



ENGLISH – A LANGUAGE THAT AMPLIFY THE HORIZONS OF EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

In today's global era, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the common language spoken everywhere. With development in science and technology this language gained the priority than the other language. India is a developing country and the study of English in this age of globalization is essential and there is an urge to enrich this language among the students too. English is the window of the world that holds the things before us. From the pragmatic point of view, it should receive a great boost. The legacy of English language has left an indelible imprint on the Indian psyche. Hence, we cannot deal with English just as a foreign language. It should be taken as a language for communication as the entire spectrum of education and philosophy, science and technology is designed in this language a student is needed to develop it at the earlier stage to get into employment. A student with good English language proficiency gets easy employability than the one lacking knowledge in the usage of language, as it attracts the attention of prospective employers towards them. This situation has arisen due to the fact that English has been recognized as a lingua franca in today's globalized world with its free market economies.. This article focuses on the need of the language for the students from engineering background for their employability.

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English for Employability, Yorke (2006) defines employability as a —multi-faceted characteristic of a person, a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation(s) to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. English, which can be considered as an international language and the most dominant language in the world, plays an important role as a tool of communication both locally and globally, having gained the status of being recognized as the global medium for business and communication. According to Nesa (2004, p.8) —English [is] the lingua franca of business, commerce, science, arts, literature of the whole world. Therefore it is vital that today's graduates be well versed in English in order to increase their employment opportunities, be able to use and communicate via the internet, communicate with foreigners, increase their knowledge and travel to other countries and thereby widen their horizons in their future lives and bring empowerment to their lives. Proficiency in English will undoubtedly increase employability by boosting basic skills to get, keep and do well in a job. Thus a wake-up call has been given to stake-holders who wield authority to provide the suitable infrastructure to increase the English skills in graduates in order that the industry and the economy will benefit, and be able to give out as well as receive from both local and international stakeholders. It is imperative that measures be taken to close the gap between the language classroom and skills that are crucial for employment, and provide an employability oriented education especially at tertiary level. For this, a needs analysis pertaining to competency in English must be conducted in order to ascertain the requirements of the industry, and this information must be brought into the classroom and made known to both teachers and students. This requires the close working between employers and institutions of tertiary education in order that the gap in respect of a lack of English competency is bridged. Creating a learner-centered classroom atmosphere coupled with the needs of the industry, and thereby implementing a holistic integrated approach to teaching English at tertiary level, will, over time, facilitate the linking together of a variety of aspects

concerning the enhancing of English language competency amongst graduates and undoubtedly bring about a solution to this increasing problem of unemployment. Additionally, focusing on the final goal of producing an employable graduate will ease the burden placed on employers to train their staff in English, with the additional benefit that these graduates will be an asset to their employers and, at a personal level, be able to forge ahead with their career advancement. Today, more graduates are aware of the crucial role that English plays in helping them be gainfully employed and it is essential that teachers of English and policy makers thrive on this positive attitude to meet the needs of both the employer and the graduate. Regardless of their social background, graduates have come to the realization that, without being competent in English, they will not be able to find suitable employment. English has thus been accepted as being a vehicle that will bring about change in the lives of graduates. It is therefore the need of the hour that teachers of English, strive against all odds to transform young graduates into professionals who are competent, confident, skilled and proficient in the English language.

In India, the language background of a student is based not just on his/her mother-tongue, but also on whether he/she attended an English medium school. Proficiency in English has never been a criterion for admission to engineering programs in India. Engineering graduates in India face the prospect of substantial unemployment despite high corporate demand for their services. Despite the growth in international demand; India is facing a significant level of unemployment among its engineers. While statistics show high levels of unemployment among engineers, many large companies complain of difficulties in finding qualified candidates—a “vexing paradox”. This increasing unemployment of engineers in India has been attributed to their limited communication skills and consequently, the teaching of English in engineering education has been under the scanner. Engineering graduates produced by Indian universities suffer due to lack of communicative skills to study in the world-class institutions or work in a global atmosphere. English language proficiency in globalizing India is an essential component of one's cultural baggage, it is



also a resource, that can eventually open doors into the world of professional employment in India and abroad. Thus, English is immediately linked to employability.

The students of engineering should be developed in the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the class room through some of the activities.

LISTENING SKILLS

Listening skill is an essential element in improving the language proficiency and understanding. The student listens to oral speeches in English, then separates them into segments the utterances he/she hears, groups them into words, phrases and sentences to understand the meaning. While listening to repeat, students imitate and memorize linguistic items such as words, idioms and sentence patterns. This is an important task in initial listening exercises.

SPEAKING SKILLS

The simplest activity for developing oral skills is to ask students to practice reading out loud in pairs focusing on fluency. Thus it enables the students to check their pronunciation, usage of correct phrases, sentences and idioms applicable to the given situation. Basic strategies such as asking and answering questions, imitation and repetition, substitution, question-answer dialogues, day-to-day expressions, eliciting, guess and speak, directed dialogues, descriptions and role-play can be used to improve speaking skills in the laboratory sessions.

READING SKILLS

Reading can be done in four different ways, depending on the purpose of reading a text: Skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading. Reading habits enables the students to profound themselves to learn the language its application and give them the opportunities to absorb vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and discourse structure as they occur in authentic contexts.

WRITING SKILLS

Engineers will have to proofread, correct or edit documents written by others, and they will have to be able to write these types of documents themselves. Writing exercises –and preferably short

one - should be given frequently and should be on relevant technological subjects (e.g. brief summaries of research article, newspaper articles, technical reports, minutes of meetings, product presentations). Process-oriented collaborative writing where students work in groups of 3 – 4 students will activate students as much as possible and allow them to learn from each other.

As a teacher one needs to develop the above said four skills which are the bases for learning a language. A teacher can develop these skills by including in them as a class room activity. For example listening skills through making the students to listen to simple conversation, telephone etiquettes; speaking skills by assigning task of group discussion, making oral presentations like self-introduction, interview skills; reading skill by making them read the comprehension passage, charts, graphs and interpreting it; writing skill by making them create documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts, curriculum vitae, email writing and so on.

So the above said things are very important for a normal Indian student which he/she should acquire in the course subjects. But a teacher in English faces a lot of difficulty with Indian students as they come with multiple language background. It's quite amazing to hear from the students say language classes are not as serious for them as they consider their core subjects. A fact that no one can forget is even the group subjects are to be read in English. All the English teachers are fed up with the complaints from the students that they fail in an interview because of English. So who do you think is really to blame? Are the teachers to be blamed? Or is it the student's fault that he failed to communicate? Whatever it is, it is crystal clear that a student needs good communication skills if he needs to get a job. Today in the globalised world, English has spread its branches wide and far giving shelter to millions of people who are depending on the universal language. As R.K.Narayan expects in his '*Toasted English*' English should reach to every nook and corner of the country. He feels it should not be confined to higher organizations but should also reach to the people under the banyan tree.



English has its impact on a large scale. All the Multi National Companies look for candidates with good communication skills rather than the candidates with good technical skills. As the whole world has come under a united network, it is must for the candidates to learn a common language through which they can communicate with their clients across the world. So it has become an essential element for the students to focus on their speech. English has become the key element in deciding the career of the students. As many English teachers share the bitter experiences of their students in Interviews, the step where they have to be out is in the oral speaking test. Somehow they manage to clear the writing round but they fail when it comes to express their ideas through speech.

As a teacher I have many personal experiences which I would like to share. One of my students in the graduation course has attended an interview. He was so confident that he would get the job as he had a good percentage. But after the interview he could make out that his percentage alone will never fetch him a job. He came running to me and asked me to help to improve his communication skills. Though it was late, I said his passion towards the language could alone teach him. He started to move the heaven and earth to learn the subject. He cultivated the habit of reading the newspaper, practicing the speech patterns in the Laboratory and finally he could taste the sweetness of the language. It's a known fact that once the journey starts, it never stops until the destination is reached, whether it is life or learning.

We have students, who come from good English medium schools, but unfortunately fail in conversing English. The common fact is that they learn the language but never apply it and so ultimately they fail once they need to communicate. The learning process should start from the early stages. No one teaches them their mother tongue. They are good at it because they listen to it from others. In the present day society it is must that students should listen to various English speeches, debates, group discussions and movies. The teacher and the student should make their destination clear enough to reach it. The teacher should make things clear by providing number of activities to the

students and the student to use the opportunity provided to develop their communication skills in English. But there is a difference in the notion towards English language is deep rooted in the minds of the teacher and the student. When two hands come close together it can clap that make amazing sound too, which a single hand cannot do. In the same way the opinion and approach towards this language should be clear for both the teacher and the student to make wonderful things happen in this world.

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