

**“ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG
POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS”**

**Santosh Rajaram Mudholkar,
Lecturer in English,
Science and Humanities
Government Polytechnic Hingoli**

Abstract: Students pursuing technical and professional education must possess English communication skills as a necessity. A student is prepared for an industrial job by a polytechnic. The ability to communicate effectively is highly value in the world of employment. Students learning in polytechnic have good knowledge about the technical field. Still, they lack confidence in expressing their thoughts in English. The lack of communication skills causes them to face several hurdles in getting successful in professional life. Due to a lack of competent communication skills, many students' performances are average in academics. The primary purpose of this study is to examine the communication skills of polytechnic students. This study also aims to identify the major problem affecting the learners' communication skill so as to give them proper attention to enhance their communication skill. The communication skills of students examining their skills are Polytechnic. It incorporates various facets of communication including skills such as speaking and listening. Besides that, the study examines learner's education background, contact with English, and learning environment for language learning. It also discovers the learners' attitudes towards language learning process.

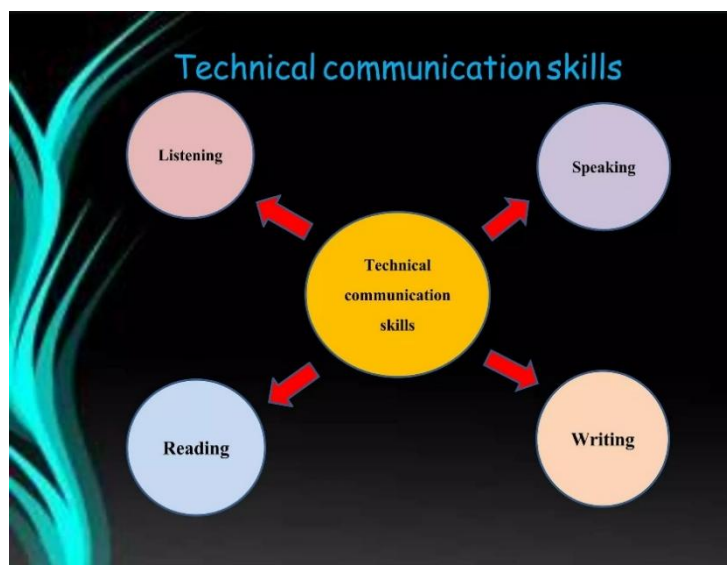
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Introduction:

English is used as a medium of communication by many countries of the world. English is definitely the most powerful means of communication of any country. All over the world everyone speaks English and that is why it is referred to as a global language. It acts as the common language. Almost all electronic appliances and machinery use English as their medium of communication. People from various countries communicate only through the

English language. Almost every nation on Earth teaches English language at their schools and colleges.

English plays an important role in our education It is essential in all fields of study. English is an essential prerequisite for the completion of higher education of any scholar.



Polytechnic education offers students technical help and social exposure, which help them grow into multidisciplinary individuals. Students today, require those skills, which help them compete at an international level or just as well in the globalized world. Students from diverse academic backgrounds and socio-economic situations were drawn by polytechnics. Many students are unable to use English effectively because it is not their mother tongue. As a result, even though students may be technically sound, they are not able to present their ideas to others, find it difficult to crack interviews, write reports, converse etc. Communication skills are those skills through which any can convey his meaningful message to the group or individual. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing are the four communication skills. The students are endowed with these skills to form, understand, and exchange views, information or ideas to get academic excellence, workplace efficiency and personal development. Both globalization and rapid technologies have made a joint attempt to develop competent manpower.

Literature Review:

In modern education, especially in technical and professional colleges, the development of English communication skills is one of the most important objectives. In today's globalized

world, a fresh graduate is not merely an employer's expectation to possess only technical knowledge, rather he must communicate effectively too. The English communication skill is very important for a polytechnic institution student in his academic life, workplace readiness, professional development and lifelong learning. Researchers with diverse educational backgrounds focused on different areas of study. They studied different aspects of communication competence, language learning processes and methods, employability and various factors affecting on learning of English language by students in polytechnic institutions. Canale and Swain in 1980 proposed a theory of communicative competence which was the start of the development of the communication-based language learning which is the basis of modern communicative competence. The ability of a person to use a language should not be tested through his knowledge of grammar, they said. Effective communication is the fruit of certain competences (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic). Grammatical competence is about how extensive the vocabulary and structure is. Sociolinguistic competence refers to how well someone can use language in social interactions. Discourse competence refers to the ability of the individual to organize the idea effectively. The strategic competence helps a student learner to avoid and solve a communication problem. By using, their work fundamentally altered the teaching and assessment of languages.

In 2001, Richards and Rodgers provided important principles regarding features and processes of language teaching methodology. In addition, for polytechnic students, this theory is quite important as a technical graduate must communicate efficiently classroom, interview, workplace, and professional activities. According to the first implication of the study, language teaching becomes meaningful when students learn through communication and not by memorizing all the grammar rules and vocabulary. In addition to this, the investigator noted that the activities like group discussion, role plays, presentation, problem-solving, and activity-based work can improve the language as well.

In addition, Richards and Rogers conclusion lays the foundation for teaching communicative classrooms. Moreover, a teacher who gets students involved in communicative activities creates more chances for them to hone the English language effectively. Also, polytechnic students can easily manage this step successfully.

A method of teaching that is communication oriented can help to a significant extent in enhancing confidence and fluency. In a talk in 2003, David Crystal explained the significance of English in the world. Further, this is because of the elaborate manner in which Crystal explains how the language has become an international language gradually. Furthermore, he retraced the historical development of the English language and explored the features that make it an immensely powerful language.

As per him, person having better knowledge of English gets better access to knowledge, job and professionals. English helps the technical student of a polytechnic to become linked with the world. Consequently, Crystal refers to the significance of English communication proficiency in the 21st century. Thus, he even provides a valid argument for assessing the communication skills of polytechnic students. Harmer (2007) studied the practical aspect of teaching English language. Students must learn listening, speaking, reading and writing skills through language activities in classroom, he pointed. As per him, the people learns the language when they involve actively in using the language with the lot of communicating activity. Many students get anxious when they try to communicate or speak in English. The English Language shakes their confidence level meaning taking away their confidence level in English Language. Teachers must work towards establishing a climate of support in the classroom setting. In such a setting, the students will feel comfortable to express their ideas without the fear of getting judged. The role of feedback, motivation and constant practice in language development cannot be ignored. Many polytechnic students face challenges in communicating with others as they do not know English.

As stated by him, English is a common language that helps people belonging to different cultures and countries to communicate. The research shows that success in the academic field, employability and promotion in the workplace happen through English. According to Rao, organizations are now hiring people with good conversation skills up as communication contributes to teamwork and productivity, leadership, and customer service. According to the research, students with good English communication skills perform well in interviews and professional interactions. These findings are very pertinent for polytechnic students who are going to be groomed for a technical career where communication is an important professional skill. According to Sharma and Gupta (2015), technical students possess certain communication skills. However, there are various challenges that prevent us from achieving this. The students have difficulties in speaking English because of limited vocabulary,

grammatical errors, pronunciation, and being afraid of making mistakes. Such was the finding of the research. It was further discovered that the students who belonged to the regional language backgrounds did not get ample opportunities to communicate with English speakers creating a communication gap. Many of them confessed to getting nervous in presentations, interviews, and class discussions in English. According to the authors, communication skills are a continuous practice and educational institutions must provide the required support for the same.

Polytechnic students must be exposed to a variety of activities related to communication to improve their confidence and reduce the fear of language. It enhances their communication skills. Kumar conducted studies to establish the relationship between communication competence and employability of technical graduates. According to the study, communication skills have now become a major factor in getting a job in the industry. In today's world, employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills who can work well with colleagues and clients. Kumar's study revealed that technical graduates who had communication skills were more successful in getting employment and adjusting to the work environment. The investigator also indicated that just having technical knowledge is less likely to work at today's competitive workplaces. Instead, firms are looking for people who have technical knowledge as well as communication skills. The importance of communication skills for further studies and professional success among polytechnic students is highlighted by these studies. The study done by Patel and Jain (2018) examined technical students' use of English language. Their investigation highlighted various factors that determine the extent of the students' language proficiency. According to prominent investigators, the educational background of the students, motivation, learning ambience, exposure to the English language, teaching method, availability of learning resources of English language etc., were among the essential factors. The competent students were generally found to be using English always or for the most part with reading, watching and listening to, online learning and interaction with others. Also, they slowly noticed increase in the performances of students who had positive attitudes towards language learning. In addition, a well-structured classroom environment that encourages students to learn along with the use of different strategies could enhance their communication skills. The results highlight the need for a holistic language development methodology that involves factors such as the person, society, and classroom environment. Singh and Kaur (2019) highlight the use of technology for developing communication skills

of students at institutes of higher education. In recent times, the rapid advancement in technology has changed the manner and speed at which learners acquire a language. Traditional methods of language learning are replaced by enhanced methods with the help of technology. It provides the learners with a lot of electronic material. The use of proficiency enhancing apps, online courses, audio-video materials, virtual classrooms, and interactive communication definitely enhances the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the learners.

According to some people, learners can practice the use of the English language outside the classroom for as long as they want because of technology. It is clear that using technology and digital tools for language learning may enhance learner motivation and engagement, which resulted in improving learning outcomes. Moreover, students at polytechnics have a good grasp of technology.

Mishra (2021) recognized that a diploma student who is regularly active in seminars, presentations, debates, group discussions and language laboratory is more confident and fluent in communication as compared to the other students. The teacher contemplates a scenario with diploma students who realize the importance of English communication for their career growth but do not have many opportunities to practice. Communication competence develops with interaction through a gradual process. In addition, he suggests that if communication skills are incorporated into the technical curricula, it will provide an opportunity for students to be better prepared and enhance their ability to work successfully as an employee in an organizational setting. The various analyzes that we have gone through make it clear that the English communication skills have become an essential part of the curriculum of technical and professional institutions. A diploma student who regularly participates in seminars, presentations, debates, group discussions and goes to the language laboratory is a more confident and fluent communicator than any other group of students (Mishra, 2021).

The purpose of this study will be explained and the rationale of the present study will be established. According to Muralikrishna (2020), putting emphasis on soft skills and communication at the organisational level has remained an isolated exercise. Moreover, such attempts often prove to be ineffective in improving workplace efficiency. It is important to include communication skills and strategies in evaluating and developing communication

skills. Scientists must state the qualification indicators of learning in such a way that they meet the requirements and infrastructure availability in colleges (Muralikrishna, 2020). Experiential learning and the process of trial and error enhances communication skills development (Kaur & Kaur.

Assessment of English Communication Skills

Speaking Skills

Communication skill that is most difficult for polytechnic students is speaking. Many students find themselves scared to speak in the English language. This happens mainly because they are fearful of making grammatical mistakes. Another reason is fear of being caught by their classmates. Students often don't participate in discussions, presentations, and interviews due to lack of confidence.

Students typically exhibit greater communicative competence when discussing familiar topics. Nonetheless, they encounter challenges in professional discussions due to the requisite technical vocabulary and structure. A student using their speaking skills often finds it easy to improve their fluency and confidence.

Listening Skills

The talk garners much attention, but it is also important to listen. Listening correctly and accurately can lead to more effective language acquisition, not just speaking with no jet lag. Polytechnic students face difficulty in listening situations every day. The accents, speed, and terminology most often create problems for them at the interview. Their limited exposure to real-life situations affects their listening scores.

An individual who pays close attention to the English language through podcasts and video lectures available on the internet.

Reading Skills

By reading, students can acquire vocabulary, technical knowledge and structures. The majority of polytechnic students engage in regular reading of textbooks, lectures, and other academic materials. Additionally, many of these students do not read much more than academic texts, which they read for the sake of passing an examination and not much extensive reading for language development. Also, teachers and counsellor's instruct students

to read newspapers, journals, technical articles and also computer materials to develop comprehension skills and acquiring.

Writing Skills

Development of a country needs Polytechnic Education to be its corner stone of foundation. The technical education in different developing countries should aim at the manpower needs of the various sectors of economy. In view of the detailed report of the advisory committee, NCTE has prepared a comprehensive plan and programmes governing all aspects of technical education. It offers knowledge and training in disciplines of engineering and science.

The process of economic development of a country depends on the creation of specialized human resources, with the help of polytechnic education. The primary aim of it is to provide technical education at a lower level to the children of our poor.

Factors Affecting English Communication Skills

Several factors influence the communication abilities of polytechnic students:

Educational Background

Students with a regional language background can face problems in technical education in English. Their previous learning may have been in little or hopefully in English medium.

Learning Environment

Students must develop Critical Thinking Skills to make reasonable and reflective judgments. This skill is essential for every student for doing academic tasks. Students who have a good sense of critical thinking conduct independent evaluations.

Exposure to English

Being familiarised with English. Our multiple encounters teach us different languages. A student's character is also shaped by the social and cultural environment as well as academic exposure and physical environment.

Motivation and Attitude

Students who recognize the importance of English in career advancement place greater importance on their communication skills. Usually, it is those with a positive attitude towards language learning who are likely to succeed in this pursuit.

Technology and Digital Resources

Since the modern-day technology is so advanced, it provides a huge scope for learning any language through an online learning course or a mobile app or through virtual discussions and also other educational platforms. Using these resources effectively will teach you how to communicate.

Challenges Faced by Polytechnic Students

Although the students know the importance of English communication, they face many obstacles such as.

- Not confident in speaking.
- Worrying about making grammar errors.
- Having a small vocabulary and difficulty pronouncing words and sounds.
- Lacking opportunities to practice communication effectively.
- Role of language of the region.
- Nervousness while presenting and interviewing.
- Constraints of engaging in an English environment.

If not appropriately addressed with proper education, these challenges can create a barrier in their work performance and their job ability.

Recommendations:

There are many effective ways to develop English communication among polytechnic students.

- Create language labs in polytechnics with required study materials.
- Hold seminars and training sessions on conversation talent.
- Promote group conversations, arguments and presentations.
- Add communication activities to the technical curriculum.
- Encourage the reading habit.
- Make use of digital tools, often referred to as language-learning apps.
- Organize mock interviews and professional communication sessions
- Provide Consistent Feedback and Guidance.

These steps can be very effective in improving polytechnic students' English communication.

Conclusion:

For students pursuing technical education, English communication skills have become essential, polytechnic students significantly require the need of English communication. Polytechnic students communicated effectively based on their prior knowledge. English communication is vital to your academic and professional success. According to the findings of the study, many students are unable to speak with fluency, lack the requisite vocabulary, have less confidence and face practical difficulties in effective communication. According to this research, communication is helpful in educational institutions and workplace settings. Moreover, findings show communication improves employability and performance. The communication process is affected by one's educational background, exposure to English language, learning environment and motivation. Education is possible with both the educator and student communicating effectively. Universal languages of communication are essential for both academic and professional success.

Future Scope of the Study:

Methods and approaches of developing communication skills in different technical courses can be investigated by future researchers. Particularly, outside of a polytechnic institute and within other private and government institutes, a variety of methods were used. Research on rural and urban students at a polytechnic institute will be beneficial to reveal the results of communication skill development of technical students. New computer learning, AI-Based learning or Blended learning or any other learning can be tested by future researchers for developing communication skills of technical students. Future researchers may also look at the Communication Competence.

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