English Language Teaching (ELT) For Engineering Students - Review

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Abstract

English is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality education and full participation in national and international life in India. The tangible impact of the presence of English is that it is now required from the earliest stages of schooling. The current English as a Second Language (ELT) in India is dynamic and has completely changed the educational paradigm. This article traces the trajectory of this change and compares it with other contexts where ELT was always the native language, investigates the evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) in engineering education in India and to understand the various approaches and methodologies used in teaching English to Engineering students. The research will explore the historical background of ELT in Engineering education, the factors that have influenced its evolution, and the current state of ELT in this setting. It will also analyze the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers and students. The study will provide a deeper understanding of trends and advancements in ELT in engineering education in India, focusing on the evolution, challenges, and efforts to enhance English language skills.

Keywords: ELT; Engineering Students; Language Teaching; Second Language.

1. Introduction

The role of English Language Teaching in India is crucially, it functions as the most powerful medium of instruction in the country, firmly regulating access to socioeconomic mobility and higher education. English in India was established to serve colonial interests, and the traces of this past remain in contemporary pedagogical practices. The basic functions of language are communication, representation, expression and social interaction. These enable humans to convey information, represent ideas or thoughts, express emotions and build relationships with others. Every education system has specific goals aimed at bringing about desired changes in students [1]. To bring about these changes, educational institutions organize learning experiences. Successful learning can only be measured by the changes this experience brings. This is a learning experience and evaluation. English has become the world's language, and teaching it as a foreign or second language has become an increasingly universal demand.

2. Learn Languages

All Languages have unique structures that convey different meanings to users. When learning a native language, our brains focus on familiar cues and apply our first language experience. Learning a foreign language involves developing a new understanding of the unique meaning clues provided by the new language. The transferability of knowledge, skills, and strategies between languages depends on how the two languages function. Learning a new or foreign language can be done through handwriting, music, watching TV in the new language, connecting with language learners and teachers online, changing language settings on social networks, traveling, and openly speaking.

3. Teaching English as A Second Language

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) defines English proficiency as students who can use English to ask questions, understand teachers, read materials, and receive test ideas. This includes reading comprehension, listening, writing,

and speaking. Reading comprehension involves understanding and interpreting text, assessing appropriate age levels, and understanding teacher and classroom language. Listening involves understanding teacher and classroom language, extracting information, and following classroom conversations. Writing involves creating content and format that meets classroom challenges at age and grade level [2-5]. Speaking involves using oral language effectively in learning activities and social interactions.

4. Trends in English Language Teaching

English language teaching is a continuous process that evolves with technological advancements. Eight key trends in learning English as a foreign language are currently observed, which help teachers achieve specific educational goals. These trends are crucial for effective English language teaching.

4.1 Change in the Goal of Teaching

The aim is to produce competent English-knowing bilinguals, focusing on English as a communication tool rather than a standalone language. English is not seen as an end in itself but as a means to learn content like science and mathematics, using Content and Language Integrate Learning (CLIL) as an approach.

4.2 Early Start in Teaching English

Implementing new technologies like computer-based games at primary school levels can be advantageous, with promising results in many countries.

4.3 Change in the Approach to Teaching Culture

English language classes should focus on using students' native language as a communication strategy or instructional tool, rather than solely teaching native English, to make learning English more effective and stress-free. Both local and international cultures dominate in English language classes.

4.4 Changing View of an English Teacher

An English teacher's effectiveness is not solely determined by their native English speaking skills, but also by their linguistic, teaching, and intercultural competence.

4.5 Change in Teaching Content and Test Design

English classrooms promote the use of native language, local texts, English translations, accents, listening activities, and creative tests.

4.6 E Learning

The rise of tablets, smartphones, and paperless kindles is transforming the way we access knowledge, making it more flexible and mobile, and the World Wide Web has significantly improved our access to information [6].

4.7 Strategic Teaching and Learning

English language teaching emphasizes student thinking, content, outcomes, and learning activities. The gamification of learning is gaining popularity as it enhances engagement and relevance for the younger generation, enhancing the complex interactions between students and teachers [7].

4.8 Teachers as Lifelong Learners

Teachers are expected to engage in continuous professional development activities throughout their careers to remain competitive and employable [8]. They also have a greater responsibility for their own professional learning, continuously improving their knowledge and skills.

5. Technical and Business English for Engineers

Technical English simplifies the complex rules of Standard English by replacing difficult terminology with simpler synonyms, making documentation easier for readers. Engineers must communicate effectively with clients, understand their needs and expectations, and translate technical concepts into understandable language. Clear and concise communication fosters trust, enhances client satisfaction, and leads to successful project outcomes. Technical English covers topics like reading, writing, listening comprehension, note making, summarizing, report writing, and grammar and vocabulary. Technical language, also known as jargon or industry-specific terminology, simplifies complex concepts and processes, making them understandable for experts [9-11]. Students develop four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The theoretical subject "Technical English" and the practical subject "Communication Skills Lab" are taught by first-year students in the engineering department, while the laboratory course is taught by second- or third-year students.

6. Technology Integration

Technology has significantly transformed English Language Teaching (ELT) in India, making it more accessible and interactive. Digital platforms, online courses, and language learning apps have enabled students to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills at their own pace, providing a personalized learning experience. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching practices in schools and colleges has significantly altered the way teachers teach and learn to teach. This has positively impacted both teachers and students, as English has become a global language with significant importance in various professions [12]. Traditional methods introduced students to English as subjects, but these methods had their advantages and disadvantages. Students often learned English as a subject rather than a language, and they struggled to apply their learning due to a lack of a favorable environment. Additionally, some English teachers in India are not familiar with the latest developments in ELT pedagogy.

Conclusion

English Language Teaching (ELT) in India has improved since the colonial era, focusing on communicative approaches and technology integration. However, challenges like teacher shortages and urban-rural divide need to be addressed. Government, educational institutions, and stakeholders must work together to meet the needs of 21st-century learners and prepare them for a globalized world. In our country, 75% of students come from rural areas and attend regional language secondary schools. To address this, a curriculum should be designed based on their background and English language skills [13-15]. A discussion should be held to determine if the existing curriculum meets classroom needs and if current methods are suitable. Feedback from English language teaching faculty at technical education institutions should be sought. A solution will benefit students and society.

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