

L2 Learners' Problems in Speaking English of Rural Background Engineering Students in AP

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ABSTRACT: *In Indian education system, learning English language is a second language (L2) which is unavoidable and undividable apart from their mother tongue (L1). An intellectual, physical and emotional contribution is necessary to learn a second language successfully and to communicate a linguistic message. Especially, the rural area of engineering students used L1 (Telugu) as a way of communication tool in some of the engineering colleges as they are facing many challenges while speaking English as a second language (L2). The present study would investigate the causes, problems and difficulties faced by the rural area students who came to study engineering courses in VIIT (A) College in Visakhapatnam, AP. The researcher has used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for 40 students including 32 male and 8 female rural area students for data collection. The collected data analyzed statistically and graphically. In the data analysis, the results revealed the reasons for failure like due to less time to learn English in the classroom, inadequate encouragement from teachers, family and friends. It is also found that the Teaching of English language in bilingual method and late foundation of English medium studies in previous academics. This piece of writing also facilitates the researchers who aim to investigate similar problems in speaking skills for rural area engineering students. The study also presented some of the suggestions and recommendations to overcome the struggle for the language teachers and students.*

KEYWORDS: *Speaking skills problems, rural areas background, bilingual method, inadequate encouragement, late foundation in English medium, mass media assert*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a weapon to communicate effectively in society. It is very difficult to consider a society without language. Language sharpens people's ideas, thoughts and controls their total day-to-day actions. The native language (L1) learns easily for native people, due to the favorable environment and by the great conscious of the language from the childhood stage. However, learning a second language (L2) require more conscious to acquire it and the exposure to the Second Language Acquisition (SLA). So many factors affect the process of learning a second language including attitude, self-confidence, motivation,

classroom conditions, environment, family background, capable of student and availability of competent teachers. (Verghese, 2009) (Cited in Causes of Problems in Learning English as a Second Language as Perceived by Higher Secondary Students .Raja, B. William Dharma; Selvi, K , JELT, v1 n4 p40-45 Oct-Dec 2011).

The students from the rural background even after their schooling and intermediate education they are unable to speak English language. According to geographical background L1 (Telugu) is used as a mode of communication by most of the rural students up to their intermediate level. But after entered into higher educational institute, teachers use English language to teach syllabus and also communicate with students in L2 (English). Though some of the students are studying English medium yet are not able to speak and write at least one sentence without grammatical errors. Students focus on English language only for marks and examination point of view only, not to study to the improvement of their speaking skills. However, to improve or speak L2 (English) language students must require regular practice and patience inside and outside of the classroom. Here inside the class means teachers and students, outside of the class means family members, friends and the environment.

Here the research question is

1. Why don't the 10 years schooling and two years intermediate make students' mastery over the English language?
2. What are the factors that make a problem in speaking English as L2?
3. The hypothesis answers are
4. While the students were studying in schools and colleges, less priority has given to English language.
5. If the language teacher does not competent in L2 then bilingual method is adopted in English classroom, though the method helps only for slow learners.
6. If a student from a rural area does not understand teaching in English then the teacher starts L1 to explain the topic.

According to Dr. Kannan (2009, ESP World, para.5) "Our examination system makes the students rote memorization rather than testing their analytical and creative skills". The speaking abilities of the students are in a weak state. Not only the weak also bright students who scored high in English written examination in intermediate are not able to communicate properly in English language. Different causes may be responsible for this problem, which the present study has tried to point out.

In this view, the English teachers are unable to help them, as they have to finish the academic syllabus in the given period.

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The schools and intermediate colleges' examinations system does not focus on the English language learning environment. If the management ready to consider the teaching in English language then most of the students face difficulties to understand due to the late foundation in English medium studies. Maybe rural areas' family educational and financial background is unfavorable to learn and speak English language. All these reasons and problems in learning English-speaking skills have discussed in this article. Here the researcher prepared and distributed a questionnaire to collect data which supported to find out the challenges with English speaking skills for first-year engineering graduates include male and female.

Identification or statement of the problem:

The rural area of engineering students of VIIT(A), Visakhapatnam, AP not able to speak English as a second language (L2) in their classrooms as well as in everyday life.

Hypothesis:

Most of the students from rural areas up to intermediate level only desire to pass the examination for marks, to get a job, degree certificate and getting admission into higher studies. 99% of students do not have anxiety in learning L2 (English) to improve their English speaking skills.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Any language learning reading and listening are considered as receptive skills and writing and speaking is the productive skills essential to be integrated into the improvement of effective communication. Of all the four language skills, speaking appears to be the most important skill required for communication (Zaremba, 2006). At the university level, few students can communicate in English and give responses to their lecturer's questions. Most of the others tend to keep silent. The learners of foreign language (L2) speaking is not an easy thing to speak and understanding the target language because learning to speak a second language requires more its grammatical and semantic rules. Native language acquisition is a usual procedure for children. Oral language can get without effort. The speaking ability improves with age growing for children, but that improvement may not lead to perfection in the language. Constant practice and clear attention are requiring to producing oral skills in a more efficient way. Speaking fluency appears to develop with increased exposure to the second language (L2) input (Al-Sibai, 2004). Input refers to the language data, which the learner is exposed to (Zhang, 2009). As cited in (IJSELL) Volume 2, Issue 6, June2014, PP 22-30.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher prepared 25 questionnaires as a tool for data collection, semi-structured interview session and classroom observations to get the opinion of the students. The collected data of students' opinions supported to processed to do further analysis. The researcher randomly selected 40 students who came from different rural areas to study engineering graduation in VIIT (A) College Visakhapatnam, AP to do research experimentation. The opinion of the students gathered in statistical method and to analyses, the data researcher used tables, bar diagrams and pie diagrams. The percentage of the respondents used to accumulates the results. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview for 12 out of 40 students. For each student was

asked three questions. The question is 1. What are the difficulties faced while speaking in English? 2. How you motivated to speak English? 3. What are the things did you to overcome the challenges. Apart from all these, researcher observed the students' speaking abilities in the classroom. The collected data was segregated into causes, challenges and solutions. After that based on the difficulties in speaking and their causes of the students the data was analyzed. In this research work the researcher completely involved into data gathering, investigation and explanation.

Limitations:

The research was limit to rural area students of VIIT (A) Visakhapatnam, AP and to the students studying B.Tech first year only.

Analysis of the Data

Response to the Q. no1 information is analyzed as following.

Q 1. What is the strength of the vocabulary in English Language?

Language Skill	No. of students	%
Listening	21	52.5%
Speaking	38	95%
Reading	16	40%
Writing	28	70%
In all skills	9	22.5%

Vocabulary (word) limit	No. of students	%
Up to 150 Words	16	40%
150-300 Words	11	27.5%
300-500 Words	8	20%
500-800 Words	5	12.5%
800 and above Words	0	0%

Table:1 strength of the vocabulary in English Language

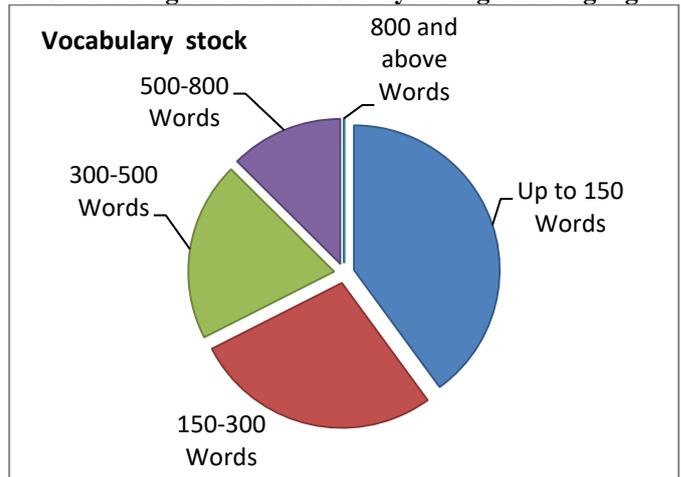


Figure 1 : Students' vocabulary stock

The above table1 and diagram-1 demonstrate that English language vocabulary limit for the VIIT engineering college students who came from rural areas have a smaller number of vocabulary store. About 45% students have vocabulary stock up to 150 words, 22.5% students have vocabulary stock 150-300 words, 20% students got vocabulary bank 300-500 words, and only 12.5% students declare vocabulary limit 500-800 words and 0% more than 800 stock of vocabulary.

Responses of Q.2 and its data analysis

Which skill of language learning do you find most difficulty?

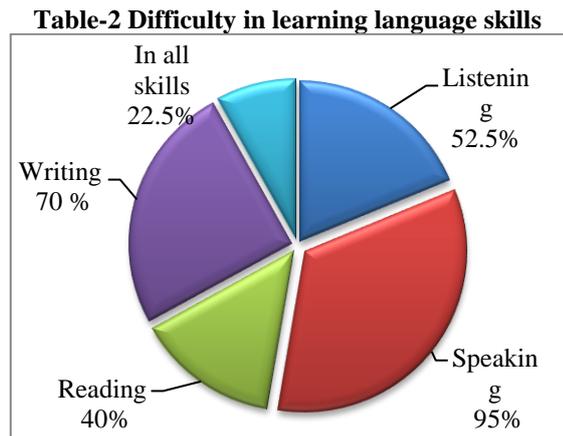


Figure 2 Difficulty in learning language skills

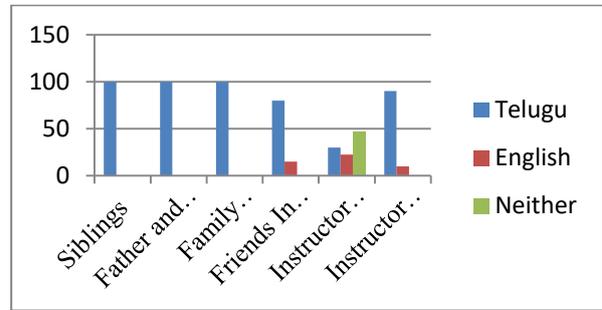
The above table 2 and diagram-2 shows that opinion of the students for learning difficulty in learning English language skills who came from rural areas. 38 (95%) students out of 40 have expressed that speaking skill learning is the most difficult for them. Out of 40 students 21(52.5%) are have difficulty to learning in listening skills where as 16 (40%) students out of 40 have said learning reading skill is tough for them, 28 (70%) students have difficulty in writing skills out of 40 students. Finally there are 14 (22.5%) students have expressed that they have completely difficulty in all four language skills (LSRW).

Q. No 3-8 responses and data analysis

Use of different languages with different people in the society

Table- 3 No. of students use different languages with others

Figure 3: Use of different languages with others
The above table -3 and figure -3 shows that how poor in use of english speaking skills of rural area students. Most of the students use their L1 (Telugu) language, When they want to communicate their ideas with different people like siblings, parents, friends and with teachers in class room. they never tried to use L2 (English) language to improve speaking skills. Here the figure-3 speaks that being rural areas of VIIT engineering college , Vishakapatnam 100% students use Telugu with their sibling, parents and family relatives. It is some interesting that just 15% of students try to use english language with their friends in classroom only. During interview session these 6 students responded that, just they want to speak in english with friends to improve speaking skills atleast. But some times they feel making mistakes in front of teachers and friends in speaking english very embarrassed, which consequences not to prefer speak in english any circumstances.



This study shows that only 30% of students want to speak in Telugu in classroom with teacher, but interestingly 22.5% of students use english to reply answers to the questions asked by the instructor. 47.5% (19) of the students due to less self confidence and stage fear don't want to use neither L1 (Telugu) or L2 (English) language with teachers in the classroom. But after the class period over those 19 students use Telugu with the teacher clarify their doubts (expressed their opinion in interview session with the researcher). Due to lack of poor listening skills and fear of speaking in english the students unable to improve L2 speaking properly.

Q.No 9 response and data analysis -Educational background of students' family

Family member	Educated	Uneducated
Father	14 (35%)	26 (65%)
Mother	10 (25%)	30 (75%)
Bother	29 (75.5%)	11 (27.5%)
Sister	17 (42.5 %)	23 (57.5%)

Table-4 no. of Educational background of the family

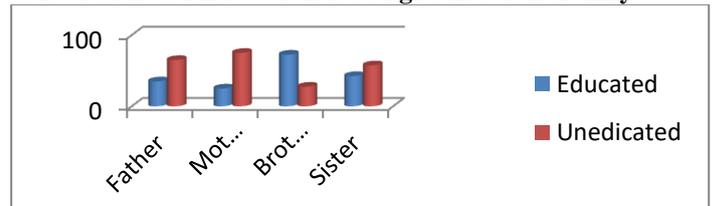


Figure-4: % of Educational background of the family

Telugu	English	Neither
40	0	-
40	0	-
40	0	-
32	6	-
12	9	19
19	-	-

Table-4 and figure-4 shows that literacy percentages of students' family background. Parents' low percentage (father-35% and mother-10%) of education background leads to poor improvement on students' speaking skills. However, the present generation relation (siblings) of the students is better than their parents. The literacy percentages of brother (75.5%) and sister (42.5%) better than their parents but they are unavailable at home as they are settled in somewhere due to marriage and job purpose (expressed in semi interview session).

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The result shows that the family education background is also one of the environments for the students could not improve English-speaking skills.

Q.10 - 13 shows the data analysis about purpose for study higher education.

Purpose of education	%
Getting good job in career	17 (42.5%)
To getting degree in academic year	10 (25%)
To get well status in the society	8 (20%)
To enhance the English speaking skills	5 (12.5%)

Table-5 purpose for study education

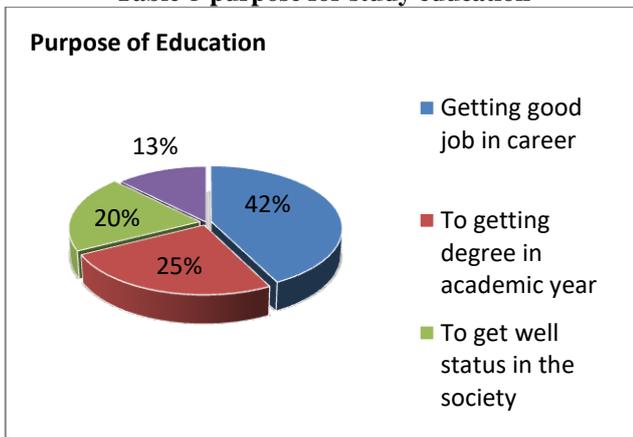


Figure-5 purpose for study education

In above table/figure-5 the researcher shows that the opinions of the selected rural areas student in VIIT for reasons of getting education. Out of 40 students 17 (42.5%) are expressed about education purpose was only for getting good jobs in their career. 25% students are revealed to getting degree certificate in current academic year. 20% students opened that to get well status in the society. The interesting thing is only five students (12.5%) expressed that to enhance the English speaking skills. The data study reflects that 35 students (87.5%) are not learning English as target (L2) language to enhance speaking skills. However, the students have to understand that without good speaking abilities in English language they will not get good job, degree and well status in the society.

Q.No 14-19 responses and data analysis

What are the problems to speak in English (L2) language?

Problems	No. of opinions
Lack of vocabulary	6
Lack of grammar rules	5
Lack of skill in construction sentences	3
Fear of speaking with others	5
Lack of motivation to speak	2
Above all	19

Table: 6 No. of opinions about problems to speak in English

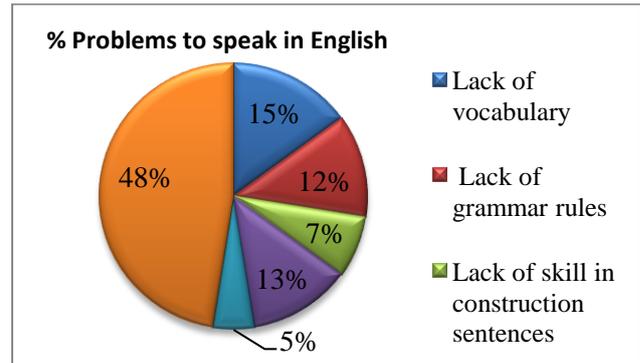


Figure-6 percentage of problems to speak in English

The above table/figure-6 explained that 48% of the students of rural areas have hindrance of lack of vocabulary, grammar rules, sentence constructions and lack of motivation when they are speaking in English language. Motivation is very essential to the rural area students to improve and speak fluently in L2 (English). They required separate spoken English classes and make them practice LSRW skills in language labs.

Q. No 20 responses and data analysis

Which academic year is the foundation to English medium studies?

Class	No. of responses
From nursery to V class	3
From class VI to X	11
From Intermediate	26

Table-7 the foundation to learning English language as L2

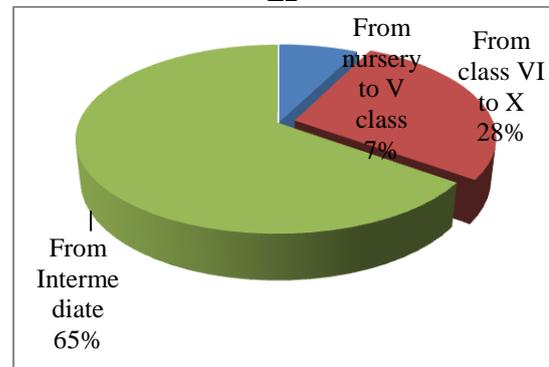


Figure-7 Foundation of English medium studies

The above table/figure-9 shows that the foundation of English medium studies for the students of rural areas. In this study, the researcher found that very less i.e. 7% of the students have been introduced English medium from nursery class due to family educational and financial background, 28% of the students started English medium from secondary school level.

Here the major problem is that after completed their schooling 65% of students have been entered in intermediate and higher educational institutions. Obviously, English medium teaching will start here onwards and many difficulties faced by these students to understanding medium of teaching and communicating in English speaking. They entered in the deep-sea of English where they struggle to swim in improving speaking skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research study and analysis the researcher found that the main problems faced by the rural areas students of VIIT engineering college Vishakhapatnam, AP and a few other rural in engineering colleges nearby. The students are unable to speak in English language due to their family educational background leads late foundation of English medium studies build lack of vocabulary, sentences formation create fear of speaking in English with teachers and classmates and finally lack of motivation to make them speak in English inside and outside of the class. Apart from all these problems initially, they feel getting education is to obtain marks, ranks and get a degree in every academic class rather than to improve their English speaking skills. The most second language learners learn the targeted language in conscious stage where they need more focus on four-language skills (LSRW). Students from rural areas have little exposure to speak in language. The language teachers encourage, motivate the rural area students, and initiate the language learning activities to create opportunity to speak English confidently and fluently. The way of teaching the lesson in English class is also one of the factor furnish to students' complexity in English speaking skills.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1. To the rural areas students- students without demoralized oneself about family educational, financial background should focus on vocabulary improving through read news paper and find new words then get their meaning from standard English dictionary daily. Those new words should use in daily conversations with teachers and friends to improve vocabulary. Listen English songs and lyrics, watch English movies and observe the body language, pronunciation and accent of the speakers to improve fluency in English language.
2. To the English teachers- First of all the language teachers should recommend their college management to give more important and provide good environment for the students to focus on improving English language skills (LSRW). Counsel the college management about English subject that, it is very essential for the students to apart from core subjects to achieve career goals rather than degrade the language.
3. Language teacher should find the rural area students on first day itself in the classroom then know their English language proficiency and motivate them towards learning speaking skills.
4. The study researcher suggested that further researcher do studies in other engineering colleges to make out the variables and similarities for improving speaking skills by incorporate speaking skills techniques into their

teaching approaches. Moreover, encourage the rural area students should utilize modern technology and make them use android mobile phones by install English speaking learning apps such as Hello English-Learn English, Utter-Learn English etc. as much as possible to improve speaking skills.

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