

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION TOWARDS B.SC. AGRICULTURE ENGLISH COURSE

DR. N. S. SARAP

Abstract: The learners of the agriculture discipline need great access to English in order to keep up with the fresh developments in the agricultural field as English is accepted internationally as the language of science. One English language course has been prescribed for B.Sc. Agriculture degree programme. When a learner is motivated by the language course, it indicates that the programme meets learners' needs, and if the learner is not motivated by the language course; it can be regarded as evidence that such programme does not match their accurate needs. Moreover there is a link between motivation and learning. Without motivation learning is not likely to take place. Casual relationship between motivation and learning is reciprocal (Mugglestone, 1977). In the history of experimental psychology, the problem of motivation and the problem of learning have been intimately linked. Motivation is highest when is seen to be great usefulness to the learners (Kadha, 2000). Accordingly students' attitude and motivation should be investigated in relation to learning and needs. The present study tries to assess the attitude and motivation of first year B.Sc. Agriculture students towards English course as perceived via teachers.

Key words: attitude, motivation, needs, learning

Introduction: The teachers of specialized subjects as well as English language courses can aptly comment on the kind of English the students should have fluency in. In spite of, English being the medium of instruction in the Faculty of Agriculture, the students do not use it frequently, either in the English subject classes or in the specialized subject classes. They occasionally communicate in English. Especially, they hesitate to speak in English. The need to require competency in general English proficiency seems to be most important in order to use English effectively even in specialized disciplines. Also, the lack of agricultural English language is another constraint that hinders the agriculture learners to use English in agricultural context. This is ascribed to the learners who are in their first year and at this stage they have not gained sufficient agricultural vocabulary to enable them to either properly comprehend or use agricultural terminology.

Considering the importance of this course the study was conducted with following specific objectives.

1. To explore the efficacy of the English language course to follow specialized agricultural courses,

2. To examine students' attitude and motivation towards the said course,
3. To ascertain the extent of language skills offered by this course,
4. To evaluate the benefit of this course as perceived by teachers.

Methodology: The study was conducted at four SAUs in Maharashtra state. From each university ten teachers were interviewed with a structured set of questions. The teachers were selected randomly. Hence, in all 40 teachers were interviewed out of which 37 were the teachers of specialized disciplines and three were of English course.

Results and Discussion: Out of the three English teachers interviewed, two informed that the students used English in English subject classroom occasionally, while one said that they used regularly. The two respondents informed that they themselves occasionally used students' mother tongue in the English language classroom and the third said he rarely used.

Table 1 exhibits how often students use English in agriculture and allied sciences classrooms (here the responses of specialized courses teachers are given).

Table (1): Students' use of English in agricultural and allied sciences classes			
Sl. No.	Category (score)	Respondents (n=37)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Regularly (3)	10	27.00
2.	Occasionally (2)	24	65.00
3.	Rarely (1)	03	08.00
Average 2.18 Total		37	100.00

The above table shows that slightly less than two-third (65.00 per cent) of the students occasionally,

slightly more than one-fourth (27.00 per cent) of the students regularly and fewer (08.00 per cent) rarely

used English in agricultural sciences classrooms. The average score is 2.18. This shows that a fair number of average students occasionally use English and a few rarely.

Table (2): Teachers' use of students' mother tongue in agriculture and allied sciences classrooms

Sl. No.	Category (score)	Respondents (n=37)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Regularly (3)	01	02.70
2.	Occasionally (2)	29	78.30
3.	Rarely (1)	07	19.00
Average 1.83 Total		37	100.00

Table 2 indicates that more than three-fourth (78.30 per cent) teachers occasionally, less than one-fifth (19.00 per cent) rarely and only one (02.70 per cent) always used students' mother tongue in agricultural sciences classrooms. The average score was 1.83. This indicates that the teachers had to use students' mother tongue for explain difficult matter along with English.

As far as the use of English in the classes, the views of teachers could be summarized as, "We always encourage the students to use English in both written and spoken communication. Large number of students found hesitating to communicate in English. Hence, we occasionally prefer to use students' mother tongue in order to enable them better understand what we teach."

Table 3 focuses on the difficulties faced by students in English and those who didn't face any difficulty as perceived by the teachers.

Table (3) Difficulties faced by students

Sl. No.	Category (score)	Respondents (n=40)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Students who faced difficulties (2)	37	92.50
2.	Students who didn't faced difficulties (1)	03	07.50
Average 1.87 Total		40	100.00

The above table shows that large majority (92.50 per cent) of the students faced difficulties in English communication and less than one-tenth (07.50 per cent) students didn't face any difficulty. The average score is 1.87. This strongly pointed out that almost all the students faced difficulties in understanding English, which is the medium of instruction for them

and there is a huge need to bring modifications/inclusions in the present English language course
The table below gives the particulars of the difficulties faced by the students according to the teachers' viewpoint.

Table (4): Particulars of the difficulties of the students

Sl. No.	Category	Respondents (n=40)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Grammar	23	57.50
2.	Speaking	17	42.50
3.	Vocabulary	17	42.50
4.	Writing	16	40.50
5.	Tenses and	15	40.00
6.	sentence	10	25.00
7.	structure	04	11.00
8.	Reading	04	11.00
9.	Pronunciation	04	11.00
	Expression		
	Spelling		

The above table shows that the respondent teachers pointed out that more than half (57.50 per cent)

students had difficulty in grammar, more than two-fifth (42.50 per cent) in speaking and vocabulary,

more than two-fifth (40.50 per cent) in writing, two-fifth (40.00 per cent) regarding tenses and sentence structure, one-fourth (25.00 per cent) in reading and 11.00 per cent each in pronunciation, expression and spelling.

Considering above facts it can be said that the most of the students had considerable difficulties in English. The first difficulty, which most of the informants wanted to express was the English of the learners was very poor. Although, the interviewees used different expressions, the essence of what they wanted to say was students' insufficient knowledge of English. The second difficulty, which the teacher informants referred to, was the limitation and complexity of the agricultural terminology. At the first year of their degree course the learners are not better familiar with agricultural terminology.

The teachers were asked about students' attitude and motivation towards English subject. In the investigation of the learners' needs, it was important to examine all the related aspects such as difficulties encountered, attitude and motivation, etc. One of the items, which was used to check the attendance rate of the students in the English language class. The attendance for all the subjects is obligatory at SAUs. Two out of three (66.60per cent) English teacher respondents said that the attendance in the English subject was high, while one (33.33 per cent) said that it was medium.

Then teachers were asked to state frankly whether the students were motivated or not by the English language course. The following table gives information regarding the motivation of the students by English.

Table (5): Motivation of students by English course

S No.	Category (score)	Respondents (n=40)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Motivated (2)	30	75.00
2.	Not motivated (1)	10	25.00
	Average Total	40	100.00
	1.75		

Table 5 indicates that as perceived by the teachers three-fourth (75.00 per cent) of the students were motivated and one-fourth (25.00 per cent) were not motivated by the current English language course. The average comes to 1.75. Therefore, it can be said

that the current English language course is important and useful for the learners.

At the conclusion teachers were asked whether the time allotted to English course was adequate or not. The responses of the respondents are given in the following table.

Table (6): Views of teachers on time allotted to English course

S No.	Category (score)	Respondents (n=40)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Adequate (2)	22	55.00
2.	Inadequate (1)	18	45.00
	Average 1.55	40	100.00
	Total		

The above table reveals that more than half (55.00 per cent) of the teachers regarded time allotted to English course as adequate and less than half (45.00 per cent) informed as inadequate. The average score is 1.55. This shows that there is a need to increase the time allotted to the course.

Conclusion: The learners of agriculture discipline are reasonably motivated by the English language course offered by the SAUs in Maharashtra State. But there is scope to improve it by giving proportionate importance to skills the students are lacking in.

Recommendations/Implications:

1. In order to improving usefulness of the present English language course and motivate the students towards it some inclusions are to be made as suggested by the teachers.
2. The present English course teaches only communication skills; there is a need to include structural aspects to the syllabus.
3. There is a need to increase time allotted to this course; one more course may be introduced.

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Dr. N. S. Sarap/Assistant Professor of English/
Deptt. of Extension Education/College of Agriculture/Dapoli (M.S.)/Dist. Ratnagiri 415 712/
nssarap@gmail.com