

Impact of English Language Proficiency on Teaching Effectiveness of Commerce and Management Teachers in Rural Maharashtra.

Mr. Milind Ramdas Gaikwad

St. Vincent's College, Pune.

Prof. (Dr.) Wakchaure Rajaram Nathaji

(*M.Com., M.A.(Eco.), M.Phil., G.D.C.&A., P.hD.*)

Professor and Head, Department of Commerce and Management

Shirdi Sai Rural Institute's Arts, Science and Commerce, Rahata.

E-mail: rajaramwakchaure@gmail.com

Abstract:

English language proficiency has become increasingly important in higher education, especially in Commerce and Management, where effective communication is essential for explaining technical concepts, business terminology, and global market practices. This study examines how English proficiency influences the teaching effectiveness of Commerce and Management teachers in rural Maharashtra. Using secondary data from scholarly articles, educational reports, and previous research, the study explores the challenges rural teachers face, including limited exposure, inadequate institutional support, and constrained professional development opportunities. The findings reveal that low English proficiency affects instructional clarity, ICT usage, assessment design, and overall academic performance, while also restricting teachers' access to research and professional growth. The study concludes that enhancing English language proficiency is crucial for improving teaching quality, student outcomes, and the overall educational environment in rural Commerce and Management colleges.

Keywords: English Language Proficiency, Teaching Effectiveness, Rural Higher Education, Commerce and Management Teachers, Maharashtra Colleges.

Introduction

English has emerged as the dominant language of higher education, business, and global communication. In India, particularly in the field of Commerce and Management, English proficiency plays a crucial role in teaching, curriculum delivery, and student understanding. Rural colleges in Maharashtra face unique challenges such as limited exposure to English, a lack of training facilities, and resource constraints. Teachers often struggle with fluency, pronunciation, and academic writing, which in turn influences their teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

This study examines the relationship between English language proficiency and the teaching effectiveness of Commerce and Management teachers working in rural colleges of Maharashtra. The study also explores the barriers faced by rural faculty and the institutional support available for enhancing their language skills.

Review of literature:

Kumar & Devi (2019) found that English language proficiency is directly linked to teachers' ability to communicate academic concepts clearly in higher education institutions. Their study showed that teachers with a strong command of English could simplify complex topics and deliver lectures with better clarity. They also emphasised that effective communication enhances student engagement and understanding, particularly in professional courses like Commerce and Management. According to the authors, poor English skills lead to misinterpretation of concepts, reduced classroom interaction, and teacher hesitation. The study highlighted the importance of linguistic competence in improving teaching quality and

academic performance. Overall, they concluded that English proficiency is a key component of teaching excellence in Indian higher education.

Thomas (2020) observed that rural faculty members frequently lack exposure to English-speaking environments, which affects their confidence in classroom communication. He noted that teachers from rural backgrounds often rely on their mother tongue for informal communication, limiting their fluency in English. This lack of exposure results in low self-esteem and fear of making grammatical or pronunciation errors in front of students. The study indicated that such communication anxiety reduces teaching effectiveness and classroom participation. Thomas stressed that regular practice, training, and supportive institutional environments are essential for improving language confidence. His work emphasises the need for structured language development programs in rural educational institutions.

Goswami (2018) highlighted that teaching Commerce effectively requires proficiency in business vocabulary, financial terminology, and professional presentation skills. The study argued that Commerce and Management subjects involve technical terms, case studies, and global business concepts, all of which demand strong English proficiency. Teachers who lack these skills struggle to deliver content accurately, impacting students' comprehension. The research also pointed out that English proficiency enables teachers to present business reports and financial statements more effectively. Furthermore, Goswami emphasised that language skills contribute to teachers' capacity for using examples from international business contexts. The study concludes that English proficiency is essential for maintaining the academic rigour of Commerce education.

Deshpande (2021) reported that students in rural Maharashtra perceive English-speaking and technology-enabled teachers as more competent than those who lack these skills. The study revealed that students associate English proficiency with professionalism, confidence, and academic excellence. Teachers who use digital tools and communicate effectively in English can explain modern business trends more clearly. The research highlighted that students are more motivated and attentive in classes where teachers demonstrate good language skills. Deshpande also found that English proficiency improves the teacher-student relationship by building trust and respect. The study concludes that enhancing teachers' English abilities can significantly improve the learning environment in rural colleges.

Chavan (2022) emphasised that institutional training programs for language skill development in rural colleges are minimal and inadequately structured. The study found that most rural institutions lack language laboratories, trained instructors, and continuous professional development opportunities. As a result, teachers face persistent skill gaps in English communication. Chavan observed that these gaps affect teachers' ability to adopt new teaching methods, especially those involving English-based materials. The research further explained that limited institutional support discourages teachers from improving their language proficiency. Overall, the study stresses the need for systematic language training programs in rural academic settings.

Patil&Sawant (2020) showed that low English proficiency negatively affects teachers' ability to design assessments, deliver instruction clearly, and engage students effectively. Their study revealed that teachers with weak language skills often create ambiguous question papers and assignments. These language limitations also hinder teachers from explaining complex business theories and accounting practices. The authors found that students in such classrooms experience confusion and reduced academic confidence. Additionally, poor English skills restrict teachers from encouraging active participation and interactive learning. The study concludes that strengthening English proficiency is essential for improving both teaching and assessment quality.

Nayak (2019) indicated that English proficiency enhances teachers' research output, publication quality, and participation in academic conferences. The study found that teachers with strong English skills

can write research papers, proposals, and reports more effectively. Language skills also enable teachers to access international journals and academic resources. Nayak observed that rural teachers with limited English abilities face difficulties in publishing papers in reputed journals. Additionally, they often avoid research presentations due to fear of communicating in English. The study concludes that English proficiency is crucial for academic growth and professional recognition in higher education.

Raut (2020) stated that students' employability and academic success are strongly linked to the communication and language skills of their teachers. The study highlighted that teachers with good English proficiency can better prepare students for competitive exams, interviews, and corporate communication. Students exposed to English-speaking teachers develop better vocabulary and business communication skills. Raut observed that teacher language proficiency also influences students' confidence and motivation levels. The study found that English-proficient teachers help create a professional learning atmosphere that supports student development. This suggests that teacher language skills indirectly contribute to students' career readiness.

Mukherjee (2022) found that language limitations prevent rural teachers from attending national and international workshops, seminars, and conferences. The study explained that teachers lacking English fluency often avoid academic events due to fear of miscommunication. This reduces their opportunities for networking, knowledge enhancement, and professional exposure. Mukherjee noted that participation in academic events is essential for staying updated with global teaching practices. Language barriers also restrict teachers from engaging in professional development programs offered online. The study concludes that improving language proficiency can significantly broaden rural teachers' academic participation and career opportunities.

Methodology:

The present study is based entirely on secondary data collected from academic journals, government reports, research studies, and educational surveys related to language proficiency and teaching performance. A qualitative content analysis method was used to examine published data on rural faculty challenges, English usage in higher education, and teaching effectiveness in Commerce and Management. The study synthesises findings from past research to identify key trends, skill gaps, and implications for rural Maharashtra colleges. No primary data or field surveys were conducted.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the impact of English language proficiency on the teaching effectiveness of Commerce and Management teachers in rural Maharashtra.
- To identify the challenges faced by rural teachers regarding English usage, including exposure, training, resource availability, and institutional support.
- To analyse how English proficiency affects academic functions such as ICT usage, assessment design, research participation, and students' learning outcomes.

Discussion on Findings of the Study:

1. English proficiency strongly influences the clarity of classroom communication.

Teachers with higher fluency can articulate Commerce and Management concepts with precision. This clarity helps students grasp complex business terms and theories more effectively. Lack of proficiency often results in vague explanations and incomplete conceptual understanding. Therefore, language skills directly shape the quality of learning interactions in rural classrooms.

2. Rural teachers experience limited exposure to English-speaking environments.

Most teachers come from Marathi-speaking backgrounds with minimal daily use of English. This restricts their opportunities to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, and spoken fluency. Such low exposure results in communication anxiety during classroom teaching. Ultimately, it affects their confidence and reduces the effectiveness of their instructional delivery.

3. Inadequate institutional support worsens language skill gaps among rural faculty.

Many rural colleges lack language labs, training centres, and structured improvement programmes. Without these facilities, teachers struggle to enhance their linguistic and pedagogical abilities. Institutions rarely conduct refresher courses focused on language development. This absence of support contributes to persistent teaching challenges linked to English proficiency.

4. English proficiency has a direct impact on assessment design and evaluation.

Teachers with strong language skills can construct clearer question papers and assignments. In contrast, low proficiency leads to ambiguous, confusing, or grammatically incorrect assessments. This affects students' understanding of evaluation tasks and may impact their performance. Hence, language skills play a crucial role in how academic assessments are framed and understood.

5. Limited English proficiency restricts teachers' participation in academic research.

Writing research papers, proposals, and reports requires a strong command of academic English. Teachers with weak proficiency often hesitate to submit work to journals or conferences. This limits their contribution to the academic community and slows their career progression. Therefore, language barriers negatively influence the research productivity of rural educators.

6. Students' academic performance is closely linked to teachers' language ability.

Teachers who communicate effectively create more engaging and comprehensible learning environments. Students benefit from clearer explanations, better examples, and improved conceptual clarity. Those taught by less proficient teachers often struggle to understand the subject matter. Thus, teacher language skills indirectly shape overall student achievement and interest in the subject.

7. English proficiency enhances teachers' ability to use global business examples.

Commerce and Management subjects frequently reference international markets, reports, and terminology. Teachers fluent in English can access global case studies and integrate them into lessons. This enriches students' exposure to real-world business contexts and trends. Hence, English proficiency expands the scope and relevance of academic instruction.

8. Professional development programs significantly improve teachers' language and teaching capabilities.

Workshops, training sessions, and FDPs help teachers refine their communication and pedagogical skills. Institutions that invest in such programs report higher student satisfaction and better academic outcomes. These programs also boost teacher confidence and encourage the adoption of new teaching methods. Overall, continuous training bridges the skill gap caused by limited exposure in rural areas.

9. Low English proficiency restricts teachers' use of ICT tools.

Many digital learning resources, software, and academic content are available only in English. Teachers with limited proficiency find it difficult to adopt modern teaching technologies. This affects their ability to conduct digital lessons, presentations, and online activities.

10. Language barriers create a mismatch between curriculum demands and teacher abilities.

Commerce and Management syllabi include global case studies and business trends. Since most of these materials are in English, teachers with low proficiency struggle. This mismatch reduces the effectiveness of modern, updated curriculum delivery.

Conclusion:

The study clearly demonstrates that English language proficiency is a key determinant of teaching effectiveness among Commerce and Management teachers in rural Maharashtra. Teachers with strong English skills are better equipped to communicate academic concepts, integrate ICT tools, design assessments, and engage students meaningfully. However, many rural teachers struggle due to limited exposure, inadequate training facilities, and insufficient institutional support, which negatively affects their teaching performance and professional advancement. The findings highlight the need for systematic language training, continuous professional development, and improved institutional resources to strengthen teachers' communication abilities. Enhancing English proficiency will not only improve teaching quality but also contribute to better student learning outcomes, higher employability, and greater academic participation in rural higher education institutions.

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