

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTES IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

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ABSTRACT

English occupies a place of prestige in our country, even after more than six decades since the British left India. No indigenous language however has come up to replace English, either as a medium of communication or as an official language. With the Independence, in spite of many a movement against the teaching of English in India under the influence of nationalistic feeling and emotional hostility, English began to reassert its position; but, surprisingly, the number of people who can speak and write English, intelligibly and correctly, is very low. The way English is taught in our educational institutes today is to a great extent responsible for this sorry state of affairs. Our technical know-how has been acknowledged by the whole world, but still our young technical graduates stay unemployed even after scoring fairly well in their degrees. The sole reason is their lacking in communication skills which are considered as the 'survival skills' or 'life-skills' in the competitive scenario of the twenty-first century. Though, the aim of the Engineering English Course offered at various engineering and technology institutes is to enable the students to learn certain macro- and micro-skills in the English language and use them effectively as students while following other courses and later as engineers/technologists at the work place; yet, most of them who have undergone the course are not proficient enough to communicate effectively in the language. This paper is an attempt to trace the problems faced by both the teacher and the student in the English teaching and learning process at the undergraduate level in the engineering and technology institutes. The paper aims at presenting the contemporary situations in India with regard to English and suggesting remedies where these are called for.

KEYWORDS: English Language Teaching (ELT), English as Second Language (ESL), Engineering English, English Communication Skills, Industry-Ready