

ENHANCEMENT OF SPEAKING SKILLS AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Soundiraraj. S¹, Abhishek David John² & Chithra. M³

¹Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Engineering Guindy, Anna University, Tamil Nadu, India

^{2,3}Assistant Professor, Department of English, Valliammai Engineering College, Tamil Nadu, India

Received: 04 Nov 2018

Accepted: 09 Nov 2018

Published: 15 Nov 2018

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive atmosphere that prevails among professional students speaking skills are considered the most important transferable skill that one needs to develop. Students who possess the ability to communicate efficiently will have a greater advantage in moving up the career ladder. Students can enhance their speaking skills by attending various workshops, seminars, guest lectures and by continuous practice that will help in projecting our talents. Attending group discussions and lectures on speaking skills enhancement can provide a better exposure to English language and understand the latest updates in the communicative world so our vocabulary library will be rich in the source, and others will not see us be outdated. Vocabulary, pronunciation, and modulation play an important role in communication. Therefore, it is important for students of various core fields to understand the importance of communication skills to become successful in their profession. The major focus is on engineering students as they are facing a great challenge in getting placed in companies due to the lack of communication skills. This fear over the lack of language is taking its toll and deterring their progress in their career chart.

KEYWORDS: *Speaking, Professional, Career Growth, Enhancement of Soft Skills, LSRW*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most commonly used languages in the world which has become the global language in the economical arena. English is said to be the universal language for a cause as its gaining a huge number of speakers, learners all over the globe in various professions, therefore it is essential for students to gain mastery over it. Communication is the mere transfer of ideas & ideologies. The four pillars of communication are LSRW – which stands for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. They are considered important aspects for gaining proficiency in any language. These skills are closely interconnected; the development of one skill will lead to the development of another.

Speaking is the ability to express one's ideas or thoughts fluently. Generally, in the English language, one's speaking skill is given the first priority. It is also considered the most stressful activity as the output is projected immediately which instills fear in the mind of the speaker. Put differently, words which are spoken are immediately perceived by the listener who begins the process of comprehending the matter spoken by the speaker.

The most essential method of improving speaking skills of a language is by its frequent usage. A student who has good communication skills will possess better self-esteem and reputation among his/her peers. In any interview, a

candidate with good English communication skills would be given first preference. The first step towards one's professional development in the current scenario is by cultivating the ability to communicate in English fluently. Among students, the major hindrance that prevents them from actively taking part in workshops, seminars, and conferences is their incapability to communicate in English. This fear later grows and manifests into an aversion for learning and self-development. One should stop lurking in the shadows and step out to attain an identity for themselves.

Students hailing from urban areas are considered to have an edge over the students from rural backgrounds in communication skills as the exposure of students to the language is comparatively low in the latter. Students of professional courses such as Engineering will have to focus especially on communication, as any multinational corporation or firm will recruit candidates based specifically on their proficiency in English and their communication skills.

SPEAKING SKILLS AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR AN ENGINEERING STUDENT

The fundamental requirement which is most sought after in an engineer is communication skills in English followed by sound knowledge in their subject. Speech is the prime means of communication of any language. It is a mandate to enrich one's English speaking skill in order to achieve overall an improvement of the other skills associated with communication also. Lack of confidence about speaking in English without any errors is one of the primary reasons for students not being able to communicate confidently and clearly.

Effective speaking skills among engineering students open wider arenas for them providing them exposure at the global level. Speaking skills will greatly help a student while presenting papers, presenting a topic at a seminar or during a job interview. However academically qualified a student may be, they need to possess towering levels of proficiency in English speaking to ace any of the above-mentioned activities. Many international organizations provide greater importance to speaking or communication skills than work experience or academic achievements. The strengths of English speaking skills are confidence and competency.

In a professional front, engineering students will have to submit projects and attend interviews. If they fail to deliver their ideas effectively with clarity, it might create a negative impact on them. An engineer is required to possess various abilities. For handling these responsibilities efficiently, he/she should have good communication skills. When students complete their course and become engineers, they have an international job market to compete in and emerge victoriously. They may come across engineers and other professionals from various countries and in order to communicate with them, English would be of great help. Only students who can communicate efficiently can carve a niche for themselves in such a competitive environment.

METHODS TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS

- Students can improve their communication skills by improving their non- verbal communication skills such as eye contact and body language.
- Incorporation of the tenets of proper speech such as intonation, modulation, articulation, pronunciation, pace, and pauses can also impact the way in which one communicates. It provides dimensions to the speech in terms of life and meaning.

- Active participation in group discussions and presentations is a tried and tested method of nurturing speaking skills.
- Speaking in seminars and discussions acts as a practice exercise and can improve the self-confidence of the speaker enabling him/her to communicate better in front of an audience.
- Frequent conversations in English with peers can improve communication skills along with confidence as our familial circuit and friends do not resort to discouraging or teasing at the mistakes committed.
- Listening is also an effective way of improving speaking skills. By listening to speeches delivered by good orators, students can understand the nuances of public speaking.
- In order to improve speaking skills, one must also simultaneously improve their vocabulary. Very often we find students stammering and unable to complete a sentence due to the lack of vocabulary skills.
- Reading aloud is also a great method for improving communication skills. It allows the reader to focus on the pronunciation of words and overall pace without worrying about putting the right words in place.
- Several materials are available online like TED talks, for example, that have transcripts included in them. By utilizing the transcripts and reading them aloud, we can get to know the correct pronunciation of a particular word.
- A recording is another great way to reap maximum benefits from a conversation with a native speaker. Upon listening to the conversation again, one can evaluate their own pronunciation and notice areas that require improvement.
- Imitating a word or phrase while listening or reading is called shadowing. When imitating what we hear, it is often more useful to focus on the rhythm, the intonation of the language, rather than on the pronunciation of individual words.
- Writing is an excellent way to start producing the language. While writing, here is ample time to look up the words in a dictionary, verify the rules of grammar and word endings. This indeed makes us familiar with the intricacies of the language and prepares us for speaking.

CONCLUSIONS

The most basic qualification that an interviewer will look for in a candidate is communication skills. For any student to showcase his/her talent, they should be able to express their ideas clearly. Communication skill is an important element that has to be practiced during a placement training session. Tutors or trainers who train students for interviews should provide feedback for them to improve their speaking skills. Mock interview sessions play an important role in giving hands-on experience and also help communicate better in an interview. Irrespective of whether students are going to pursue higher education in India, abroad or seek a job opportunity, they need to prove their mettle and communicate in English fluently.

REFERENCES

1. Abhishek David John, Chithra, M. and Jayanthi, V. (2017). *LSRW and its Importance for Engineering Students. IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Engineering & Technology*, 5(11): 41-46.
2. Abhishek David John, Mythili, R. and Arthi, M. (2017). *Skills for a Successful Group Discussion. IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Engineering & Technology*, 5(11): 21-24.
3. Nadeem Khan and Arshad Ali (2010). *Improving the Speaking ability in English: The Students' Perspective. Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences* 2, 3575–3579.
4. Rup Narayan Shrestha, Bharat Raj Pahari and Jai Raj Awasthi (2015). *Impact of English in the Career of Engineering Students: A Brief Overview in Global Context. Journal of the Institute of Engineering*, 11(1):182-188.
5. Kamonpan Boonkit (2010). *Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non- native speakers of English. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2, 1305–1309.
6. M. Shyamala Bharathy & T. Shrimathy Venkatalakshmi, *Revisiting the Use of Role Play in Developing the Speaking Skills of Tertiary Level Learners, International Journal of Linguistics and Literature(IJLL)*, Volume 3, Issue 2, February-March 2014, pp. 33-46
7. Simona Şimon (2014). *Enhancing the English oral communication skills of the 1st year students of the Bachelor's degree program "Communication and Public Relations. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116, 2481 – 2484.