Communicative English: Why it is Essential to Emerging Engineers; The Challenges and Remedies

D. Renukadevi

1Assistant Professor, Department of English, Erode Sengunthar Engineering College, Thudupathi, Erode, Tamilnadu, 638 057. Email: renukarkm@gmail.com

Abstract

English language competence is a significant aspect of an engineering student’s academic life and prospective career. It is because the main mode of communication used and most of the teaching contents and the sources for information are in English. After graduation too, English takes its predominance because it is the official language used in work places global wide. The criteria to be a successful engineer depends not only on the ability to perform calculations and experiments, as in most other jobs, but mainly based on the ability to present his innovative, creative ideas convincingly. Hence proficiency in communicative English is very essential for an efficient engineer who has sound technical background to interpret the technical facts in the universal language which everyone in any corner of the world can understand. The present paper deals with the importance of English language competence in every walk of the professional life of an engineer for his bright future insisting that the engineering students should primarily focus on English learning and be competent with English communication skills so as to tap on the plethora of potential economic benefits that may be the ultimate result when English is taken over by them.

KEYWORDS: English Proficiency for Engineers, Primary problems, Remedies

1.INTRODUCTION

English has been in India since the early 17th century, with the arrival of East India Company. Though its forceful entry was not welcomed earlier by Indians, with the passage of time, it became indispensible by the early 20th century, taking its enormous emergence as the official language and had its indomitable influence and governance over academics. No doubt, today English is the lingua franca of professional education, especially in engineering education where the need for it is
more manifold than it used to be. English for engineers is not just for his occupational purposes but it is the basic tool in the hands of an efficient engineer. That too, in this global arena, English Communication skills are essential for anyone who aspires to carry out his/her professional practice. Engineering communication skills basically represent the fluency in the English language which is the key factor for effective communication.

2. SPECIFIC NEED OF ENGLISH FOR EMERGING ENGINEERS
In the world of engineers, English has become the predominant language for communication. Almost all engineers need to work with technical drawings, discuss dimensions and tolerances, talk about different materials and their properties, describe the shapes of components and how they fit together, describe causes and effects, explain technical problems etc. The language used in these common technical contexts is English. Moreover, Technical writing is the much needed skill to be inherited by the emerging engineers of today. In the recent years, Spoken English also gained an unprecedented predominance in the engineering curriculum. Most of all, the medium of instruction and the sources of information are in English. So acquiring English fluency gradually is very essential for emerging engineers. In their career too, Engineers have to use English on a larger extent, to coordinate with their colleagues and to cope up with the emerging trends.

3. CHALLENGES IN THE ATTAINMENT OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH
In India which is highly noted for its cultural and linguistic diversity, the engineering students coming from varied backgrounds are facing great challenges, while taking up this professional course of their dream. With their entry into engineering colleges, most of the Indian students who had their education so far in their regional languages, start digesting the bitter truth that they have to keep pace with the others of better linguistic competence in English in a common set up in which there is no special consideration for their pre knowledge on English, the way in which English is ‘practised’ by them or their linguistic competence in English. Unfortunately, even in this fast paced technological era, majority of students have not got the opportunity of learning English in a better way because of obsolete methodologies followed in most of the engineering institutions.

4. REASONS FOR LACK OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AMONG ENGINEERING STUDENTS
Learners personality traits, their learning strengths, styles and preferences are not taken into serious consideration before getting into a way to teach English as a communicative language for blooming engineers. Also, prior preference is given to specialized subjects by the students even at their very entry level in the engineering
institutions and in the later years of learning too, English is almost brushed aside both by the curriculum and by the students until the time of placement when it has to be reincarnated in the name of communicative English after a long phase. The main finding is that the majority of students use little English outside their program because they are mainly dependent on their peer group for their social-life and activities outside the academic context. Hence opportunities to use English are negligible. Another consequence is that the persistent lack of confidence in speaking English outside campus inhibits the students from developing social independence and it is greatly reflected in the interview, where they have to prove themselves chiefly with their English speaking skills. Their reluctance in acquiring the most needed English language skill generally results in lack of confidence in writing skills during their work on independent research projects where English writing skills are essential.

5. CONCLUSION:
THE NEED OF THIS HOUR

- A positive guidance and high motivation to channelize the students from vernacular background towards successful professional life is much needed from the side of educators of English for blooming engineers. This is because English builds in an engineer a great confidence to face his highly competitive, most challenging professional field.
- Remedial measures in the form of unconventional methods like e-learning can be adopted for effective teaching of communicative and technical English.
- Student-friendly or learner-centric environment will facilitate the learners of English at the crucial period of their professional education.
- What is preferred today is a more holistic, dynamic approach that arouses the real interest and awareness in learning the universal language which will greatly support their engineering professional growth.

REFERENCES

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