
A STUDY ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: With English increasingly becoming the preferred language of education even among the students hailing from poorer sections of the society and also rural areas, the Andhra Pradesh government has decided to lay emphasis on English right from Class in its schools.

Accordingly, English will now be taught as the second language from Class 1 from 2011-12 academic year, minister for primary education Sake Sailajanath said.

“The basic idea is to provide access to children from proper selections as well as rural areas to English education right from Class 1 rather than Class II (the current policy), so that they compete with students of private schools”, Sailajanath told Press Trust of India.

A report by the Regional Institute of English (RIE), (Bangalore) has established that the percentage of enrolment of students in government schools has drastically reduced from 84.48% to 55.72% in primary and upper primary schools, whereas admissions in the private residential schools increased from 17.52% to 44.28% in the period from 1995-96 to 2009-10 in Andhra Pradesh.

In respect of Telugu medium, enrolment percentage in Class I to Class X for the period 2000-01 to 2009-10 in Government schools reduced from 83.47 per cent to 65.54 per cent, while English medium enrolment increased from 13.77% to 31.66%.

“It was observed that most parents in rural areas are withdrawing their children from government Telugu medium schools due to lack of English teaching,” the report noted.

RIE has recommended introduction of English from Class I without making it a burden for the children to learn it most effectively in the early years. The Andhra Pradesh government hopes that the introduction of English from Class I will help in increasing the enrolment of students and helping them at later stage of their education. The State Council of Educational Research and Training had also proposed the introduction of English as a second language from Class I in government schools and recommended development of effective textbooks from Class I to V reflecting constructive pedagogy as recommended by National Curriculum Framework 2005. It also recommended development of appropriate reading material and learning cards for effective English language acquisition and developing textbooks in coordination with the RIE.

Keywords: Globalization, Context, Idealistic, Prescribed, Curriculum, Evaluation.

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English Language Teaching in Andhra Pradesh:

Andhra Pradesh is one of the states in India which was formed on linguistic basis. Though Telugu is state's official language, Urdu (Deccan Urdu), Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil and many other languages are spoken here. Now, with the advent of technology and globalization, the state has become a hub for multinational companies, corporate setups, education and business. People come here only from other states but also from other countries for various purposes like pursuing education, business, tour and etc., and it has become a land of opportunity. With all these changes, this state has become a multilingual state. Though Telugu is the official language of state, all the official orders are issued in English. Correspondence between ministers/departments of the government and the lower hierarchy is usually done in English. English is used for acquisition of information. News papers, magazines, and journals etc. are used for this purpose. Thus the state has the news papers *The Hindu*, *New Indian Express*, *Deccan Chronicle* and *the Times of India*. English news papers are the second largest selling papers in the state.

Education in the state is mostly spread through Telugu and English media. However, English is a compulsory subject at school and college levels. In most of the private educational institutions, English is the medium of instruction. University education is usually offered in English medium. Globalisation and information technology have contributed to the awareness the importance of the English language among the students.

The state government issued an order [G. O. 76] to introduce Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) syllabus for higher classes from 2008-09 academic year. English will replace Telugu as the medium of instruction and the state syllabus in 6,500 governments run high schools in Andhra Pradesh from 2008-09 academic years. The government said that the move would not only strengthen school education but also improve the English language abilities of rural students and prepare them to avail opportunities in Information Technology and based industries. The Educational department, has issued

an order implementing these changes from class VI in 6,500 select schools convey over 2, 50, 000 students.

The Board of Intermediate Education introduced new syllabus for Intermediate First and Secondary year students. This syllabus is prepared by the language experts and senior most faculty of English and Foreign Languages University formerly CIEFL. Both the books Internet-I (Inter first year English Text Book) and Internet II (second year English Text Book) are based on the communicative approach. All universities in Andhra Pradesh give priority to English language teaching and learning. The Osmania University (OU) started Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT). It gives training in Communication Skills and Personality Development for university students, teachers, and employees.

In the educational system of Andhra Pradesh, English is given importance. English is introduced in class V. At High School level in English medium and non-English medium school, English is the third language while Telugu is the first and Hindi the second language. At Intermediate and Intermediate completed student level, it is one of the two languages in Part-I (Languages) and, at the Post-Graduation level; English is the language of higher education.

Andhra Pradesh has been implementing the Three Language Formula. English is taught alongside Telugu-the regional language and Hindi-the official language. If it is an English medium school, the students are taught the subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and other subjects depending upon the institution) in English, and if it is Telugu medium school all the subjects are taught in Telugu and English and Hindi as second language and third language. Across the country, the four language skills are taught and some training to read and write but when it comes to listening and speaking, it is completely undervalued and neglected. The syllabus and the examination system itself clearly show that learners are emphasized on rote-learning and the ability to produce the long essays as answers to the questions asked in the exams. There is no place to the skills like listening and speaking to be tested or examined. Still the old and outdated teaching practices and teacher-centredness in the Indian classrooms has been not giving any scope for the learners to interact and participation. Naturally,

therefore, speaking remains one of the most neglected skills in the second language classroom.

Nageswara Rao. E (1998: 68-69) laments the story of affairs when he notes how teaching speaking has only met with lip sympathy, with “idealistic statements” made from time to time “about its need, its content the methodology for teaching and testing of specialists in English.” To language experts entrusted with the duty of preparing reports about what should go into a spoken English course, the stated objectives were:

- To give students an elementary knowledge of the Phonetics of English,
- To acquaint them with the Phonetic Symbols so that they can use a pronouncing dictionary, and
- To give them ear-rating and speech practice in order to improve their spoken English.

It is to be evident from what is stated above that the instructional component of language learning was not recognized at all. According to Bygate (1987:35) language is needed to handle different kinds of interaction such as: “formal committee type meetings: public meeting; debates; informal chat with friend service encounter; social interaction; oral presentations; informal discussions; informal planning and decision-making; game playing.”

In most of the schools and colleges in India learners have been taught to read and write as the examination system demands it while not much effort or initiative seems to have gone imparting listening and oral communication skills. Extra-curricular activities such as debate, elocution etc., have been centred to a minority, leaving the majority, leaving the majority tongue tied and discouraged. As everyone takes pedagogic discourse does not however, justify its continued absence or omission from the speaking from the learning/teaching context. As Bygate (1987:25) puts it: “speaking is however, skills which deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages. Learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions”.

A vast segment of the Indian population receives their education in a language other than their mother tongue, either because of choice or because of necessity. The consequence if such instruction through the second language has not been systematically investigated”, says Sridhar as quoted

by Fishman (1991:96-97). In most of the schools in Andhra Pradesh, ‘sequential bilingualism is followed’. India is one of the countries in which English has been taught as a second language. In addition to that in some private schools Science, Mathematics and Social Studies have also been taught in English. There are also both private and government junior colleges. To illustrate, the Board of Intermediate is the only board at + level built in Andhra. The board was founded in 1976 using English as the medium of instruction. In Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh, English is taught by lecturers in English. There the students are taught basic grammar, reading, listening and speaking skills they will need during their department studies in order to help them carry out their +2 studies more easily and successfully.

After students finish X class or Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C), they start their Intermediate studies, during which they take two English courses prescribed by Board of Intermediate and designed and prepared by English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. Students are required to take two of these during their two year course. The first course they take is Internet-I (English Text Book for First Year Intermediate Students), which has been used to focus mostly on developing speaking and writing before the Curriculum conducted between 1976-2013. The next course students take is Internet-II (English Text Book for Second Year Intermediate Students, which has been used to focus mostly on developing all the four skills. Then, during sophomore or junior year, students take English Academic Oral Presentation Skills, which focuses on developing presentation skills. If their department requires them to take composition course which requires its students to take the course during their sophomore year. This course, which was the focus of this particular study, aims to develop skills students will need when applying for jobs or Intermediate completed student programme and once they will need after they get employed or accepted.

Internet I and Internet II are supposed to be an integrated skills course, in which there are vocabulary exercises in addition to reading, listening, writing and speaking activities. The course has two main parts: the first part is prose and poetry, which focuses on reading and writing skills along with some vocabulary exercises to develop students’ knowledge of job related vocabulary. The second part is a collection of some short stories during the first year and an

abridged novel during the second year focuses on listening and speaking skills.

When the course began to be offered in 1976 it was piloted in 5 sections using the handouts prepared by some lecturers at some of the Intermediate classes as a pilot project by the board of Intermediate in Andhra Pradesh. The curriculum was implemented in the rest of the sections, departments and other private junior colleges and getting feedback from the lecturers in meetings the same curriculum is used till now.

Conclusion: As mentioned before, this study aims to develop speaking and writing skills as it is crucial to understand whether the programme is successful in realizing its aims. As stated by Hutchinson & Water, it “helps to show how well the course is actually fulfilling the need” (1991, p. 152). Thus, needs are to be identified first for evaluation to show whether they

are fulfilled or not. That means, for effective evaluation a needs analysis study needs to be carried out to learn the needs of students so that the evaluation study could analyze whether these needs are met or not. For this purpose, the researcher carried out comprehensive needs assessment study as a part of the research, the details of which can be seen below.

This needs assessment study undertook to identify the linguistic and non-linguistic needs in Prakasam district students, both in pursuing their academic studies in their faculties and in meeting professional demands after graduating. The reason for the needs analysis study was to elicit the needs of the students so that the objectives of the courses offered by the English Language Department could be revised accordingly to meet these needs.

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