



COMMAND OF COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY IN ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT



It is necessary to understand the importance of teaching English language through literature in order to make language learning an enriching experience for students. English language Teaching (ELT) gained prominence in the last three decades. The mushrooming of technical institutes all over the country has led to the popularity of technical English in our country. The paper tries to analyse how literature can be used effectively for teaching technical English in engineering colleges. The paper also tries to find out whether learning English Language is feasible through the use of Literature. Literature supplies many linguistic opportunities to the language learner and allows the teacher to design activities that are “based on material capable of stimulating greater interest and involvement” than many other non-literary, informative texts. The aim of these activities should be to focus on the form and content of the text at stake, and to provide the stimulus for interaction to take place between the learners among them, and with the teacher.

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Language which has been considered man's most remarkable achievement, is so much a part of our lives, like the air we breathe, that very often we take it for granted and as often are not aware of its characteristic features. There are many things about language that are still a mystery and will probably remain so. However, there are aspects we do know. The past several decades have seen a tremendous amount of linguistics as a language, a description of

its basic characteristics would make a better understanding of linguistic science. Language is a system. It is not a random collection of items. Patterning is all important. Each language has its own structure, its own system. It has its own unique way of organizing its units into an internal structure. Man is a social being. As soon as he is in contact with others he communicates. For this he makes use of spoken and written language.



Language is one of the most important areas of human development. A language is a means of communication. Communication skills set us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. Human beings use language not only to transfer their ideas and thoughts but to foster friendship and to learn cultural, economic and social relationships. Words can have a significant impact on the way people are supposed and the level of respect they are given. So language is obviously a vital tool in the hands of human beings. Many people believe that language has proved as a potent weapon and way to progress; and ultimately to success. What we feel or what we know, we have to convey the same to others. In order to convey we know or we feel, we need a tool. That tool is language. There are many languages in the world. One among them is English. Language is a system. Each language has its own structure, its own system. The main objective of the teaching learning of a living language –like English –is to help the learners to become able to use it to communicate with others, by sending and receiving meaningful messages. Language is an important tool of communication to express one's ideas, views and feelings.

As globalization and competitiveness become the benchmark of any MNC, it becomes obviously important for employees to be equipped with good communication and soft skills. Therefore engineering graduates require an ever increasing range of skills to maintain relevance with the global environment of the era. Increasing pressures and challenges arising from the broadening roles of engineers has enhanced the need for the Indian engineers to acquire good English communication skills. Good English Communication Skills is a vital element of an engineer's profession and the lack of such skills only undermines the image of an engineer. There is a great need to frame course material and develop methods and strategies to enhance various skills of communication of engineering graduates.

COMMUNICATION

Ashraff Rizvi in his 'Effective communication skills' explained that "Communication is a word originated from Latin word "communico" which means "to share". Communication is the transfer of

information from one person to another person in order to exchange ideas, express feelings and understand each other." (Ashraff Rizvi)¹

Communication well demands that one should learn the rules and practice a lot. Unlike listening, speaking, and reading, writing is the way one makes their opinion visible to the world. Without writing ideas on a paper, thinking remains invisible and it remains ever locked in the brains. Language is the most commonly used and effective medium of self-expression in all spheres of human life – personal, social, and professional. Thinking is a creative process and it exposes one's personality. Sometimes learner may feel it is happy to be without any thought because nobody wants to put a foolish, illogical, misinformed mind on display to others. But in today's world of high competition, writing has become the one major component and true measure of our thinking and everyone wants to see it. In doing so, we provide a logical pattern of organization that follows the conventions of standard written English. The days of the multiple-choice tests are gone. Present testing process wants to show not just what one knows but how they know it and how they can apply. In short, today's tests are mainly on our writing ability. Students should possess these communication abilities before they enter into any profession.

"Communication as an academic discipline, sometimes called "communicology," relates to all the ways we communicate, so it includes a large body of study and knowledge. In the journals, already many researchers have shown the results of studies that are the basis for an ever-expanding understanding of how we all communicate." (Ashraff Rizvi)

Communication happens at many levels in many different ways. Almost many fields of study dedicate a part of attention to communication, so when speaking about communication, it is very important to be sure about what aspects of communication one is speaking about. Definitions of communication range widely, some recognizing that animals can communicate with each other as well as human beings, and some are narrower, only



including human beings within the parameters of human interaction.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication process takes place by enriching four skills- Listening, speaking, reading and writing. The last of the four ways we learned to communicate was through writing, and the very formal exchange of words to paper was probably initiated in school, as early as kindergarten. Now, as adults, even though one can say with confidence that they know "how" to listen, speak, read, and write, even they can use these four skills in their communication well.

Learners can evaluate their language abilities by asking following questions. Have they ever "listened" to a lecture and not been able to remember one thing heard? Have they ever "read" a page or two and had to read it all over again because they didn't concentrate? Have they ever "spoken" and then had to explain something twice because it's not clear for the first time? Have they ever "written" an exam or a paper or even a note, to find they needed some serious help making oneself understood? If the learner were ever in any of these situations, he was not alone. Every human being would have experienced this stage. The present paper helps us to approach effective communication skills.

There is a clear necessity for effective English communication skills for engineers in the current globalized environment. A course in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) will enhance English language training and an engineering student's communication skills. It will also aid in the globalization of education and the internationalization of practicing engineers. The English language has become a major medium for communication across borders globally; a deficiency in this area may result in barriers for graduates' professional development. ESP focuses the learner's attention on the language and communication requirements in a particular professional field. The concept of ESP achieves more in the education of engineering students by focusing the learner's attention on the particular terminology and

communication skills required in the professional field.

Teaching English to engineers is a delicate and demanding matter in terms of content, methods and techniques, and deciding which are appropriate for this particular area of engineering and English. That is, the aim in such an interdisciplinary course is to develop and master relevant communication and professional skills, using English as a means and a kind of mediator in shaping future engineers. To achieve this goal, ESP teachers have to plan the course they teach and provide the materials for it. The incorporation of communication skills courses in English for engineers at the universities is becoming an essential element of continuous learning.

The aim has been to develop good English communication skills abilities in its engineers. The goal of developing communicatively competent users of English can be realized effectively if elementary schools, junior high and senior high schools and universities take the initiative in improving the educational system in respect of English education from their respective positions. The incorporation of language and communication improvement courses is an important element of continuous learning, and will ultimately contribute to the process of life-long learning. This should in turn facilitate advancements in engineering and, indeed, engineering education through streamlining fundamental communication skills.

BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Communication barriers especially in English will create misunderstandings and also it leads to the delay of work. Communication breakdown arises due to improper encoding of message. Even by passing message to many it gets diluted and the meaning will change. Due to physical distractions, emotional interferences and cultural differences may cause a problem. Sometimes noise from the surroundings may stand as the hazard for communication. Poor expressions of the speaker can create confusion so during communication not just the sender even the receiver need to concentrate on the message. They need to show interest in the communicative process.



Communication barriers can be overcome by following few points. Communication should be goal oriented. Have a positive attitude about communication. Do not make communication simply for responsibility consider it as a creative task. One need to accept the truth that if he/she will not show interest in communication it will lead to miscommunication and finally it will create many problems for both sides. Avoid distractions and doing other works during communication.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps build relationships and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes life comfortable. Learner should focus on his various skills in communication because this ever-changing world has sustenance difficult. Communication skills are continuous process of lifelong learning, essential for human resource development. This change in the field of communication will bring social transformation; even the field of education has not remained untouched. Quality has become a decisive factor in the new millennium in attracting students, faculty, and institution. Students started concentrating on English language learning more than their mother tongue learning. Due to globalization, English language got so much prominence. Students will be placed in multinational companies when they have better communication skills in English. There is tuff competition in the market and only those can survive who possess effective communication skills. Communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate and includes all four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The lack of communication skills only serves to undermine the whole profile of the professional engineer. Globalization directly influences industry's needs; a global engineer must be able to easily cross national and cultural boundaries. This in turn directly affects engineering education. A common code for communication is required. Those education institutions, which meet the language requirements for the new global engineer, will be ready to face the

new millennium. Sakran and Awad emphasizes the need for engineers to be able to integrate technical expertise with behavioural and societal issues, to work on solving complex problems in teams composed of professionals from many disciplines and exhibit high level communication skills.

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

One of the main fallouts of globalization of English is that all learners, no matter what their social or regional origins belong to, need to increase their English language repertoire. The present global context therefore calls for steps to tone up English language teaching. The recent studies in the field of language education show a shift in focus from the product of teaching to the process of learning. This mounting recognition of the process of learning led to the interest in how learners learn a language. It is a fair assumption that a good language learner is likely to display a personal learning style or positive learning strategies which is not so good counterpart displays. Hence training the learners in the use of language learning strategies (LLS) could be one of the ways of improving language competence. The underlying assumption is that strategy training has a bearing on the quality of learning. It has been felt that an overt training course in language learning strategies helps to bridge the gap between actual competence level and expected competence level and may further enable the learners to move towards learner autonomy.

FEATURES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Language learning strategies...

- Contribute to the main goal – communicative competence as reflected in the learner's skills in listening, speaking, reading or writing
- Allow learners to become more self-directed
- Are problem oriented
- Involve both cognitive and meta-cognitive aspects of the learner
- Are flexible
- May be visible (behaviors, steps, techniques, etc) or unseen (thoughts, mental processes)



- Involve information and memory (vocabulary knowledge, grammar rules, etc.)
- And most importantly, can be taught.

This teaching component of LLS has been attracting the attention recently and this means that, those who are keen to harness the potential, which LLS seem to be providing to enhance an individual's ability to learn a language is being explored. In this way LLS also expand the role of language teachers.

Psychologists believe that learning should be a pleasurable and rewarding experience. Children tend to learn more when they are tension-free. They can and do learn a lot of things through games. Language can also be learnt through a play-way method. Language games have both fun and excitement and serve the pedagogical purpose. It must be noted that language games would fail in their purpose if they are not planned in advance and used methodically and carefully. Games are often wrongly regarded as an end-of-term activity or something to fill in the last five minutes of a lesson. In fact they can be used at all stages of practice from controlled to free. Language learning is many sided, which need not discourage us from seeing it crudely as a matter of four skills: those of successful listening, speaking, reading and writing.

CONCLUSION

To be successful in any field one need to know and understand how to communicate effectively. Communication is the most important function a human being performs in his/her life. Communication like birth, death growth and decay is a part of individual life as well as organizational existence. Its importance is self-explanatory and is an experience of all as well. Communication skill is essential for an Engineer who aspires to carry out his professional practice in the global arena. The rapid globalization of the world's economy has placed a significant impact on the way Indian engineers work.

The role of engineers in society is changing and places new pressures and demands on engineering faculties in the Universities around the world. Engineering education requires a more outward look with the ability to produce graduates who would be able to lead the engineering profession with its increasing pressures and

challenges arising from the broadening roles of an engineer. Engineers are required to perform not only in technical capacities but also in the non-technical capacities. English language is not the mother tongue of our country India and hence do not degrade yourself in case you are poor in English communication skills. In our considered opinion, one can tremendously improve his communication skills in English with more practice and regular use of spoken English. For speaking good English, one should have burning zeal to learn English and has to put enough efforts.

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