



# **Systematic Barriers and Innovations in EFL Teaching across Indian Higher Education**

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Preethy Ann Mathew

PhD Scholar, The Glocal University, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author Email: [preethyannmathew@gmail.com](mailto:preethyannmathew@gmail.com)

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## **Abstract**

The study explores the attitudes of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers about the higher education scenario in India. Qualitative interviews conducted with a diverse range of EFL teachers then throw light on a few critical issues concerning challenges in teaching, institutional support, and technology integration in teaching languages. The result showed that, despite teachers claiming they are willing to engage the students and improve learning outcomes, they are faced with great difficulties such as inadequate resources, limited opportunities for professional development, and mixed levels of support from the administration. The study stresses the need to promote a collaborative teaching culture on campus and conduct relevant training so as to assist teachers in addressing changing educational demands. This advocacy for EFL teachers is believed to provide valuable insights and contribute toward enhancing the very issue of English language education in India's higher education framework.

## **Introduction**

“Systematic Barriers and Innovations in EFL Teaching across Indian Higher Education” represents the intricate realities of English as Foreign Language (EFL) educators in the scenario of higher education in India. Globalization affects almost all educational orientations; English is certainly the most important language to organize communication and academic achievements by using it. The article aims to provide an opportunity for EFL teachers to share their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding the dynamics of the changing educational environment in India and how these influence classroom practices and student achievement.

The higher education system in India is characterized by diversity and rapid evolution, with a large number

of institutions that have been set up to meet international standards. Though with its troubles, which may include a wide range of levels of institutional support, variable availability of resources, and differing pedagogical approaches, the article aims at bringing to the fore the voices of the EFL teachers that would represent their unique viewpoint about teaching contributions towards language acquisition and intercultural communication in this compressed and increasingly interdependent world.

Understanding the experience of EFL teachers is essential for pinpointing aspects on which the higher educational system in India could work. By listening to their voices, one would also be able to make sound policy and curriculum decisions for the improvement of English language instruction. This article not only throws up the voices but also adds to the academic discourse to such discussions in language education besides being useful for the stakeholders in trying to establish a better working and learning environment for a greater number of scholars across India.

## **1. Background EFL Teaching in India**

The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has changed over the years in India, from the period of British colonialism when English served merely as a language of administration and elite education. In the post-independence period, English became a medium of higher education and international communication, thus becoming integrated into various curricula. The very process of globalization and the need for English in the professional fields have given choice importance to EFL teaching in the context of higher education in India. Despite the challenges posed by the varying degrees of access to quality resources and quality training of teachers, EFL teachers have made attempts to adapt their methods and approaches to best suit the varying needs of students in different parts of India, thereby representing a fluid and dynamic scenario with great relevance to both local contexts as well as international standards.

### **1.1. Importance of Teacher Perspectives**

The perspectives of teachers are vital in understanding highly churning dynamics of higher education, which comes into play in India when considering English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Challenges and opportunities are placed before educators, determining what will ensue in crafting curricula, teaching strategies, and forms of student engagement. Sharing their experiences and opinions enhances the understanding of pedagogical practices and institutional policies, shaping an environment conducive to academic excellence and cultural relevance. Consequently, the recognition of teacher perspectives will also

assist in designing better professional development programs that meet educators' actual needs, resulting in furthering the quality of education that higher education institutions in India provide to their students.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design**

There is a strong probability that this study under consideration, titled “Systematic Barriers and Innovations in EFL Teaching across Indian Higher Education”, is qualitative in nature with semi-structured interviews for the collection of in-depth insights from EFL teachers of different higher education institutes in India. This allows the researcher to understand their personal experiences, the challenges faced in the teaching environment, organizational support, as well as pedagogical practices. The selection of the sample might also be purposive sampling to include representation from all parts of India and types of institutions to add content richness to the data collected. Data collection would typically involve thematic coding for finding out common themes and patterns from the interviews to give a whole perception about the EFL teaching landscape of Indian higher education.

### **2.2. Participants**

Considering the assortment of English as a Foreign Language teachers selected from various higher educational institutions, the study would mostly consist of experienced and novice instructors from as many places and as different from universities, colleges, or types of institution as technical institutes; all institutions are in India. This variety would bring different opinions on the challenges and opportunities that EFL teachers encounter in the Indian higher education system. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants whose insights would reflect the fine-grain complexities of teaching English in a multilingual and multicultural environment and accordingly provide them with a better choice of feeling and understanding.

### **2.3. Methods of Data Collection**

Employing an appropriate mixed-methods design brought both qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection to try and understand well the experiences and perceptions of teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFLs)-related returns. Surveys were administered to quite a varied sample of EFL teachers in the higher education institutions around India. This allowed collecting quantitative data about their practices, challenges, and support from their institution. In addition to surveys, semi-structured interviews were administered to a few selected participants to gain in-depth qualitative perception about their experiences and

thoughts on the higher education environment. Such combinations of methods allowed researchers to triangulate findings to add validity to results by capturing both statistical trends as well as rich, nuanced narratives from EFL teachers.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis techniques present several instruments to extract qualitative and quantitative data from teachers in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Such methods include thematic identification and analysis of themes or patterns within qualitative data from interviews or open-ended questions in survey instruments. This research methodology allows researchers to capture the nuanced experiences and responses of EFL teachers to their teaching environment. Further, there might be descriptive statistics to summarize quantitative data for insight into demographic information and general trends among respondents. Also, triangulation is a part of such methods focusing on combining more than such data source or methods for improving the validity and reliability of the findings. Finally, through such an extensive set of data analysis methods, this research would comprehensively understand the challenges of the opportunities that EFL teachers find in India's higher education system.

### **3. Findings**

The results highlight that EFL teachers face huge challenges in the field of higher education across India, including inadequate institutional support, lack of resources, and varying degrees of motivation on part of the students. The study indicates that teachers are interested in additional professional development opportunities and improved collaboration with other faculty to enrich their teaching practice.

#### **3.1. Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers**

The environment for EFL teachers in India has perhaps the most trying set of challenges in higher education, such as a lack of infrastructure, a high student-to-English instructor ratio, and heterogeneity of students' capabilities. Many institutions do not even have access to modern teaching materials and technology, leading directly to ineffective teaching and engagement processes. More so, the differences in students' language backgrounds usually result in difficulties when trying to address individual learning needs and leave teachers

with no option other than that of being nonchalant about the individualized nature of their teaching. In addition, due to mounting pressure to fulfill institutional expectations and standards of the prescribed curriculum, many times teachers cannot remain creative or flexible in their lesson plans. All these factors come together to create a very complex environment in which EFL teachers must constantly evolve towards providing quality education in an environment filled with systemic constraints.

### **3.2. Institutional Barriers**

The institutional barriers pose such a glaring challenge to the professional development and efficiency of English as Foreign Language (EFL) educators in contemporary times, that when one closely observes the Indian higher education environment, it is very easy to see them. Such barriers included limited administration openings, poor facilities, and a lack of assistance towards innovative teaching approaches. Many institutions lack facilities such as technology and current learning materials that are indispensable in modern language instruction. Bureaucracy at its worst can crush creativity and promote an isolationist attitude toward collaboration on the part of the teachers. Standardized testing emphasizes rote learning over communicative competence, and thereby aggravates the teaching situation. Therefore, such institutional impediments create an atmosphere repugnant to nurturing effective EFL teaching practices that in turn determine student outcomes and the totality of quality education.

### **3.3. Pedagogical Challenges**

The pedagogical challenges for teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in India confronting higher education are manifold and deeply embedded in systemic issues. The challenges are egregious, with the unavailability of core resources such as teaching materials and technology, and outdated materials useful for effective instruction. Often, students exhibit divergence in their language proficiency levels, which de facto constitutes hurdles to the common teaching approach of "one method fits all." Furthermore, the examination-oriented approach restricts students' and teachers' ability to develop new techniques of teaching which impart critical and communication skills, often leading to disinterest and low class participation by students who see no relevance of the learning of English language skills to their future jobs. These factors create a murky teaching landscape that restricts EFL instructors from looking at positions to further the language competencies of their students.

### **3.4. Student Engagement Issues**

Situation of student engagement in higher education in India paints a rather dismal picture of the EFL teachers, largely due to these interrelated factors about large class size, heterogeneous student backgrounds, dissimilar motivation levels, and the levels of proficiency in the English language. The teachers have always reported on how difficult it is to get the students engaged in an active mode of participation by passive learners whose very behavior is facilitated through traditional teaching methods that promote rote learning before interactive learning. There seems to be rampant discouragement in engaging students effectively due to limited resources and support for innovation in teaching. This has led EFL teachers to stress the need for more personalized attention paid to individual student needs and a more dynamic classroom environment conducive to learning.

#### **4. Support Systems for EFL Teachers**

##### **4.1. Professional Development Opportunities**

In the Indian higher education context, the professional development opportunities for EFL teachers are becoming more diverse and available, correlating with the increasing recognition of the need for EFL educators to learn and adapt to the changing teaching methods and methodologies. Workshops, seminars, and conferences organized by institutions focus on innovative teaching practices, technology integration, and curriculum development concerning the needs of the English language learners. Moreover, online platforms offer flexible access to pedagogy and language acquisition theory courses so that teachers can develop skills at their own pace. International collaboration between universities and other organizations adds to these opportunities by granting exchange programs and research collaborations exposing educators to international practices. This multifarious way enhances skills and abilities of EFL teachers as well as the quality of English language education in India.

##### **4.2. Institutional Support Mechanisms**

Institutional support mechanisms in the Higher Education Area of the EFL teachers in India are embedded in several structures and processes designed to promote teaching effectiveness and professional development. These mechanisms range from structured orientation programs for new faculty, on-the-job training programs in pedagogy and language skills, access to teaching and technological resources, mentorship of new faculty by senior professors, and institutional policies promoting research and faculty collaboration. EFL programs in universities provide avenues for feedback for teachers to voice their concerns and suggestions, thereby allowing the establishment of an inclusive academic culture that appreciates their contribution. Such support,

therefore, becomes one way of promoting the quality of teaching, enhancing job satisfaction, and increasing the retention of EFL teachers amidst challenges in the higher education environment in India.

## **5. Discussed items**

### **5.1. Applicability and Capability for Policy and Practice**

The findings from the study underline the critical need for policies that address the uncommon challenges faced by EFL teachers in Indian higher education. The findings mention that effective policies should focus on professional development, teaching resources, and collaborative working environments for the teachers. If educational authorities take teacher feedback into account when developing policies, the result would be more responsive and adaptive policies that encourage good practices in teaching and support learning outcomes for the students. However, the ability of institutions to put these policies into practice would depend on the availability of funding, program training, and institutional systems of support that give EFL teachers the ability to function effectively in their roles. This comprehensive framework would guarantee that both policy and practice nature are grounded in classroom realities, thus raising the profile of HE in India.

### **5.2. Suggestions On the Improvement of the Teaching of EFL**

If EFL in Indian higher education institutions must be enhanced, it must necessarily involve a multi-pronged strategy from the technology curriculum integration to continuous professional development of teachers and creating an interactive learning environment. Digital tools and resources can help make lessons livelier and more accessible to students through language learning apps. Constant workshops and trainings could help educate teachers on innovative teaching methodologies and recent trends in linguistics. Students working on collaborative projects, peer-assisted learning, etc., would allow real language experience and cultural exchange, promoting better proficiency of English and also building up their confidence to use it.

### **5.3. The role of institutional support**

While institutional support may greatly enhance the effectiveness of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at higher levels of education in India, it has many dimensions: adequate provision of resources, professional development, and enhancement of an academic culture that popularizes and values language education. This kind of support can work for improvement in curriculum design, access to new technologies

for teaching, and skills enhancement of teachers to adapt to new challenges in language teaching. Apart from that, the presence of a strong institutional culture encourages partnerships among teaching staff and research endeavors that work toward bettering pedagogy. Effective strategic support mechanisms that prioritize EFL programs ultimately give teachers the means to provide quality education that serves the various needs of students in a globalized world.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Summary of Main Findings**

The study discusses the different difficulties that EFL teachers face in India within the higher education system, such as inadequate resources, lack of institutional support, and differences in student motivation. They are in dire need of more professional development and pedagogical practices designed specifically to make them more effective teachers. The study also shows that the academic environment should be more supportive through teacher input and collaborative support among teachers to make gains in the field as a whole.

### **6.2. Areas of Research that Need to be Focused on**

The study elaborates that English as a foreign language teachers have to face several challenges in higher education, ranging from lack of resources and institutional support to varying degrees of student motivation. The researches show that these teachers demand better prospects in professional development and improved pedagogical practices to do justice to their professional effectiveness for the teachers. It basically entails the essential collaborative framework of teachers in an environment where their teaching needs are being met, thereby ending up in more improved educational outcomes altogether.

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