



TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO UG STUDENTS IN RURAL AND TRIBAL AREAS OF CHANDRAPUR AND GADCHIROLI DISTRICTS : CHALLENGES & REMEDIES

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper attempts to analyze the issues involved in low English proficiency among the UG students in rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts. The quality of English language education, particularly in above mentioned districts, is appalling in terms of outcome of language learning. As English has acquired the status of Global Language and its importance can not be denied in today's era, it has become imperative to find out the proper measures dealing with English language proficiency to meet the global demands and increase competence among the above mentioned group of students.

While learning any language, it is important to consider ethnic, linguistic and religious heritage of the language learner. The factors like: cultural background, family environment, English language as a second or third language, educational background as well as psychological factors have become barriers in the acquisition of English language proficiency skills for the above mentioned class and same is posing great challenges for English teachers to cater the quality English language proficiency skills. Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. Nevertheless, by considering the factors responsible for low English proficiency, some of the remedies could be applied to remove hurdles and stride on the way of language acquisition skills. Through teachers training with engaging brainstorming, with working on language attitude, by using advance technologies for learning with fun and focus on practicality approach, with effective use of all LSRW skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), the scenario of poor English proficiency among above mentioned section of students could be changed.

Key words: - *Global language, lingua franca, native language, language proficiency, language attitude.*

INTRODUCTION:

Language is a very vital tool of better communication through which not only thoughts and ideas are communicated but also it helps in creating cultural bondage, friendships and economic relations. Owing to this language plays very significant roles in human life. More than 7000 languages are spoken in the world which have some kind of recognition. Among all these languages some major languages which are spoken at large scale all over the world are: English, Chinese, Spanish, French, Russian, Portuguese, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, German etc. English Language, as we know, has acquired the status of being Global Language which cannot be denied in today's era. It has become a Lingua-Franca: a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose

native languages are different. Different languages have served as lingua franca through history. For a certain period in Europe Latin was used in Roman Empire, Mandarin was used in China, later French served as international language till English replaced it. But transformation of English language as a global language was rather quick.

As English language has got such a tremendous importance not only in global scenario, but also within the country, it will certainly be imperative to be acquired by to be citizens of India despite of being located at remote areas. As English has become the language of trade and commerce, education and pride in Indian scenario, it is vital to acquire English language skills for being effective in today's globalized world.

While considering the English language proficiency skills among the Indian students, it is distinctly clear, at large scale, that the students from urban or semi urban areas whose primary and secondary education has been through English medium schools are far better than the students whose primary and secondary education is from some other regional languages. The distinction is vivid when we think about urban and rural students in English language proficiency.

The English language proficiency of UG students in rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur & Gadchiroli districts is more pathetic than students from urban areas. There are number of factors involved in the low proficiency in English language among these class of students. To analyze the condition of these students, it will be essential to throw some light on the elements responsible for such state to find out the rectifying true measures.

Major factors involved in low proficiency :

By keeping in mind the UG students in rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur & Gadchiroli districts, the researcher has tried to analyze some of the major factors responsible for poor English proficiency level. These are as follows :

i) Cultural background and surroundings :

The acquisition of any language is a continuous process which is started from the very childhood . Whatever happens around the child is acquired by listening and complete observation. So the culture which is followed in the family or around him / her will have its impact on the language learning. On the initial stage child listens and accordingly tries to imitate. So whatever the language he / she listens is acquired. If someone has been in a good atmosphere, its impact would be certainly greater for child's language growth.

The children those who are grown up in the rural areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts will not have that good English language atmosphere for their language growth.

The languages which are acquired by these students would be regional dialects of Marathi, Hindi or any other language spoken at their houses. The tribal students from these districts would have acquired Madiya, Gondi or other prominent language at their region depending on the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious background they follow.

The means of communication among themselves will be one of those regional languages after its acquisition and it would continue even though they would go for higher education.

ii) Educational Background :

Educational background of the parents as well as of the students would have its significant impact on the language competence . As being mostly illiterate or little educated, parents could not provide the necessary surrounding or could not give that much attention towards the language competencies of their wards, because they themselves are not aware about these skills. This is also one of the reasons for low competencies of the English language.

Most of the students have been promoted to the next class in their schooling . With cheating and malpractices some of the students reached to UG level. This is also undeniable fact in these regions which makes the farce of the university education. As students are promoted to the next class in their schooling , without testing their analytical, creative approach and understanding level which leads developing inertia and lethargic feeling toward new learnings results into stagnation in the learning process.

iii) English language is considered as a mere subject:

From the very beginning of the education English is considered as one of the difficult subjects of study. So only for getting into next class exams are faced. And same approach remains during their UG courses also which results in pathetic English communication skills.

iv) Teaching medium :

Generally Marathi or sometimes Hindi is used as the medium of instructions during the schooling and same is followed even at UG level. This bilingual teaching for English language sometimes proves to be obstacle .

v) Student's whims and fanciful notions of college life :

some of the students having their own whims and fanciful notions about college life because of wide influence of mass-media and internet use really brings obstacles in their learning process. As they consider college life is only for enjoyment and this recklessness leads them in more distractions from their studies.

vi) Age Factor :

Age factor can not be ignored when it comes to language acquisition. As it is well known fact that child ability to acquire new language is better compare to the adults. So teaching another language other than native language becomes difficult task for adults if their certain capabilities are not enhanced in certain age.

The students particularly from rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts would have already learned their family language by the time they reach to UG level. Marathi,Hindi, Madiya, Gondi, Telugu or any other regional language would be their first language which they would have acquired with certain speaking style, with certain intonation and with certain sound practice. Every language has their unique qualities which are hard to acquire for a person of other culture unless understanding and living in their culture.

The impact of English language could be seen almost with all the languages as it has been accepted by most. Though it may not be used in its actual forms but distorted forms of English words could be seen with common words. Some of the English vocabulary they would have learned by the stage they reach at UG level . More than 70 % of the students would have acquired some of the English vocabulary in

distorted way, mostly in pronunciation. Once you become adult with certain way of pronunciation of words it becomes difficult to first unlearn that word and then relearn with correction. With adulthood certain ways are so deep rooted in our psyche, it seems as if working automatically.

Being in the rural and tribal areas it would be herculean task to rectify the problem and bring into correct ways.

vii) English as a Second or third language :

For most of the students from this region English becomes either second or third language. For general Marathi speaker Hindi serves as second language while English as a third language. For tribal students, their mother tongue would be Madiya or Gondi, then their medium of instruction in school would be Marathi, next they would try with Hindi. Thereafter comes English for them. While learning English most of them go through psychological dilemma.

viii) Psychological factor :

Most of the student from this region consider English as a difficult language as this notion they follow from the beginning of their education. Instead of treating English as a language to be used in exchanging ideas and communication, it is looked as mere a subject. Another factor for psychological reason is the surrounding. They hardly get chance to listen to English.

Low ability in English language brings inferiority complex among students as they start to think they are not capable to understand English.

ix) Lack of Communicative Competence :

It is well recognized fact that during the early age of child, language acquisition capabilities are higher compared to adult. If good exposure of language skills are not provided to the children during this stage, it may bring some hazardous effects mastering good communication techniques.

The students particularly from this region have not good competence in English communication. They are in the atmosphere where vernacular dialects are prominent. These dialects are also responsible for low confidence in the English language as it is used every time.

Following some of the factors are responsible for lack of communicative competence among these students:

- The surrounding where they grow up
- Most of the student's parents are daily worker and because of their straighten conditions and almost illiterate education, they could not provide better atmosphere for good communication skill
- More students are engaged themselves in helping parents in their work or taking some of the family responsibilities resulting in distractions from adopting good educational skills
- Disinterest towards education
- More impact of vernacular dialogues and distorted form of English vocabulary
- Teacher's lacunas are also equally responsible
- Lack of good educational infrastructure as well as technology in the region
- Lack of motivation among the student has led to poor English communication competence.

Challenges in front of teachers at UG level :

I) As most of the students are not from good educational background they lack interest in studies leading towards low capabilities among them.

II) Student -teacher ratio is very low and because of that teachers are not able to find out the problems faced by individual students, that leads in communication gap in teacher and student. Overloaded classrooms provide little chances for a teacher to really focus on individual students need.

III) Certain syllabus is prescribed which is needed to be completed in stipulated period.

This do not allow a teacher to focus on basic requirements for English proficiency.

IV) Lack of infrastructure and lack of audio, visual aids which could have been helpful in creating good atmosphere for learning.

V) Lack of teachers training for language competence

VI) Inferiority complex among students

Remedies for teaching English to UG students :

As the responsible factors for overall low English proficiency among the UG students of rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts have been discussed here, it would be imperative to find out the ways to overcome these hazards in language gaining.

Following are some of the measures:

- a) Bringing awareness about necessity of English in today's world is of the foremost importance among these students. They should be convinced that English language proficiency can change their course of life.
- b) Motivation would play vital role for these students. Firstly, it is important to make them realize they have equal competence as any other students from good academic background and they are as good as any English speaker.
- c) Arranging periodical teacher's training by keeping in mind the problems faced by these group of the students in acquiring English language proficiency is equally necessary.
- d) Focusing on LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) Skills. Students should be realized that as they have acquired their mother tongue, this language also could be acquired with conscious efforts. As a baby acquires a language first by listening very carefully and thereafter tries to imitate. Same should be followed for gaining English language also.
- e) Consciously by using the advance gadgets like mobile phones, computers, internet, language laboratory etc., one can create the atmosphere needed for the practice for better communication competence. For the best

practice of all these LSRW skills these advance devices would prove to be effective.

f) Library facilities would be enhanced in the college premises to create atmosphere for the students encouraging for more practice.

g) More English teachers should be recruited to increase students teachers ratio higher. So that students would get more opportunity to get personal guide line on the path of learning this foreign language.

h) Variety of methods should be applied by the teacher while teaching this language so that teaching learning process would be fun rather than a task. Traditional Grammar teaching method, direct method, indirect method, playing word games in classrooms, actual participation in group discussion etc. can bring innovations in teaching learning process.

i) If students are committing mistakes while practicing that should be handled rather very effectively. Otherwise always correcting approach could discourage them.

j) For English language learner there should be well designed syllabus by keeping in mind the actual need of learners.

CONCLUSION :

As the demand of good English speakers is increasing, it is vital to make the UG students from rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts competent enough to face the competition which is growing at rapid pace . if we think the inferiority complex would not eat their heart out, it is necessary to work on basic English communication skills of these students otherwise it could be big hurdle in their way. Practicing LSRW skills with conscious efforts certainly would bring positive results among these segment of the students.

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