

Challenges in Teaching and Learning English-Speaking Skills in Andhra Pradesh: An Investigation

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ABSTRACT

In Andhra Pradesh, a significant gap often exists between teaching and learning English for communicative purposes, particularly in developing speaking skills. This challenge persists despite English being the medium of instruction from LKG to Ph.D. programs. It can no longer be overlooked, as English has become the world's lingua franca and a vital springboard for securing placements. After centuries of the British rule English has become an integral part of India's education, trade, commerce, technology, and legal systems. The importance of English has seen a marked increase in the era of globalization. Moreover, with the widespread use of social media and computers becoming ubiquitous, English is no longer confined to reading and listening but it has also become essential for speaking and writing. Among them, 'speaking' has become such a tough challenge. In the past, education was primarily focused on acquiring knowledge, particularly in reading, writing, and basic arithmetic computations. However, there has been a significant shift; education is now seen by the entire student community and their parents as a means to secure livelihood or employment. This has made it essential for individuals to express their feelings, ideas, plans, thoughts, problems, solutions and information effectively in English. To address students' lack of communication skills, Andhra Pradesh converted Telugu-medium schools to English-medium. However, without changing teachers' and students' mindsets, progress remains negligible. Language is not just a medium for expression but a form of thought itself. Learning a new language expands thinking, inspires new ideas, and transforms actions and personality.

Keywords: Communicative, Globalization, Proficiency, Mother Tongue Influence, Methodology, Lack Of Commitment, Traditional, Interactive, Auditory Feedback

Under the three-language formula, students are taught Telugu, Hindi, and English at school and Intermediate levels, with the medium of instruction being either Telugu or English in Andhra Pradesh. The second language is not obligatory, allowing students to choose either Hindi or Sanskrit. Telugu is taught as it is the state's mother tongue. This aims at introducing students to its rich literature while helping them stay connected to their native culture and roots. Telugu is not taught with a focus on communication skills, given that most students already possess strong spoken proficiency in the language. Similarly, Hindi, as mentioned earlier, is taught as part of the three-language policy but without emphasis on communicative purposes. By and large, students face no significant disadvantage if they do not excel in Hindi or Telugu, as they only need to secure passing marks in the final exams of the academic year. Sanskrit can also be chosen as a second language, and students may score 99 out of 100, yet they often can't form even a few sentences in the language. It is treated merely as a means to gain more marks with less effort. However, English is fundamentally different from the three languages, as it is primarily used for communication, and thus plays a distinct role. Moreover, traditional approaches to teaching the language are ineffective for both teachers and learners. The primary purpose of incorporating English into academics is to enhance learners' speaking and writing skills, with speaking being the key focus. Though it may seem like a common language, English offers the opportunity to become a global citizen in this era of rapid change, where people are required to communicate internationally in English across various sectors.

English teachers must recognize that there are various approaches to language instruction and must, at times, adapt their methodologies to accommodate students' social backgrounds. Unlike other subjects and languages, teaching English extends beyond mere content delivery. The ears and eyes serve as input devices, while the mouth and hands are output devices. When the input is zero, the output is also zero. Therefore, active listening becomes a crucial component of communication skills, involving not only hearing but also understanding and responding to what is being said. Active listening is an essential skill that fosters effective communication and helps build strong relationships in the classroom or workplace. It requires focus, attention, and empathy toward the speaker. A practical example of active listening is

paraphrasing or decoding, which involves repeating the speaker's message in one's own words. This technique ensures accurate understanding by verifying the interpretation of the message, helping learners clarify misunderstandings and ensuring both parties are on the same line. Empathy and understanding are important components of effectual communication. They allow learners to view situations from another person's perspective and genuinely grasp their thoughts and emotions. When listeners engage with empathy and understanding, they are more likely to build strong relationships and avoid misunderstandings. As Shakespeare says, 'Brevity is the soul of wit,' clarity and conciseness are two essential objectives of communication skills, enabling one to express thoughts and ideas effectively and to the point. Clarity refers to the quality of being easily understood, ensuring that one's message is neither misinterpreted nor misconceived. Conciseness, on the other hand, is the ability to convey a message briefly and directly, without unnecessary elaboration or beating about the bush.

In order to achieve clarity and conciseness, a speaker must be mindful of the language and tone used during communication. Simple, easy-to-understand language, tailored to the audience, should be employed. One should avoid using unnecessary jargon or technical terms that may be unfamiliar to the listeners or students. Likewise, it is crucial to use an appropriate tone and pitch to convey the message effectively. Non-verbal communication is a crucial aspect of effective communication skills, encompassing facial expressions, eye contact, posture, tone of voice, and gestures. While discussing various types of communication skills, non-verbal communication is often overlooked. However, it can convey more meaning than words alone, making it essential to understand its role in effective communication. Teachers must emphasize that clear and effective communication is a primary goal of developing communication skills. It involves the ability to convey information in a manner that is easily understood by the audience. This involves using language appropriate to the situation and audience, organizing information logically, and avoiding ambiguity or confusion. English language teachers must keep these goals and objectives in mind. By carefully considering these aims and objectives, English teachers can create engaging and effective learning experiences that empower students to become proficient communicators, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

Both English teachers and students should recognize that English is a dominant language in international business, diplomacy, science, technology, law and academia. Proficiency in English opens doors to global opportunities and enables communication across cultures. Moreover, a vast amount of information, including research papers, news articles, and online resources, is primarily available in English. Neglecting English limits access to this invaluable wealth of knowledge. Many prestigious universities worldwide offer their courses in English, making a strong foundation in the language essential for students pursuing international education through IELTS or TOEFL.

Additionally, the Indian Constitution recognizes English as one of the five official languages to be used by state institutions, including universities, colleges, and schools. In fact, English is taught as a compulsory subject in every educational institute. English has thus become an integral part of the Indian educational system. Moreover, English is taught as a compulsory subject in schools and colleges across India, including private institutions, and is widely used by students preparing for competitive exams. While the degree of emphasis might vary depending on individual circumstances, a basic understanding and functional use of English is highly beneficial in the modern world. Ignoring English can significantly limit opportunities in various aspects of life. Therefore, encouraging students to learn and improve their English skills remains a valuable pursuit of English teachers.

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language is not as straightforward as teaching subjects like Mathematics or Biology. If the goal were merely to help students understand and reproduce content for exams, it would be a different matter altogether. Here, the English faculty's role is to facilitate students' understanding of English and empower them to articulate their knowledge, thoughts, and feelings gradually. What does teaching mean from a broader perspective? Teaching is the process of facilitating learning. It imparts knowledge, skills, and values, guides understanding, fosters growth and development, and shapes character, social and cultural processes. It is to be designed in such a way that it should equip individuals with knowledge and skills that contribute to their personal and professional lives in future. By and large, it is impossible to define the exact or permanent nature or method of teaching, as it is a dynamic and ever-evolving process. Teaching imparts knowledge and understanding that students would likely struggle to obtain independently. Teaching involves both transferring knowledge and ensuring student comprehension, with the latter being paramount. To achieve this, teaching should employ interactive methods, creating a more engaging learning experience. A good teacher must build a psychological bridge with his or her students through interactive processes, fostering a connection among the minds in the classroom. Teaching is not merely a job but a profession that requires specialized education, particularly for teachers involved in high school education in India. This specialized education and training are crucial for guiding, advancing, and fostering the holistic development of students. Teaching brings about changes in students' behavior and is both an art and a science. It is not a passive activity but a dynamic, face-to-face interaction. Moreover, teaching is observable, measurable, and modifiable, with endless potential for improvement. Teaching is a discipline that combines the creativity of art with the methodology of science. As an art, teaching emphasizes the imaginative and creative abilities of a teacher or lecturer or professor in crafting meaningful classroom experiences that facilitate student learning. As a science, it highlights the logical, systematic, and technical

steps necessary to achieve goals effectively. Educationists hold diverse perspectives on the concept of teaching. For some, teaching is seen as a form of interpersonal influence designed to transform another person's behavioral potential. For others, teaching is a complex social phenomenon, deeply influenced by various social factors. Social and human factors are dynamic and ever-changing, which is why teaching is not a fixed or static concept. Some educational philosophers of Western countries view teaching as a scientific process, with its key components being content, communication, and feedback. Booker T Washington once said that the happiest people are those who do the most for others. Teaching is the most powerful tool for uplifting and transforming lives. Overall, the teaching strategy generally has a positive impact on student learning, and it is always possible to modify, develop, and enhance it. It is widely acknowledged that teaching involves four key steps: 1) Planning, which includes content analysis and the identification and formulation of objectives. 2) Organization, which outlines the teaching strategies needed to achieve specific objectives. 3) Selection of appropriate teaching and learning strategies to ensure effective communication of content. 4) Management of the teaching-learning process, focusing on assessing learning objectives based on student performance, providing valuable feedback to both teachers and students.

The characteristics of teaching are as follows: Teaching inherently involves learning, as successful teaching signifies that learning is an integral part of the process. It is an activity designed to foster learning and is intentionally directed toward achieving that outcome. While teaching does not always guarantee learning, it is typically anticipated to result in it because students should have learning attitude and get benefit from it. Teaching is a purposeful activity aimed at promoting learning in others. It encompasses actions undertaken with the intent of facilitating knowledge acquisition or skill development. Teaching involves a set of activities, with training and instructing being its core components. Teaching is a professional practice involving interactions between teachers and students, resulting in the students' growth and development. It focuses on guiding students toward learning specific content or skills through a system of diverse actions tailored to the context, subject matter, and students' behavior within the prevailing physical and social conditions. Teaching can be observed, analyzed, and evaluated through teacher behavior, teacher-student interactions, and the behavioral changes observed in students. Communication skills play a crucial role in the effectiveness of teaching. In modern classrooms, as teaching is an interactive process aimed at achieving specific, progressive objectives. Teaching takes various forms, including formal and informal, descriptive or remedial, and formative or informative approaches.

By the above example, the objective of teaching is learning, so teaching and learning are inseparable counterparts, two facets of the same coin, each completing and enriching the other. The process of learning transcends on mere hearing and rote memorization for the sake of examination. But involvement delves far deeper, involving the assimilation of knowledge, critical understanding, and the capacity to apply insights meaningfully. Learning is a profound and enduring journey that encompasses understanding, retention, analysis, and practical application. It fosters critical and creative thinking, empowering individuals to adapt and transfer knowledge to novel and diverse contexts with ingenuity and purpose. Transformative and enduring learning has the power to reshape the lives of students and learners profoundly. As the proverb aptly states, a teacher is one who illuminates the eyes, guiding others from the darkness of ignorance to the light of understanding and wisdom. Genuine learning catalyzes transformative change, arising as a consequence of experience, and enhances the learners' potential, empowering them to achieve superior performance and reach new heights of capability. Through the process of meaningful learning, students or learners gain the ability to perceive concepts, ideas, and the world itself from new perspectives. It expands their intellectual horizons, enriching their understanding and fostering a deeper, more refined view of the surroundings. Thus, learning is not a process imposed upon students; rather, it is an active endeavor in which students engage themselves. The traditional paradigm, where the teacher is the sole dispenser of knowledge and students merely passive recipients, must be dismantled and replaced with a more dynamic, learner-centered approach.

As a result of proper learning, learners come to see concepts, thoughts, ideas or the world differently. Through active listening, students gain significant opportunities to hone and refine critical intellectual skills and cognitive processes, such as problem-solving, scientific inquiry, motor coordination, linguistic abilities, and essential values; all of which are vital to their success in any field of study. In the process of learning, students are afforded invaluable opportunities to cultivate interpersonal, social, and soft skills, all of which are essential for personal success. Mere passive reception of content is insufficient; true learning demands active engagement, where careful and thoughtful listening plays a pivotal role in deepening understanding and internalizing concepts.

This form of learning is intricately connected to higher-order cognitive processes such as intelligence, critical thinking, and reasoning. It enables students to evolve intellectually, guiding them from the formative stages of childhood all the way to the pinnacle of their academic pursuits. It holds true, as old habits are deeply ingrained and often resistant to change. Here is a quote from the renowned educationalist, Benjamin Bloom, who states that learning is not a passive activity. Students gain little by merely sitting in classrooms, listening to lectures, memorizing prepared materials, and regurgitating answers. True learning requires active participation in discussing concepts, writing about them, connecting them to prior experiences, and applying them meaningfully in everyday life. This quote underscores the

active, participatory nature of true learning, emphasizing engagement, reflection, and application. The harmonious fusion of effective teaching and impactful learning has the power to create transformative and extraordinary outcomes.

A brief analysis of the Three-Language Formula: The Central government's New Education Policy 2020 has endorsed the formula in the state of Andhra Pradesh. A closer examination of the details of this formula can be undertaken. The New Education Policy 2020, introduced by the Central Government of India, has strongly advocated for the implementation of the Three-Language Policy up to the degree level. However, among all the states, Tamil Nadu has emerged as the sole state opposing the NEP 2020, firmly declaring its intent to adhere to the existing two-Language Policy. The state has expressed its resistance to the imposition of Hindi, emphasizing its commitment to preserving linguistic autonomy. Due to the politicization of the Hindi language issue, Tamil Nadu has steadfastly adhered to the Two-Language Policy for the past fifty years. This approach, the state says, has contributed to the state's remarkable progress, fostering significant social and economic advancements over the decades. The Two-Language Policy in Tamil Nadu comprises Tamil and English, reflecting a balanced approach to preserving cultural identity while embracing global connectivity. The state firmly rejects the notion that their stance reflects linguistic fanaticism. According to the Central Government, the Three-Language Policy is designed to fulfill three key objectives: fostering group identity, promoting national unity through the adoption of an inter-state language, and enhancing administrative efficiency. In 1968, the Three-Language Formula was introduced nationwide based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, with the exception of Tamil Nadu. The state, with its strong opposition to Hindi, chose to adopt a Two-Language Policy, making the issue a politically charged matter.

In the recent G. O. in School Education Rules, 2003, AP (GO.Ms.No.86, Education (SE-C&TBP) Department, dated 2/7/2003) were issued for the implementation of the three language formula. They should be followed from the Academic Year, 2003-04. The study of languages in schools has been clarified. In accordance with the Three-Language Formula, students in schools shall study languages from Class I to Class X as outlined below: (I) For Telugu Medium Schools, (a) First Language is from the classes I to X - Telugu (b) second language - classes from VI to X - Hindi (c) Third Language - Classes from V to X - English (II) English Medium Schools: (a) First Language is from class I to Class X (i) Telugu in case of the students whose mother tongue is either Telugu or English. (ii) There can be Telugu or any mother tongue if the students whose Mother tongue is other than Telugu or English. (b) The Second Language can be for the classes, right from VI to X (i) Hindi if the students who have taken Telugu as first language. (ii) Telugu shall be studied by students who have chosen a language other than Telugu as their first language. (c) Third Language. Classes from I to X – English.

In Andhra Pradesh regarding English, despite the varying linguistic policies and shifts, the language has taken on a commercial dimension. Parents have come to realize that proficiency in English can significantly impact their children's future prospects, particularly in securing employment. As a result, they are increasingly meticulous about ensuring their children receive an English-medium education, regardless of the fee structure, recognizing the long-term value it holds for their children's success. Moreover, the state leadership recognizes that English serves as the cornerstone of scientific, technological, legal, and commercial discourse, and is acutely aware that students are falling behind in both their professional performance and competitiveness in the global job market. Given the country's rich and diverse linguistic heritage, the Indian Constitution recognizes over 22 vernacular languages. Nonetheless, English is regarded as a vital language for contemporary life and has long been a foundation of the Indian education system. Those who can articulate their subjects, ideas, emotions, plans, and thoughts in English are often granted high-ranking positions, while those who can't are relegated to the sidelines. Indirectly, it is proficiency in English communication skills that holds dominant positions. Consequently, in recent times, several states in India have adopted English as the medium of instruction, with Andhra Pradesh being no exception. All private educational institutions, both schools and colleges, have already embraced English-medium approach and made it mandatory for enrollment.

Moreover, each state holds its own language in high esteem, often praising it as the finest of all. For instance, Telugu is compared to honey, Kannada to *kasturi*, and Tamil to maturity. Each state often harbors a sense of animosity towards the languages of other states. While modern technologies and electronic gadgets have been integrated into educational institutions to enhance teaching and communication, learners in towns and rural areas still lack access to these facilities. However, another concern arises: in many cases, individuals are more inclined to use tools for destructive purposes rather than constructive ones. More often than not, these electronic gadgets are misused for viewing pointless or trivial content. However, these electronic gadgets can never replace a living teacher, as they can't understand students' feelings, emotions and tailor their teaching to meet individual needs. Upon reflecting on the current state of education, a bitter truth emerges: the majority of teachers, particularly English instructors, are reluctant to embrace modern teaching methods and remain entrenched in traditional approaches. They adhere to the methods they were taught by their own teachers, but these approaches rarely prove effective in teaching English for communicative purposes. Through the traditional approaches, they can primarily engage the eyes and hands of students, rather than fostering true communication. This glaring lapse is evident in nearly all schools and colleges, except in a few of the higher-standard institutions. As a result, students may pass English exams with little to no communication skills.

Overall, the situation remains dire, even in engineering colleges located in rural and semi-urban areas. English instructors must undergo rigorous language training and adopt communicative strategies to enable students to learn and practice English effectively for their future endeavors. Only through such efforts students will achieve success in today's fiercely competitive corporate world. A report suggests that teachers should possess fluency in English, regardless of their subject area, so they can foster an English-speaking environment in the classroom where students feel compelled to interact exclusively in English. The key to learning English for communicative purposes lies not in learning alone, but in practicing more.

However, this process is heavily reliant on the skill and dedication of committed teachers. Thomas Alva Edison is often remembered for his response when asked about the secret of his genius: 'One percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.' In some states, the first language may be replaced by the second or third language English, and the vernacular language may be sidelined. This is also happening in Andhra Pradesh, yet the outcome remains discouraging, as English communicative ability in students is still very low. On the other hand, there are no opportunities to study engineering, medicine, or any postgraduate courses in one's mother tongue. However, a basic command of English is essential in the job market. The irrational fear of speaking English has become a formidable challenge for students to overcome.

A survey reveals that teachers in their 30s, 40s, and 50s continue to embrace traditional teaching methods in their classrooms, where the teacher is the active giver and students are passive recipients, particularly in government schools and colleges. It undermines students' interest in English and offers them little opportunity to learn it; when learning is nonexistent, practice holds no value either. As a result, students require external support to acquire and apply their English language knowledge in real-time practice. Therefore, English Language Training for teachers is essential, but it must be implemented on a larger scale.

Another important point to consider is, in many of the so-called private intermediate colleges, the managements' primary focus is on securing ranks and marks in engineering and medical entrance exams, in order to attract more admissions the following year. They give seldom importance to social sciences. This excessive pressure on students drives some to take their own lives. Even governments capable of intervening and curbing these inhuman practices appear to be compromised. As a result, English and second language syllabi are rushed through and materials are handed out within just one or two months of the end of the academic year. Consequently, students enter professional colleges with minimal communicative skills in English and a diminished sense of humanity, as no social sciences are taught during the two years prior at the crucial age.

In Andhra Pradesh most students begin learning English alphabet at a very young age. Currently, they start learning letters in the first standard or even pre-first standard, whereas a few decades ago, English was introduced only in the sixth grade. Today, in LKG, children are taught nursery rhymes in both Telugu and English at nursery classes. However, in private schools, the emphasis is often placed on English rhymes alone. Their parents feel immense joy when they hear their children mimicking the rhymes like parrots. The million-dollar question is: If English is introduced at such a young age, what prevents the students from acquiring communicative English? The problem is that LKG emphasizes rhymes, while most UKG students are primarily taught to memorize words, focusing only on their meanings and spellings. In some cases, they are required to rote-learn and write out words, meanings, and sentences as such. This is why children struggle to form sentences and fail to recognize that words are the building blocks of sentences. They learn the spellings and meanings of words to fill in missing letters, match words with their meanings, and write the spellings of numbers. Marks and grades are awarded based on these criteria to delight the parents. As a result, using words and forming sentences with them are poles apart; it is akin to making an omelet without breaking an egg. Furthermore, teachers often lack a foundational understanding of the nature of the English language.

Dr. Rajkumar Singh, a renowned youth motivator, emphasized the significance of LKG and UKG in a child's early development. According to him, these two foundational levels of education, catering to children aged 3 to 5 years, serve as a crucial predecessor to formal schooling. How many schools are equipped with playgrounds? The LKG curriculum is designed to introduce foundational concepts and motor skills through playful and interactive methods. It prioritizes creating a fun and engaging environment that nurtures interest for learning. Social and emotional development is a vital aspect of LKG education. Typically, children progress to UKG at approximately 4 or 5 years of age upon completing LKG. The UKG curriculum builds upon the foundation established in LKG, with a strong emphasis on further developing language and numeracy skills, particularly in English. At both levels, the development of gross motor and fine motor skills is essential. Children are introduced to more structured learning activities, allowing them to further develop their reading, writing, and basic math skills in UKG. Given the critical importance of LKG and UKG in laying the groundwork for formal education, the role of specialized teachers becomes indispensable. Overall, it is evident that teachers handling Kindergarten classes must be well-trained, particularly through programs at any government-approved institutes where the training is done meticulously.

However, in private schools, individuals without proper qualifications are often assigned to these roles, and notably, Kindergarten classes are absent in government schools. Thus, the very foundational step in a child's educational journey is misaligned.

For example, children know the meaning of 'tree,' but they struggle to construct a sentence using it. They may memorize 'The plants are green,' but they may not understand what 'green' actually means. They are familiar with 'am, is, are, was, were,' but often don't understand their proper usage. The next horrible thing is, in some schools, the children have to learn words in English and their meanings in Telugu. What happens here for children is, at a very tender age, English becomes a language for reading, listening, and writing, but not for speaking, which will eventually become a pivotal skill in their lives. The next pressing concern is that teachers in schools and lecturers in colleges frequently require students to read answers silently across all subjects, despite the fact that English is the medium of instruction. This practice erodes students' ability to articulate effectively in English. It is now essential to shed light on the merits of reading English aloud and the drawbacks of reading it silently. The key components of communication skills include body language, verbal communication, and para-verbal communication. These three elements serve as the cornerstones of effective communication. When students read English aloud, no matter what the subject is, they can hear their own voice in unison and become attuned to para-verbal elements such as tone, pitch, and rhythm. Without the habit of listening to one's own voice, there is always hesitation to use English for speaking purposes.

The other benefit from this reading aloud is one can make out how one's pronunciation or articulation of words and this leads one to improve one's English speaking. Besides, one can make one's mind function three things at the same time of reading. This happens because when students read words aloud their mind functions three things: 1) Auditory Processing which means when reading aloud, the mind processes the sound of one's voice, linking the written text to its verbal counterpart. This reinforces the recognition of words, pronunciation, and finds out stressed and unstressed syllables. Hearing one's own voice aids in internalizing language patterns, contributing to improved speech fluency and vocabulary retention. 2) Monitoring and Adjustment which means the mind continuously monitors the delivery of speech, adjusting elements such as tone, pitch, rhythm, and volume to convey meaning more effectively. For instance, a change in tone can express a question or emotion, while varying pitch or rhythm can highlight important information or ideas.

This awareness and regulation of speech dynamics enhance the clarity and effectiveness of communication. And 3) Cognitive Reinforcement which deals with reading aloud, activates multiple cognitive processes, strengthening comprehension and retention. The mind not only decodes the words but also reinforces understanding through auditory feedback. Auditory feedback refers to the process in which individuals hear and process the sounds they produce. This dual engagement of reading and speaking enhances memory, supports learning, and solidifies language patterns or sentence structures. It allows the brain to process information more deeply and efficiently, fostering greater language fluency.

These numerous advantages are severely lacking when students are instructed to read silently, which significantly hampers their communication skills in English. The question arises as to why teachers misguide students in this regard, and the answer is simple: they are unaware of the benefits of reading aloud. On the other hand, silent reading offers certain benefits. It helps improve reading speed and ensures that others are not disturbed. This approach is particularly useful while preparing for competitive exams, as it allows faster reading and the acquisition of more content in less time. Additionally, it can enhance interpretation skills, especially for those who have already possessed strong speaking abilities. In brief, for beginners aiming to develop and enhance their speaking skills in English, reading aloud is highly recommended. On the other hand, if the goal is to improve interpretation skills, cover more content, and avoid disturbing others, silent reading is preferable. Teachers and lecturers should be mindful of these advantages and disadvantages. The final point is that if one is reading for fun and relaxation, silent reading is more beneficial. It enhances speed, allows for better absorption of concepts, and helps in deducing the meaning of new words through contextual clues. However, if the goal is to develop speaking skill in English, reading aloud is essential. Ultimately, teacher is the key figure in this process. Stephen Hawking remarked on the role of a teacher, 'If you look behind every exceptional person, there is an exceptional teacher.'

George Bernard Shaw once remarked that there is no such thing as perfectly correct English, but there is presentable English, which he referred to as good English. Students in Andhra Pradesh dream and aspire to master this presentable English, as it has become an integral part of every school and college curriculum. Moreover, their ultimate goal is to succeed in interviews. To achieve this, students must undergo a well-structured classroom process, which hinges on the right strategy, competent human resources, and appropriate materials. Classroom processes encompass all activities carried out by the teacher, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, posing questions, and answering them. These activities aim to impart linguistic skills to students, with the first step being the elimination of their fear of speaking English. However, learning is also shaped by how the curriculum is delivered and the classroom conditions in which this delivery occurs. Therefore, every school and college should strive to cultivate a unique environment within its

classrooms to facilitate the teaching and learning of English for communicative purposes. As shown above, fear should be dispelled, as it is the greatest obstacle preventing students from speaking English when it is taught as a second language.

A few years ago the District Educational Officers in AP, (This office Procs.Rc.No.21/A&1/2015 dated 31.10.2015.) accompanied by their teams, conducted extensive visits to numerous schools within their jurisdictions to assess the methodologies and practices employed in teaching English and other subjects in classrooms. The visiting teams placed particular emphasis on schools situated in rural and semi-urban areas, dedicating greater attention to these regions.

They closely examined the procedures and the implementation of various activities within the classrooms. In addition to observing teaching methods, interviews and discussions were conducted with teachers, students, and their parents to gain a comprehensive understanding. Photographs of the classrooms were also taken as evidence. Frequently, the visiting team members and District Educational Officers engaged in direct interactions with teachers and students, conversing in both English and the local language to gather valuable feedback. In this study, classrooms were meticulously observed to collect data on various facets of the educational process, including classroom dynamics, instructional transactions, teaching aids, teacher-student interactions, and student participation. Overall, the situation was largely identical across both private and government schools.

Although English serves as the medium of instruction in Andhra Pradesh, it was observed that teachers frequently resorted to using Telugu for delivering basic classroom instructions. A striking revelation was that the language predominantly employed for teaching English was the vernacular, infused with the local dialect. When questioned about their reluctance to use English throughout the lesson, the teachers explained that the students would struggle to comprehend the material if it were delivered in English. Consequently, they felt it was essential to use the mother tongue to ensure effective understanding. The teams noted that while translating individual words or phrases into the vernacular may be permissible, translating an entire lesson diminishes the fundamental role of English as both a medium of instruction and a tool for communication, leading to the gradual erosion of its core purpose. The teams conveyed this observation in their feedback to the government. The teams found that communicative approaches to teaching English were rarely employed in the classrooms, and there was scarcely an English-speaking environment, even during English instruction. Students believed that the most effective English teachers were those who spent considerable time using the vernacular to translate content and refrained from asking comprehension-based questions. As a result, English remained confined to reading and writing, rather than being utilized as a language of spoken communication.

The teams felt that the teachers might look modern, but their methodologies were absolutely obsolete and so there should be sea change in their teaching. The teams observed that the teachers should undergo a profound transformation in their approach to teaching. There is a proverb that says that in the process of learning, one will impart knowledge, and through teaching, one will deepen one's own understanding. It suggests that teaching without continual learning leads to stagnation. It implies that teaching is most effective when the teacher remains a lifelong learner, constantly expanding his or her knowledge, exploring new ideas, and adapting to changes. When teachers stop learning, they may begin to teach outdated methods, ideas, or perspectives, which can limit their effectiveness and the growth of their students. It is universally recognized that there is a significant distinction between being a mere instructor and being an inspiring educator. An educator who embraces continuous learning brings fresh insights, challenges students to think critically, and cultivates a dynamic and engaging learning environment. In contrast, an instructor who has ceased to learn may only convey information, failing to ignite curiosity or promote the intellectual growth of their students. The teams observed a predominance of instructors, with only a few truly transformative educators.

In retrospect, it is evident that over the past three decades, both parents and children have developed an increasing emphasis on speaking English, a trend that continues to intensify. This heightened awareness has gradually permeated even the most rural areas, reflecting a widespread aspiration for linguistic proficiency. Parents are deeply concerned when their children struggle to speak English. While the children themselves recognize the importance of English proficiency, there remains a paradoxical desire to acquire the skill without actively engaging in spoken practice. This reluctance, rooted in an irrational fear of the language, persists even in professional colleges. The ideal time to address and overcome this fear is during primary and high school; however, it is precisely at this formative stage that students are subjected to profound neglect and inequity in their language education. Teachers in the private sector face immense pressure from both management and parents.

However, a significant challenge lies in their lack of proficiency in spoken English. Furthermore, they remain unaware of effective teaching methodologies and fail to evolve through reflective practice. Instead, they rely heavily on rote-based methods, which hinder meaningful learning and language development. Most teachers urgently need to acquire the skills necessary to help students speak English confidently and with clarity, free from confusion. This gap persists because many teachers have yet to undergo any structured English Language Training, despite the availability of such

opportunities, and their enthusiasm for learning remains unlighted. While this issue is prevalent among English teachers in both the public and private sectors, the situation is even more pronounced for teachers of other subjects. As previously observed, many of these educators, particularly in public sector institutions, function primarily as adept translators, meticulously transferring information rather than fostering comprehensive understanding. As previously noted, teachers often adopt the role of information providers, while students remain passive recipients. The prevalent practice involves teachers simply reading aloud from the text, often with poor pronunciation, and subsequently translating the content into the vernacular language. This approach is widely observed among educators, with the exception of those teaching in a select few esteemed private schools, where more effective methods are employed. The influence of the mother tongue on spoken English and its impact are both statistically significant. Substantial time and effort are devoted to teaching and learning English, particularly in English-medium schools and colleges, reflecting its prominence and value in educational and societal contexts, but the outcome is not up to the mark.

Every English-medium school proudly proclaims during admissions that it prioritizes fostering proficiency in spoken English. However, these promises often ring hollow, resembling the adage that empty vessels make the loudest noise. When teachers actively engage children in speaking English, it equips them with the confidence and skills necessary to navigate the language effortlessly in the future. However, teachers are stifling this potential at the very outset, preventing students from developing the confidence and ability to speak English. In 2017, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation conducted a series of surveys and educational programs across India, during which it remarked that many English teachers fail to recognize the distinction between the phrases 'Man is a teacher' and 'The man is a teacher.' This revelation underscores a deeper issue; one where the river of knowledge has run dry at its very source. The foundation's survey also revealed a sobering fact: only a quarter of third-grade students in India were able to read and comprehend even the most basic sentences. The comment may appear derogatory, yet it carries an undeniable truth. On one hand, the government and the parents invest vast sums, crores of rupees, on education, yet the results consistently fall short of expectations.

The author of this article had the unsettling experience of witnessing an individual, who had studied in English medium from LKG to Ph.D, with six years of teaching experience and applied for a associated professorship at an English medium professional college, struggled to introduce himself in coherent, presentable English. The inconsistent use of verbs completely muddled his English, rendering it incoherent. He frequently made blundering mistakes and exhibited poor body language while delivering his model class. The question is: what kind of English speaking skills can his students possibly learn from him in the classroom? It is a misconception to assume that students can naturally acquire communication skills over time through general classroom activities and instructions. Consequently, students fail to develop these essential skills, leaving them devoid of confidence while conversing in English. Adding to this challenge, the articulation of individual sounds during English pronunciation instruction is often neglected, both at school and college levels. For instance, students pronounce the letter 'h' in words such as 'honest, honorable, hour, vehicle, and aghast,' despite it is silent. Similarly, they incorrectly pronounce the letter 'b' in words like 'dumb, plumb, crumb, thumb, numb, succumb, lamb, limb, climb, tomb, comb, bomb, womb, and cupboard,' where it remains silent. Students inevitably replicate these errors, as they are unwittingly reinforced by their teachers.

The significance of pronunciation in communicative English cannot be overstated; it is equally as vital as grammar and vocabulary. It has become evident that activities conducted in digital English language labs at engineering colleges not only help eliminate the influence of the mother tongue but also accelerate the acquisition of target language skills. These labs, equipped with projectors, internet-enabled computers, collar microphones, and other tools, provide learners with the opportunity to listen to accurate pronunciation and assess their progress during practice sessions. However, students often confine their learning and speaking practice exclusively to the lab environment. The moment they step out of the lab, they gradually forget what they have learned due to the absence of an English-speaking environment outside. In engineering and degree colleges, students often remain carefree until they face on-campus interviews. At that point, panic sets in over their inability to speak English, akin to digging a well only when thirst strikes. Realizing the futility of their efforts and facing repeated rejections in interviews, they turn to Spoken English centers. However, these institutions often focus solely on teaching rigid grammar rules, which intimidate them to the core. This is because the trainers are unaware that teaching grammar is not the same as teaching speaking English. Consequently, students end up wasting valuable years without making meaningful progress in their search of jobs.

On the other hand, the demand for communicative English has grown significantly with the expansion of the corporate industry, which offers lucrative job opportunities. The service sector has further amplified the necessity for proficiency in spoken English among the job seekers. Teachers at primary and high schools fail to instill the habit of speaking English and dispel stage fear during the formative years when students are most receptive to learning the language. At the Intermediate level, both management and faculty focus exclusively on core group subjects, neglecting the importance of interactive English. By the time, students move on to degree or professional colleges, their minds have often become closed. It is well-known that open-minded individuals are more curious and eager to learn what they don't know. They approach challenges with a willingness to grow, remaining unshaken when discomfort arises during

their studies and unafraid to face an audience. Open-minded individuals embrace the possibility of being wrong, fostering an attitude of continuous learning and self-improvement. They seize every opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills they find valuable for their growth. This mindset enables them to learn significantly from their mistakes. Individuals gain invaluable insights through their mistakes.

Conversely, closed-minded individuals resist challenges to their ideas or abilities. They experience fear and anxiety when speaking a language they have only just begun to learn. They are often frustrated when others discover their ignorance, feeling disheartened by making mistakes. Their focus shifts more toward being proven right than seeking clarification, asking questions, or understanding others' perspectives. Instead of addressing their doubts, they simply conceal them. Getting doubts clarified is crucial to the learning process, which is why scholars have emphasized that people should embrace their doubts and regard them as opportunities for growth. Doubts serve as a crucial tool for learners, helping them identify areas where further knowledge is needed and motivating them to seek clarification. Once their doubts are addressed, they not only deepen their understanding but also become better equipped to face challenges with greater confidence and insight. Therefore, when doubts arise, students should not hesitate to speak up and seek clarification. Asking questions presents an invaluable opportunity to engage with others and gain new insights. Who knows, a simple doubt might spark a meaningful discussion or lead to an unexpected avenue of learning. It is, after all, the key to success in one's academic journey!

In communication, doubt clarification involves reflecting back to the speaker or teacher the core meaning of what he or she has just said, as understood by the listener. This process ensures that the listener's comprehension is accurate and provides an opportunity to address any areas of confusion or misunderstanding. To raise a question or doubt, communication skills and a bit of courage are essential, and in class, only open-minded students tend to do so. When one doubt arises and it is not cleared, many more tend to pile up, resulting in diminished clarity of mind on the particular topic. Here, Voltaire comes to mind with his mighty words that judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers. Open-minded students, when given the opportunity by their teachers, ask questions or doubts. This is one of the best ways to learn English language in classes. Teachers ought to encourage doubt clarification from the very beginning of a child's schooling. However, teachers in schools often dismiss this process due to a lack of patience. Through clarification, both teachers and students can make sense of these often confused and complex issues and this can fetch classroom dynamics which refer to the interactions, behaviors, and relationships that occur between students and teachers within the classroom.

Asking and addressing doubts offers twin benefits: on one hand, it clarifies a concept for the student, and on the other, it enables the teacher to assess the student's understanding of the concept. This feedback loop fosters stronger teacher-student collaboration, allowing the teacher to better gauge both the student's conceptual grasp and their language proficiency; thus language is linked to it. When more students ask questions, the teacher gains valuable touch points to assess progress in the lesson and gather insights on how future lessons can be better organized to enhance teaching effectiveness. Thus, teachers can find immense satisfaction in their teaching, and every classroom can become a miniature world. Inquisitive minds, along with self-regulatory learning and self-expression, can be nurtured in primary classrooms, as students at this stage are often open-minded. Inquisitive minds, along with self-regulatory learning and self-expression, can be nurtured in primary classrooms, as students at this stage are often open-minded. According to a report, the average kindergartener in LKG and UKG asks up to 300 questions per day. This number increases significantly when teachers actively encourage and create opportunities for inquiry. They adopt a similar approach when learning English.

Nevertheless, this innate curiosity often diminishes over time if they are raised in an environment that discourages questioning. To preserve and nurture children's inquisitiveness, teachers can adopt the following strategies: Ask open-ended questions: Encourage responses that allow for creativity and multiple perspectives, fostering critical thinking. Use the trial-and-error method: Engage children by asking why a particular result follows an action, helping them develop problem-solving skills. Introduce new and stimulating experiences: Provide opportunities to see, touch, and explore novel and interesting objects or environments. Allow time for play: Playtime not only helps children discover their interests but also inspires curiosity and encourages them to ask questions. However, in most cases, these strategies are not implemented in kindergarten classes. As a result, many children gradually refrain from asking questions, becoming passive recipients in the classroom. This can only be described as detrimental to a child's natural learning process, particularly within an academic setting. As old habits die hard, the children continue to reticent to speak in English and don't ask their doubts. It is the solemn duty of teachers to encourage students to voice their doubts and to address them using the most thorough and effective methods. Resolving doubts fosters deeper understanding, ultimately paving the way for academic excellence, especially for English speaking skills.

Curious children are more likely to learn and retain information, remain engaged, and perform better in school. They also tend to be more observant, imaginative, and creative. But, what really happens in their classes is their curiosity of children is stifled at its very inception. Curiosity, in fact, can serve as a powerful driver for achieving fluency in

language learning. As one embarks on learning English, a mountain of questions inevitably arises: 'am, is, are, was, were, will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must, have, has, had, do, does, did,' all of these seem to enshroud the learner's mind. These words may seem simple, but they form the fundamental building blocks of English. They are essential for constructing statements, yes-or-no questions, positive and negative responses, 'wh' questions and answers, asking for permission, making requests, expressing compulsion and possibility and capability. It is widely believed that English is the easiest language in the world, which is why it has undeniably become the global voice. While there are clear methods for using the above words correctly in sentences, explaining them requires a knowledgeable teacher. This is because learners often have many doubts that need to be clarified within context. Prof. M. Narendra says, 'Don't sit on your doubts; one doubt piles upon another.' By the end of the day, the mind grows dull due to the weight of countless doubts, and one's self-confidence eventually plummets.

An interesting and knowledgeable teacher plays a crucial role in resolving students' doubts. If the teacher views teaching as a routine task, they tend to stifle the students' curiosity. However, if the students are at degree level, there lies an alternative: they can consult online resources for answers. Numerous English language websites are available, which can be helpful if the students have a basic understanding of English. Otherwise, it's akin to looking for something impossible to find in a vast sea of distractions. Another option is to search and have a knowledgeable friend from whom one can benefit, as two heads are better than one. Having a second person can greatly improve one's speaking skills. Once a clever friend is found, the possibilities become limitless. However, problems arise if both individuals are uninformed; it then becomes like the blind leading the blind. In difficult situations, students often perceive speaking English as an insurmountable challenge, thinking, 'I can't speak English' or 'I can never learn the language.' This is nothing but negative self-hypnosis. In reality, such words and phrases should be banned from one's vocabulary, or from the dictionary of the mind. They only obscure the progress one is making.

Even in professional colleges, students attend communicative classes with the belief that the faculty will do everything for them, without learning the basics, such as the forms of irregular verbs (V1, V2, V3), or actively participating in language activities. The writer of this article encounters this issue firsthand. Students can learn only a small portion from the faculty; the rest comes from practice and application. The universal truth is that one can learn from mistakes. Students, especially boys, are often reluctant to learn and practice, perhaps believing that they can acquire English speaking skills effortlessly, living in a world of imagination. However, they only realize the importance of speaking English when faced with campus interviews in their final year, particularly during the face-to-face interview in which the candidate's ability in speaking English and soft skills are tested. In a panic about the job interview, they turn to their communicative trainer for help, seeking guidance on how to succeed in the HR round. At that point, there's little to turn to the basics and prepare diligently. According to a study, acquiring Intermediate-level English, whether spoken or written, requires approximately 350 to 400 hours of consistent study where English is a foreign language. After this, the learner will be able to understand the main points of familiar topics, write in simple language, and express plans, ideas, and thoughts clearly in English.

English is a mandatory subject for all students, requiring them to make space for it in their minds. Several factors make it essential to develop skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking English. English is the language of instruction for professional and higher education courses nationwide. Although the central government recently introduced engineering programs in vernacular languages, this initiative has failed, as neither institutes nor students show interest in pursuing it. Additionally, local languages lack the technical terminology required. Although professional courses are pursued in vernacular languages, securing jobs often require proficiency in an English-speaking environment. Furthermore, scientific and technological innovations are opening doors to new opportunities with better rewards and profits. The paradox in Andhra Pradesh is that while students recognize the importance of English speaking skills and desire to acquire them, they expect to gain this ability without making the effort to actually speak English. Here Shakespeare's words come to mind: 'Some there be that shadows kiss, such have but a shadow's bliss.' The question then arises: what prevents them from speaking English? The answer is simple: they are afraid of speaking it. Another factor is that ignorance can be a potential source of fear.

Educational psychologists suggest that while learning a language becomes more challenging with age, it remains possible at any stage, with the required time becoming a critical factor. Children, however, can learn new languages faster than adults, typically up until the age of 18 or 19. A research shows that children can easily learn two or more languages by the time they finish high school studies. Some reasons why it might be harder for adults to learn a new language include the fact that the brain continues to develop into the late teens and early 20s. Additionally, once someone masters their first language, its rules can interfere with the newly learning language. Students should acknowledge this fact and make use of their free time to improve their English speaking skills. On the teaching side, there is a troubling issue. In many engineering colleges, faculty members teach their subjects solely in English, as it is a matter of necessity, a Hobson's choice. That is all well and good up to that point. But at the same time, when they need to interact with students, such as during a general inquiry, they simply switch to the vernacular, their mother tongue. Majority of them follow this path, and the author of this article can attest to it. Why do they do this? Why don't they

interact with their students in English either in the classroom or in the department? This is because the faculty members have little knowledge of functional or communicative English. As this is the prevailing situation, how do students feel in an English-speaking environment? How can they improve their English speaking skills in the classroom from their faculty members? The only opportunity is during the Communicative English period. However, the idea behind the syllabus set by universities is that students should learn the elements of English during the Communicative English hour and practice them in all their other classes. Now that, the reality is quite different, English speaking skills remain 'an unattainable Arcadia.

Once students complete their degrees or master's programs, the job hunt begins: a transition from the world of imagination to the world of reality. Meanwhile, their parents often pressure them for updates on interview outcomes. Consequently, young men and women come to realize what they have already suspected: the importance of English speaking skills. This realization sparks a search for spoken English centers, as they are compelled to learn English, whether they like it or not. Due to the increasing demand for spoken English, there has been a rapid proliferation of English Language Teaching Institutes, often branded as Spoken English Centers or Institutes. These centers, run by private individuals, are found in nearly every town, with no city lacking them. Upon visiting these centers, a harsh reality emerges: many Spoken English Centers in towns exploit aspiring students by charging exorbitant fees, often burdening their parents. Are these courses cost-effective? The answer is no. While some reputed Spoken English Institutes in cities may be exceptions, most centers, especially in smaller towns, focus solely on teaching English grammar in its pure form rather than in an applied, practical manner. This approach is akin to a belt running on two pulleys: there is movement, but no real progress. The strict emphasis on grammar rules often intimidates learners, adding fuel to the fire for the majority of students. Another surprising revelation is the faculty members from neighboring institutes also work at Spoken English centers.

Now, it's time to examine grammar and its role in English language. Grammar encompasses the sound, structure, and systematic elements of a language. People who speak their native language can communicate effectively because they intuitively understand its grammatical system without formal study. In Andhra Pradesh, their learning process primarily involves, thinking in Telugu, listening and imitation, underscoring the pivotal role these practices play in mastering a language. The same phenomenon occurs when a language is native. For example, in this state, even uneducated individuals speak Telugu fluently without any knowledge of its grammar, as they are born and brought up in a Telugu-speaking environment. When it comes to English, students in Andhra Pradesh rarely encounter an English-speaking environment, except in courts, academic and business chambers. As a result, the importance of grammar in developing English speaking skills can't be ignored in the state. Rudimentary grammatical elements play a crucial role in conveying messages, ensuring clarity and accuracy, and facilitating effective communication in English. By adhering to grammatical guidelines and avoiding broken English, speakers can convey their ideas accurately and gradually build credibility.

While grammar plays a significant role, it is not the sole factor contributing to effective communication skills in English. Fluency, pronunciation, body language, and intonation are equally important, as the goal is not dry communication but effective communication that truly matters. Fluency is the ability to speak English smoothly and without hesitation. It is often misconceived as speaking fast, but this is entirely incorrect; one can maintain one's own comfortable pace while speaking. Pronunciation refers to the correct articulation of words, while intonation involves the rise and fall of the voice, emphasizing key content words during speech. Grammar helps in understanding the structure and nature of a language. However, one might excel in English grammar yet struggle with communicative English. To become an effective communicator, learners should focus on improving their vocabulary, sentence construction, body language, and pronunciation. By mastering these aspects, they can express their ideas clearly, effectively, and confidently. Learning and remembering are distinct from applying knowledge in speaking and writing. Language learners should also focus on developing their listening, reading, and writing skills alongside their speaking skills. To become proficient speakers, learners must practice speaking consistently. It is important to remember that people do not speak grammar, they speak a language.

The upfront statement is that grammar is like ingredients: they cannot become food on their own and as such. They must be used in precise quantities to prepare a dish, and its taste ultimately depends on the skill and talent of the cook. English teaching faculty must understand this thoroughly; otherwise, their teaching may become mere indoctrination. At the degree level, colleges and universities often organize various fests, poster presentations, seminars, and workshops. However, only a handful of capable students participate in these events, exchanging knowledge and improving their communication skills. The majority of students in engineering and degree colleges avoid such programs, primarily due to a lack of confidence in their English-speaking abilities. This is why it can be said that only a small portion of the purpose of teaching English is being fulfilled in classrooms, while the larger part remains unaddressed. On the other hand, there is an abundance of resources available, including hard and soft copies of books, as well as numerous online audios, videos, and audiovisual materials, all freely accessible to enhance one's verbal abilities, other skills and understanding of the structural and pronunciation differences between British and American

English. Structural familiarity is crucial for students seeking to improve their English-speaking skills. It involves mastering sentence patterns, whether they are simple, complex, or compound, and enabling learners to communicate effectively and confidently. Structural English typically refers to understanding the grammatical framework and patterns of a language, focusing on how sentences are constructed and organized for different purposes.

Structural English emphasizes the correct use of grammar, syntax, and sentence structures to convey meaning accurately. This approach helps learners grasp the rules that govern word order, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and other fundamental elements of English language construction. Structures refer to the various arrangements or combinations of words in an accepted style, designed to effectively convey the meaning intended by the speaker or writer. It encompasses the various ways clauses, phrases, or words can be used. Language is best learned through a systematic selection and arrangement of sentence structures or patterns, combined with the use of appropriate vocabulary. Both the teaching faculty and the students should understand this; however, knowledge must flow effectively from the former to the latter. Fear plays a detrimental role in acquiring English-speaking skills. It can be categorized into two types: logical fear and illogical fear. Logical fear is based on valid reasons, while illogical fear is entirely unfounded and serves as the greatest obstacle for learners. When it comes to speaking English, most students are afraid of making mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes while learning, whether it's a language or any other skill. Indeed, errors are an essential component of the learning process. If someone claims, 'I have never fallen off a bicycle,' it likely means that he or she has never learned how to ride a bicycle.

Fear of making mistakes often prevents learners from speaking English. However, if English teachers at the elementary or high school level are truly dedicated to their profession, they can effectively dispel this irrational fear, enabling students to become confident and proficient communicators in English. The issue, as mentioned earlier, is that most English teachers in the public sector act merely as translators and fail to fulfill their communicative roles effectively. They often fail to recognize the distinction between a subject teacher who imparts knowledge and an English language teacher who helps students develop communicative skills. In private-sector schools, the managements are rarely visionary; they often view everything through the lens of profit and loss and are content with students repeating English like parrots. Only a few schools have English language labs, and those managements are particularly focused on improving English language skills. The so-called corporate schools, which are purely commercial in nature, do not assess the linguistic abilities of their teachers.

Parents, many of whom are illiterate or semi-illiterate, are content with their children's marks and ranks. Even highly educated parents follow the same path, seeing no alternative. Educationists, on the other hand, believe that foundation coaching for exams like NEET/JEE should not begin as early as class 6 or 7, as it places undue pressure on children and turns education into something monstrous. The author of this article was astonished to see a sixth-grade student holding a book titled Foundation Book for JEE Mains, despite struggling to answer basic questions on fundamental mathematical concepts. Yet, the corporate schools charge a special fee for the above foundation classes and the parents, being driven by high expectations, consent to pay the fee and then wash their hands of their children. The managements, ignoring what are truly necessary: the basics of mathematics, other subjects, social sciences and English communicative ability deceive both students and parents. It's akin to constructing a building without a proper foundation. Among these, the English language feels like a world away from the learners. There is a proverb: 'One teaches, and many learn.' This represents one side of the coin; the other side is that the attitudes of both teachers and learners need to be changed and committed.

It is the teachers' responsibility to create an English-speaking environment in the classrooms, as students rarely have access to such an environment outside, whether in urban, rural, or semi-urban areas. The language spoken outside and within homes remains the same; the mother tongue. There is a practical and relatively easy-to-implement strategy that English teachers or lecturers can adopt immediately, requiring only a little commitment and creativity. It involves creating a safe, supportive, and encouraging environment for speaking. This will enable all students to engage in various speaking activities such as small group discussions, debates, storytelling, role-plays, mock interviews, story development, story completion, incident narration, picture description, situational conversations, and more. These activities can help dispel the learners' fear. The faculty must understand that students are rarely spoken to in English, which is a major obstacle to their ability to speak the language. The classroom remains the only ray of hope in schools and colleges. It is clear that the need of the hour is the right kind of education. Whether it's language learning or teaching, it requires an elaborate and careful plan, with the utmost attention to regularity, continuity, consistency, and stability. Teachers must recognize that teaching is a complex and dynamic activity. It is often said that a teacher is a lifelong student. They play a significant role in shaping the lives of their students.

Recently, various technologies have been integrated into English teaching to make classrooms more effective and engaging. In recent years, numerous approaches, methods, theories, and techniques have emerged to impart English language skills. Despite these diverse teaching and learning strategies, the English language remains elusive and looms like a mirage in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in a multilingual country like India. For the benefit of contemporary

learners and future generations, it is essential to identify specific challenges that must be addressed through targeted strategies by English teachers. In response to the needs of the current generation, teaching can be transformed into an engaging and enriching experience for both educators and students through innovative approaches. Education should never become monotonous or routine; teaching English must be student-centered. Every student should be encouraged to engage in conversation in English within the classroom. Undoubtedly, there exists a vast range of differences among students who choose different instructional mediums, wherever applicable. In such cases, teachers must adapt their approaches based on the students' learning capabilities and social backgrounds. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to attentively observe each student to assess their level of linguistic acquisition.

It is essential to acknowledge the specific issues that arise in the current, challenging classroom situations. Teachers and lecturers require specialized motivation, training, and ongoing professional development to address these challenges effectively. Language and literature should be interconnected, encompassing reading and storytelling, as well as discussions around them. This approach can be highly effective at the primary and high school levels. Teachers should identify students who are eager to learn English and involve them in language activities from the start. This can inspire more passive students, as they will be encouraged by observing their peers' participation and progress. School and college management, along with institutional heads, should closely monitor the progress of English teaching on their campuses. All institutions, from kindergarten to postgraduate level, must be equipped with state-of-the-art English language laboratories, featuring advanced electronic devices and software applications, to facilitate technology-based English language learning. English teachers should recognize that, unlike their counterparts in Western countries, English language learners in India do not have constant access to English-speaking environments. In most cases, people speak the local language, and the classroom remains the only setting where students are exposed to English. English language teaching can be elevated to a respectable level through classroom activities such as situational conversations, open-ended questions and answers, reading aloud, dictation exercises, clue expansion, and quizzes on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, spelling, and writing.

Teachers should avoid criticizing learners by highlighting their mistakes. Those who fear making mistakes are unlikely to achieve anything. Learners must understand that starting something new is always challenging, and the fear of speaking English is their greatest obstacle. It is observed that many school and college graduates have poor English proficiency, especially in speaking. Meanwhile, both the state government and parents invest significant amounts of money on these students' education. For example, the state government has allocated Rs. 53,000 crores for education over the past three years. This is a significant amount, especially for a newly formed state like Andhra Pradesh. Yet, the outcome remains disappointing. The reasons for the poor performance include large size classes, inadequate teaching aids, teachers' low proficiency in English, limited experience in communicative language teaching, insufficient focus on oral communicative English, lack of interest among teachers, and the fact that teaching serves as a mere source of income for more than fifty percent of them. Other contributing factors include the use of the mother tongue in classrooms, lack of commitment from English teachers, very low motivation among students, interference between English and Telugu, absence of programs in English-speaking environments, limited student participation and response, and, above all, ineffective skill development and a lack of communicative or interactive English teaching. The English teachers should understand that English is not a subject, but a language and the primary purpose or function of the language is to acquire English speaking skills.

Remedial Measures: The challenges faced by English language teachers in Andhra Pradesh are substantial, particularly in rural areas. In these regions, the teacher is often seen as the sole model for learning, making the task even more demanding as students rely on them for all their educational needs. Therefore, teachers should be equipped to address the practical needs of learners, helping them become competent enough to interact with one another by dispelling the fear of speaking. Building rapport with the class, offering an assuring smile and a warm greeting, and demonstrating a strong command of English helps teachers connect with students instantly. When students feel this connection, they find learning the language much easier. The role of communicative English in students' lives should be clearly defined. The teacher's goal should be to help students understand spoken English and enable them to speak, read, and write in English effectively. Grammar translation method should be annulled. Teachers should make their students think in English, it is slow course, but it works well. For example, label everything that is around, think of simple sentences, etc.

Teachers must create opportunities for students to speak English in meaningful, realistic, and relevant situations. Their role is particularly crucial in rural areas, where students often rely solely on their teacher as a model for learning. Teachers are responsible not only for supporting average and above-average students but also for addressing the needs of below-average and slow learners. Good teachers are those who manage their classes with the needs of all students in mind. Providing individual attention to students can resolve many issues that arise during class. An English teacher should encourage students to speak only in English within the classroom. This approach helps students recognize the need to interact in English. Teachers should encourage participative learning, which will remove the barriers between students and the English language. Teaching speaking English is not a one-way process; it is multifaceted. A possible

solution is to conduct a written exam worth 50 marks and an oral exam, also worth 50 marks, which could be administered by a teacher or lecturer from another school or college. This oral exam can be both honest and challenging, as it is designed to assess the learner's English speaking skills. Learning a language is a slow course, one can't learn swimming when the water is already at the chin.

CONCLUSION

Speaking is crucial for linguistic competence, especially in the job market. Proficiency in English speaking often aids writing skills. While some teachers stress on speaking, many students neglect it due to ignorance, arrogance, or fear of mistakes. Drawing from experience, the author asserts that this negligence forms a barrier to learning English-speaking skills, even in professional colleges where students think that some miracle will happen and some company will hire them. This idea is nothing more than an illusion. 'You reap what you sow!' Unfortunately, the education system prioritizes passing exams over equipping students with the practical ability to speak English effectively in real-life situations. It is disheartening to note that the teaching of English in Andhra Pradesh does not coordinate with its primary objective of developing speaking skills. Most teachers prioritize exam results, but great teachers identify challenges, foster learning, and encourage communication. English teachers at all levels must adopt communicative strategies and continually enhance students' speaking skills. Recalling Shakespeare's words in Julius Caesar, 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves,' the author highlights that much of the responsibility rests on English teachers who, having started teaching, have neglected learning through their teaching. Similarly, students often sacrifice long-term gains for short-term rewards; it is like losing a cow for the sake of a cat.

'The survey concludes that teaching and learning English-speaking skills in Andhra Pradesh must align with the demands of the globalized modern world, rather than being confined to mere marks.'

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