



## ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYABILITY – THE NEED FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING GRADUATES IN INDIA

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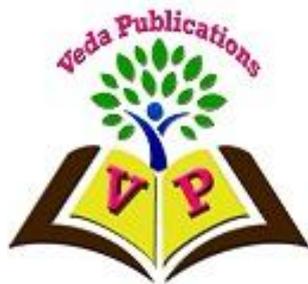
### ABSTRACT

Education is a determining factor that plays a major role in identifying whether a country is moving towards development or not. Communication is the life blood of social as well as corporate world. In the current scenario, an individual, an M.B.A., an Engineer, a Graduate or an Undergraduate needs to communicate in English. But they fail as they are lacking in English language. English language makes the candidate confident and Self-reliant and is a medium which ensure their present employability.

Good English language proficiency amongst graduates enhances their employability and is a gateway to the world of work-readiness which will attract the attention of prospective employers. This situation has arisen due to the fact that English has been recognized as a lingua franca in today's globalized world. English as communication skills plays a crucial role in employment all over the world. To achieve success in one's career, it is essential to acquire an ability to speak English effectively and fluently. Proficiency in English, therefore, is needed for employees' career advancement in both local and international companies and for improving their technical knowledge and skills.

This paper will highlight the importance of English and how English can reduce the unemployment by learning communication skills and also redeems the prospects and needs of English for employability in India. It not only helps the people to acquire a dream job through communication skills but also explores the different ways of learning communication skills through communicative activities. In the current environment, education with good communication skills provides individuals with a better chance of employment, which successively leads to a better lifestyle, money, power and status.

**Keywords:** *Education, communication skills, English Language, Proficiency, Lingua Franca, and Employability.*





## INTRODUCTION

According to Yorke, Employability is 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 them, the workforce, and the economy.

In the view of Nesa, English is the lingua franca of business, commerce, science, arts, and 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. The close working nature between employers and institutions of tertiary education is created through a learner-centered classroom atmosphere paired with the needs of the industry, and thereby implementing a holistic integrated approach to teach English at tertiary level. This, over time, facilitates the link together 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.

"It is a language which is rich in languages, literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we give up English we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge"

- Radhakrishna University Education Commission

This is very true in Indian context as we live in an era of modern science and technology where the media or the language of communication is only English which is demand of time and need of everyone who wish to be grown up with the knowledge, skills and information. It is also a tool of securing a dream job which is possible through English language. English is a West Germanic language spoken originally in England is now the most widely used language in the world. It is the 4<sup>th</sup>

most common native languages in the world after mandarin, Chinese & Spanish.

India is on the journey to become a strong and prosperous nation in the world for that it is trying to maintain a good foreign policy, for all this, there is a need of a common language i.e. English. It is this language which is understood almost all over the region in addition to national language of Hindi, all schools and colleges teach English and this language is a store house of social and political knowledge. Hence, the study of English language is of great importance for a developing country like India. So to survive in modern society, knowledge of English language is as essential as water.

We are living in the digital age through English language with various technologies and World Wide Web further English is used for higher learning. All the students who go abroad for higher education whether it is medical, business schools or advanced studies their medium of instruction is English. All the Universities and colleges in Great Britain, The United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore which are centre of attraction for higher studies for International students they teach only in English. All the journals, periodicals and reports that inspire today's scientists, engineers, technologists and technocrats are published in English.

As English is a language which is very rich and powerful it is ultimately going to reduce the chances of unemployability. The relationships can be built up through communication skills. If we are fluent enough in our communication skills then the dream job is not far from us. For good communication skills we need to learn English. Most of the students who passed out their degrees of engineering or management but they are not able to get a desired job. It is only due to lack of communication skills. They are not poor in their skills so being skilled technically they are poor in attracting the people. As a result of it they remain unemployed or suffered from exploitation. English Language makes them unique personality. It leads them towards soft skills, life skills, interpersonal skills and many more skills.



There is a co-relation between the empowerment of English and employability. In today's scenario we can say that both are two sides of a same coin. If your spoken English is very powerful, no corporate house can reject you and you can have a best job opportunity. Today in the world of trade & commerce, technological world we need to have good command over English along with our technical skills. It is well said --- "Good English equals good job".

The need to enhance employability skills and English competency amongst graduates is an ongoing crisis that is being faced by policy makers, employers and graduates alike. Research has revealed that there is a serious unemployment problem amongst graduates due to the lack of English skills and competency. The English language is considered as a stepping stone along the pathway to securing employment

#### **WHAT IS THE EMPLOYABILITY?**

The term employability generally refers to the skills required to acquire and retain the employment. These are the skills focus on the analytical and interpretative abilities of the learners. The present market is rapidly changing with heavy competition and other hand science and technology had brought many changes in the trade and commerce. At the outset, it is very clear that a traditional degree is not enough to satisfy the learners who are expected to have a good command over the employability skills, which are lifeblood of any organization. The term employability focuses on enhancing the academic and professional development of the learners to cope up with the revolutionary changes brought by the globalization. For the last two decades, the definition of the term employability has shifted from formal oriented to functional oriented skills. It is also deals with a set of achievements and personal attributes of the learners. On other hand, there is a lot of responsibility on the English teachers to create an atmosphere, which will help learners to have exposure in the employability skills in addition to the subject knowledge. Robinson defined employability skills as "those basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job". Employability skills are often used to describe

the preparation or foundational skills (communication, personal and interpersonal relationships, problems solving and management of organizational process) upon which a person must build a job with specific skills.

#### **ENGLISH – A TOOL FOR EMPLOYABILITY**

As the private sector companies are gaining ground and becoming more competitive due to changed world economy, the employees are always kept on their toes. It is like either you work hard and show your performance or perish for not taking care of your professional growth. The ability to use a language efficiently is very much required to remain employable. Communication skills are very much essential for one's professional growth. The ability to express fluently in both written as well as oral form of language is very much essential for the career growth.

As it is stated above, English being the most commonly used language in the corporate world. The knowledge of English is one of the most important employability skills. Proper English does not mean only the ability to make grammatically correct sentences. It means other related skills for effective communication like presentation skills, convincing and negotiation skills and interpersonal skills using that language.

#### **THE NEED OF THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

Over the six decades of the independence, the education in the country has grown enormously. The system has built the large capacity both in the conventional and modern disciplines. Even as we talk about the increasing number of job avenues emerging in many sectors, India falls under the pressure of shortages of quality and talent in the job market. In this connection, employability is a far bigger than an employment. The present market gives importance to the skilful work force with the quality output. The gap between the classroom and teaching and the market expectation should be fulfilled by qualitative and quantitative efforts of the academics.

#### **THE TYPES OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

Though it is broader term, it involves with set of skills according to the University of Bolton, the



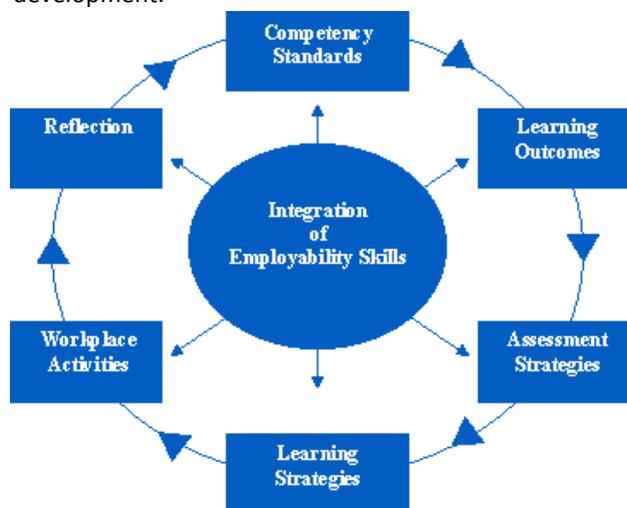
employers generally find the following attitudes from the learners, which are 1.Communication 2.Term work 3.Application of Numeracy 4.Organization and Time Management 5.Problem Solving 6.Flexibility 7.Action Planning 8.Self-Awareness 9.Personal Impact and Confidence 10.Initiative. On other hand Dr. Rod asserts that the following are the must have skills of any professional. They are 1.communicative skills 2.Critical thinking 3.Problem solving. Communication skills deal with the ability to deliver the ideas effectively, clearly and with confidence either written or spoken form. Critical thinking skills refer to ability to think critically, creatively, analytically and innovatively and it focus on the ability to apply the own knowledge to existing problems. Some of the strategies are learning by questions, cooperative and problem based learning.

**FACILITATING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY**

Employability is defined by Yorke and Knight (2003) as —A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

**ENGLISH – THE DRIVING FORCE**

In today’s global world, English can be considered as world language and the vehicle of communication. Being knowledgeable and fluent in English is undoubtedly a powerful tool that can bring about personal as well as global advancement and development.



There is a demand for English medium education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in India. The policy proposal for educational reforms put forward by the National Education Commission (2009) acknowledged the fact that it was vital to build up the English medium education in both State schools and State universities where teaching English requires being well-versed in the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**ENGLISH-EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

The following are the employability skills that can be gained:

- Advanced literacy and communication skills and the ability to apply these skills in appropriate contexts including the ability to present sustained and persuasive written and oral arguments cogently and coherently.
- The capacity to analyse and critically examine diverse forms of discourse.
- The ability to adapt and transfer the critical methods of the discipline to a variety of working environments.
- Competence in planning and executing essays, reports and project work.
- The capacity for independent thought and judgement, and skills in critical reasoning.
- The ability to comprehend and develop intricate concepts in an open ended way which involves an understanding of aims and consequences.
- The ability to work with and in relation to others through the presentation of ideas and information and the collective negotiation of solutions.
- The ability to understand, interrogate and apply a variety of theoretical positions and weigh the importance of alternative perspectives.
- The ability to handle information and argument in a critical and self reflective manner.



## EMPLOYERS' CRITERIA

Employers have identified the attributes that should be considered to recruit the graduates. The qualities or attributes used here have been identified and categorised by employers of the Policy Forum of the Council for Industry and Higher Education:

- **Cognitive Skills / Brainpower:** The ability to identify and solve problems; work with information and handle a mass of diverse data, assess risk and draw conclusions.
- **Generic Competencies:** High-level and transferable key skills such as the ability to work with others in a team, communicate, persuade and have interpersonal sensitivity.
- **Personal Capabilities:** The ability and desire to learn for oneself and improve one's self awareness and performance. To be a self starter (creativity, decisiveness, initiative) and to finish the job (flexibility, adaptability, tolerance to stress).
- **Technical Ability:** For example, having the knowledge and experience of working with relevant modern laboratory equipment.
- **Business and / or Organisation Awareness:** An appreciation of how businesses operate through having had (preferably relevant) work experience.
- **Practical Elements - Vocational Courses:** Critical evaluation of the outcomes of professional practice; reflect and review own practice; participate in and review quality control processes and risk management.

## IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH IN EMPLOYMENT

As we know, English, the language connects people from different regions, cultures and nations. By default, due to the fact that the British ruled most parts of the world and they could conveniently sow the seeds of English language and culture in those countries. Though not intended, the British gave a common language to the world which has helped in sharing any kind of information fast and clear without any translation. Though the British left their colonies a long time back, their efforts and reforms in the field

of education are yielding results now.

## ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Communication means the exchange of information, ideas, feelings and thoughts. The type of communication which is used in the corporate world is business communication. A person who is considered employable only when he gets the necessary qualification, experience, interest, learning attitude and expertise in the field where he wants to seek employment.

Effective communication includes the ability to communicate effectively in any language. Academicians and researchers those who are in favour of English for effective communication would say that English is the official language in most of the companies in cities these days. The reality is that the companies consider the candidate's ability or inability to speak fluently in English as one of the major selection criterion. The mere domain knowledge won't guarantee one a good job. The situation in most of the companies has changed from a scene where all employees are isolated and would concentrate on their individual performances.

'Team work for better success' is the mantra followed by most companies. So there is no space for individual glory. Employees are expected to be interactive and communicative with others in the team and outside.

## CORPORATE EXPECTATIONS

As the ability to speak and write in English is considered very important by the recruiters at the time of recruitment, let us discuss the expectations of corporate world in this regard. Companies want people who can basically read and understand written words in the form of instructions, reports, letters, memos, notices and other any form of official documents.

The ability to express formal communication in oral as well as in written form is equally considered important by the prospective employers. As one moves higher in the vertical direction in the organisational hierarchy, it becomes naturally necessary for an employee to be good presenter,



negotiator, and convener of meetings. The mastery over English will help a person to conduct his duties efficiently. One of the important deficiencies found by the employers and recruiters in candidates for different jobs is the lack of oral as well as written communication skills.

Employers would be happy to interview and recruit who have both communication skills in English and job skills. It lessens their burden of giving too much orientation training at the time of induction or on the job training. The fact is that we have a large English speaking population, it makes easier for MNCs and foreign universities to do their business here. The knowledge of English is an important employability skill with in India and outside to be employed as well as to move higher in one's professional life.

### CONCLUSION

At last to sum up, English is a link language, world language, International language, business language, language of commerce and trade. We are living in the digital world of information communicative technology and we cannot deny the fact that English is a tool of empowerment for employability because this language is a gem of all the fields of business world whether it is a soft ware companies, engineering, medical, science, aviation, education, humanities etc every where the process starts in English. So English is not only very important and necessary now a days but it opens the gateway of business world and makes us a good communicator with entrepreneurship. The essence of English will grow and capture all the corners of the business world which affects a lot to the employability because there are so many large projects which aim at improving the society through English and can be a mode for sustainable development through these three Es viz. Education, Equity and Employability.

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