

**Language Competency –
Promoting Communicative Approach For Engineering students.**

Mr. Billa Jaheer,

Assistant Professor of English,
Dept. of Humanities and Sciences,
Annamacharya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Rajampet. Kadapa (Dist.) A.P, India.
Email:zahoob@gmail.com

Abstract

In this world of gizmos, particularly with the cut-throat competition existing in the global arena, Communication skills play a key role for global communications. To face the impending future encounters at the workplace and to meet the demands of the organizations the engineering graduates got to be equipped with excellent communication skills. Name any organization which is considered to be highly reputed is in fact looking for professionals who possess the gift of gab, garrulous and tackle the bottle-necks in the organization with their exceptionally phenomenal communication and inter-personal skills. The companies like Google and Microsoft are today looking for engineering graduates who not only have technical knowledge and but have immense talent of communicating with the people for official transactions. So the need of the hour is to create the methods and techniques which would meet the communicative requirements of the engineering graduates. In this paper I am trying to explore the methods which can be implemented and imparted among engineering students to make them viably competent and effective communicators.

Key words

Communication skills, Engineering students, Language lab, Teacher, Competence and Presentation

Introduction

‘The Earth is revolving round the Sun’ is the known fact alongside ‘the globe is revolving round the English language’. The English language, inter nationally a language of the asset, as it is used in business, technology, media etc. and intranationally a lingua franca leads us to globalization. ‘Think logically and speak clearly’ is the living slogan in this educational arena. Now-a-days, engineering education is given priority at this juncture communicative competence is playing a crucial role in competing the requirements of this competitive world. Engineering students in rural areas are suffering from the low level of communicative competence. For developing language proficiency of graduates, they require higher levels of speaking skills to serve the need of the purpose like examinations and placements. Engineering students are presumed to work for industries in India and abroad to get the ability to communicate in different situations.

The need of Communication Skills

Most of the intellectual engineering graduates fail to make an impact on the global market mainly because they lack the required communicative competence. It is a high time for every engineering student to realize that

he/she should learn not only technical skills but also communication skills. Communication skills are indispensable for an engineering graduate. Technological University Curricula can no longer afford to ignore the importance of communication skills for engineering students for their educational, as well as professional purposes. It is no way an exaggeration to say that communication skills in English are necessary for sheer survival in this world today. So communicative competence is a key dimension of modernizing Engineering graduates.

Induction of Language Labs:

Innovative trends in science and technology provide an enthusiastic platform for the engineering students to learn communication through technology. Communicative English becomes the unprecedented predominance in JNTUK curriculum. English Laboratory is introduced to the Engineering students to improve the communicative competence through technology as it is a technological aid for the students to learn.

Incorporation of language laboratories enrich the learning skills of the students and provide the wide range of opportunities for the students besides inculcating interest and enthusiasm towards learning easily. The first and foremost chapter, in the university curriculum, is situational dialogues or role plays. K-Van Solutions and Hi-Class are some of the software companies developing the software to give ease to the student before they are going to handle any dialogue in the prescribed curriculum. This language laboratory has a various advanced facilities which can help an engineering student to learn language with effective communication.

Trending Technological Tools for effective communication

The idea of the language laboratory establishment came into existence in education in the 1960s. With the popularity of internet in the 1990s advanced the development of education through the technological tools. Multimedia control server, headsets and microphones,

Communicating response pad, etc. are the gear up tools to use in language labs. Computer-Assisted Language Lab, Web-Assisted Language Lab, Mobile Assisted Language Lab, Radio and T.V. Studios are all various technological devices to develop the communicative competence of the students. For instance, look into the dictionary for a word is an outdated fashion and watch the web in cell phone or computer by consulting technology is an updated passion for the technological students. Demand for technology in the engineering field makes emerge these technological tools. Language learning and promoting language becomes easier and interesting to both the pedagogy and the learner.

Importance of Computer-Assisted Language Lab (CALL)

Computer Assisted Language Labs provide repeated practice for the average students to meet their objectives. At present, students have got exhausted, boring, and painful and lose interest in working with the Text Assisted Language Labs. Computer Assisted Language Labs attract the students with its own features. These labs teach more interesting and attractive ways. Though the students are taking tedious drill, it becomes more interesting to take the drill. These labs motivate students to go beyond the initial mastery over the topic. Intelligent students can go speedily in meeting the tasks set to them and the other students can go according to their own limitations of their knowledge. When the students work with the computer they can work individually. After gathering the content, they work in pairs and teams. This feasibility is available in lab classes. They learn from the internet as well as from their interactive communication with their peers. Students can estimate their level of knowledge and compare their strengths with their classmates. Teachers' contribution in making them learning the skills plays the essential role in the lab.

The teacher can get login with the server system, teacher can attend the student individually and clarify the doubts while they are working. Teacher can engage all levels of students very fruitfully. Teachers' planning prior to come to the language labs work very well in such type of labs. If an online test is conducted to the students, immediate result and feedback will be provided to each student. Through this, they can estimate themselves and practice to get the good result. Tedious evaluations of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation processes become very handy to the teacher with Computer Assisted Language Labs. Teachers using the CALL software in a sophisticated manner can explore their ideas and promote communicative competence in engineering students.

Role of Web-Assisted Language Lab

The World Wide Web gives exposure to technological students to acquire knowledge. Students get easily hyper media or hyper text communication on the Internet. Knowledge from the different parts of the world is linked together and saved electronically. Web users are transferring and sharing the information and enriching the resources day by day. Promoting communicative competence through the web brings out new approaches to the process of education and instruction.

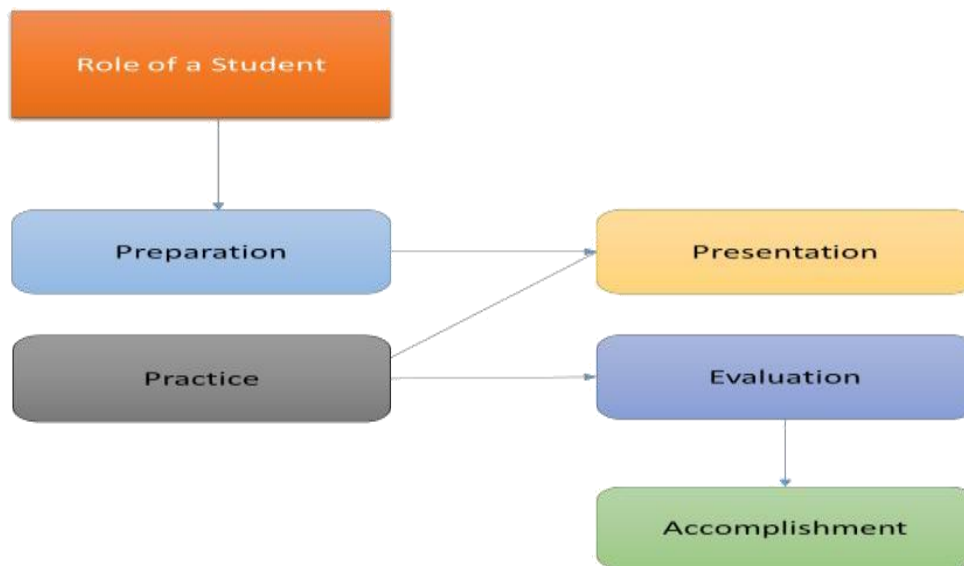
Providing different web addresses in the form of URLs to the students to give practice in the language lab.

They take various exercises from different web sites and get mastery over them. Teacher can divide all the students into pairs and make them participate in discussion with their peers. Perfect monitoring of all students can give a lot of benefit to both the student and the teacher while promoting communicative competence.

Providing the opportunity to work with various websites and allow them to participate in discussions. Students can easily and interestingly develop their communicative competence.

Mobile Assisted Language Lab for the Conduct of Vocabulary and Quiz

Mobile is a common device used by all the students of technology. Now days 90 percent of the students are using cell phones, 20 percent of the students are using tablets and iPods. Common features of these devices now include the Internet access, SMS text-messaging, voice-messaging, cameras, and video-recording. In the process of language learning, all these features empower communicative language practice, access to reliable content, and accomplish the task. This particular lab is more focused for vocabulary and quiz. This mobile technology is useful to the student both inside and outside of the classroom. The teacher can send the chunks of vocabulary or quiz to students. Students can answer at that time or they can take time and answer them. They write the assignments issue by the teacher. It is like continuous learning mode. Whenever students show interest towards the tests they can take them. When the student sees the words send by their teacher they work with the word stems and can improve the vocabulary and quiz in the same manner. Students have fun with their mobile phones. Students are very attentive and focused while they are using mobile phone in the classroom. One way computers are better than mobile phones for handling different types of information but these mobiles are very easy to carry from one place to the other because of portability. Some students don't have their personal computers, for them these cell phones are really a boon. Though this technological lab can have its own limitations but based on the continuous instruction by the instructors it will work very well. Comparitively the mobile is the cheaper than computers and a middle class student also can afford to buy the mobile to work for the technological classes in this present scenario.



Effective utilization of Radio and T.V. Studios

Students usually do presentations in Radio and T.V. In some of the colleges, the management provides the students both the Radio and the T.V. facilities. Students can get their feedback from the society and the other students. Their voice modulation will be tested in the studios. They can listen to their own voice in the Radio and they can see their posture in the T.V. Reading newspaper, participating in the group discussions, debates and quizzes are the significant programmes in both the Media. Students can get recording their sessions and bringing to the teacher for evaluation. Though they evaluate themselves, they feel satisfaction to get evaluated by their teachers also. If they identify their mistake in their pronunciation, bodylanguage etc. they cannot commit the same mistake once again in their life time.

Role of the Student

Whatever may be the technological tool is, after collecting the information the role of the student starts. Every student has to undergo the below stages to improve their communicative competence. Teacher's promoting communicative competence and students' adaptability to the situations should be in a balanced proportion.

- **Preparation-** In this stage, the teacher's role is to recognise the students' basic knowledge to perform the task such as eliciting their previous knowledge, selecting the information, arranging the information logically,

finding out the apt vocabulary to the context, planning for the concept and getting synchronization of the main ideas.

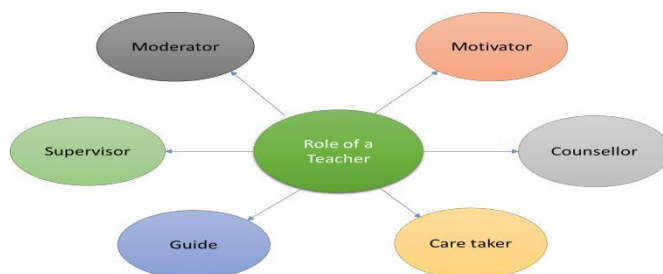
- **Presentation-** In this step, the teacher monitors each student; advice the students about their astute attention, self-monitoring, moderation, elaboration and note taking.
- **Practice-** At this juncture, the teacher encourages the students to look after their language production, pronunciation and body language which includes posture, eye contact and smile.
- **Evaluation-** In this phase, after practicing, the students assess their effectiveness of their own learning by briefing or giving a self-talk, either collaboratively or individually.
- **Accomplishments-** In the last stage, the students transfer their ideas to accomplish their tasks by integrating them with existing knowledge.

Role of a Teacher

Technology with a dedicated teacher is very essential in a language laboratory.

Synchronizing the tools with students knowledge is the prime responsibility of the teacher.

Playing the different roles in the lab is shows the expertise of the teacher.



- **Motivator:** Teacher always motivates the students to participate in different activities in the lab. Strength comes of the words of the teachers. Mesmerizing words of the teacher work on the young minds to reach their goals to develop their communicative competence.

- **Care Taker:** Teacher has to give the assurance to the student that they commit any mistake at the beginning that will be acceptable. This assurance gives them enough of energy. At first, they commit some mistakes but those will be reduced by the monitoring of the teacher and student as well.
- **Counsellor:** Teacher counsels the student when they feel fear to participate in the discussions and presentations. Interacting with the student reduces the tension in the budding engineers. They overcome their fears with the soothing words of the teacher.
- **Moderator:** Sometimes students will be humiliated with the mockery made by the other students in the class. In this connection, teacher has to act like a moderator, who mediates and convinces the other students by making them understand that the mistake made by the student is inevitable in the part of every beginner.
- **Guide:** Teacher has to show a path where they prove themselves in attending presentations in technical symposiums and seminars. Teacher always gives them the strength by extending the helping hand in preparation of the material and giving guidance in every aspect.
- **Supervisor:** Teacher's duty is to supervise the whole class that they are going on in the right way or not. What type of material they are browsing in the internet, the way they are handling the tools in the lab etc. Timely feedback while they are participating in the activities.

Feedback

Promoting communicative competence is a never ending process. It seems every time it starts. The last but not the least skills is to make the students understand getting feedback and giving feedback. It plays an essential role in evaluating a student to uplift to the expectations. Teacher's support in the part of every individual is to give the timely and relevant feedback on the performance of the student. At first, teacher has to take the chance to give the feedback then ask the student to share his/her feedback. While giving the feedback both the teacher and the student has to follow the above points in the picture. In this context of feedback, Brown says in his book *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*: "Learning to swim, to play tennis, to type or to speak all involve a process in which success comes by profiting from mistakes, by using mistakes to obtain feedback from the environment and with that feedback to make new attempts that successively approximate desired

goal.” According to Brown, students learn anything through trial and error method. Positive feedback from the teacher nurtures the students to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Conclusion:

The strongest desire every engineering student nurtures is to get placed in the campus interviews and is made possible only through their communicative competence. Their competency in communication plays an instrumental role in every walk of life. As the technological tools mentioned above are made available at all engineering colleges the students can make the best use of them to promote their communication skills to the fullest core. These tools will certainly make them help hone their skills and progress well in the area they have chosen to excel. If they use technology for limited purposes they can stand by themselves. Teachers can play a significant role to boost up the morale of the students to face the future challenges with great ease. Rigorous monitoring of the teacher through giving them the online tests can give a lot of benefit to the students. While the teacher is promoting the communicative competence, the students have to learn life skills which are the very important ingredients of their future success. Teacher can be a harbinger for the success of engineering students to achieve communication competence in manifolds. The better the engineering students make use of the above mentioned methods and tools the better they become effective communicators.

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