

# A Study to Explore the Evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Engineering Education in India

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**Abstract:** *English Language Teaching (ELT) has played a significant role in the development of education in India. English has become a global language, and its proficiency is crucial for academic, professional, and social success. This study aims to investigate the development and changes in English Language Teaching (ELT) within the context of engineering education in India. By examining the evolution of ELT practices, this research seeks to gain insights into the various approaches and methodologies employed in teaching English to engineering students. The study will delve into the historical background of ELT in engineering education, exploring the factors that have influenced its evolution over time. Additionally, it will analyse the current state of ELT in this specific educational setting, considering the challenges and opportunities faced by both teachers and students. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the trends and advancements in ELT in engineering education in India. In this article, we will explore the evolution of ELT in India, its challenges, and the efforts made to enhance English language skills in the country.*

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching, ELT, engineering education, India, evolution, methodologies

## 1. Introduction

The roots of English language teaching in India can be traced back to the colonial era when the British introduced English as the language of communication and administration. However, after India gained independence in 1947, there was a shift in educational policies to promote regional languages. English, though, continued to be taught as a second language.

English has also been described as a "world language," a commonly spoken language of today. It is the lingua franca of the new era and is taught and comprehended as a second language all over the globe. In India, English serves not only as a language of communication but also as a language of coordination for inter-state and intra-state cooperation, as the country is characterised by its vast ethnic and linguistic diversity. Despite the fact that modern technology has begun to play a significant role in language instruction and acquisition in schools and institutions, it is inadequate and ineffective, particularly in small communities and rural areas. Students at the secondary and postsecondary levels who are learning English continue to pass examinations without making sufficient efforts to either comprehend the language or recognise its utility.

Since the colonial era, English has developed to the point where it has statutory status as an official language associated with it. Although it is estimated that English-speaking Indians make up less than 10 percent of the world's population, they dominate national administration and play a significant role in policy formulation. Students and parents view English as the language of opportunity and a means of achieving social mobility. Consequently, the desire to

acquire this language is widespread. Approximately twenty million pupils are currently studying English around the globe, according to an estimate.

The evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) practices has been a dynamic and ongoing process. Over the years, ELT has witnessed significant changes and advancements, driven by various factors such as technological advancements, pedagogical research, and the changing needs and expectations of learners. These modifications have led to a shift from traditional teaching methods to more learner-centered approaches. In the past, ELT practices primarily focused on grammar and vocabulary instruction, with an emphasis on rote memorization and teacher-centered classrooms. However, with the advent of communicative language teaching, there has been a greater emphasis on developing learners' communicative competence and promoting meaningful interaction in the classroom. Additionally, the integration of technology in ELT has opened up new possibilities for language learning, allowing for more authentic and engaging learning experiences. As a result, ELT practices have become more dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of learners in the modern world.

The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) in engineering education can be traced back to the early 20th century when engineering became a popular field of study. As English became the language of international communication, it became necessary for engineers to have a good command of the language. ELT was introduced in engineering education to help students improve their language skills and communicate effectively in the global

market. Over the years, ELT has evolved to include various teaching methodologies and approaches that cater to the specific needs of engineering students. Today, ELT is an integral part of engineering education and plays a crucial role in preparing students for successful careers in the global marketplace.

## 2. Review of Literature

According to Manish Kumar [2019], "English is our big window on the world" English exists throughout, including India. Because of its widespread use, English is dubbed a 'global language.' It is the most taught foreign language in many nations despite not being an official language. English thrives in India and abroad. English is everything—the weapon of dominance and tyranny, the creator of riches and inequality, the mass education tool. Training must also be conscious of England's assault. In the era of globalisation, English has become a global language of reference for all human endeavour. Instead of being labelled the colonisers' language, globalisation has made it worldwide renowned. Professional progress in the current world requires English proficiency. English vocabulary covers much of what individuals think and feel about science and humanity. International markets use English as their contact language. Technology will transform teaching and learning. Considering the aforementioned issues and reasons, we must modify English language education from elementary to higher school. Higher education will use this paper's solutions to fix the issues.

R. Abilasha, M. Ilankumaran (2018) Often referred to as the "global language," English is widely utilised today. The modern language is taught as a second language globally. Due to its ethnic and linguistic variety, India uses English for communication and inter-state and intrastate cooperation. Modern technology is insufficient and useless, but it is beginning to play a role in language teaching and learning in schools and institutions, particularly in rural and small communities. Students may pass English tests without striving to learn the language or its value. This essay emphasises the need of utilising English to fulfil the escalating expectations of a competitive corporate environment. This article discusses ELT instructors' daily activities and tactics. Students may apply their language learning by meeting their real-world demands.

Sailaja, Pingali [2017] In this global competitive climate, language is deeply linked to human emotions and behaviours. English is vital for communication today for many reasons. It is the most widely spoken foreign language. Thus, Mexicans and Swedes frequently speak English. To communicate globally, everyone should learn the language. You may talk to non-English speakers worldwide. It involves ethnicity, religion, and self-trust. Everyone—beggar, banker, wild, or civilized—uses it for labour, worship, and amusement. Languages are vital and current in all nations. For social, public administration, business, education, and other functions, social group members must talk. Our country is multicultural and multilingual. A person works best in their mother tongue. To meet social needs, they need use their mother language. It's reasonable to consider the mother language for schooling.

However, communicating to share a language has helped learn English. Modern English usage is discussed in this article.

Tiwari, Sandhya (2016) Current ESL/EFL instruction is characterised by a proliferation of methods and modules. It represents profession power and scope. Theory shapes language teachers' opinions and approaches to teaching and learning. Theory predicts, explains, and evaluates circumstances and possibilities, and rationalises language acquisition interventions. It helps find viable ways that have been tested and understood. Methods refer to strategies and procedures used to complete tasks and achieve certain objectives. Theories frequently suggest the best way. Learning and teaching should acknowledge and understand their theoretical framework rather than just practising from personal or professional experiences rather than tested theories. ELT practitioners can put students at danger by practising from preconceptions and beliefs rather than professional theory. Many hypotheses exist on second language learning. Second language acquisition study is strongly related to linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychology, neurology, and others, which explains the multitude of hypotheses. Research on these ideas illuminates the many factors that affect language acquisition.

### Modern Approaches to ELT:

Over the years, ELT in India has witnessed several transformations. Traditional methods focused on grammar translation and rote learning, which limited students' ability to communicate effectively. However, there has been a shift towards communicative approaches that emphasize speaking and listening skills, along with grammar and vocabulary. As per Sandhya Tiwari, "If you are serious about improving your public speaking then you should approach it like a serious learning task." (Tiwari, 2018).

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in engineering education in India has witnessed significant trends and advancements in recent years. With the increasing demand for English proficiency in the global job market, engineering students are required to have a strong command of the language to succeed in their careers. As a result, ELT has become an integral part of engineering education in India, with a focus on developing students' language skills and communication abilities.

One of the major trends in ELT in engineering education in India is the use of technology. With the advent of digital tools and platforms, educators are now able to provide students with interactive and engaging learning experiences. This includes the use of online resources, multimedia content, and virtual classrooms. Additionally, technology has enabled educators to personalize learning and provide students with individualized feedback, which has been shown to improve learning outcomes. Another drift in ELT in engineering education in India is the integration of language learning with technical education. This approach recognizes the importance of language skills in the engineering field and seeks to provide students with the necessary language skills to succeed in their careers. This includes the use of technical vocabulary and terminology, as well as the development of communication skills for professional

settings. Overall, the advancements and trends in ELT in engineering education in India reflect the changing demands of the global job market and the need for students to have strong language skills and communication abilities. By embracing technology and integrating language learning with technical education, educators are better able to prepare students for success in their careers.

### Challenges:

Despite the progress, there are various challenges that hinder effective ELT in India. One major challenge is the lack of trained and qualified English language teachers. According to an ELT practitioner, Sandhya Tiwari, "Teachers have a challenging task to accomplish, sometimes equal or more than the challenge for learners. They have to devise, implement, observe, and modify their strategies. Throughout the course they are there by the side of their learners to make learning a rich experience. Apart from helping to learn they have to guide the learners to become independent in the area of focus". (Tiwari, 2017) Many schools and colleges do not have adequately trained teachers who can deliver quality language instruction. Additionally, the socio-economic divide in India poses another challenge, as access to quality English language education is limited in rural areas and among underprivileged communities.

In a world that conditions the learners to obsess about outcomes encouraging multitasking rather than focus on a single goal, it is easy to undervalue the importance of practice. Practice is the key to acquiring skill and mastery. By making the learners concentrate on specific tasks rather than spend energy worrying about future outcomes or brood over past mistakes, teachers can help learners be more focused and more 'present'. Cultivating discipline and focus, through practice, helps the learners carve a frictionless path to achieve desired results. It is important to note what it means to practice and how learners can shift their perspective to view practice, not perfection, as the ultimate goal. (Tiwari, 2017)

### Government Initiatives:

Recognizing the importance of English language skills for employability, the Indian government has taken several initiatives to improve ELT. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education emphasizes the development of communication skills in English. The English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) and the English Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (ELPAT) are some of the government initiatives aimed at enhancing English language teaching and assessment.

### Technology Integration:

Technology has played a crucial role in revolutionizing ELT in India. Digital platforms, online courses, and language learning apps have made learning English more accessible and interactive. These technological advancements have enabled students to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills at their own pace, providing a personalized learning experience. In the recent past few years, the world has witnessed many crucial changes in education sector. Education appended with technology is driving in the direction of 'knowledge society'. And, one of the most

phenomenal transformations is the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching learning practices into schools and colleges. This significant change in the use of modern technology has indisputably altered the manner in which teachers teach and means adopted to learn to teach. This has apparent advantage both to the teacher and taught. On a surface level this has drastically contributed in developing essential skills amongst of ESL students in learning English language. As English has emerged as a global language, it also plays a vital part in every profession with respect to its importance and demand. In the past, students were introduced to English by conventional methods. All these methods have their own advantages and disadvantages, where the students learned English only as a subject rather than as language. They were also unable to put their learning into practice due to lack of a favourable environment. Another limitation seen in Indian teachers is that some of the English teachers are not familiar with the latest developments in ELT pedagogy. (Tiwari, 2016)

### 3. Conclusion

ELT in India has come a long way since the colonial era, with a shift towards more communicative approaches and the integration of technology. However, challenges such as the shortage of qualified teachers and the urban-rural divide still need to be addressed. Continued efforts from the government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders are required to ensure that English language teaching in India meets the needs of the 21st-century learners and prepares them for a globalized world.

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