Creating Language Awareness: Teaching and Learning of Remedial Grammar and Vocabulary for Effective Language Use

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ABSTRACT

Remedial language teaching is widely significant in identifying language related problems of the students and in providing them sufficient guidance to overcome from their language learning difficulties in academia. In this pursuit, Remedial English Course (REC) is introduced to the lateral entry students who have newly enrolled in the second year of Computer Science Engineering course in a reputed engineering college in Tamil Nadu, India. A diagnostic test is administered to analyze the language skills of the students. It is found that the students are almost poor in the basic grammar and they are not able to use appropriate vocabulary to construct good sentences. In light to overcome their language difficulties, a remedial course is conducted for developing their language skills to communicate effectively in both academic and social contexts. Error analysis and remedial measures for learning adequate grammar and vocabulary is undertaken to help the students explicitly learn language components in both discrete sentences and paragraphs. With teacher guided and peer reviewed learning process, students are made familiar to apply and understand the literary and practical use of language components to efficiently communicate in any given contexts.

Keywords: English Language Education (ELE); English Medium Students (EMS); Language proficiency; needs analysis; Remedial English Course (REC); Students with Limited English Proficiency (SLEP); Vernacular Medium Students (VMS).

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1. Introduction

English language has been used as a feasible learning resource in developing students' intellectuality for promoting academic knowledge and professional communication skills. It has been the most demanded skill of today and its impact on primary, secondary and tertiary level education have widened the scope of developing students' communicating ability in knowledge dissemination and research. In India, the implementation of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the present educational system has been increasing but the desired effect is still under examination. ESL pedagogy strongly recognizes the importance of structural and functional uses of language and its interactional use is more expected in any real situational contexts. As the students are engrossed with limited English proficiency, teaching grammar has become indispensable in all the three levels of

primary, secondary and tertiary education. At the tertiary level, the students are more expected to interact and to use language without any grammatical errors.

Teaching Remedial English as a bridge course has become important for the entry level engineering students in the tertiary education. The introduction of the remedial course is meant to aid the engineering students to communicate effectively in English. Most faculties and students often wonder why the Remedial English Course (REC) is essential for learning English at tertiary level education. They often question - Is REC is fairly needed for higher education? Is REC should have the contents on teaching grammar and lexis? How far lexicogrammar help the technical students to learn structures and word knowledge for developing communication skills? Why learning remedial English teaching is necessary for the lateral entry engineering students? How far REC help the engineering students to gain proficiency in English? What are the approaches and techniques applied in REC? Why learning grammar and vocabulary has been specified in REC? Does learning grammar and vocabulary help the students to gain proficiency in English? As these inquiries are concerned to be more relevant in understanding the linguistic competency of the students, this paper envisages the need for remedial learning and explores on the explicit teaching and learning of remedial grammar and vocabulary for creating sufficient language awareness and to use it in real communication. REC is conducted to diagnose and provide remedy to the various language problems faced by the engineering students, especially for the second year lateral entry students who have qualified with the polytechnic degree, and who have literally little knowledge to speak and write in English.

2.Background to the study - Literature Review

Grammar, spelling and punctuation have become the most pervaded and pertinent problems found throughout the world unfolding the linguistic barrier of both native and nonnative underprepared school and college students (English Today, 2006; Murdick, 1996; Tucker, 2011). Effective written communication will be possible only with good sentences written with appropriate grammar and vocabulary; and apt spelling and punctuation (Edwards, 2000; Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson, 2012). Most studies (Canale & Swain, 1980; Ellis, 1993; Ellis, 2002; Hsieh, 2006; Kayi, 2008; Myhill & Jones, 2007, Schulz, 1996; Truscott, 2007) reflected on the importance of acquiring grammatical and lexical knowledge for effective writing. A remedial course on language skills are given to the limited proficiency students to develop appropriate verbal abilities to communicate in English (Atai & Nazari, 2011). Grammar and vocabulary tasks need to be clearly envisaged with appropriate meanings, expression, form and style (Allen & Widdowson, 1979; Gimenez, 2006; Haidan, 2011; Klapper, 1997; Krashen, 1982; Williams, 1995). Wang & Wang (2014) explored the effect of explicit grammar instruction on Korean students' writing and editing skills. As the students are able to edit their language errors, it is found that the explicit grammar knowledge had a positive impact on their writings in the sentential level. Azman (2016) specifies the teacher support and training and the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) guidelines on the syllabus and assessments as the two major reforms that would help English Language Education (ELE) courses to resolve the pedagogical issues in both major and minor levels and to function effectively.

Khan (2011a) commends on developing teachers' competence in developing relevant skills and strategies to diagnose the factors related to learning difficulties and low achievement of the underprepared students. In a study conducted in the Jeddah Community College, Khan (2011b) discusses about the low performance of the students and the pedagogical and management challenges faced in the ESL/EFL classroom. Students' low motivation has been described as one of the major factors that need to be resolved by the consistent guidance of the teachers and the management. While discussing on the remedial measures to be taken to solve the problems and difficulties in the English Language acquisition in Saudi Arabia, Al- Nasser (2015) highlights that the outcome of the course in terms of language proficiency is found to be dissatisfying and bothersome. It is found common in second and third world countries that the ESL/EFL learners, in spite of their long run in attending English classes, they are not able to produce error free sentences in English. While discussing on the essentialities of students' concern, interests and

efforts as a prerequisite for their successfulness of remedial learning, Al Othman & Shuqair (2013) explores how low motivation, lack of prolonged exposure, only learning the basics of language, lack of seriousness on the part of the students would be some risk factors that lead to the failure of the remedial courses in Arab University. Rind & Kadiwal (2016) and Sahito (2017) reports on the teachers' helplessness and students' dissatisfaction in the overcrowded classes and discusses the learning difficulties and class management problems while conducting a remedial course for tertiary level students in the Universities of Sindh and Jamshoro in Pakistan.

In a study conducted in the United States International University, Luoch (2014) found a positive difference in the performance of the students in the posttest than in the pretest. The test components are generally covered with the grammar and composition content and the remediation of the programme proved to be successful as the students are able to acquire language skills and are able to use it for academic success. Rose (2011) commends on 'think and write' to develop persuasive writing skills than concentrating on mere grammar workbooks and online grammar resources in remedial writing courses. Grammar and mechanics are indispensable though the focus is on good writing than measuring the correctness of grammar in writing. Recent studies emphasize that sufficient insight on the mechanics of writing need to be provided in developing their writing skills (Al Fadda, 2012; Salem, 2013). In a study conducted in Mannar, Sri Lanka, Selvarajan & Vasanthagumar (2012) identified that with the teachers' competence and the humanitarian grounds on understanding the issues of the social economic and psychosocial backgrounds of the underprepared students, remediation can be done to achieve its objectives. In India, limited proficiency of the students has been the concern of primary, secondary and tertiary level English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and the English Language Education (ELE) researches are profusely undertaken to address these issues through the remediation mechanism of developing language and communication skills in the language preparatory programmes. Jadal (2012) emphasizes on teaching language skills through the remedial package than teaching the low achievers through the traditional methods. Muthiah (2015) focussed on meaningful repetition of writing through activity centred approach to solve the writing disorders of the slow learners. As explicit instruction and remedial learning of grammar helps to develop linguistic knowledge of the students, this study focuses on developing remedial measures for effective writing.

3. The Present Study - Methods and research design

3.1. Research Objectives

The objective of the present research is to understand the language problems of the second year lateral entry Computer Science engineering students and help them explicitly learn remedial grammar and vocabulary for effective language use.

    1. Does remedial courses are necessary for improving language ability of the slow learners in English? Why?

    2. How far the engineering students are attempted and benefitted to effectively learn and communicate in a remedial English course?

3.2. Context and course of the study

In engineering education, the objective of the Technical English course is to make the students to acquire language skills to confidently communicate in real situations. In Maha College of Engineering, engineering and technical students generally lack adequate language skills to communicate effectively. Students came from various academic backgrounds with a majority of students with Tamil (vernacular language) as a medium of instruction. Though most students have hailed from Tamil medium, it is generally acknowledged that even the few students who had their study in English medium are doing no better than the Vernacular Medium Students (VMS). The Vernacular Medium Students (VMS) and English Medium Students (EMS) face the same problems when learning the structures and functions of language. The EMS tried to interact with the faculties

whereas the VMS seldom try to speak and hitherto hesitate to communicate in English. As students expected explicit learning of concord, tenses, voice, sentence framework, synonyms and word formation in the remedial course, they are given sufficient practice on those grammatical and vocabulary items.

3.3.Participants

Remedial English Course (REC) has been conducted to second year lateral entry Computer Science Engineering students (28). Two experienced English faculties, including the present researcher acting as a research participant conducted a two-hour remedial course in the evenings of all the working days for two months. All the students, both boys (24) and girls (4) are about 19-20 years old. The faculties, with more than twelve years of teaching experience had a matured insight in designing, planning and execution of the remedial course. As the students are very limited in strength, the faculties found it very convenient in analyzing the language requirements of the students and thereafter providing special attention to all the students. The management conducted periodic meetings to ensure the improvement of the students in their efforts in language learning.

3.4.Data collection and analysis

A qualitative research survey is undertaken to examine the linguistic competence of the engineering students and help them overcome from their language difficulties through remedial grammar and vocabulary learning. Diagnostic tests, classroom interactions, unstructured interviews, formal and informal discussions are the main tools used in the survey. The survey is done through diagnosing the written performance of the students in their internal Cycle Test - I formative assessments. With a thorough investigation of needs assessment done through diagnostic tests, it is observed that the students need to be given adequate practice on verb conjugation, tenses, voice, framing questions and word formation, word collocation, idioms and phrases, spelling and punctuation. Following subsequent unstructured interviews and discussions with students in counseling sessions, language remedial learning programme is organized. Students are asked to explicitly learn grammar for conceptual understanding of the items in both discrete levels as well as to use it in discourse. Students are found to be intrinsically motivated to undertake this course, as they considered communicating in English is essential for their academic, social and professional communications. As they understand the need for learning grammar and vocabulary, the faculty engaged them in both oral and written tasks to improve their performances in authentic communication. Pair interaction, repair and corrective feedback are found to be the efficient tools in assessing the performance level of the students.

3.5.The need for Remedial English Course

REC aims at making the engineering students capable enough to communicate effectively in English. Its objective is to diagnose the communication level of the students in their entry into the third semester of the engineering course. Communication based orientation is given to the students to make this course a more successful one with the desired objectives of using language appropriately in both oral and written contexts. This course attempts to develop English language and communication skills, thus focusing on teaching basic grammar and lexis in functional writing and oral interactions. The major agenda of the course is helping the students to confidently speak and write in good English without committing grammatical mistakes. Students need to know, understand and practice the basics of grammar and lexis and to use it effectively (Chin, 2005; Ellis, 2006). The adequate use of grammar and vocabulary is quintessential to develop error free language skills as well as to communicate appropriately in any given contexts (Heikki, 1995). Students' needs and their domain skills that they lack in acquiring and learning language items are scrutinized to provide sufficient remedial training in improving their linguistic abilities for effective communication. Data analysis has been thoroughly done with the application of descriptive coding methods. The coding and categorizing of each grammatical and vocabulary

item has been clearly noted down to explicitly train the students in identifying and improving their areas of language difficulty. The objective and descriptive questions in the diagnostic tests helped the teachers to spot the grammatical errors and the casual interactions and the discussions in the classroom helped the teachers to code and highlight their language problems and for designing the content of the remedial course. Teachers' automated efforts to coordinate with the students to consult, examine and review the obvious learner and learning related problems helped them to motivate and sincerely practice those grammatical and lexical items in the due course of the remedial programme.

4.Findings and discussions

English faculties emphasized the role and significance of grammar in both speaking and writing. They always focused on developing language skills as the students are generally ingrained with the problems of grammatical errors and inadequate word power while communicating (Turner & Upshur, 1995). As spelling and punctuation mistakes are apparently found in their writings, they focused on teaching the mechanics of writing along with functional composition tasks.

Use of grammatical components

Students may be able to answer **parts of speech** in the exercises, but they are not able to produce accurate sentences of their own using the same grammatical categories. Sometimes, the students may understand the concept and the aspects of prescriptive grammar, but they are not able to apply the theoretical grammatical knowledge when they construct sentences of their own.

Subject-verb agreement is the most challenging area faced by most of the students. Students need to be given more tasks and activities to understand the various rules that underlie in subject-verb agreement.

> Neither of them is good at Arabic.
> Each student has contributed for social welfare fund.

The students feel tedious in understanding and memorizing the simple rules that follow with subject-verb agreement. A verb should agree with its subject-noun or pronoun in number and person. Even though they try hard to understand the definitions used in framing a sentence with subject-verb agreement, they are not able to apply the same in practice. They are literally confused with all the types of nouns namely compound, abstract, collection and material nouns and pronouns and their corresponding singular and plural numbers.

> These clothes are old.
> The furniture is very attractive.
> None of the students have appeared for the test.
> One should solve one's problem.
> Columbus discovered America.
> Tamburlaine was written by Marlowe.
> Slow and steady wins the race.

Verb confusion prevails when two or more subjects are used. Students often wonder about the singular or plural form of the subject.

Spoken English and Hindi are taught here.

His character and conduct is good.

Students feel extremely difficult to understand the use of **grammatical categories** with their **grammatical functions**. They may be able to form the words with the root word, but they are not able to understand and differentiate the grammatical categories like noun, verb, adjective, adverb etc.

develop	developing	development	developmental
construct	constructing	construction	constructional

Formation of noun from verbs and adjectives and the verb or adjective from noun is an easy task to the students. They are not aware about the grammatical function of the words like natural, flexible, audible, confidence, acceptance, adhesion, catalysis etc. They need to understand the rules and keywords of prefix and suffix and the grammatical function of the word formation. Students are capable to understand the use of **words as nouns and as verbs** in sentences. But, when they are to frame sentences using the same word as nouns and verbs, it seems difficult for them.

contact (N) – I don't have any contact in the office.

contact (V) – When shall I contact you?

address (N) – Write your name and address.

Address (V) – The chairman addressed in the board meeting.

They attempt to write the **verb form of the word,** but when they need to frame a sentence using the **noun form of the word**, they seldom imagine a good sentence. They are often seemed to be doubted whether the noun should come in the first, middle or in the end of the sentence.

He is on medical leave.

His leave is cancelled.

Students hardly understand the use of **auxiliaries** in the sentences. They are not even aware about the term or label of 'be' forms and 'modals' even though they may have used it several times. They need to understand about the pronouns with singular or plural noun and the corresponding main and auxiliary verb with appropriate tense forms. As the students gradually learn the functional aspects of grammatical items, they realize that practicing grammar is one of the prerequisites in communication. Though they systematically understand the different tense usages, they face difficulty in placing auxiliary verbs with the appropriate tense forms. When a specific topic based exercise is given on auxiliary verbs or tenses, students understand the concept, and they are able to do the task. But when they are to comprehensively frame their own sentences using tenses in worksheets, they are not. Some students usually interchange tense forms. The grammatical complication, always arises with the combined use of **tenses and voice**. It is commonly observed that most students are seldom aware about the keywords used in the respective tense forms. Some students understand the keywords used in all the tense forms. But when they are to make sentences using different tenses, they tend to hesitate whether the given idea should be written in simple past or past perfect tenses.

I came this morning.

He had finished his work when I went there.

Students often use the phrasal verbs like carry on, call for, build up, break down, fill in, fill up, give up, make up, set up, settle down, aim at, burst into etc. They are not able to give the definition of phrasal verbs, though they use it. They need to discriminate the use of 'it' in a situational context. They easily understand that **gerund is a form of a verb** which ends in –ing forms, but they are not aware or able to acknowledge that it has the force of both a noun and a verb.

I enjoy swimming.

Reading books is a good hobby.

Dancing is a good exercise.

Students are given adequate exercises on **infinitives**. When a simple question about infinitives is asked, they remain silent. When few examples are given, they resume identifying the use of infinitives in a sentence.

To read novels is my favorite pastime.

I wish to study abroad.

I love to swim early in the morning.

While using the **cases and the numbers with pronouns**, they lack to correlate it with the meaning. They often face difficulty in making an indirect speech, passive and impersonal voice. Students usually seem to familiarize with the use of **prepositions, conjunctions and articles,** but still they have certain doubts regarding the use of on, in, at above etc.

The bird flies in the sky.

Students face difficulties in distinguishing the types of **conjunctions –** coordinating and subordinating with their meaning. When framing the sentence with a conjunction, they were also uncertain about the respective use of tenses. Sometimes they are led to confusion about initial or middle position of conjunction. The use of interrogatives as a conjunction is also doubtful for them as they have always remembered the conjunctions only like and, but, or, after, because, though, although etc.

When he came, I revealed the matter.

Place the speaker where it is audible.

I do not know why he has created the problem.

They are also found uncertain about the use of **'connectives'** with time, reason and purpose.

After he had finished his work, he felt satisfied.

Call him that he should work.

We study that we should get good marks.

As you were working, I helped you.

Students are also found left unpracticed with the occasional **connectives** like how, while, as well as, as though, provided that, on the condition etc. In **direct speech and the reported speech,** they need to understand the use of quotations, the verb and the tense forms, numbers in a pronoun. Most of them feel very hard to understand the numerous rules involved in various ways of reported speech making. To show the causal relations the use of 'connectives' like as a result, because of, owing to, on account of, due to, consequently etc. exercises on cause and effect is done. When the given sentence is simple, the students are able to express it appropriately. But when the sentence is long and complicated with scientific or technical contexts, the students seldom understand the complete meaning of the sentences. Faculties reorient teaching conjunctions and linkers and few students are able to do it exceptionally.

Students are able to understand the usage of **conditional clauses** but they are not familiar with the differences between open, improbable or rejected, impossible and imaginary conditions. They are able to use 'if conditional' clauses in a generalized context.

If you work hard, you will get success.
If he had worked hard, he would have passed the examination.

They may be able to frame the above sentences, but they are not able to distinct it whether it may be in open condition or impossible conditions. Sometimes they are not able to frame the sentences with appropriate conditional clauses too. In addition to the basic grammar, students are engaged in practicing the **expressions of similarity and contrast.**

She went to the college, but I didn't.
Computers store good memory. So does a human.

Expressing **purpose and means** by using – in order to, so as to etc. remains complex to the students.

He used the bicycle so as to save petrol.

Number confusion prevails when **numerical expressions** are given in the expanded form.

a 5-litre flask – A flask with a capacity of 5 litres.
a 100-watt lamp – A lamp of a power of 100 watts
a 3-year project – A project of 3 years.
500 ppm – Five hundred parts per million.
60% v/v – Sixty percentage volume per volume

Knowing and using grammar is really challenging to most of the students as generally they are made familiar with the rules, but they seldom apply their metacognitive and metalinguistic ability to put the same rules in discourse. They may know little about the grammar rules of a language, but they may not know how to apply the same immediately while orally communicating with others. In addressing the overall written performances of the students, English teachers accepted that the students are found improving. In this regard, the teachers revealed their classroom experiences on students' learning and writing abilities,

It is found that though the students are not able to define the rules in applying a grammatical item in discrete sentences, but they are able to use it effectively.

Students carelessly wrote even their names in small letters without knowing that the first letter of their name should be in capital. But as their individual writings are checked regularly, they are able to slowly incorporate the instructions in writing.

Students are hopeful. They are eager to clear their doubts both on and off classes. They are also found using dictionary regularly. Most students consult a dictionary and even when they are not clear with it, they approach us.

It is really good and convincing to see that the students are found to be serious and committed in learning the remedial package.

It is generally noticed that they are able to involve and participate in learning grammar items, but they are not able to spell out that they are really working towards the functions of these items.

Framing sentences

Students may know about the sentence structures, but they are not completely familiar with constructing sentences when a task is given to construct a sentence on any structure. But still, they possess intrinsic knowledge in generating a variety of sentences, semantically it may be considered for being able to understand the meaning of expressions. The students are not totally practiced to think and communicate in English. They are not given adequate knowledge of grammar and to practice in knowing about the syntax of a language. The students are able to frame some hint based broken sentences. But when they are asked to frame a sentence with the given SVOA or ASVOA forms, they are seldom able to think meaning in new sentences – using the above forms. They are not able to correlate words with their meanings. They are not better exposed to analyze to frame a sentence using S, V, O, C and A. But still, if they are asked to give examples on simple, compound and complex sentences, they are found to produce good sentences, but they are not able to label the sentence structure.

My friend is a soldier.
She will join the duty today.

Question types

Tag questions seem to be very easy when the concept is understood, but still some students face difficulty in knowing and repeating auxiliary verbs like 'be' forms and modals in question tags. The real problem arises when the students use 'full stop' instead of placing 'question mark' in the end of the sentence. Some students may not know to write a negative tag for a positive statement and a positive tag for a negative statement.

I am not tired, am I?
She is very sensitive, isn't she?
We seldom listen to radio, do we?

Some students often confuse about the use of little, few and a little and a few for both **positive and negative tags.**

Few people went to hostel, do they?

A few people went to hostel, didn't they?

Some students may not be aware of using pronouns like I, we, you, he, she, it and they; and there as the **subject of the tag.**

He went to Calcutta, didn't he?

She speaks Latin, doesn't she?

You wrote that article, didn't you?

There are a lot of people here, aren't there?

It is also widely observed that students are not able to frame **'Wh – type questions'**. It is also examined that they seldom use capital letters for the first letter of the question word and also to put a full stop or question mark at the end of the sentence.

What is a language?

Who wrote Great Expectations?

Close - ended questions like 'yes' or 'no' type is definitely an easy task to the students. But some students make still easier by just answering yes or no to the questions given, leaving the other words in the sentence.

Is this your book?

Yes, this is my book.

Can you drive a car?

Yes, I can drive a car.

In most of the close ended questions, instead of writing the complete answers, the students simply write in single words like 'yes' or 'no'. They are expected to complete the intended content with the explanation while answering short questions.

As this Remedial English course is widely aimed at making the students communicate with appropriate language skills, English teachers' followed inductive and deductive approaches both in turn, helping the students literally understand the grammatical concepts in sentence making. Students with Limited English Proficiency (SLEP) die hard to learn linguistic rules and to use it in writing. They confess that learning grammar is unavoidable for them, and they wish to practice the usage of the grammatical items with sufficient examples. Most students attempted to use grammatical components in sentence fragments. They are able to code the grammar with meaning and attempted to communicate extensively. Almost all the students actively involved in the grammar classes and proved that they are found to be reasonably improved in paragraph writing. Students with good fluency often become bored when they are exposed to grammatical units as they feel that it seldom helps in their practical communication. They often divulged that instead of seriously learning grammatical usages they need to use language.

Use of vocabulary

Inadequate word power is one of the major constraints that any limited proficiency student faces while communicating. Students confess that the lack of vocabulary skills is the major constraint that obstructs their thoughts in communication. They are unable to continue their conversation for want of words and to relate their thoughts into meaningful words. They often stumble and fumble in search of words. They rely on a dictionary and other resources to understand the meaning and use of words. But, unfortunately their learning of isolated words does not match the contexts as they are not able to locate the exact synonym of what they want to communicate. The choice of vocabulary and grammatical items are equally important in sentence construction. Their limited knowledge on word power is one of the major problems for them to hardly distinguish between **homonyms and homophones**.

Bank – financial institution

Bank – pool, the edge of the river

Homonym errors are very common even in the tertiary level students. It is commonly witnessed in most of the leave letters that even an average student has the habit of writing 'principle' in place of 'principal' and 'grand' for 'grant'. They are not able to analyze what a 'study certificate' refers to. They have the habit of pronouncing it as 'steady certificate'. **Compound words** form the essential part of technical vocabulary. Students need to acquire fair knowledge of **technical terminology** to promote their technical writing skills. The other areas of immediate concern are spelling and punctuation. Students deliberately commit spelling mistakes. The immediate concern of the language teachers is to make the students to construct a sentence without any grammatical and spelling mistakes. Grammar and spelling errors have become the common errors of the language to them. Teachers' efforts in continuous monitoring and peer review helped the slow learners to repair their errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Generally, slow learners are not familiar with the changes and variations happen in due course of language use. However, they are able to frame new word formations with the code mixing of their native languages.

With continuous practice in written performances, most students are able to use appropriate tenses with corresponding number and gender. Most students claimed that they are able to know how to use structures in real interactions. With continuous teacher support and prompting, they are found to narrate their experiences with appropriate tenses. While seeking permission or exchanging information, they are able to use present simple and continuous tenses. They are found to be confident in correlating form, function and meaning while doing both oral and written tasks. Students are continuously guided and counseled to make this remedial course meaningful with the desired objectives of learning. As the students are able to understand the functional and interactional use of structures, they are able to answer both discrete and descriptive questions in the subsequent assessment, Cycle Test – II. The results of the test showed that the students have obtained pass marks in the internal assessments. Further, the Management recorded the feedback of the students in their online students' portal and thus they found the remedial package to be more successful as all the students have given positive feedback on the course. When asked about their learning experiences in the due course of the remedial programme, students reported,

Of course the remedial syllabus has helped me to improve my English communication skills. Now I am confident to communicate with peoples of other countries via Internet.

K. Jayaraman, II year CSE

I am able to work myself on grammar. Sometimes, though, I have difficulty in answering objective questions on grammar, I am comfortable in paragraph and essay writing. I feel that my grammar skills are more improved.

Chitra, II year CSE

I had difficulty in attending evening classes. Because I got low marks in English, I compulsorily attended the grammar classes. The teacher helped me to use both online dictionaries and printed dictionary. Now reading and referring dictionary has become my hobby. I check spelling and pronunciation regularly. I have cleared English test too.

Nancy, II year CSE

I have been reading grammar and vocabulary in schools, but now I am able to use grammar as my friends and teachers are helping me more. As my teachers are using more new words, I am able to learn and understand them.

Gopinath, II year CSE

I am able to understand the definition and rules of all the grammar items. But when questions are asked generally, sometimes I get wrong answers, sometimes though I identify the answer with one rule, answers are given stating another rule.

Naveen, II year CSE

Teachers ask us to do more reading for understanding various rules of grammar. It takes more time to understand grammar and to use it. But teachers are helpful, and so they always clear my doubts. I am able to get more marks than before.

Preethy, II year CSE

Teachers are found helping the students to learn more vocabulary for improving their command of language. As immense knowledge in vocabulary and refined expression reflects the attribute of gaining versatility in language, students are encouraged to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary to express their concrete ideas and information. A fair knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homophones, abbreviations and acronyms, the use of American and British vocabulary, scientific and technical terminology and appropriate use of registers helped the students to distinguish the importance of both grammar and word power in constructing sentences. Students' consistent efforts in understanding and practicing structures helped them involve in the remedial process of effective language learning.

5.Implications of the study

Practicing and exercising grammar may be sour, tough and difficult, but it cannot be simply ignored. One could not truly avoid applying grammar, whether they feel it easy to practice language without systematically learning it. Directly or indirectly, grammar is learned and acquired. Teaching and learning of grammar could be done with or without much interest, but one cannot deny the vital role of grammar in a language. Learning grammar should not be a process of just linguistic learning. Students need to learn and use grammar and should take necessary efforts to aptly apply it in real communication too. Mere substantiating the rules with examples only suffice knowing about the structural components but it does not credit the pragmatic use of language in discourse. Students should be instructed to know the real application of the specific grammatical component, register and style when put into real language use.

5.Conclusion

In India, remedial grammar teaching is indispensable as most students are found to be generally poor in communicating in English. This remedial course is inclined to help lateral entry second year engineering students to develop expertise in language use as it will help them effortlessly use both form and function in realia. The present study is an attempt in realizing how best the slow learners can understand and use the structures in spoken and written discourse. The performances and academic success of the slow learners are found to be satisfactory due to the efforts of the teacher interventions and peer review in this remedial programme. This course is found to be successful as the students are motivated and have gained sufficient language awareness about its communicative use.

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