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EQUIPPING THE ENGINEERING STUDENTS WITH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR JOB POTENTIALITY THROUGH LANGUAGE LABS

T. NARESH NAIDU

Assistant Professor, Intell Engineering College, Anantapur, A.P (India)



T. NARESH NAIDU

ABSTRACT

Communication Skills are of paramount importance and it is very clear that the corporate culture and its heritage thrive on effective communication. In particular for an individual's prosperity and growth rests on communicative potentialities, so also with an organization. That's why the universities and the professional colleges focus on importance related to skills related in language and communication among the students in order to live up to the mark in this fast-changing world. In fast-paced competitive world, ability to communicate effectively is the most significant factor for the Engineering students. In order to enrich the skills of students related to job potentiality; English Language Communication Skills Lab (ELCS) plays a vital role in the Engineering curriculum of various universities in India. The present paper emphasizes on equipping the Engineering students with communication skills for job potentiality through this module i.e. Language Labs. It also helps cater to the needs and requirements of the employees as well as employers.

Key words: potentiality, TALL, fast-paced, enrich, corporate culture

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Introduction

Competency in English language is an important aspect not only in the academic arena and prospective career of the Engineering students. They need to handle different situations in their professional career. In this context, the language laboratories play a predominant role in equipping the engineering graduates with effective communication skills. They enable the students to acquire substantial abilities in academic matters as well as to reach the expectations of the employers in the corporate society. The first and foremost objective of the language labs is to focus on LSRW through which the communicative skills. As English and communication skills have reached to the most significant level in the world, language labs are the significant approach in improving or equipping the students with the language and communication

skills scientifically. They provide the wide range of learning opportunities for the engineering graduates as well as promoting interest and enthusiasm.

At present, engineering students need to think critically, creatively, logically and intellectually in order to find suitable solutions to the problems, communicate clearly, working judiciously at a work place in order to get placements in the reputed companies as well as to carve a niche in the industry. The recruiters of the MNCs look for those candidates who are the best, the most articulate and deliver value to the industry. So, in this scenario, in many engineering colleges, the faculty of English play a key role in training the candidates for suitable job positions through practical sessions such as GDs, Interviews, SDs, JAM sessions, etc., via language labs i.e. Teacher Assisted Language Lab (TALL) or Communication Skills Lab and Computer Assisted

Language lab(CALL). The integration of these labs will help the students improve their employability skills effectively.

Review of Related Works

Russell N. Campbell (1967-680), University of California, Los Angeles, in his article, "The language Laboratory and Pronunciation Teaching" published in "Journal of English Language Teaching" , expressed that the teaching of modern languages has become a responsible task. Language labs are one of the modern techniques being followed to practice speech sounds and learn right pronunciation. Undoubtedly, the language labs can be used to maximize its contribution to the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages.

Sheela. K.S. (2013), Associate professor, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Guntur district, A.P., India, in her research article " English Language in Relevance with Employability Skills" published in Research Journal of English Language and Literature, explained that employability skills are general skills that are needed to get jobs and they also help to stay in a job and work. One can get job with his or her talent but stay in a job needs survival skills as the classroom while putting the skills learnt into practice.

Shikha Seetha (2013), Associate professor , VNS Group of Institutions , Bhopal, M.P., India, in her research article entitled " Necessity of Soft skills Training for Students and professionals", stated that effective communication and interpersonal skills are crucial to enhance employability opportunities and to become oneself successful in a corporate world. A particular corporate program for soft skills may help the candidates to equip themselves up to the expectations of the employers.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To improve LSRW skills of the engineering students.
2. To equip the employability skills practically through language labs.
3. To learn good pronunciation and accent.
4. To achieve the targeted skills by integrating the TALL and CALL.

Importance of Language Laboratories: In the era of IT, the English language has been witnessing several innovative methods in the form of electronic devices

for easy learning and teaching the subject. The modern methodology is supporting the learners and teachers for quick learning and effective teaching. All the universities have been giving importance in prescribing the language laboratories in the curriculum. They thought that this is the facilitation for learners by self-learning or teaching. Technological devices are useful to the teachers who wish to bring sounds and sights into the classroom. Language labs, LCD projectors, computer-related technologies and E-classes are the current practices in improving the language and communication skills of engineering students for employability.

At present, in the Engineering Curriculum, the language labs play a significant role to meet the objectives designed in the syllabus. Labs are interactive in the sense that the teacher could monitor and speak with students from the main control and students could reply or record their voices or responses for some time till the achievement of accuracy over the recorded one. Students are very careful in the language labs to observe the things very keenly in order to keep themselves abreast with the requirements peer students.

Parts of Language Labs:English Language Communication Skills Lab consists of two parts for comfortable teaching and enhancing the employability skills of the engineering students.

Teacher Assisted Language Lab (TALL): Interactive approach is adopted in labs. A teacher makes the candidates participate in all the activities. It is also known as Communication Skills Lab. The teacher conducts good number of activities such as GDs, Interviews, JAM sessions, SDs, Conversations, etc. to improve the communicative abilities of the students.

Computer Assisted Language Lab: Generally it is equipped with 60 systems, one master console, LAN facility and English Language software for self-study by learners. CALL is gaining ground with more and more teachers and learners becoming literate. Today, getting valuable information has become cheaper through technology and encouraging the varieties of software for language learning in all the engineering colleges.

Statement of the Problem: The demanding needs of English Language and Communication Skills in

engineering curriculum as well as in the job market have placed great emphasis on students' needs to become proficient in language and possess effective and added communication skills. After the completion of B. Tech course, students will search for jobs in MNCs. In this connection, possessing communication skills is essential for any kind of job. So the present study focuses on equipping the engineering students with communication skills for job-potentiality through language labs.

Methodology: It is purely based upon the empirical survey of the investigation. The present study "Equipping the Engineering Students with communication Skills for Job-Potentiality through

language labs", the investigator has used the questionnaires and conducted the survey for collecting opinions of faculty of English and the students of engineering colleges. In this study, the investigator has distributed the questionnaires to engineering colleges of Anantapur district. Classroom observation and consulting the experts regarding the enhancement of job-potentiality to the engineering students are taken up by the investigator.

The data is collected through the structured questionnaires separately for teachers of English and the students of engineering. It is collected from the following colleges presented as below.

Table-1: List of Engineering Colleges in Anantapur District chosen for the Present Study

S.No.	Name of the Engineering College
1	Anantha Lakshmi Institute of Technology & Sciences, Anantapur.
2	BIT Institute of Technology, Hindupur.
3	Chiranjeevi Reddy Institute of Engineering & Technology, Anantapur.
4	Gates Institute of Technology, Gooty.
5	Intell Engineering College, Anantapur.
6	Intellectual Institute of Technology, Anantapur.
7	JNTU College of Engineering, Anantapur.
8	P.V.K.K. Institute of Technology, Anantapur.
9	Shri Shiridi Sai Institute of Science & Engineering, Anantapur .
10	Shri Sai Institute of Engineering & Technology, Anantapur.
11	Sir C.V. Raman Institute of Technology & Sciences, Tadipatri .
12	Sri Krishna Devaraya Engineering College, Gooty
13	Sri Krishnadevaraya University College of Engineering, Anantapur.
14	Sri Sai College of Engineering & Technology, Anantapur.
15	Sri Venkateswara Institute of Technology, Anantapur.
16	Srinivasa Ramanujan Institute of Technology, Anantapur.
17	Tadipatri Engineering College, Tadipatri.

Table-2: Questionnaire for English Teachers of Engineering Colleges and their Responses:

S.No.	Questions to the Teachers	Responses of the Teachers	Investigator's Observation
1.	Do you handle language labs for improving communication skills and English pronunciation?	In almost all engineering colleges have language labs. The teachers handle them for various purposes. There is a scope for pronunciation practice also.	Well-equipped language labs are required.
2.	Do you have any special training in teaching communication skills?	No particular training is given to the teachers in teaching communication skills at the university level or at the college level.	Orientation programmes like Train the Trainers to be conducted.
3.	Do you follow any software for teaching communication skills? (a)If please mention (b)Whether it is prescribed or suggested by the university?	Teachers follow the prescribed or suggested software for teaching communication skills.	Technical and language problems in software
4.	Do you take any assistance of technology for teaching communication skills?	Teachers take the assistance of technology such as power point presentation, audio visual aids, showing recorded lectures, etc. to the students.	Technology creates interest among both communities.
5.	To what extent, the lab helps the engineering students to improve job-potentiality in the present market?	Teachers strongly accepted that the language labs are the only ways to improve communication skills or job-potentiality skills.	Lab stands for practice. So practice makes a man perfect.

Table-3: Questionnaire for the Engineering Students and their responses:

S. No.	Questions to the Teachers	Responses of the Teachers	Investigator's Observation
1.	Do you use language lab everyday for updating correct pronunciation?	Students responded that lab helps in updating their pronunciation skills.	Not every day. It is available only weekly three hours.
2.	How much time do you spend in language lab?	Only three hours a week.	Insufficient schedule for lab
3.	Does the software help you to improve communication skills?	Software helps partly in CALL for theoretical areas and TALL helps to learn practical things which help for employment.	No proper updating every year.
4.	Describe your role in the language labs?	As the learners, witness several experiences in the labs which are new and unimaginable. Every experiment is a kind new experience to remember and follow for a longer period for time.	Students taste all flavours of topics in improving the skills of various kinds.
5.	Do you accept strongly about equipping communication skills is possible only through language labs?	There is a strong agreement from the students regarding improving communication skills is possible through only Language Labs.	No Labs except CALL and TALL help to improve communication skills.

Discussion

1. All the engineering colleges in the district have language labs with objective of providing communicative ability among engineering students to face the competitive environment in the job-market. Even they can practice pronunciation skills through lab. But they have three hours of lab every week which is insufficient to equip themselves as successful men. At the same time, they require to have corporate ambience in the labs when they participate in some kind activities such GDs, debates and Interviews.
2. Teachers exercise a lot with all care, concern and commitment about enhancement of employability skills of the students. Yet they require comprehensive training in teaching communication skills to the students. Neither university nor college will take care about the training programs in the district.
3. A prescribed or suggested software by the university is followed in the affiliated colleges of JNTUA. The software in the CALL will help the students imbibe skills related to employability partly where as TALL helps them to become proficient men in the job-market. Integration of these two labs absolutely creates interest and enthusiasm among the learners. But the CALL requires proper updation time to time in terms of service, maintenance, error-update, etc.,
4. Language labs are very much essential to the students as well as to teachers to equip stakeholders' with the requisite skills at the earliest possible way.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. At least an hour practice a day is must. It should be carefully devised in the time-table.
2. Teachers of English in engineering colleges are required to update their skills through the programmes like 'Train the Trainer' sessions.
3. Frequent updating of the systems and its equipment is more essential.
4. Teachers should conduct practical sessions along with the assessment of students' performance marking on the prescribed proforma to get them to know the level of improvement.

5. Preserve the assessment sheets and recorded the practical sessions for future use to improve the proficiency, eloquence, fluency, etc.,

Conclusion

The present study is just an attempt to improve the skills and competencies in the students highlighting the importance of the language labs. The skills the students learn in the engineering curriculum should provide opportunities for employability. Competency in English language is important aspect not only in the academic life and prospective career of the Engineering students. They ought to handle different situations in their professional career. In this context, the language laboratories play a predominant role in equipping the engineering graduates with effective communication skills to establish themselves in any sector.

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Profile of the Author

Mr. T. Naresh Naidu is an Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Sciences, Intell Engineering College, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India. He obtained Master's Degree in English from Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur and Master of Philosophy in English from Dravidian University, Kuppam. He also secured the certificate of State Level Eligibility Test of AP & TS 2014 for Assistant Professorship and Lectureship conducted by Osmania University, Hyderabad. He is working as External Subject Expert Matters for Mobile Tutors Private Limited, Chennai. He participated and presented eight the research articles in National and International conferences so far. Besides, he published four research articles in national and international journals.