TRAINING IN-SERVICE TEACHERS OF KARNATAKA TO DEVELOP SPOKEN ENGLISH: ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract:

The objective of the paper was to identify difficulties of in-service English teachers of Karnataka government schools in spoken English. To find out the teachers' difficulties, classroom interactions and observations will be taken. After that, learning strategies will be shared with teachers, and the same will be implemented during the training program. And at the end of the training, results of the training and classroom strategies will be collected through questionnaires and oral interviews. Finally, findings and conclusion will be mentioned.

Key words: Teacher training, Training in-service teachers, Develop Spoken English, Teachers' issues and Class and Training Strategies.

According to National Educational Policy of India 2020, it discussed various issues related to teachers' issues from recruitment to continuous development. As per the NEP 2020, teacher's role was taken as most important role in shaping the future of India and the next generation of citizens. It also discussed the importance of language taught at schools. (Page: 05). It also suggested to fill the teacher vacancies in a time-bound manner to avoid large pupil-to-teacher ratios to increase the quality of teaching and learning. It also suggested the teacher-pupil ratio as 30: 1 in schools (Page: 10). It focussed on the skills and knowledge improvement through various ways like teacher trainings, school complex teacher trainings etc. (Page: 21) And also encouraged the collaborative learning among teacher community to create good learning environment in school system. (Page: 22)

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify difficulties of in-service English teachers of Karnataka government schools spoken English.
- To observe classroom interactions, find out their practical difficulties, and give them solutions to improve their spoken English.
- To use classroom strategies and other strategies to improve spoken English of the teachers.

Significance of the Study:

Teachers are very important persons in every one's life. Due to them, children get knowledge, become good citizens in the society. Hence, teachers need to update their knowledge through various sources like reading books, journals and attending training programmes. Periodical training is required for teachers to develop their skills. One of the important subjects is spoken English for teachers to deliver the content to students and so that students will get communication in English and become employees in future to be part of economic development of the society. For jetting jobs, requirement of spoken English is needed in many jobs. To meet this aim, teachers are required training. Hence, this study is taken for identifying spoken English difficulties and giving practical solutions through various strategies.

Research Methodology:

Data Collection and Research Tools:
The data were collected from the in-service teachers of primary and upper primary schools of government of Karnataka. It was done through oral interviews by using questionnaire and also classroom observation of various activities like group presentations, individual interactions, and through question-and-answer sessions and also sharing teachers' difficulties for not improving their spoken English. The questionnaire was attached to this paper at the end.

Target Population:
In-service teachers participated in a specific period of training at the Regional Institute of English, South India, Bengaluru. It was a residential training, and intended to give personal attention to all the teachers through a well-planned with tight schedule to cover all the required modules. The teachers were from all over the Karnataka state. Regarding their teaching, they were teaching English language from the first class to tenth class.

Questionnaires for Collecting Feedback from the Teachers:
There were five questions on personal details and also six questions on collecting feedback from the in-service training.

Questionnaire for In-service Teachers

I. Personal Details:

1. Name of the teacher:
2. Designation:
3. Educational qualification:
4. Name of the school working:
5. Number of years of teaching experience:

II. Details about the training:

6. Name of the training institute, program, duration and objectives:
7. Did you meet the objectives of the training at the end of the program? Yes/No
8. The methodology of the training: List of the activities used by teacher trainers during the training. Please mention.
9. Did the teacher training improve your speaking skills in English? – Yes/No
10. What were the areas in which you got improved in the training? – list them please.
11. What were the issues or difficulties that you shared with your colleagues and teacher trainers and got them clarified or solved?

Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaires:

Personal Details of Teachers (Questions from 1-5):

From question 1 to 5 included the details like, name of the teacher, designation, educational qualifications, name of the school working, number of years of teaching experience. With reference to this, the following data were provided.

The Karnataka government in-service teachers of primary and secondary schools were participated in the research. There were 33 female teachers and 55 male teachers participated in the training programme. All the primary teachers had the qualification of bachelor degree and diploma in education, and all the high school teachers had the qualification of bachelor degree with bachelor of education. Some high school teachers had completed post graduate courses in English too. Regarding their experience, there were teachers with experience from 1year to 25 years.

Details about the Training (Questions from 6-11):

6. Name of the training institute, program, duration and objectives:

15-day Professional Development Program for the Primary/Upper Primary School Teachers of Karnataka. This was conducted by Regional Institute of English, South India, and Bengaluru with the financial support of DSERT/SSK, Karnataka. The objective of the training program was to train teachers in developing Spoken English Skills.

7. Did you meet the objectives of the training at the end of the program? Yes/No

All the 88 teachers unanimously said 'yes' that they improved a lot from the training program and achieved the objectives successfully.

8. The methodology of the training: List of the activities used by teacher trainers during the training. Please mention.

Regarding the question number 8, the details were that Individual, pair and group activities were used for the training. Along with these, small project works were also used in the training. The main focus was on improving spoken English communication skills of the in-service teachers.

9. Did the teacher training improve your speaking skills in English? – Yes/No
Regarding the improvement of speaking skills, all the teachers said 'yes' that meant they improved their spoken English skills.

10. What were the areas in which you got improved in the training? – list them please.

1. Mother tongue influence on speaking English was reduced after the training.
Along with that grammar points were also improved: use of simple present, present perfect and past tenses and use of prepositions, difference between the American and the British pronunciations.

11. What were the issues or difficulties that you shared with your colleagues and teacher trainers and got them clarified or solved?
List of difficulties that they shared with their colleagues and teacher trainers:

1. Fear of speaking in English with others.
2. More workload at the school due to a smaller number of teachers.
3. Other subject teachers do not speak in English.
4. Their focus was on completion of syllabus and conducting exams.
5. Difficulty with students that mother tongue should be used to teach them.
6. Students don't understand English, if it is taught in English.
7. They don't have encouragement or environment to speak in English except in training centres.
8. They always use mother tongue to communicate with students and colleagues.
9. They get many doubts regarding English in our school during teaching but they feel that if they ask other English teachers, what they would feel, and they may feel that they are superior and we are inferior.
10. All the students are from rural background with maximum agricultural background and small business.

Methodology Followed at the Training:

Institute strongly believed in a learner-centred method, where teacher trainers used to act as facilitators and the teachers complete the tasks. It meant that more percentage of involvement from the teachers and due to this, teachers learned the content of the training. In addition to this, individual, pair and group activities were given to the teachers.

Issues of the In-service Teachers while Participating in Performing Group Activities:

Fear of Colleagues and Teacher Trainers:
Many of the teachers had fear to talk in English in the classroom in front of the teacher trainers. The reason was that they might make any grammatical errors and if it happens teacher trainer may feel bad and other teachers may also know his or her errors and it may lead to their decrease of self-respect. And also, they may be looked down upon.

Group Work with Known People or Same School or District:
They wanted to do pair and group works with known people from the same school, mandal and district. Due to this, exchange of ideas and knowledge do not take place.

Observation When Teachers were Asked Questions:
According to the classroom observation, all the teachers were used to reply at the same time when trainer asked questions. Many were used to give reply to the trainer at the same time. As per the experience, majority of the teachers had fear to give an answer as an individual. They had a fear for stage or fear of talking among many teachers.

Self-confidence of Teachers:
Majority of the teachers' self-confidence was low due to the thinking that they were from different educational backgrounds and they needed to speak in front of experienced teachers. Other reason was that some of them worked as resource persons, they were active in the classroom for interaction. Generally, as an individual teacher would not come forward to talk.
 Majority of the teachers had fear to talk face to face in front of teacher trainer due the feeling of making mistakes in English.

Feeling of Junior, Senior and Experienced Teachers:
The feeling of teachers from lower school, middle school and higher school was there for some teachers. Due to this, the gap was created and not allowed much interaction among them initially. There was some other feeling that experienced teachers, qualified teachers, seniors, juniors and resource persons etc.

School environment – Unfavoured for Speaking in English

What was the environment in the schools regarding speaking English?

No speaking environment was there in the schools and other subject teachers do not speak in English. Only English subject teachers use English language in the classroom and they use translation method or bilingual method for teaching English subject to students in the classroom.

When an English teacher talks English in the school with other teachers?

Generally, other subject teachers do not show interest to speak in English. They wanted to speak in the mother tongue. There was no encouragement to speak in English from the other subject teachers.

What was the workload of the teachers at the schools?

Teachers used to take a greater number of classes than the required number of classes due to the unavailability of the required number of teachers which was because of no recruitment or less recruitment from the government. Hence, English teacher needs to teach other subjects like social studies, science, maths and Kannada etc. In some schools, large number of students with two or three teachers in the school was major hurdle for teaching learning process.

Pressure on Teachers to Complete Syllabus:

Their focus was on syllabus completion, preparing them for exams, concentrating on the only specific lessons and questions for the exam point of you. Every time the focus was on 10th class students as they need to right board exams, and focus was given less on other classes. Even some teachers have more than number of required strength of students in the classroom. That means, it is very difficult to manage the large classes due to which learning does not take place properly.

Non-academic Duties as Burden to Teachers:

Along with above-mentioned issues, they were asked to do all the government assigned duties like mid-day meal programme management, census duty, Aadhar enrolment, election training and election duty for all the local state and national governments. They also do other assignments assigned by the government.

Regular Travel Time:

Teachers travel from one place to another place daily because husband works in one place and Wi-Fi works in another place. More time is spent on journey in a teacher life. Because of this, teachers get tired and do not get enough time for class preparation, and also the same routine is continued as a regular life for the teachers. Due to this, less concentration is given on the classroom teaching learning process.

Findings and Classroom and training strategies for developing spoken English:
Teacher is a continuous learner:
Teacher should be a continuous learner. We keep learning many things throughout our life. daily we learn Somethings and we need to learn many things in life. No one is perfect in any subject, everyone may be better, he or she should always try to be best in the life. When we think that I am the best, my learning stops there. So, the same approach is applicable to teachers and teacher trainers and all.

Sharing of Knowledge and Friendship among teachers:
During the training, they were trained to maintain cordial relationship with all the teachers and they started practising the same from the training time. Therefore, they developed good friendship with their colleagues. They realised that with friendship and in an informal setup, many things could be discussed and solved and more time also could be spent on learning the English language subject and teaching methodology and other relevant issues.

Asked experienced teachers to share their difficulties and solutions:
Experienced teachers were asked to share their experiences in facing difficulties in speaking in English and also solution that helped them to improve spoken English.

Created environment to exchange knowledge between teachers and teacher trainers:
I used to tell that teachers have experience in teaching to student's and I asked them to share their experiences examples difficulties and best possible solutions to improve teaching. through this I used to remove the gap between teacher and teacher trainer.

Avoid fear of someone with higher qualification:
They also think that teacher trainers have Ph.Ds. and working in premier institutes, colleges, universities with a lot of experience. This thinking was removed from their minds bye convincing that we both are here to improve the teacher training and teaching skills. If we both help each other to solve issues in teaching English then we can as teachers and teacher trainers can equally important for the cause of teachers and future generations inner Government schools.

Removed gap between lower, middle and higher schools:
This was removed by giving an example that all the classes are a like floors to construct a beautiful and strong quality building. At each level of the class from first to ten, every teacher is important and needs to construct the beautiful future of the student. If any level is failed there is a possibility to collapse the whole structure or the system. Through this is understood importance of each level of teacher and everyone is equal to shape the bright future of the students. that's how tried to remove the gap among teachers or teacher trainees

or in-service teachers and made them to realise that all were same working for the same cause.

Cordial relations and sharing of each other's experiences:
The above-mentioned factors like qualification experience matter a lot in the training program with reference to classroom communication when task given with the same combination of teachers. I motivated them by saying teacher who has higher qualification is an added value that teacher can help other teachers for the improvement of teaching. experience matters more, experienced people always should come forward to share their experiences with freshers to guide them. Seniors experience teachers should come forward to help newly joined teachers or less experienced teachers. So that good, cordial learning environment would be created in the school. at the training place respecting each other is very important to share knowledge. With reference to opinions knowing new things getting new updates etc.

Encouragement to make as many mistakes as possible to learn:
They were motivated like no need to worry about making any errors in speaking in English during the training program and regular teaching time in their schools. They were asked to make as many errors as possible. So that their colleagues and teacher trainers could correct them and it would help them to learn from the errors. It was also emphasised to utilise the opportunity or available resources during the training program. It helped them a lot and they came forward to speak in English in all the given activities in the classroom.

Improvement of Self-confidence:
Self-confidence is very important to speak in English. Through the activities of teacher training, teachers' self-confidence was improved a lot. Through this, they started communicating in English with other teachers and students too.

Asking questions, doubts and clarifications:
They were encouraged to ask questions in the classroom, doubts and clarification daily. Through this strategy, many of them came forward to ask doubts or clarification they had. Through this teachers' interaction ability was increased and their old and past doubts were clarified and they also felt very happy and appreciated this strategy as they benefited from it.

Importance of Training:
They were told the importance training. It was a place for reading a lot, referring books, learning as much as possible. They were made conscious the objectives of the teacher training and created awareness to utilise the training period with dedication. It was proved through their feedback at the end of the training program.

Learning from Colleagues:

Since it was a residential training program, they used to get a lot of time to spend with their colleagues as they stayed at one place on the training campus. It was motivated them to talk to their colleagues regularly to improve their speaking abilities. They did it and got benefitted from this strategy.

Speaking in English on the Campus and in the schools:

They were asked to speak only in English during the training program. It was made a kind of strict principle by convincing all the teachers. All the teachers accepted and followed it and continued the same after the training too. They saw a sea change in speaking and exchanging of knowledge.

Networking after the Training Program:

Networking among teachers was improved after the training. They had it all over Karnataka. It helped a lot for sharing of their professional knowledge and also felt that they belong to one family and got the good bond.

Connectivity through Social media:

Before coming to the training programme, they did not have common platform to discuss professional related issues and they also did not think about it. After joining the training, the teachers got this idea of creating closed WhatsApp groups for discussing teaching related issues. And through this, they created their professional development group and started discussing the teaching related issues and also improved their learning in the English language subject.

Mentorship from the Senior Colleagues:

They were asked to identify experienced and knowledgeable teachers or colleagues as mentors. Through them, they were asked to fix a schedule or any suitable time to discuss the language issues. It could be done once in a week or twice in a week as per their convenience. The strategy also worked very well and got benefitted and they were doing the mentorship technique.

Grouping of Teachers for Regular Activities:

All the teachers were grouped randomly into many groups from the first day of the training. The purpose of the grouping was to exchanging of knowledge and learning together as a group. In this group activity, some factors were taken into consideration like same school, same mandal, district, should be in one group. And all the men and all the women should not be in the same group and it should be a mixture of both men and women for effective learning from each other.

Arranging Regular Internal Group Discussions among Teachers:

After completion of teacher training, they were asked to conduct short-term discussions as per their availability of time when they went back to schools. They had these discussions once in a month, and it worked very well and from this, they all improved professional discussions and got knowledge.

Techniques used for Grouping in the Training:

Assigning 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 numbers or A, B, C, D & E to the teachers and asking them to repeat the same with other teachers till the group completes. The reason for doing this was that the teachers should not sit it along with known people or teachers their school teachers or district and mandal close teachers. They could speak better English with roommates with already known groups or formed groups.

Conclusion:

Based on the classroom observations during performing classroom activities and also teachers' own experiences in sharing their difficulties in speaking in English, many classroom strategies were used to develop their spoken English. At the end of the training, there was a complete change in the positive development of their attitudes and learning. Therefore, the strategies helped them to develop spoken English of in-service teachers.

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