

The Importance of Professional Communication For Technocrats from Rural Background

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Abstract:The recent increase in the demand for professionals communicating proficiently in English language is visible. The global recognition of English language in connecting people from different walks of life whether professionally, academically or socially explains the need to acquire command over the language. It is essential to convey ideas and thoughts in an effective and a skilful manner. Thus, it requires training of soft skills such that speaker is able to convey views in a different manner from the everyday use by emphasising on the style and the tone of the message. The skill to communicate adeptly in English among professionals from rural background is amiss because the medium of basic education has been in their native language. A wide gap has been observed between the understanding of their core subject and communication skills which results in weaker job perspectives. Thus, it becomes essential to incorporate along with their technical subject a course on English communication. This paper is an attempt to systematically analyse the factors that inhibit a large number of students to gain the maximum benefit out of the course. And it suggests that the impediments to smooth and adequate acquisition of language can be overcome by sustained encouragement and motivation on part of the instructor, thereby infusing a special significance into the pupil-instructor relationship.

Keywords: Rural background, soft skills, proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent increase in the demand for professionals communicating proficiently in English language is visible. The global recognition of English language in connecting people from different walks of life whether professionally, academically or socially explains the need to acquire command over the language. It is essential to convey ideas and thoughts in an effective and a skilful manner. Thus, it requires training of soft skills such that speaker is able to convey views in a different manner from the everyday use by emphasising on the style and the tone of the message.

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The new trend in trade and commerce to target consumers worldwide at the grass root level has led to a global need of a universal language. In contemporary times, it is English that has emerged as language of global exchange. English language is credited as Lingua Franca for it helps in communicating ideas between people who do not share a common native language. It enables the people to cross their national boundaries. Its ever increasing number of users has put it in the category of a standard language. The factors that relate to its mass geographical distribution is, that it is the language of commerce and also of some international organisations such as UNO, European Union etc.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In seventeenth century the East India Company came to India, focussing to promote trade and commerce, resulting in the encounter of Indians with the language. Eventually the British built imperial interests and decided to establish India as one of their colonies. To fulfil this mission the British promoted their culture and language as a tool to colonise people. They were successful in creating the impact of

English language as a medium to gain knowledge and scientific development. Thus early reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated the promotion of English language versus Sanskrit and Persian. He believed that English is more scientific and progressive so it should be introduced in college and universities for the development of India. In cooperation with Lord Macaulay, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was able to set universities in provinces of Madras, Bengal and Bombay to promote education in English. This is how the course of development of English language initiated. But on the other hand what purpose Lord Macaulay had with introducing English language is suggested through his remark that he wanted to create, "A class of persons Indian in Blood and Colour but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (qtd. in McLeod 141). It suggested that they wanted a class of workers to execute their foreign functions in their native country. By doing so government job opportunities were enhanced. The change in the medium of language was welcomed and gained popularity among the middle class and the elite. Thus by 1852, recognised secondary schools were established in India. Its root deepened in Indian soil by being a medium of instruction in colleges, universities, and political proceedings and as a medium of interaction of high culture. However, in 1930s the estrangement towards the language accelerated for the momentum to gain freedom was at its peak. Several educational schemes promoted vernaculars as the medium of instruction but for secondary and higher education English was dominant. In fact, A.K Sharma observes that the "status of English" in Indian educational system throughout the British rule "was enviable" (31).

In post independent India English language was considered as a link language. Even the constitution of India continued the bilingual approach of Hindi and English for its official purpose. Thus, along with Hindi, other state languages as decided by the state legislation, English also is the official language of India. In the year 1965 the constitution decided to replace the usage of English language in official purpose by Hindi but this attempt faced resistance by states in which Dravidian languages such as Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada are spoken. Also from other states where Hindi is not the dialect. Hence thereafter constitution agreed to continue the use of English language for official purpose.

III. TOWARDS CONTEMPORANEITY

In India English language has been handed down by British. Since its time of inception and development in India it has been considered by people as the language of knowledge, elite, ethics and progress. It has travelled a long course in this multicultural country. Several distinctions have been observed according to its purpose like foreign language, secondary language and finally third language. The foreign language status can be understood to study a particular thing such as scientific readings by a restricted group of people. In Secondary language status it points that it is the language of

universities and colleges. But the third language status implies its mandatory inclusion in all sorts of educational, social, political and cultural curriculums to have better job perspectives versus those candidates whose studies are vernacular based. This particular aspect of English language to achieve success nationally as well as internationally has increased its importance.

In India, English medium teaching from the primary level has been suggested by the educationists and several states have even incorporated this shift. Keeping in mind the revolutionary development in the field of information and technology, the global connectivity in the field of trade and commerce, the political and cultural exchange, and even social networking sites have added to its status as the language of world. Though English ranks third in its number of users after Spanish and Mandarin, it is the link language across the globe.

IV. TEACHING ENGLISH

With the development and globalisation in all spheres such as economic, social, political and cultural. It has become essential to be skilful in communication through a common language that has connected the entire globe. The course of professional communication aims to polish the four areas of: listening, speaking, reading and writing that play a very vital role to be effective in communication skills. The four areas are studied with intricacy to acquire skill in order to communicate assertively. The regular training in speech and writing requires the training of nuances that are more objective and empathetic to enhance the interpersonal skills. It also pays attention on the purpose behind the communication for this decides the style and the tone of the content of the message. It is just like the non-verbal cues in verbal communication. Thus, the right kind of phrases and words should be selected in order to sound credible, sincere and honest. This kind of approach keeps the audience in mind as a result it becomes more persuasive but at the same time flexible enough for the audience to express its choice. Thus tailor made professional communication cycles in speech and writing are very different from the general studies hitherto. Similarly, the training in listening and reading skills focuses to hone both the skills in a way to locate the gaps in the calibre of an individual's cognition and behaviour. Thus the identification of the areas of concern the gaps are bridged in order to be more effective and participative. For Mark Tully, a truly egalitarian system of education ensures availability of the language to all across various sections of the society. He writes:

The elitist status of English in India creates problems for the economic development because that means that the education of the mass of people will be ignored. He argues that the solution for this situation would be that the spread of English throughout India would be encouraged. So that it would become a genuine link language of the country, not just, as it is at

present, the linklanguage of the elite. (qtd. in Vijayalakshmi and Sarat Babu 3)

The technocrats from rural background face a major setback in their communication for there are multiple reasons. The key to success in a professional field lies in the proficient use of English language to convey their ideas. But it has become a hindrance to many a students and has resulted in the loss of huge talent and student's worth of handling higher job responsibilities. Their education in core subject training has been done in their mother tongue. So it gives them access to good institutions on basis of their knowledge. But the lack in their communication skill inhibits them to secure a good job. The students under this category nurture hesitation for learning new language within them so potently that they fail to develop interest. They become resistant in their learning process as a result confidence cannot be built up because of lack of practice. Similarly, a set of students who are exposed to the usage of language but are not proficient also face problem. Such category of students also fail to articulate the effective kind of sentences and effective kind of understanding. Again it becomes essential for them to have a good command over language. M. Indira while quoting Mahajiteswar Das, points out:

Effective learning takes place only when the learner is able to communicate fluently both in writing and speaking and is able to use English for library purposes. In this context, Mahajiteswar Das holds a different view saying that teaching English as a 'library language' was not beneficial in terms of providing job opportunities because the students who learn to use English only as a 'library language' are less competent than the students who acquire competence in all the four skills of English language. Therefore, according to Mahajiteswar Das, it is necessary to develop all the language skills in order to improve communication skills. (4)

The situation becomes very challenging to overcome for it is not taken seriously by disinterested students. As a result each individual remain as it is without any progress. So it becomes essential for the instructors to continuously motivate students to speak in English whether correct or incorrect in the beginning to shed their inhibition. The corrections should be informed to the students with correct syntactic structures which would help them to internalise the correct sentences.

The technocrats coming from rural background often lack adequate proficiency over English as a language of communication. While it becomes pertinent to include a course on Remedial English/Professional Communication in the vocational structure, it is perhaps of greater importance to nurture confidence and ease in these technocrats, and this can be done through consistent encouragement on the part of the

instructor. For an overall development of the technocrat's personality, it is important that the language is imparted through subtle mechanisms of persuasions. Furthermore, in order to infuse a spirit of smooth conversation, technocrats need to be encouraged to incorporate the language in everyday discourse. This can be done through exposing the young learners to various media, including newspapers and television news. Correct pronunciation of the word can only be grasped when the learner listens to the word, and thus audio-visual mode becomes important.

V. CONCLUSION

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that my teaching experience has taught me that technocrats from rural background shy away from using English because of lack of confidence, especially when conversing with their urban counterparts. It is here that the role of the teacher comes in, and it is here that a teacher through sustained encouragement can motivate the student to adopt and internalize the language.

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