



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION SKILLS (ELCS) LABORATORY FOR THE ENGINEERING STUDENTS STUDYING AT COLLEGES AFFILIATED TO THE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY, HYDERABAD AND THE ROLE OF AN ENGLISH TEACHER.

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ABSTRACT

English Language Communication Skills Laboratory, a course for undergraduate engineering students studying at colleges affiliated to the Jawaharlal Nehru Technology University, Hyderabad, India was introduced in August 2005. The main objective of the course is to develop students' pronunciation, conversation, grammar and vocabulary. It would help not only for the rural and regional medium background students but also English medium students to improve their communication skills. Many students are in hesitation and worry to come on the dais to present a paper. In this paper I gave a detailed picture of the English lab syllabus, objectives and advantages to students by lab which make develops students' communication skills in English, the problems of the students and the role of teacher in guiding students in the English lab.

The first-year **Engineering English** course has largely focused on Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills. Final examinations are based on only these skills. In this milieu it was decided that students should be trained in the skills which recruiters look for engineering students who prepare for on-campus recruitment. English language communication skills (ELCS) laboratory was introduced in August 2005. The main objective of the lab is to prepare the students for campus recruitment. The lab makes the students to habit of listening and speaking with accurate pronunciation. Students can record their own voice and play back for self evolution. It acts as a platform for learning, practicing and producing language skills through interactive lessons and communicative mode of teaching. Language laboratories are for drills and for listening comprehension. It is also used for consolidating the learning. Language lab may have the following objectives, purposes, functions to work upon.

The components of the course are:



- Introduction to the sounds of English-Vowels, Diphthongs and Consonants phonetic sounds.
- Introduction to Stress and Intonation
- Situational Dialogues / Role Play
- Oral Presentations- Prepared and Extempore
- ‘Just a minute’ Sessions (JAM)
- Describing Objects/ Situations/ People
- Debates
- Telephonic Conversation
- Giving Direction

Objectives:

1. To expose the students to a variety of self-instructional, learner-friendly modes of language learning.
2. To help the students cultivate the habit of reading passages from the computer monitor, thus providing them with the required facility to face computer-based competitive exams such GRE, TOEFL, GMAT etc. To enable them to learn better pronunciation through stress on word accent, intonation, and rhythm.
3. To train them to use language effectively to face interviews, group discussions, public speaking.
4. To initiate them into greater use of the computer in resume preparation, report writing, format-making etc.
5. To maintain good linguistic competence- through accuracy in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.
6. To enrich the discourse competence, to prepare the learner to be able to produce contextualize written text and speech..

To get a job in companies for engineering students, they should have communication skills in English. The student’s communication skills are noticeable in an interview by the panel of judges. Students can easily learn English by using the communication lab which helps them to speak with exact pronunciation. Many students in India have lack of communication skills in English. Even though they are good at English, their stage fear and poor body language make them outside from the companies. Some people may be good at communicating through writing but they may have problems speaking in front of an audience. Some may be good at interpersonal communication, but may not feel comfortable making presentations.

Advantages of Language Lab

Acoustics:



English Lab provides an opportunity to all learners to hear the instructions. Each learner can listen to the lesson material at a level set by the Instructor and also receive guidance from the teacher. Individual headsets give the students the accurate and correct pronunciation.

Developing Listening Skills:

We know that listening skill is very important aspect in language learning. Language lab helps learners to develop good listening skills. Learners hear the correct language patterns all the time through their headsets. The students might be attentive towards the sounds in the lab more careful than the theory classes.

Privacy and Effective Learning:

Individual headsets provide learners with a psychological privacy. They promote not only speaking ability but also effective learning. It encourages the students to speak so that the mute and shy people including other students get benefit from it. They can practice the sounds according British pronunciation which help them to speak with correct pronunciation. The shy learners can get more benefits from the lab. Students can be supervised individually by the monitor so that their doubts can be clarified easily. In theory classes, the students usually stop speaking when teacher communicates with an individual learner but in a lab they will continue working without interruption. The students can improve their language skills effectively by listening the material in the lab.

Overcoming Shyness:

The use of Language learning system encourages learner to talk freely and loose their shyness when talking in front of the people. Lab systems tend to make students more anonymous.

Attention and Concentration:

Since the language lab allows the learner to listen to the program individually, each individual learner's attention may be focused on the program material being studied. The attention and concentration to students by lab make them to learn more things in the lab.

Oral Testing:

The students can test their voice by producing the sounds. The testing will make the students to speak without fear and to bring the students on one path which focus on learning English.

Record / Comparing:



The learners have the ability to record their own voices along with the master stimulus. Each learner can be working interactively on different segments within the same program or be working with completely different program material.

Role Playing Exercises:

Using the random pairing/random-grouping features that all advanced modern language learning systems incorporate, instructors can generate a variety of exercises structured around role-playing. Learners can be grouped together in small numbers and hold conversational practice with each other.

Teacher Monitoring:

Since the instructor is not concentrating on producing the next question or drill, he/she can concentrate more on the student responses. The instructor has more time to produce materials and oversee class activities due to the automatic, rather than manually, controlled instructor console features.

Role of English Language Teachers in English Language Communication Lab:

Once upon a time, the role of an English teacher is to explain the English lessons in regional language (translation method) but in the modern age, English language teachers have expected to play the following roles:

- 1) As an English teacher, he has to teach the lessons and grammar with full of examples.
- 2) As a communication skills consultant, English teacher works out and plans for improvement of students communication skills by introducing new activities like group discussion, debates, situational dialogues or other activities.
- 3) As a soft skills trainer, he must train the students to empower them. Though we have had students who are quite experienced with computers, we have also had some students who had seldom used a computer; lacked basic knowledge such as how to operate a mouse or open a folder; and lacked the vocabulary, reading, and listening skills to follow instructions for using the computer. We know that most of the students have the communication problem. Sometimes they do not have adequate language proficiency.

Communication and soft skills and ability to learn on their own are very important for those who join the company. English Teachers have a responsibility to help the students in overcoming their fears about communicating and to assist students in developing more positive perceptions of communication activities.

How the Learners Can Overcome Their Communication Problems

- a) Try to know about your communication nervousness.
- b) Accept your mistakes and if you have fear and nervousness when you are asked to speak before of an audience.
- c) Keep the point in your mind that speech anxiety is a natural emotion.
- d) Write your mistakes and find out all these where you are committing errors.
- e) Take steps to develop your confidence level.
- f) Share your communication problems with your teacher.
- g) Have an outline plan of your presentation.
- h) Take steps to improve your English and your pronunciation.
- i) Utilize the lab for your communication improvement.
- j) Try to participate in all kinds of topics actively so that you can acquire language.
- k) The teacher should identify the areas in which students have communication problems and training should be individualized.

Conclusion:

The paper has given a detailed picture of advantages of the English language communication lab. The syllabus for engineering students and its objectives were given in the paper. The English language teacher is not just a teacher of grammar and sentence structure; he/she is expected to play an active role as a diagnostician, counselor, communication specialist, soft skills trainer.

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