

English for Specific Purpose vs. English for General Purpose

Ashish Kumar Pandey, Research Scholar

Abstract

The present research article is based on a need analysis of the engineering students. The study finds that many Indian engineering graduates experience several difficulties during their jobs due to their inadequate communication skills and they are deficient in confidence. Hence, it becomes inevitable that these students should be properly trained in all the four basic skills of language, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW). Further the study also concludes that, how awareness of the importance of communication skills during and after their graduation is helping the students. Condescending approach towards English is a result of engineering students taking English only as general purpose (EGP), not as a specific purpose (ESP) language, while the trainer can usually differentiate EGP with ESP. In this research paper, researcher discusses the actual situation of Indian Engineering graduates about their English communication. Researcher randomly selected three colleges. The number of students selected from these three colleges for the study is 540. Data was collected by using two different methods: semi-structured interviews and through the questionnaire filled personally by the students.

Keywords: Communication skills LSRW, ESP, EGP, EOP, EAP

Introduction

In the Indian subcontinent, English is accepted widely from beginning to end for a variety of communicative purposes whether it is in MNCs or in metropolitan cities, since a few decades ago. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:53-4) stated that ‘what distinguishes ESP from General English is not the existence of needs as such rather an awareness of the need... for the time being, the tradition persists in General English that learners’ needs cannot be specified; it is difficult to assume true needs ...’ P. Seedhouse, 1995 states that English plays a vital role in the job market. English became a significant part of education for Indians because of easy runway for job collection. English plays vital role in the various sector for communication purpose so one has to learn English for communication; the purpose may be Formal (English For Specific Purpose) or informal (English for General Purpose).

Review of Literature

For many years now keeping a continuous use of English has become the integral part of the Indian curriculum. In the past, urban population was using English as a general-purpose language. But after development of technological sector, people from rural areas also have begun to learn and use English.

After independence it was decided that English will be the second official language for India for fifteen years only. After fifteen years it is continued because non-Hindi states would not accept Hindi only as the official language. As of today, most educated Indians have preferred English as primary language for all kinds of communication either formal or informal. 'Today English language plays a vital role in higher education, media, and administration of private and government organization' (A. Clement & T. Murugavel, 2015).

English became a symbol of medium for better education in any of the discipline in India. No Indian can deny English language is globally accepted, so most Indian feel proud if they have any of the four basic skills of English language.

Many people wish to educate their children into English mediums schools. It is to be said Graddal says 'that English has become a powerful agent for change in India'.

Mastery in English communication has become one of the options for any aspirant in job sector or business sector.

Definition and Characteristics of ESP

The term 'ESP' stands for 'English for Specific Purpose'.

Important Characteristics

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners.
2. ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
3. ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

Variable Characteristics

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English.
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level.
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.
5. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the needs and demands of the learners of English communication. This is for the engineering graduates of selected colleges of Uttar Pradesh Technical University. The primary objectives of the study are to improve the all four basic skills of (LSRW) for the proficiency of English communication, and the development and utilization of course content and pedagogical knowledge of advance English communication. Here, the investigation is as follows in these points:

1. What kind of problems the students are facing during the course learning?
2. Which kind of teaching aids students have needed from their Instructors?
3. How the course content is to help the students for improving communication?
4. What kind of syllabus they have required?
5. ESP trainers how cope up the students?

Scope

The study investigated specific English communication skills of engineering undergraduate students who are required to make effective professional communication for their future career. Consequently, the study would fulfill the requirement of all those who are directly or indirectly getting involved in the field of communication.

Historical Development of ESP

Dudley-Evans and St John state that the general aim of Developments in English for Specific Purposes is a Multi-Disciplinary Approach to pull together the theory and practice of English for Specific Purposes, using their experience as lecturers and practitioners in this subject (p. viii). Additionally, they assume that their experience in both English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) will help them to survey these extremely fascinating areas of study, trying to design an up-to-date, introductory overview. The authors have also made a special effort to include activities, extracts from ESP textbooks and academic texts, and some recommended bibliography on each of the units of this book.

In Chapter 1 of 'Dudley Evan' book provides a general idea about the concepts and issues of ESP. The chapter gives a common definition of ESP, a fundamental study on dissimilar classifications of ESP, and the different levels of teaching structure and perspectives (teacher, researcher, evaluator, course designer, and collaborator). This introduction of ESP helps the reader to understand ESP as a Multi-disciplinary activity.

Westerfield said, "In the need assessment process, the ESP practitioner does his/her best to find out information about the needs of the sponsor organization, the need and wants of the learners, and the context in which learning takes place. This will involve conducting a *Target Situation*

Analysis (what does the learner need to be able to do with the language future), *Present Situation Analysis* (what can the learner do with the language now), and *Context analysis* (what is the environment in which the learning take place).

Above mentioned need analysis explanation does investigate three situations of the Target: situation analysis, present situation analysis and context situation analysis. It is a very important aspect of the study of ESP because we need to focus on the syllabus design on the basis of material selection, which depends on the needs of students. In Indian situation, especially the north (Hindi region) requires more attention, for improving general as well professional communication skills to get better jobs in the market.

Language Teaching Approach and Discussion

The present study focuses on instead multi-approach to improve communication skills of engineering graduates. The paper assesses the impact of students' schooling on their needs and expectations of Technical Communication which is a part of second language learning, taught to the B.Tech first year students of Gautama Buddha Technical University, Lucknow. Of all the factors, one's training and schooling impact his language abilities the most. Someone coming of a convent school and a big city has better access and exposure to English language and accordingly his needs are different than the needs of someone who comes from a village and a traditional school. However, it may not be justified to make any kind of sweeping generalization. The research has investigated all four basic skills and how much students are proficient in various skills.

The students from rural background showed good command in grammar. So rarely they did mistake in the writing skills. But who did his schooling from urban is poor in grammar, that is why they did mistake in writing skills. So, the instructor should focus on their needs for writing skills.

Major Findings

From the above study we some important facts. These are:

- The students from rural background is not much proficient in reading, speaking and listening skills but they are good in writing skills of communicative English. So, the instructor needs to pay special attention over these skills for rural students for future reference. Then they would be able to use communicative proficiency for all kinds business correspondence.
- The students are focused on general English, but for the business purpose they should focus on English which is also called ESP, EAP, EOP, etc.

- Many of the students from rural areas could write correctly, and many of the students from urban areas could speak correctly. So, a balance should be maintained by the communication instructor in the classroom.
- Language learning experiences were not strong in business communication students. So, there is need to make them learn advanced English.
- The attendance must be mandatory for the communicative class and for internal evaluation.
- The course material should be according to the need of various communicative part of business, like memo, business letter, etc.
- The course should be taught first year and final year.

Conclusion

The study suggests that the student should be categorized on the basis of their rural and urban backgrounds. Three stages may be proposed for the rural students—primary, intermediate, and tertiary levels. At the primary level, these students should be made aware of the basics of communication skills and should be provided conducive atmosphere in order to generate certain degree of confidence in them. Intermediate level may be used to expose them to language laboratories where they should be encouraged to train themselves with the help of trainers in their accents, pronunciation and intonation along with the advanced level of communication skills. Tertiary level should be the final level where the students should be prepared for and encouraged to make presentation, take seminar and practice group discussion and interview skills. According to the performance of the students in the English diagnostic test, these students may be introduced to the primary level and then intermediate and tertiary levels or they should be taken in directly at intermediate or tertiary level. Identifying these levels of the students would help them to improve their competence in their communication skills step-wise.

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Ashish Kumar Pandey
Research Scholar
Department of Linguistics
University of Lucknow
kumar16pandey@gmail.com