



International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies (IRJIMS)

A Peer-Reviewed Monthly Research Journal

ISSN: 2394-7969 (Online), ISSN: 2394-7950 (Print)

Volume-I, Issue-I, February 2015, Page No. 131-134

Published by: Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://www.irjims.com>

Strategies for English Language Teachers to develop Communication Skills among Engineering and Technology students

Bishnu Prasad Gogoi

Assistant Professor of English The Assam Kaziranga University, Assam, India

Abstract

With the emergence of new technology, English has become a global language, and proficiency in English communication skills is considered highly essential for a person's personal and professional growth. Communication generally means the transfer of ideas, feelings, plans, messages, or information from one person to another. Hence, a student of Engineering and Technology cannot ignore the basic skills of communication. In the globalized context, they need a specific set of language skills for their success throughout. Today, it is effective communication in English that fetches students their dream jobs; helps a professional surge ahead of others; keeps afloat a multinational organization and elevates a common mortal to the dizzy heights of achievements. Thus, it is expected from them to have effective communication skills not just because of decisive breakthroughs in communication technology but also because with each passing day, the impact of the words they say and write seems to grow manifold. At the professional front also, it is communication that decide a person's career curve. It is so, because in the professional world, what professionals do most of the time is communicate. Effective communication skills are indispensable to move them up on the corporate ladder. Keeping this in mind, the English language teacher has to play an important role by taking a judicious responsibility to help the aforesaid students in developing their communication skills. This paper of mine is an attempt to highlight the strategies to be considered by the English language teachers in developing the required communication skills among the students of Engineering and Technology.

Key Words: *Communication Skills, Proficiency, English Language Teacher, Engineering and Technology, Professionals.*

Introduction: In order to maintain relevance with the global environment of the new millennium, Engineering and Technology students require an ever-increasing range of skills. English Communication skills are a vital tool for this, recognized by academicians and industry. English Communication skills are also important, given its widespread status across the globe as a *lingua franca*. Indeed, multilingual skills are considered a salient feature in the make-up of the new global engineer. English communication skills are essential for a student who aspires to carry out his/ her professional practice in the global arena. Today's engineer has to communicate with more number of his / her counterparts across the globe and has to travel to many continents and work away from their home country. But their language proficiency is not enough for them to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently. The engineers produced by the universities / colleges suffer largely due to lack of communicative skills to study in the world class institutions or work in global atmosphere. Effective communication is all about conveying messages to other people clearly and unambiguously with as little distortion as possible. Today's organizations are constantly looking forward for the candidates who have sound communication skills in addition to good technical knowledge. Success is not achieved by them who cannot communicate well. They will get less credit for their achievements than they deserve. Thus, effective communication is a must to influence people and win their minds and hearts. Unfortunately many Engineering and Technology students do not possess these required skills and as a result they are not offered good jobs in the reputed Multi-

National companies. Having kept this factor in mind, the English language teacher should give utmost importance to develop English communication skills among these students, with an objective to make the job aspirants successfully employed. Now let me discuss how an English language teacher can be creative and successful in teaching different skills of communication.

The Role of English Language Teacher: The first and foremost important thing that the English language teacher has to do is to help the students in overcoming their fears about communication and motivate them to develop more positive perceptions of communication skills. He/she is expected to play the roles such as - motivator, counsellor, diagnostician and above all, communication and soft skills trainer. He/she need to be friendly with the students so that they can freely interact and express their problems in learning and improving English communication skills. The students should be involved in various sessions such as Debates; JAM Sessions; Group Discussions; Role Play; etc. in order to strengthen their confidence level. They need to be encouraged to cultivate the habit of reading English newspapers, magazines, fictions, novels, etc. at regular intervals. The English language teacher ought to encourage them to gain command over the essentials of English grammar. He/she has to enable them to learn better correct pronunciation using stress, intonation and rhythm. He/she should motivate them to take active participation in regional and national seminars, symposiums and workshops and remain updated with the latest knowledge in the specialization of English language and communication skills. The English language teachers must also be aware of the latest technologies, methods and approaches of language teaching, explore new ideas and having a certain amount of specialization in the concerned subject.

The Role of English Language Teacher in teaching Listening Skills: Research corroborates the view that human beings spend more time listening than speaking. It is a skill most used by all of us, but we get little training in this. It is primarily so because listening is usually taken for granted. It is often considered a neglected skill. There is a good saying in English, "One cannot become a good communicator unless one is a good listener". So, the teachers of English should make students to realize one important thing that to become effective communicators, they should be good listeners first. Just as a child learns to speak after listening to his dear ones, so do those who learn a new language. It is the responsibility of the teacher to drag the students' attention and concentration to the maximum extent. To develop listening skills among the Engineering and Technology students, the English language teacher can effectively utilize the English Language Laboratory. The rapid advancement in science and technology have produced a number of innovative products to assist the learning process. With the help of head phones and ear phones, the teacher can easily develop the listening skills by asking the students to listen and learn various sounds, rhythms, tones and stress patterns of English language. In addition to this, the English teacher should insist his/her students to learn at their own pace and assess their proficiency by listening to various audio-visual materials to enhance their listening skills. The teacher should also be well equipped to use all the latest technical aids available. He/she can also execute the following activity to develop listening skills among the Engineering and Technology students. Before the commencement of class, the teacher needs to choose a short article from a newspaper or a magazine and read it aloud to the entire class. After the reading task is complete, the teacher should ask a few questions to get quick response from the students verbally and then ask them to write their answers on the sheet of paper. After giving a few minutes time, the teacher should again ask them if anyone knew the answers to the questions. It is unlikely that any one person will have answered all the questions correctly. The teacher should ask them why they did not remember much after listening to the provided article. Discuss how they could improve their listening skills.

The Role of English Language Teacher in teaching Speaking Skills: Like listening, speaking is crucial to effective communication. Speaking is the purposeful process by which people, using audible and visible symbols, communicate meaning in the minds of their listeners. It is flexible, changing, as well as complex and varied. Of late, not only the Engineering students but also other students of different courses develop a sort of fear to speak in English. The English language teacher should come to their rescue and motivate them to overcome this fear as quickly as possible. Most of the students find it difficult to convey their thoughts, because of a strong influence of their regional language and mother tongue. In order to overcome this particular problem in the student community,

the English language teacher should first make the students feel, “ease at home” when he/she helps the students speak in English. This can be done through various fun filled group activities such as – Group Discussions, Debates, Role Plays, Just a Minute Sessions, etc. The teacher can adapt a student-centred approach to teaching. In this way, the students are made to speak most of the time and ample opportunities should be created for the students to use English not only in the college campus but also outside. Repeated exposure to the language will prove to be highly beneficial to them. Above all, the teacher should encourage the students of Engineering and Technology by asking them to try to become less hesitant and more confident while they speak to someone. Students should be constantly motivated to speak in English rather than in their mother tongue. The English teacher can also do the following activity to develop speaking skills among the Engineering and Technology students. Debate is the best way that the teachers can provide their students with the opportunity to practice their communication skills. Research suggests that debate encourages different types of responses, help students to develop convincing arguments, and allow teachers and students to learn from one another. In addition to this, the English language teachers can also organize mock interviews, oral presentations to sharpen the communication skills of the students.

The Role of English Language Teacher in teaching Reading Skills: “Reading maketh a full man”— Francis Bacon, the famous essayist, has rightly observed in his well-known essay, “Of Studies.” Reading is an important communicative process and reading skills are probably the most important language skills required for academic and professional purposes. Comprehension in reading refers to the identification of the central theme, main ideas, supporting details, and writing patterns. Reading helps a student improve his vocabulary, develops his comprehension ability and increases his language style. Hence, the teacher should take this into consideration and help the student master the skills of reading. To develop the reading skills in the Engineering and Technology students, the English language teacher can give a few reading comprehensions in the form of stories, descriptions and narrations. The learners can be encouraged by allowing them to follow the different methods of reading such as skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive. Following this the students can be asked to pick out the difficult words and to derive the meaning of those words from the context. In this way, the students can definitely improve their vocabulary besides comprehending the given passage without the help of a dictionary. In order to be an efficient reader, one need to develop visual perception skills as well. Visual perception is a basic requirement for reading effectiveness because we recognize a word through sight. Inaccurate visual perception may lead to visual misunderstanding and lack of comprehension. It may also lead to confusion and misunderstanding. The English language teacher should encourage his/her students to develop their visual perception skills perfectly. By all means, effective reading skills are vital to achieving success not only in one’s academic but also professional life. Usually, it is observed that only good readers are good communicators. Therefore, it is a skill that cannot be ignored. It is advisable, therefore, to acquire efficient reading skills as early as possible.

The Role of English Language Teacher in teaching Writing Skills: Francis Bacon right opined that “Writing makes an exact man”. So to make a man exact, the English language teacher should not forget to teach the students the required skill of writing. But writing is rather a difficult task which requires conscious efforts. Language laboratory will be a good resource for the English teachers to develop the writing skills of the students. Writing can be practiced through typing on gap filled exercises and model format for letters, reports and resumes. Later, these can be observed and edited by the instructor/teacher through the teacher’s console. The English language teacher has to remind the students very frequently to brush up on the basics of English grammar, which are essential to become a good writer.

The English teacher can also execute the following activity to develop writing skills among the Engineering and Technology students. The English teacher can ask the students to write articles on recent issues, descriptive essays about a person or place they have recently come across. They can conduct writing workshops on letter, report, resume, poster and project writing and provide remedial feedback to the learners. One of the quickest ways to improve writing is through feedback. In this process, the language teacher need to point out the errors and also help the students correcting them. The teacher should also guide the students to make a conscious commitment to strive for better writing every day.

Conclusion: Of late, teaching English to the Engineering and Technology students is a great challenge. Communication skills among these said students can be developed by rigorous training programmes and lot of practice work. It requires persistent efforts. Due to the unprecedented importance given to good communication skills, it has become imperative on the part of students to master them. As teachers of English, it is incumbent upon us to help students discover the astonishing power of the English language and it is our bounden duty to play a pivotal role in developing the four Skills of English language among the students of Engineering and Technology.

References:

1. Bhattacharya, I. An Approach to Communication Skills. Pearson, New Delhi 2009.
2. Bhatnagar, M., Bhatnagar, N. Communicative English for Engineers and Professionals. Pearson, New Delhi 2011.
3. Brumfit, C.J. Problems and Principles in English Teaching. Pergamon Institute of English, U.K., 1986.
4. Davies, John. Communication Skills: A Guide for Engineering and Applied Science. Prentice Hall of Australia Pty Limited. Australia, 2001.
5. Ellis, Richard. Communication Skills: Step Ladders to Success for Professionals. Intellect Books. USA, 2009.
6. Kumar, S., Lata, P. Communication Skills. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012.
7. Mitra, Barun K. Effective Technical Communication: A Guide for Scientists and Engineers. Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2006.
8. Prasad, P. The Functional Aspects of Communicational Skills. New Delhi, Katson Books, 2012.
9. Riemer, Marc J. Communication Skills for the 21st Century Engineer. Global Journal of Engineering Education. Vol.11, Issue 1. Published in Australia, 2007.
10. Rizvi, A, M. Effective Technical Communication. Tata McGraw Hills Education Pvt. ltd. New Delhi, 2005.
11. Sarmah. S., Mishra, B. Communication Skills for Engineers & Scientists, New Delhi, PHI Learning Pvt ltd. New Delhi, 2009.
