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**Communicative Competence :**  
**A Way to Enrich Emerging Indian Engineering Students' Employability**

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**Abstract**

*In today's most revolutionary communicative era, the importance of English cannot be denied or ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere. It is the globally acclaimed language of science, aviation, computes, diplomacy and tourism. Having proficiency on the language is a boon for professionals and hence the chances of getting better jobs are brighter. For budding professionals, in addition to analytical and problem solving skills and technical skills, communication skills—the major outcome of modern English learning enhances their confidence level to work in the highly competitive global environment. The present paper explains the significance of English language competence in every walk of the professionals for their bright future and how the teachers and students need to make integrated efforts to build their proficiency in English that would help them be successful in studies, and their professional career.*

**Keywords:** significance of English language competence, effective communication in professional career, ways to build proficiency in English.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The globalization process has brought technical communication to the forefront of academia and industry. With the whole world becoming the global market and businesses becoming diverse and result oriented, professionals and technocrats are facing new challenges in communications every day. The growing importance on oral communication skills by employers has been reverberated internationally. Effective communication enhances the engineers' confidence level. Lack of communication skills paves ways to the low profile of engineering in general public. Hence proficiency in communicative English is very essential for an efficient engineer who has sound technical knowledge to interpret the technical facts in the universal language which everyone in any corner of the world can understand. It is a phenomenon which is needed to be practiced at all levels of experience and regardless of the position an individual holds in organization, everyone must be proficient in this realm.

### **COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: THE NEED OF THIS HOUR**

Communication is an important aspect of everyone's professional life. Communication skills are essential in all spheres of life. Effective communication encompasses the choice of vocabulary, speed of delivery of words, Pronunciation and body language. Being efficient in communication will motivate people to work towards perfection and success in their taken task.

There is nothing great in the possession of degree obtained from renowned university or the college when one cannot get his point across, no matter how competent he is, he will not be perceived positively in his profession. Upon a survey conducted, it was suggested that more than 50% of the engineering projects that are failed purely due to ineffective people's management and the inability of a manager to convey his message to the team due to various communication barriers. This is the rationality that at all levels, that most employers are seeking to appoint people with good communication skills.

According to Najjar (2002) "communicative competence, including teamwork and professional writing skills for example, the ability to research, write and format basic research reports as well as develop formal oral presentation skills is important to prepare students for both academic success and the workplace." Kang Shumin says: "Learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules". He further opines that: "Learners must also acquire knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact".

Engineering professionals are expected to do multiple language tasking even after their graduation at their workplace through writing, reading, listening, speaking, etc. Effective communication is an indispensable skill for organisation success. Having professionals good at communicative competence allows a firm to learn new skills and technologies, improve quality of their product or service and foster the innovation. For all this reason effective communication is needed by all professional.

A recent newspaper report said that of every hundred interviews, only five qualified for employability. It is not that they were poor in technical skills, but they lacked in communicative competence. As Thomas N. Huckin and Leslie A. Olsen, state: “Scientists and engineers may be technically brilliant and creative, but unless they can convince co-workers, clients, and supervisors of their worth, their technical skills will be unnoticed, unappreciated, and unused”. Communication skills are equally important as their engineering specific knowledge for youngsters aiming at a bright career. Poor communication skills, low confidence levels and improper body language will have effects in securing a job in this competitive world.

## **ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYABILITY**

English Competency is the key factor in improving employment opportunities. In a nation like India, which is having more population the employment market is a crowded space and English language competency is seen as indispensably essential. Besides the accumulation of degrees and postgraduate degrees one might have, technical qualifications, industry experience and so forth, not being able to communicate effectively in English is perhaps the greatest barrier to sustain in the job market.

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 is being measured as international language and the most dominant language in the world, plays a vital role as a tool of communication both nationally and internationally, having gained the status of 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. Hence it is essential for engineering graduates to 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.

## **REASONS FOR LACK OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Engineering stands one of the most popular choices among aspirants for under-graduate courses. The recent survey revealed that the highest percentage of engineering graduates in the country cannot speak fluent English, which is required for jobs in multinational companies. Academicians agree that not having linguistic fluency in English has posed a barrier to many during recruitment. Since the basis of the admission in engineering colleges is limited to maths and science, English skills which are missing right from school are not tested nor honed. Moreover, the attitudes of Engineers in particular tend to emphasize technical and mathematical skills more than communication skills, not realizing that they cannot be successful in their jobs if they are poor listeners, speakers and writers.

Even though the curriculum continues to be in English, students are not insisted to converse in English right from school level. The emphasis has always been on understanding and writing English but hardly on spoken skills.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Education system should place a greater focus on soft skills including language proficiency in the curriculum in secondary school and higher education itself. Steps have to be taken to strengthen language skills development through bridge courses and other supports for incoming students at the entry level in colleges. Language learning is a skill-oriented activity and needs an entirely different pedagogic approach from the one used for other conventional Courses. As the learners are adults they have different learning styles which must be respected by adopting holistic and dynamic approach which will certainly improves engineering professionals' employability.

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