

Communication Skills: Importance of English in Today's World

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'Employability' is a global phenomenon and it is one of the basic skills required to acquire good position and advancement in an individual's career. It has to be accepted that English is one of the core skills that is essential in building up professional skills and it has the ability to transform lives of a person. It is widely acknowledged that English is the prominent means of communication and has gained significant importance in the field of Education, Commerce, trade and IT. It can be widely noticed that private sector companies are becoming widely competitive and it is essential for the employees to keep their professional growth far above the ground. The knack to use English Language efficiently at his/her work determines their ability to remain employable. If an individual remains employable it showcases his efficiency in the relevant skills he possesses. It is evident that English is an important tool of communication and it is one of the prime factors in 'Employability Skills' and a person who is proficient in English Language is well sought after in the corporate world. The business of an International Company depends on the employees who can communicate with ease to their clients through their effective language

skills. India is experiencing a transition in economic, social, trade and education systems:

The official position of English in India remains that of a transitional necessity. But this agenda has been over taken by events. Economic growth means that more jobs require English; the expansion of education means that English is needed by more people for study; and for a growing, globalised, urban middle-class English is playing a greater role in both their work and personal lives. (Graddol 64)

India is one of the countries where English is not the mother tongue but is an official language and it has occupied the reputation of being a global language and as "English is the medium of interpersonal communication in the corporate world and therefore having good command on English language has become even more crucial" (Mohapatra 22-23). It is impossible for an employee to work in a group without acquiring good inter personal skills. If an individual has good command in English he/she can present himself/herself in a convincing manner to execute their set of ideas, experiences and problems with ease in the place of work and as Mohapatra puts in "Engineers usually work in groups and this very nature of their work demands mutual cooperation and effective interpersonal communication within and outside the organization in order to understand and co-ordinate with co-workers and accomplish their projects" (23). It is important that an employee has to be successful in completing their projects and bringing in profit for their company. As Luke Mastin quotes in his article "Language Issues: English as a Global Language" he points out that:

Its worldwide reach is much greater than anything achieved historically by Latin or French, and there has never been a language as widely spoken as English. Many would reasonably claim that, in the field of business, academics, science, computing, education, transportation, politics and entertainment, English is already established as the *de facto lingua franca*. (n.pag)

Every HEI's in particular has a significant role in working on the 'life skills' of a student. To be particular every student is given education in English in order to improve their proficiency in English. As Crystal points out "about a quarter of the world's population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is readily growing" (6) but it has to be remembered especially in India that there is certainly an issue among the non-compatible students in English. It is very clear that every graduate is likely to attain an employment at the end of their study and most important of it is to stay successful in their chosen occupations. It has to be bitterly accepted that technically sound students do not get selected in job interviews just because they lack in communication skills but "mainly based on the ability to present his innovative, creative ideas convincingly" (Renukadevi 51). Their dream of going abroad gets shattered when they do not get through the standard linguistic aptitude tests (TOFEL & IELTS). As Clement and Murugavel observe:

Many ... graduates in India are found to be unemployable due to their poor communication skills and lack of confidence. There have been a lot of research papers that have recapped the importance of improving graduates' employability skills; however,

the problem of poor communication skills grows unabated in India. (2)

Engineering and Arts and Science Graduate students equally lack in a range of valuable skills and it is the duty of an English teacher to enable students to sustain themselves in the professional world. It is necessary to create an awareness on the importance of communication in job requirements and the language proficiencies expected by every corporate company today. Every course is introduced with a subject in English in an aim to expose students to the global standards effectively. It is an antiquated thought that mere grammar teaching would facilitate a student to acquire good communication skills. But the English teacher has to be a trainer who would bridge the gap between the student, institution and employer needs. It is necessary for the teacher to follow the new nuances in teaching that caters to the recent job requirements of the world. Not only teaching but also training should be given in different proportions depending on the requirements of the individual.

A student's learning and exposure to English language starts from the classroom itself. But not every Language teacher is ELT trained and very few has the interest in acquiring basic knowledge about the practical sessions that can be handled in the class. Many conferences, workshops and seminars have concentrated on developing the techniques and strategies in the classroom teaching but it has to be admitted in the words of Clement & Murugavel that:

- 1) Lack of training for English professors.
- 2) Students of different levels in the same class.

- 3) Number of students in each class (60 per class).
- 4) Lack of time to complete the prescribed syllabus.
- 5) More importance on written exams (traditional method in India).
- 6) Pressure on teachers to produce high pass percentage in final exams.
- 7) Lack of quality text books.
- 8) Use of workbooks that compile the exercises from previous university question papers.
- 9) Lack of support from college managements.
- 10) English being treated as yet another subject to study.
- 11) Irrelevant syllabus design.
- 12) Lack of relevant methodologies (Clement & Murugavel, 117)

The above drawbacks are still having an effect till this date and effective measures have to be taken by the institutions to improve the quality of the staff. The board of studies, eminent professors and corporate professionals can join hands to formulate a syllabus that would help in fulfilling the requirements of the society. It has to be emphasized in the syllabus that communication skills in English is an important factor that has to be concentrated upon in addition to their academic excellence and as Jeon Jihyeon clearly states that : “Though many teachers understand the importance of communicative competence, the limitations of classroom reality block them from implementing their ideas” (n.pag). Learning Centered Classroom and Language labs should be set up, an environment of work place should

be set up to improve the learning skills of the student and it is evident in the words of Ranjan as he clearly puts in "Good infrastructure is also a reason for good performance" (n.pag). Students should be trained to seamlessly translate their thoughts and words so that they would be adroit in English. Role Plays, Group discussions, reading practices and Listening skills enhancement exercises should be given to students as it will help them to possess a strong knowledge in English that will definitely change the working attitude and will help to improve the employability skills.

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