



EVALUATING ENGLISH CEFR (COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE) LEVEL OF FINAL YEAR POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS THROUGH MOBILE ASSISTED LANGUAGE TESTING TOOL

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ABSTRACT

In these gadgets driven days, our hunger for electronic devices & technology is growing fast. In every field of human life technological devices are developed & updated in the last few decades. Among them mobile phone has brought satisfaction in human life especially in students it is more popular tool. Without this device they can't imagine their life. Though parents & teachers are against of carrying mobiles in the classrooms as they distract students from their learning still students are carried away by its applications. Mobile phones revolutionized the world with its impressive database over the globe. There are few possibilities to turn this craze of using mobile phones for learning language & test their communication skill. One of the ways is manifesting students different tools available for learning English through application based on tests. This study is an attempt to assess English language skills of students & motivate the learners to improve their language through mobile application of language learning. This paper exhibits the benefits of using mobile phones for learning purposes mainly improving technical students 'English language Skills' through BRITISH COUNCIL English Score which is an online tool for testing English level with Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) globally recognized language proficiency standard. I conducted English proficiency test of final year polytechnic students with British Council app which was analyzed in this paper. The paper concludes with findings of test & with some recommendations for improvement.

Keywords: Gadgets, Mobile assisted language learning (MALL), Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), British Council, and Communication Skills.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world everyone is promoting the use of ICT in education for better teaching learning process. But researcher thinks already students are using much of their time for

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using computers, mobiles & watching television. They also fascinated by using these devices, so why not we adopt some of the successful tools for effective teaching learning process. We can explore & experiment with a variety of technologies already at hand in the lives of student. There should be a leap frog e-learning through m-learning, it's time to share innovative ways of learning with, and through mobile technologies & using them to achieve educational goal. Smartphone performs several functions of computer with a touch screen interface having internet access with a large storage. Student can access the digital technology with the help of Smartphone's while travelling or waiting. Mobile became basic need of student, so we can turn this obsession of using mobile for learning English language. We spent several hours researching & testing educational learning apps recommended by educators, teachers & parents. As a researcher tested students' English proficiency through class test & noticed some students were poor in vocabulary, some were poor in grammar, some in reading & comprehensions after that researcher provided the learning material to students then after three months researcher taken another test and the result of it is analyzed in this paper. This shows how the technology is instrumental to me in developing language skills where there is lot of inclination towards theory and briefing the technology.

The phase of undergraduate study plays a vital role which determines the students further education and career. The students need to assess themselves & be assessed by teachers to know their level of language for further improvement. The nature of assessment determines the learning behavior of teachers. The impact of assessment on the language learning process has been focused by number of researchers(Crooks,1988:Heywood,1989:Newble & Jaeger,1986). The research scholar B. Velangini Kumari had shown the same thing by assessing English communication skills of Under graduate BA, BCom, students in E- Journal for ELT. Volume 7 - Number 2 (April - June 2017).

The influence of globalization & other electronic gadgets is entry of multinational companies in India. These companies require management skills for effective functioning of their organizations. Major management functions are planning, organizing, delegating, controlling & coordinating. All these functions need effective communication skills. To achieve goals professional organization focuses on soft skills. All the required soft skills need the basic skill that is communication skill. Every professional organization expects effective communication skills in their employees. One has to fulfill employer's expectations during his professional life.

Importance of English Proficiency for technical student: Communication may be oral or written; it involves all the skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Communication plays a pivotal role in an organization, whether it is a business enterprise, an industry, or an academic institution. All managerial or administrative activities like planning,



organizing, recruiting, decision making, coordinating, writing reports, giving instructions, reading brochures all involves communication. Communication serves as an instrument to measure the success or growth of an organization. English language proficiency is the pedestal of effective communication. The various types of communication not only help an organization to grow, but also enable the communicators to develop certain attributes. It is sorry to say though most professionals are well aware of the importance of communication, but they do not develop their skills to good effect in this sphere of work. The higher your position, greater is your need to communicate. Very soon the Polytechnic students are entering in such careers where they need to be aware about vital role of Communication skills.

Role of Smartphone's in learning Language: Smartphone performs many of the functions of a computer, having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded applications. A mobile app is a computer program designed to run on a mobile device, such as a smartphone. These several functions student can use to learn for learning languages. Some useful apps like.....

Duolingo

Memrise

Busuu

BBC learning English

Hello English: Learn English

English conversation practice

Drops

Ankidroid

Beelinguapp

Fluent forever

Translate

IELTS apps

Sample:

About hundred students from last year Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering, Computer Engineering from A.G. Patil Polytechnic Institute, Solapur were selected to assess their Vocabulary, Grammar, Listening and Reading skills in English language.

Data Collection tool:



The BRITISH COUNCIL English Score which is (having globally recognized CEFR scale for describing English language proficiency) an English language exam for students, teachers and job seekers was used to conduct the test and collect the data.

Thanks to the British Council English Score group for providing free access to British Council’s Free English Test app to every student.

Data Collection:

About hundred Polytechnic students were randomly selected for the British Council’s English Score test. The selected students were given detailed explanation about the test by the researcher. Having downloaded the British Council English Score app on their mobiles all selected students took the test by following the instructions given on the app and recorded their score with level and analysis given by the app. The researcher noted the score and analyzed the data for further assistance to improvement.

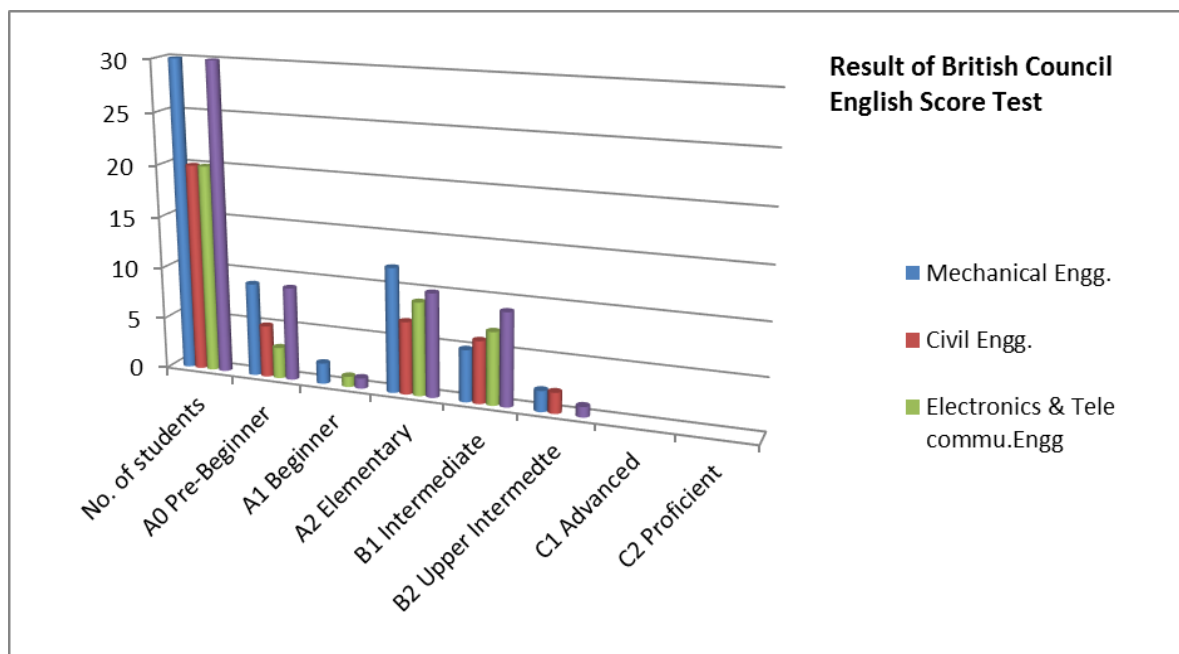
Result, Analysis and interpretation of data:

The students English language skills were tested through the Smart phones using BRITISH COUNCIL English Score tool and the score was recorded as indicated by the tool. The score was as follows

Branch/Group	No. of students	No. of students achieved CEFR level A0 Pre-Beginner	No. of students achieved CEFR level A1 Beginner	No. of students achieved CEFR level A2 Elementary	No. of students achieved CEFR level B1 Intermediate	No. of students achieved CEFR level B2 Upper Intermedete	No. of students achieved CEFR level C1 Advanced	No. of students achieved CEFR level C2 Proficient
Mechanical Engg.	30	09	02	12	05	02		
Civil Engg.	20	05	-	07	06	02		
Electronics & Tele commu.Engg	20	03	01	09	07	-		
Computer Engg.	30	09	01	10	09	01		
		26	04	38	27	05		

Source: BRITISH COUNCIL English Score Test

Graphical diagram showing the result of British Council English Score test for English Proficiency



The above score was given by British Council English Score test based on the performance of learners. Students from Third Year Diploma in Mechanical Engg, Civil Engg, Electronics & Telecommunication Engg & Computer Engg were given the standard test based on CEFR level for English proficiency using smartphones. Number of learners with Pre- Beginner A0 level & Beginner A1 level results were 26 & 04 out of 100, number of learners with Elementary A2 level result were 38 out of 100, number of learners with Intermediate B1 result were 27 out of 100 and number of learners with upper intermediate result were 05 out of 100. No learners have achieved Advanced C1 & Proficient C2 level result. Beginner level students need to be improve their English skills by practicing more in all levels. Elementary & Intermediate learners have to take extra efforts to become proficient in English language. They have to improve their LSRW with vocabulary & grammar. The students showed lot of enthusiasm in taking up this test & later determined to make use of mobiles as a tool for learning language.

Findings of the Study:

Findings related to the above status of English communication skills of UG level technical students are as follow.



1. The learners with pre-beginner & beginner English are 30% who came under poor category, with Elementary English are 38% , intermediate & upper Intermediate English are 27% & 5% who come under average category.
2. Inappropriate approach to teaching learning process.
3. The learners came from such a family background where most of the parents do not speak, read or write English.
4. Inadequate vocabulary knowledge shows poor performance in test.
5. The preconceived notions about English as difficult & confusing.
6. Dominance of mother tongue at home & in the neighborhood, they are taking less efforts in learning English.
7. Lack of confidence & motivation in speaking English, though they have basic knowledge of English.
8. Inadequate qualified English teachers & improper teaching methods.
9. More focus on Mathematics & technical subjects in technical education.
10. Learners do exam oriented study
11. Inadequate provision in language laboratory, language software should be regularly updated utilized properly.

Suggestions to improve Communication Skills for students, teachers and Job seekers:

1. Self motivation, make conscious effort to communicate in English only
2. Learn words through situations.
3. Read English newspaper daily to get acquainted with new vocabulary also updating oneself with current affairs.
4. Develop technical vocabulary.
5. Exposing to online learning apps of communication skills.
6. Focus should be on language learning skills rather than on completion of syllabus.
7. English lovers try to maintain a diary and write daily a new words, new phrases that they come across in a day.
8. Be good listener first, then only you will be good communicator. Listen more than you speak. listening helps to familiarize with rhythms & intonation of English.
9. Reading loud which improves the pronunciation, familiarize with IPA sounds by listening native speakers of English as imitation plays vital role in effective communication.
10. Watch the movies & TV programs in English through which you can learn vocabulary, idioms, slang & pronunciation.
11. Talk to yourself in English narrating your actions in English can be an effective way of spoken English.



12. More qualified English teachers should be provided in institutes & encourage them to undergo various professional teaching courses, workshops, seminars to update them.
13. Spend unbroken time for improving English proficiency on daily basis.

CONCLUSION:

There is always a challenge to acquire and master language proficiency in English as the new vocabulary added everyday with new inventions and innovative technology. People randomly teach in the classes but there are some good sources to test the students and teaching them. Teaching without testing the students and their ability, their need, their proficiency will be wastage of time. The researcher is on the firm opinion that when there are such tools available in the market, they should be used and applied that will be very instrumental in good result and outcome of the English proficiency. Thus the study proposes application based English learning for Polytechnic students.

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