



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT

*The objective of any Engineering college is to impart technical - based knowledge education, to develop the professional skills for immediate employment. Due to globalization many well-reputed companies have come into India in search of engineers with excellent communication skills. Any job called for private or corporate sector mainly, demands fluency in English language as an important factor .Apart from technical knowledge, soft skills and commanding proficiency in English language are necessary to work. English language proficiency in a globalizing India is very resourceful and so it open doors into the world of professional employment in India and abroad. Proficiency of a language refers to certain level of competence in skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Hence, communication skills are the basic foundation and integral part of a technocrat.*

**Keyword:** Fluency, Communication, Employment, Proficiency, Language

#### **Introduction:**

Fluency is the ability to speak or write a particular foreign language easily and accurately. Achieving English language fluency takes a great deal of effort for students learning English as a second language. One should not confuse the term fluency with mastery; fluency is a skill which is to be attainable whereas, mastery requires a number of years of extensive language study broad knowledge of vocabulary etc., knowing the exact definition of fluency is the first step in gaining fluency in and mastery of the language.

There are two ways of communication i.e. the verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Man is vocal and thus verbal communication refers to the words spoken by a person i.e. origin of a message which is encoded by the sender and transmitted through the channel to the receiver. On the other, Non-verbal communication refers to “all external

stimuli other than spoken or written words and including body motion, characteristics of appearance, characteristics of voice and use of space and distancing” (Sereno and Bodaken). All these non-verbal characteristics taken together are also called as body language. Body language plays an important role in oral communication.

Sigmund Freud’s observation may appear to be an exaggeration but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth: “He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent he chats with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore” (Knapp 12). The two way means of communication are closely well-knit. Proper training is essential to acquire the skill of effective communication. Communication depends not only on the words spoken but also on how it is spoken i.e. facial expression, body movements etc., and so communication is dynamic, irreversible, proactive, interactive and contextual. All languages are used for communication. Language plays a great part in the mental, emotional and social development of a person.

### **English Language and Communication**

English language is the window which opens up the human achievement to new horizons beyond. Many countries are teaching English as a second or foreign language and there are many people who use English as a means of communication, along with their mother tongue. The roles of English have been enlarged in business, media and corporate communication. The position of English in the world has changed so greatly. Economic and technological forces played their part in keeping English at the centre of communication.

English has become an international commodity. English language is re-inventing itself as the tool of global communication. English is the language of administration in inter-state and between the centre and the states. Man is vocal; he uses his body for gestures of many kinds. Thus, both speech and gesture can be represented in picture form or symbolically and conveyed beyond the immediate context. Man, in common with other creatures, uses signals, but he also uses language with a subtlety and complexity and range far beyond anything known to.

The elements of the visible code are as follows:

### **Personal Appearance**

The first impact on the audience/listener is created by the ‘personal appearance’ of the active part played by a speaker (Mohan and Meera). One’s appearance may put the audience into a resistant or even an enmity attitude or induce in them a receptive mood which is essential for the success of communication.

## **Posture**

‘Posture’ also conveys a meaning to a certain extent. It generally refers to the way one stand, sit and walk. A speaker can also analyse whether his communication is understood by observing the posture of the listener.

## **Gestures**

‘Gestures’ too play a significant part in making communication effective. Playing with a ring, twisting a key-chain etc., are some of the gestures which shows a speaker’s attitude of communication. On the other side, Gestures are used to communicate short messages (“yes”, “no”, “go there”, “be silent”) and other discourse markers (11). These gestures enhance the impact and add a greater value impact upon the listener.

In sign language articulation, the analogue of the movable articulator in speech (the tongue) is the hand or hands. These may adopt several basic shapes: open, clenched, one or more fingers extended with the others closed, one or more fingers curved, etc., No other part of the body is used as an articulator: even the rare full arm motions are accompanied by a distinctive hand gesture, and signs for actions characteristic of the feet, such as walking and dancing are made with the hand. The hands may be used in a stationary position or moved up, down, forward, back, to the left, to the right, in concert, parallel to each other, or crossing over each other.” (Ljung 119-127).

Gestures are formed by movements of the facial muscles, head, limbs or body. These movements may express or emphasize a thought, feeling, or mood. There are at least three major divisions like use of gesture as an accompaniment to oral language; use of gesture by itself as the language, as in the case of deaf-mutes; use of gesture as an independent means of communication.

Gesturing is inevitable. We clap our hands for approbation, rub our hands in delight, manipulate our fingers while in a fidgety state, wring our hands in distress, raise them in wonder and astonishment, snap the fingers for calling the attention of the other, use the palm of the right hand for blessing, with index finger erect and other fingers of the right hand forming a fist, we warn others, we shrug the shoulders for showing that we are not responsible, or that we don't know something, we wink at others in collusion and glare at others and exchange meaningful, understanding with conspiratorial looks and connivance.

We raise our brow in frown and in wonder, use our fist to threaten, and raise the hand with the fist to convey solidarity; we bite the lips to acknowledge our errors, and in vexatious circumstances; fold the palms to greet the others, and pray to gods; fall flat on our stomach with hands stretched over the head, and legs also stretched out to surrender ourselves to the

one before whom we fall flat; we bend our knees, and worship. While the ordinary language can be used in its written medium even when the addressee is absent whereas performance of gesture requires an audience.

Oral speech is produced manually; this manual production of speech is different from the manual production of gestural signs. In case of gestural signs, the medium is manual in the sense that manipulation of hands, fingers, palms, elbows, and other body parts is made.

There are three elements in the description of nonverbal communication, according to Poyotos, 'gesture', 'manner' and 'posture' (Thirumalai). By 'gesture' Poyotos means conscious or unconscious body movement made mainly with the head, the face alone, or the limbs, learned or somatogenic, and serving as a primary communicative tool, dependent or independent from, verbal language; either simultaneous or alternating with it, and modified by the conditioning background (smiles, eye movements, a gesture of beckoning, etc.,).

'Manner' is seen similar to gesture, but it is more or less dynamic body attitude and socially codified according to specific situations, either simultaneous or alternating with verbal language (the way one eats at the table, greets others, coughs, stretches, etc.,).

'Posture' is a conscious or unconscious general position of the body, more static than gesture, learned or somatogenic, either simultaneous or alternating with verbal language, modified by social norms and by the rest of the conditioning background, and used less as a communicative tool, although it may reveal affective states and social status (sitting, standing, joining both hands behind one's back while walking, etc.,).

Just as human languages become an integral part and indices of social rank and behavior, gestural communication, apart from its use as a mere communication channel and an art form in itself, is also used to exhibit implicitly the underlying social relations. Use of gestures in speech also has the function of announcing that speech is in progress and that the individual speaking is in a state of deliberate act of expression. Another important characteristic of gestural communication in Indian communities seems to be the phenomenon of suppression of gestures or avoidance of gestures in oral communicative acts.

### **Facial Expression**

The face is the most expressive of all the parts of the human body. A smile (friendliness), a frown (discontent), raising the eyebrows (disbelief) can add to the meaning being conveyed through verbal means. Whereas, an effective communication turned out to be a failure because the speaker would not have proper 'facial expressions' (Mohan and Meera).

### **Eye Contact**

‘Eye contact’ enables the communicator to alter, adjust and reframe his message while transmitting it. Studies have shown that better eye-contact leads to more effective communication. It has been rightly said that the eye is an extension of the brain and a window of the soul.

### **Space Distancing**

‘Space distancing’ differs from culture to culture. For example, in India two male adults may hug each other and walk hand in hand simply because they are friends, whereas in another country their relationship may be misconstrued. Therefore, ‘Space distancing’ can cause troublesome to a communicator (12). Thus, the visible code is significant as the verbal code. The visible code differs (from culture to culture) and so care should be taken to use the appropriate symbols in cross-cultural contexts.

A language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. Language is the power of vocal communication and it is a system for communicating ideas and feelings using sounds, gestures, signs or marks. Any means of communicating ideas, specifically, human speech, the expression of ideas by the voice and sounds articulated by the organs of the throat and mouth is a language. This is a system for communication. A language is the written and spoken method of combining words to create meaning used by a particular group of people. Language is specific to humans, that is to say that it distinguishes humans from all other living beings. Language therefore remains potentially a communicative medium capable of expressing ideas and concepts as well as moods, feelings and attitudes.

### **English Language Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and Learning a language process is an art as well as a science. Languages are being taught and learnt everywhere as a first language, second language, foreign language, and language of wider communication for different purposes, in different settings, at different levels and to different group of people. English language which is used as a medium of instruction starting from Standard – I consists a number of factors and aspects which have to be given much importance, in order to have a successful educational planning and implementation.

There are five important components, which are highly responsible for a better teaching and learning activity, namely, a) Learners. b) Teachers. c) School (Learning) environment. d) Social environment (background) and e) Learning materials.



Though the above five components is a common teaching and learning situation, one can find significant differences in different levels of teaching and learning a language (Ravi 3). A set of linguists who based their assumptions of language on psychology made claims that language is nothing but a kind of habit formation. According to linguists, language is learnt through use, through practice. The ways in which the words can be meaningfully combined is defined by the language's syntax and grammar.

The actual meaning of words and combinations of words is defined by the language's semantics. The historical circumstances of India (having been ruled by the British for over two centuries) have given the Indians an easy access to mastering English language, and innumerable opportunities for advancement in the field of science and technology.

Globalization, have enlarged English language teaching and learning in particular, business, media and corporate sector for an effective communication. The economic imperatives and also the technological forces played their role in keeping English language at the centre of communication with the two accepted varieties, such as British and American English. For quite a few decades English language was taught and learnt with the educated 'native' speaker as a model. Thus, English language succeeded in re-inventing itself as the language of global communication.

### **The Role of Language and its Varieties**

Language is one of the privileged possessions of man. Language plays a predominant role in human life towards communicating thoughts, feelings, and ideas for the social development of a person. Language has been identified as a tool of communication for centuries. Language has enabled man to communicate with the environment and to regulate his social behaviour. All languages are meant for communication and on the other hand many people use English language as a mode of communication along with their mother tongue. For more than a century, English has been occupying a unique position in our country and also English plays a vital role in our system of education and in every sphere of our activity too.

The success of communication occurs in the cooperation between two parties, one active or at the giving end and the other passive or at the receiving end and the success is measured in terms of the achievement of not only the effective transmission of the message but also of the intended result. Communication is thus a network of interactions in which the sender and the receiver keep on changing their roles. All living creatures have to communicate with one another of their own group for their survival on this universe. The reasons for the failure of the communication occur as a result of the number of physical and mental barriers.

Some of the barriers are: absence of common frame of reference, also called communication environment, badly encoded messages, disturbance in the transmission channel, in attention

by the receiver, semantic difficulties, vagueness about the objectives to be achieved, psycho-physical factors (Mohan and Meera) and selection of a wrong variety of language.

English is the official language of air transport and shipping; the leading language of science, technology, computers, and commerce; and a major medium of education, publishing, and international negotiation; and so scholars frequently refer to present day English as World English i.e. written forms of American and British English. This kind of formal English, particularly written English, is often called 'standard English' (A version of the language almost universally agreed upon by educated English speakers around the world is called formal written English). English language has acquired the title as “global language” because it is used for business, science and politics globally (“English Language Teaching”). Standard English has at least three identifying characteristics:

- a) It is easy to recognize in print because written conventions are similar world-wide.
- b) It is usually used by news presenters.
- c) Its usage relates to the speaker’s social class and education.

‘Standard English’ today does not depend on accent but mainly depend on the printed language. Present-day English is an immensely varied language, materials derived from many other tongues. Whereas, ‘Modern English’ sometimes described as the dominant language and also the required international language of communications, science, information technology, business, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy.

As a result of the growth of the British Empire, English was adopted in North America, India, Africa, Australia and many other regions, a trend extended with the emergence of the United States as a superpower in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and ‘International English’ which might supplant both current American and British English as a variety of English for international communication. Both England (United Kingdom) and America (United States) have English as their mother tongue. But English spoken in England differs from English spoken by an American (Sachdeva 60). ‘Received Pronunciation’ (RP) which is a standard model of teaching pronunciation (96) has traditionally been regarded as proper English. International English is the concept of the English language which refers to much more than an agreed spelling pattern.

Local variations in the formal written version of the language are quite limited, being restricted largely to the spelling differences between British and American English, along with a few minor differences in grammar and lexis. Teaching can be made possible in any way but good teaching requires detailed knowledge of what language is and how it is learnt. Sometimes it is also referred to as Global English, World English, Common English, Continental English or General English. Thus, these terms refer simply to the array of varieties of English spoken throughout the world.



## **Global Language**

Language learning requires knowledge of vocabulary, sounds and structures. Firstly, the best way to be presented to the students is of structures. Secondly, the other two aspects of language i.e. vocabulary and sounds will automatically be acquired among the students. As M.A.K. Halliday points out, 'language is too rich, complex, subtle, and messy' (44) even to be captured in a single theory and so is language pedagogy. For the presentation of structures, different techniques (definition to be quoted) or study aids including audio and visual may be made use of when needed in particular situation.

Some of the techniques are – i) Situation be created by showing actual objects or by using charts, pictures, etc., ii) Verbal situation may be created by speaking some sentences iii) By using mother tongue if it is needed there (Sachdeva 148). Bilingualism means ability to use two languages. Fluency in a second language requires skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing in practice.

India is a multilingual country, where English language occupies a prior position. Simply achieving high academic qualifications and results no longer work wonders in the challenged scenario. English language proficiency forms an essential requirement of one's collection of "cultural capital" and "cultural goods" which must be acquired in order to enjoy elite status in the society.

English teaching can be used effectively to promote understanding among various regions, religions and linguistic groups. Academic and educational level depends on the depth of the material to study, intellectual content, topic choice and mother tongue supports for treatment of errors, selection of syllabus items, areas of grammar and vocabulary and attitudes of learning relies on motivation.

Language is not just a means of communication but also a cultural window which introduces one to the social and intellectual surroundings. In today's competitive world, it is advisable to pursue higher education in English language. A language attracts people because of the wealth of literature and knowledge enshrined in it. English is available to us as a historical heritage in addition to our own language.

We must make the best use of English to develop ourselves culturally and materially so that we can compete with the best in the world of mind and matter. Adults learning English bring to the task a mature personality, many years of educational training, a developed intelligence, a determination to get what they want, fairly clear aims, and above all strong motivation to make as rapid progress as possible.





### **Challenged Scenario**

There are now many reputed companies that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills and Multi-National Companies that have been recruiting engineers and marketing staff who need to be taught spoken English. There are Medical Transcription (MT) centres which need efficient translators and reporters.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) entails training students, usually in a higher education setting, to use language appropriately for study. It is a challenging and multi-faceted area within the wider field of English Language Teaching (ELT), and is one of the most common forms of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

English for Academic Purposes programme focuses instruction on skills required to perform well in an English-speaking academic context across core subject areas generally encountered in a University setting. Programme may also include a more narrow focus on the more specific linguistic demands of a particular area of study, such as psychology, business or medicine.

English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is to meet the specific needs of the learners. It makes use of the methodology and activities of the discipline it serves and its purpose. English language, the language of news, business, information, opportunity, employment, has become the synonym of all progress in the recent years.

ESP concentrates not only on the recognition of particular structures of sentences or word combinations, but also on the choice of terms and meanings of words in different kinds of texts. The specific aims of getting to know specialized vocabulary, enlarging one's knowledge of the subject matter by reading in English and being able to use the language in the prospective profession or study areas by becoming prepared for some common situations. English for Academic Purpose (EAP) is to fulfill the needs of students in preparing them for the study functions to be involved in future study tasks. Attending such courses will aid them to become more competent as researchers in advanced social science areas of study. EAP course will result in tremendous increase in motivation to learn, interest and participation. The learners are more willing to learn and perform tasks as they can see the significance of learning the skills.

In brief, EAP does create a different learning environment for learners and this is important in order to produce capable students. Recognizing success in teaching English and real success in English language teaching and learning is when the learners can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom. Programme may be divided into pre-sessional courses and courses taken alongside students' other subjects. In the former case, sometimes the courses may be intended to raise students' general English levels so that they can enter



University. Outside Anglophone countries, English-medium Universities may have a preparatory school where students can spend a year or two working on their English and academic skills before starting degree courses.

English courses running alongside other degree courses may be based on the American English and composition model, or may employ content-based instruction, either using material from the students' degree subjects or as an independent, elective-like course. In common with most language teaching, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction teaches vocabulary, grammar and the four skills (reading, writing, speaking - including pronunciation - and listening), but usually tries to tie these to the specific study needs of students; for example, a writing lesson would focus on writing essays rather than, say, business letters.

Similarly, the vocabulary chosen for study tends to be based on academic texts. In addition, the practitioners often find that, either directly or indirectly, they are teaching study skills and often having to tackle differences in educational culture, such as differing attitudes to plagiarism. This trend has become more prominent as the numbers of foreign students attending United Kingdom institutions and other across the Anglo sphere, has increased over the last decade.

### **Conclusion**

English language is so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a "world language", the lingua franca of the modern era, and while it is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language. Some linguists believe that it is no longer the exclusive cultural property of "native English speakers", but is rather a language that is absorbing aspects of cultures worldwide as it continues to grow. It is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications. Language is not the invention of individual man. In its creation and development the community has worked and continues to work as long as the language has life in it. Hence, language appeared to the advocates of the national idea as the purest product of national creativeness and become for them the clearest symbol of national unity and for creative self-expression of all aspects of one's life and thought.

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