# Enhancing Communication Skills through ELCS LABS OF JNTU-H ENGINEERING COLLEGES in Nalgonda District of Andhra Pradesh: A Review

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**Abstract**

English Language Communication Skills Laboratory (ELCS) plays a significant role in enhancing the skills of engineering students. The infrastructural facilities provided in addition to the teacher resources to enhance the skills among the students at the foundation level of engineering first year sure to prepare them compatible for 'industry ready'. The ELCS Labs help the budding professionals to acquire relevant language skills affectively and certain measures are required to be taken by the university authorities to highlight the use and importance of the ELCS Labs for forthcoming times.

**Keywords:** ELCS Labs, communication skills, engineering students, teacher's role, PBLG..

## 1.0 Introduction

The use of effective communication is an outcome of the language labs. Proficiency is of course, the matter of constant practice, endeavor and effort. This is not an easy task as there has to be required immense practice for developing communication skills of engineering first year students in the district. In terms of global scenario "Engineering English" has been growing its prominence everywhere and the professional students of science and technology need to acquire these skills according to the global demands of the present century.

The central idea of writing this research paper enhancing communication skills through ELCS Labs of JNTU-H Engineering colleges in Nalgnda district of Andhra Pradesh- A review presents the status of ELCS Labs and discloses various facts about the students learning communication skills in the district. There are 47 engineering colleges existed in the district.

## 1.1 The prominence of ELCS Labs

English Language Communication Skills Lab (ELCS) is BTech common core syllabus (HS05232), a mandatory course for all the first year engineering and technology students affiliated to the JNTU-H in Andhra Pradesh, was implemented in September, 2005. The course aims at developing language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Apart from "Enjoying Everyday English", a theory paper, ELCS plays a significant role in imbibing language skills and communication skills for the engineering students.

Need and importance of ELCS Labs for engineering students:

- Encourages students to acquire language skills during the allotted slots of prescribed schedule.
- Provides ample opportunities to learn communication skills in different modules.
- Enhances learners' freedom of utilizing multimedia resources.
- Develops communicative competence among the students.

## 1.2 ELCS Learners Vs Normal class room learners

Considerable change is found between the normal class room learners and language lab learners.

To find contrast

- Normal class room learning is methodical and learning opportunities of communication skills is confined.
- Students' acquisition of skills based on the environment of class room.
- Time bounded teaching
- Testing and evaluation is based on the content.
- Anatomy of the learner is confined.

**1.3 ELCS Labs provide the learners:**

- Learning at ease.
- Communication skills through language labs with ample opportunities.
- Learning by doing (self-preparatory materials).
- Creates enthusiasm of learning through self -motivation.
- Testing, evaluation through online learning.
- Accommodates technical language to learn communication skills.
- ELCS Labs elevates the learners' choice of acquiring communication skills.
- Avoids the monotony of theory classes.
- PPTS, A-Vs, Documentary films are interesting for learners to acquire relevant information.

**1.4 Advantage for rural area students**

Many of the engineering students in the district are from rural areas and their medium of instruction is not English from the beginning. In engineering education, students need to acquire communication skills as it is essential for them to obtain professional career. Normally rural area students from Telugu medium background have apprehension or phobia of learning communication skills. Through ELCS Labs the communication competence can be enhanced by taking certain measures.

A few of the problems of rural area students in acquiring communication skills:

- The students have been suffering from negative attitude towards learning communication skills.
- Lack of interest to learn.
- Lack of motivation.
- Apprehension of communication.
- Lack of awareness for the need of learning.
- Cannot be able to mingle with good speaking students.
- Other psychological barriers.

In such conditions:

The ELCS Labs promote learning based on the techniques of creating motivation and enthusiasm among the learners.

**1.5 The problems encountered by the teachers in ELCS**

- To promote and enhance communication skills among the students of engineering first year, the teacher has to be equipped with the thorough knowledge over the subject and be able to equip with comprehensive language needs of the students.
- Apart from that the faculty members need to have a comprehensive idea about the language needs of the learners.

**A few demerits**

- Lack of proper facilities in the labs.
- It is observed that many of the ELCS lab faculty have not been attended training camps conducted by the JNTU.
- Internet facility and regular updates of software is not provided in many labs in the district.
- The prescribed practice hours are not adequate.

## 1.6 Merits

- Provides opportunities for listening practice.
- Enhances pronunciation, proper articulation of speech methods.
- Develops reading habits with interest.
- Motivates and enhances enthusiasm among L2 learners.
- Brings awareness towards language learning.
- L2 medium (native Telugu medium) students may cultivate good communication skills.
- Fluency and accuracy will be developed.

## 1.7 Advantages of the curriculum of ELCS labs

- Language lab develops phonetic and spoken English skills with RP (Received Pronunciation) among the students of engineering.
- Develops the technique of accent, speaking with clear syllable division.
- Enables the students' spoken skills with proper stress and intonation.
- Develops students' abilities in making the conversation, dialogues and participating in the role-play activities.
- ELCS Labs focus on the oral presentation skills with eloquence and spontaneous speaking skills with extemporal levels.
- Provides various topics to develop the skills of speaking in JAM (Just A Minute) sessions.
- Essential skills like participating in the debates and group discussions will be developed.
- ELCS Labs enable the students to enhance their skills in information transfer and telephoning skills.

Apart from these skills the ELCS labs incorporate the students to develop their skills. The skills related to soft skills like argumentation skills, problem solving, conflict management skills are need to be developed among the students of engineering first year since the foundation level.

## 1.8 Activity scope in ELCS labs

The scope of activities may be categorized into three levels

1.    Individual activity
2.    Pair activity
3.    Group activity

| Level | Activity |
|---|---|
| Individual | - S.D.(Self-Description)<br><br>- JAM (Just A Minute session)<br>- Oral presentations-prepared and extempore<br>- Describing objects –persons-places etc. |
| Pair activity | - Exchange of dialogue<br>- Role-play<br>- Telephoning conversation |
| Group activity | - Debate<br>- Group discussion<br>- Seminar<br>- PPT (power point presentation), Conferences etc. |

Tab.1

### 1.9 Limitations and confinement of the role of teacher in ELCS Labs

- ELCS Labs undoubtedly play the significant role in enhancing the communication skills but the teachers role is determined by the various aspects as he/she should able to suggest the standard and useful software contents of the related contents based on the syllabus in the curriculum.
- The faculty should be highly resourceful for the larger benefit of the students in promoting communication skills.
- The teachers are also need to be trained properly for the use of all the features of the labs.
- They should be required to know the needs of the learners and recommend the software (language software agents) to bring necessary changes according to those requirements.
- Technically savvy.
- Encourage learners towards learning contents with passion, also required to make them realize the importance of ELCS Labs.
- Motivate the students towards learning and use the skills appropriately after teaching-learning sessions of the ELCS labs.

### 1.10 Limitations and confinements of the students participating in ELCS Labs

The problem towards enhancing communication skills through ELCS is the involvement of the learners' abilities and level of retention is poor due to the following reasons.
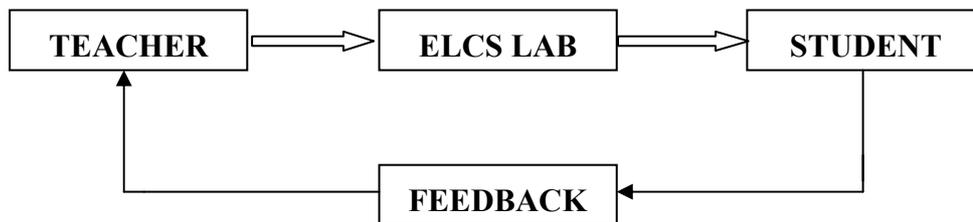


Fig2

- Lack of co-ordination and understanding between teacher-students.
- Lack of self-motivational skills.
- Lack of awareness.
- Lack of knowledge and foundation.
- Lack of knowing the need of learning.
- Teacher's steps towards motivating and encouraging enthusiasm among the learners is not fulfilled.

### 1.11 Suggestions for enhancing communication skills through ELCS Labs

Apart from the statement of the problem, a few suggestions are proposed to develop communication skills for the students of engineering under the affiliated colleges in the district are

- To conduct remedial sessions for ELCS Labs.
- To train up the students regularly even after prescribed hours of instruction.
- Language clubs.
- Encouraging students towards e-learning.
- Exchanging of the groups from one college to other college.

A few draw backs:

- No project work prescribed for first year.
- Writing skills are neglected.
- Time is confined.
- No follow up of the ELCS labs for the second year.

### 1.12 Project based learning groups (PBLG)

It is suggested certain strategies to implement the project based learning groups to promote communication skills among the first year engineering students to enable them

**To initiate**

- This project aims to identify the poor learners' problems of learning communication.
- To counsel them.
- To encourage the students from L1 medium background (T.M.) towards learning communication skills.
- To conduct special labs for them.
- To organize seminars and group learning activities regularly to enhance communication skills.
- Encourage the students to speak good English in not only lab sessions, but also in institute campus.
- Knowing the language problems of the students and to clarify them with the focus on individual learners.
- Motivating the students towards reading English newspapers, journals and magazines regularly.

**Listening**

- To collect various recorded speeches of the great orators, leaders, statesmen, philosophers and encouraging the students to listen to them to develop their skill of listening.
- Present the native speakers' pronunciation either recorded or live presentation through A-V or internet sources to enable the students to understand the original accent and articulation of the native speaker's speech.
- Assign the students a project on various listening purposes (active listening, passive listening) with their own sample collection.

**Speaking**

- Through ELCS Labs the communication of speaking can be enhanced by asking the students to speak for specific purpose.
- Provides ample opportunities for the learners to speak on different topics based on plain, logic and conflict subject matters to enhance communicative abilities.
- Mutual exchange of ideas, opinions and views to interact between or among the groups for developing oral communication skills.
- To assign the Project work such as asking the students to record your speech on the most memorable event in your life or to speak on your hobbies etc.

**Reading**

- To develop the habit of reading in order to make the learners worthy enough to know the current technical developments.
- To encourage the learners towards reading for passion by cultivating the habits of reading both academic and non-academic aspects.
- Assigning various activities for reading: such as excerpts from texts and news papers.
- Practicing reading exercises from biographies, scientific papers etc.
- Reading to understand the different forms of English especially encouraging the various poetic forms for aesthetic purpose.
- Reading for entertainment and specific purpose.

**Writing**

- Developing integrated skills by organizing seminars and conferences for promoting enthusiasm and enhancing the need for learning communication skills.
- Good hand writing skills have to be cultivated.
- Logical and legible handwriting abilities are needed for professional students.
- Assigning the writing of short paragraphs, essay writing, letter writing and report writing etc.
- Developing the skills of technical paper writing etc. needed to be practiced from the beginning of the first year engineering onwards.

**1.13 Conclusion**

The study on Enhancing communication skills through ELCS labs of JNTU-H engineering colleges in Nalgonda

district of Andhra Pradesh: A Review- discloses several facts related to ELCS labs in developing communication skills among the students of engineering first year shows a detailed analysis of advantages of the English language communication labs in providing communicative abilities among the students studying first year engineering in the district. The purpose and strategy are clearly explained how remedies can be helpful to solve the communication problem of the rural area students especially from L1 medium by implementing the PBLG. The clear analysis is also made on the activities, merits, demerits and limitations on the implementation of ELCS labs. Basic language skills of LSRW are given in the paper. The faculty of English language is expected to play a lead role as a counselors, communication experts, and soft skills trainers. The students need to grow passion for learning and imbibing communication skills to excel in their careers. As an outcome of this project the researcher is to expect the learners to obtain efficient communicative skills through English language and communication skills labs in new dimension.

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