowing what to teach, when to teach and how to teach in schools. Their only motive seems to be completion of syllabus. The teacher should be fully aware of the fact that his students' proficiency in English is not up to mark owing to the deteriorating standards of teaching in schools. The objectives of teaching English should be practical and in keeping with the standard of proficiency achieved by our students. It may be, because the emphasis in the schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and not on the LSRW skills, which helps improve communication skills.

Whatever the reasons may be, English language teaching in India has suffered to such an extent that students, especially with rural background, who pass tenth class or can neither speak, write correct English. It is unfortunate that they fail to read English properly. The way they read, the way they pronounce the words clearly indicate that something is wrong with the teachers too. In most of the schools, teachers, who are neither trained nor competent, teach English

This study is an attempt to trace the problems faced by both the Teacher and the student in English teaching and learning process at school level. It aims at presenting the contemporary situations in India with regard to English and suggesting remedies where these are called for. Keeping this in mind, the investigator selected a number of schools and junior colleges to find out the reasons for the poor standards in English. Preparing two sets of questionnaires-

one for the teachers and another for the students, the investigator administered them with a request to come out with genuine reasons. In fact the investigator visited the institutions two, three times and received lot of information mostly through informal interaction.

As per the feedback from different sources, reasons for the failure on the part of students seem to be the following:

Teachers in schools seem to have failed in understanding the importance of English.

Unfortunately in Telugu medium schools reading of the prescribed texts is also not encouraged. Most of the rural students, who complete their secondary education with Telugu as medium, are not able to communicate-read-and write in English properly. This is because of their weak foundation of English, lack of communication build-up at school.

The English teachers of the Telugu medium classes are dependent on the grammar-translation method which has its advantages but also disadvantages.

Language learning is a skill that can be perfected only through constant practice and continuous exposure to the target language, which is denied to the student, who studies in Telugu medium schools. Telugu medium students do not have the advantage of constant exposure to language which is a given for English medium students. One of the foremost reasons for Telugu medium students lacking in proper English communications skill is that they are essentially very weak in their language base.

The students of Telugu medium face communication problems in both the vernacular and English. The problems, moreover, are not restricted to only the oral component; their writing skills are also equally poor. As a result, the performance of these students in academic and other co-curricular activities is below average which eventually mars their employability chances.

Another thing that is contributing to the lack of English language acquisition in particular and communication skills in general is the reading habits of students. Students appear to read only what is prescribed as texts.

English is taught just like any other subject. Students have to write essays, short questions etc., which does not improve the creativity of the student. To save time teachers dictate notes, students cram and reproduce it in the examination and get good marks. This shows how faulty the examination system is.

The English teachers of the Telugu medium classes are dependent on the grammar-translation method which has its advantages but also disadvantages. Telugu medium students have to constantly face the interference of mother tongue as they strive to acquire English Language Skills.

Proper training of teachers is of paramount importance. Many teachers have no concept of the techniques and methods of teaching English. Their only pursuit seems to be improving the pass percentage. They cannot impart skills to the students without mastering them, which needs training.

The teachers work under pressure as they are overburdened with other work too, which is in no way connected with their profession. Both the teachers and the taught failed to realize the importance of learning English as a language.

Modern language teaching needs audio-visual aids and teachers are either ignorant of the importance of such aids or they are not provided the aids properly.

The investigator suggests the following remedies for the ills of the education. People, who love the profession of teaching, have to aspire for the posts of teaching. Committed and responsible teachers are the need of the hour. Especially teachers of English have major responsibility in preparing the students for future assignments. They have to cultivate the habit of reading, which automatically develops other skills. In government sector or private

sector, while selecting candidates, demonstration has to be arranged and those who teach well have to be appointed.

Training should be given to teachers, whenever the necessity arises.

The strength in a classroom should not exceed forty, so that individual attention can be paid. Sufficient number of teachers has to be appointed. Needed infrastructure has to be provided by the government/ managements.

To teach English properly, English language lab is a must. So whether it is English medium institution or Telugu medium institution, Language lab has to be established and the teachers have to be trained in that aspect. As far as possible, teachers should not be disturbed by assigning work other than teaching.

Without foundation it is impossible to construct a building. The foundation has to be laid in the schools for which teachers should be qualified and properly trained. Instead of pressurizing the teachers for cent percent passes in schools, the higher ups have to instruct them to develop the skills needed. Depending on the workload, staff members have to be appointed and if they fail to do justice even then, the action required has to be taken. Academic freedom to teachers is of great help. Heavy syllabus is of not much use. Teachers have to be made accountable as is said “a committed teacher improves his calibre along with his experience and a person, who works only for perks, is a blot on the profession. He ruins the lives of many students by being lazy and by not teaching what is expected of him.”

P SRINIVASA RAO

LECTURER-IN-ENGLISH

VSR&NVR COLLEGE, TENALI