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Need of ESP Teaching in Technical Colleges/Institutes of Bihar

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Abstract:

This is the age of globalization, where technical knowledge and proper communication skills are equally important in the industry internationally. In this case the knowledge of general English is not enough. Students of technical institutes require a specific kind of English which help them in their particular field. The paper analyses the need of ESP teaching in technical/institutes of Bihar and explores various dimensions to the execution of the ESP programme /course in English.

1. Introduction

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is a need based and we can say a goal oriented concept to determine which language skill should be profitably developed for the academic and professional purposes/ success of students. It is necessary that ESP courses should be based on specific professionals or academic needs of the learners. The formation of goals and objectives in a particular course helps to create the goal that shows where the teaching is going to be about. As K. Graves (1996) explains, "goals are general statements or the final destination, the level students will need to achieve. Objectives express certain ways of achieving the goals." Although ESP is a goal oriented course and focuses on the use of a specific kind of material the development of basic language skills. ESP aims at developing the general proficiency in English although with specific times of teaching text serving the needs of the learner at its best. The method of teaching ESP is mainly learner-centered where the learners need, interest and suitability are taken care of.

2. Discussion

"Technical Education had been a key priority in the state of Bihar, and it had established several prestigious Technical institutes in the State. Presently, 'Aryabhatta Knowledge University (AKU), Patna has been established by Government of Bihar for the development and management of educational infrastructure related to technical, medical, management and allied professional education in the state. The objective of the university is to promote the professional education infrastructure to meet the national standard through well advanced course, infrastructure and quality faculty.' Bihar lacks in the infrastructure both in the terms of number of institutions and the quality of education. As a result Bihar state has become the major hub of students migrating to the others states for pursuing their education and carrier building for future growth. Here is the list of top government / private technical institutes of Bihar which Includes both Engineering and polytechnic education." (From the website of State Board of Technical Educational, Bihar.)

"The State Board of Technical Education has been constituted vide Government Order No. 75/ Dir .dated 31st May, 1955 under Department Of Science and Technology, Government of Bihar, Patna. Its basic role is to smoothen the process of managing the Diploma & ITI Colleges in the state establishing new technical colleges/institutes, registering the students conducting their examination, evaluation, publishing the results issuing certificates to the students." (State Board of Technical Educational, Bihar) There are about 70 engineering, /polytechnic colleges in Bihar.

In Bihar nowhere ESP is taught. All students in Bihar pursuing undergraduate courses in Engineering/ polytechnic, irrespective of the disciplines of their choice, take a course called Compulsory General English.

The colleges offer English for 2 semesters for the first year B.E. / B.Tech. students. What we see here in the syllabuses that the focus is on basic grammar elements, basics of technical communication, common errors, Synthesis, Vocabulary, speaking, reading and writing. The syllabus also includes listening process and audience analysis.

The second semester syllabus also contains some grammatical components. In writing, the focus is on paragraph writing and sentence structure. Basics of group discussion (spoken English), business letters, job application letters, memos and e-mail message writing. It also focuses on the various types of report writing, précis writing, etc. These all make it a general course in English to improve the knowledge of language, comprehension and communication skill in a general day-to life. It may be pointed out here that it is the direct imposition of English upon the learners' without knowing their level / background of knowledge of English as if English is their mother -tongue. As we know mother -tongue or the first language is different from a second language. In the sense first language is not taught but caught.

And through the scheme of examination it is clear that much importance is given to direct questions, which elicit and require one-word answers. In the exam paper, questions that elicit long answers were asked. But these questions also elicit direct answers on the content. There seems to be no scope for creativity or intellectual challenge.

We can say that though the syllabus appears to be very crowded, but has the lack of relevant materials for the engineering students. The focus is on basics the of communication, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The syllabus deals with the four modes of writing, bibliographical entries, using dictionaries, formal and informal reports, memos, business letters, job applications, basic phonetics, group discussions and presentations. But, they all come under General English which can be useful in their day to day life but is not enough in their own respective fields.

3. Analysis

There is a need is to design a kind of Syllabus / study material that helps the students pursuing their courses in / engineering / polytechnic that is relating to English for Special Purposes and a kind of course that enables them to use English for their own purposes.

According to Allen (1984: 49) 'Syllabus ... is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught'. Nunan (1988) shares almost the same view that a syllabus is a specification of the content that is to be taught in a language program and the order in which it is to be taught. Hutchinson & Waters (1987: 80) state that 'A syllabus is a document which says what will (or at least what should) be learned'

ESP based syllabus would be more useful for the students pursuing their studies in technical subjects. A separate need-based syllabus in English should be designed to meet the specific needs of students pursuing Engineering/polytechnic or any kind of technical degree. Learning jargons and technical terms in a particular area is the most important thing in teaching ESP. It is because ESP is different from GE (General English) mainly due to the jargons and technical terms used in the particular area of learning. In the ESP syllabus for technical students, emphasis should be laid on science vocabulary and sentence structures, which are more useful to technical students. Such syllabuses have now been followed for more than a decade in various Engineering colleges in different states in our country and there is a need of implementing of this kind of syllabus (that includes ESP courses) in our state i.e. Bihar.

Developing ESP courses will enhance personal and professional fulfilment, and reflect the process of lifelong learning. Therefore, special attention in ESP teaching should be focused on ways of promoting all the skills, including listening, reading, speaking and writing which enable learners to respond to different day-to-day situations and react properly in special circumstances.

ESP is essential for the students of the technical college. ESP fulfills occupational, vocational, academic or professional requirements of learners' in a way that directly benefits them in their professional academic career. The purpose of the present paper is to find out the need of ESP teaching in technical/institutes of Bihar where ESP is not taught. ESP includes much more than the teaching of specific materials and contents. Teaching ESP combines development of linguistic skills together with the acquisition of specific kinds of information.

4. References

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