

# A study on the significance of English language proficiency for engineering students

Ramesh Kumar

MA, College of Commerce, Patna

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### Corresponding Author:

Email: rameshkumar02101983@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

*This study addresses the difficulties encountered by B.E./B.Tech first-year students of the 2019 cohort in enhancing their communication skills. It is also common knowledge that pupils from rural areas struggle to learn and speak English. Teaching both technical and conversational English is essential for engineers in the current environment. Teaching English to engineering students is a subfield that focuses on the development of communicative ability for business settings, sometimes known as target scenarios or situated business contexts. In a global context, effective communication skills in English are crucial for engineers. For this reason, teachers must choose appropriate language materials and employ them strategically to achieve a certain communication objective.*

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## Introduction

The act of communicating or exchanging ideas with the goal of fostering mutual understanding is called communication. The dynamic, interactive process of communication. Ideation, encoding, channelling, decoding, and feedback make up its five phases. Today's engineers need to be proficient in both technical and communication skills. Engineers are expected to communicate effectively even at the junior level. They must therefore develop their communication skills with their coworkers, team leaders, and clients. But in practise, we see engineers that lack communication skills. They will undoubtedly be able to persuade others with their communicative ideas if they receive good communication training.

English's significance as a connecting language and as a global language is now generally acknowledged. It is also common knowledge that pupils from rural areas struggle to learn and speak English. In the current situation, teaching both communicative and technical English is essential for engineers. The multidimensional global trend in ESP known as "English" has its origins in the academic and business worlds. It is widely defined by the needs of the learners and the language used in the business sector. Target scenarios, also known as placed contexts in business, or teaching English to engineering students is defined as a subfield that focuses on the development of communicative competence for business settings. Engineers need to be able to communicate effectively in English in a worldwide environment. Because of this, these educators must choose the best language resources and strategically employ them to fulfil a certain communicative objective.

The English language is a key component of the modern scientific and technological world and serves as its lingua franca. Today's engineering students are required to be fluent in English. They may get in touch with several businesses in due course regarding project work, industrial visits, and campus interviews. The engineers will be able to

arrange their ideas and express them logically if they have a solid command of the four communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

The four English language abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are crucial for everyone. In the business world, students need to be able to talk and listen in situations including presentations, negotiations, business meetings, group discussions, video conferencing, and telephone conversations, among others. Writing business letters, reports, using fax machines, and other professional communications all demand reading and writing skills. In addition to these abilities, students' backgrounds are examined. Given that India is a multilingual nation and that English is not the pupils' first language, All these areas are taken into consideration while teaching English to engineering students, and the curriculum is created appropriately.

To pursue a variety of engineering and technology disciplines, students from other states enrol at the Nalanda College of Engineering in Gokhulpur, Bihar, India. English is used as the instruction language. The difficulties first-year B.Tech students in the 2019 batch faced when trying to develop their communication skills are covered in the current study.

### The respondent profile:

The age range of the students is between 18 and 20. Their educational requirement is a passing grade in intermediate school or higher with English as a second language. Many of them have poor grammar and fluency in their English, making it difficult for them to communicate. Many of the pupils are from Andhra Pradesh, and they studied in their native tongue with no exposure to English, which is a pretty obvious explanation. Due to parental pressure, the current economic climate, and their enthusiasm for engineering, they have decided to enrol in Chennai's B.Tech degree programme. Suddenly, they discover that the surroundings are strange and

that nobody is using their native tongue. They can only speak English when they wish to communicate.

### Course Design:

All first-year B. Tech students were initially given access to a one-month bridge course programme. The students received enough study resources, and they were encouraged to use the thesaurus and dictionary. By utilising the English alphabet, they were asked to create word games and tongue twisters. By learning five new words every day, students were also encouraged to strengthen their word skills. To give pupils practise in hearing and speaking, a well-programmed language lab was created. There were pre- and post-evaluation tests given throughout the bridge course. This test provides a clear view of the knowledge and anxiety levels of the students.

A two-semester curriculum for teaching English to engineering students was created. The first semester's course outline includes topics including letter writing, definitions, process descriptions, and English grammar. The second semester's curriculum is structured to include group discussions, presentations, LSRW skills, interview skills, and many styles of thinking, such as creative, critical, and problem-solving thinking.

### Methodology

Their cultural upbringing was likewise unique. In this situation, the teacher acted as a facilitator. The students were required to share their experiences with their peers after completing particular activities. The pupils' daily exposure to UGC nationwide Edusat programmes helped them hone their communication abilities. The students utilised their computers to access the Internet and download the necessary materials as the Nalanda College of Engineering campus is online enabled. Participants in the post-course evaluation noted significant gains. When they started the first semester, the students felt confident in their communication abilities.

The first semester is spent emphasising reading and writing techniques. They were able to form sentences without error thanks to their understanding of grammar. They read and comprehend running sentences as a result of reading comprehension. Definitions provide people information about certain concepts and aid in understanding the context. They can better grasp the process description of a particular product with the aid of the process description. Instructions get oneself ready for everyday life. Finally, writing letters encourages kids to use their own words while writing letters.

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Speaking and listening skills are the main topics in the second semester. At the start of the second semester, they requested to watch group discussions, presentations, mock interviews, and problem-solving technique stories in the communication skills lab in order to prepare themselves to take part in these activities. This encouraged them to express their ideas clearly and provided a clear understanding of their standards, which made them improve themselves for the workplace. Both the theory and the body language are taught via LSRW Skills. Their ability to think critically and creatively helps them to think deeply about issues and force themselves to come up with solutions.

### Findings

For the first semester university examination, 1250 first-year B.Tech students were registered. Out of 1250 students who registered for the communicative English I Paper, 2 students were absent, 3 students failed, but overall 1248 students passed, resulting in a 95.63% overall pass rate for the first semester's university exams. The same number of pupils registered for the university exam for the second semester as well. Out of 1250 students who took the communicative English II exam, 2 students were missing, 4 students failed, 1246 students passed the technical English exam, and the overall pass rate for the first semester of university exams was 97%.

The students' increased participation significantly improved their communication abilities. Students were prepared for group discussions, mock interviews, and seminars by becoming proficient in all four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). They gave presentations on several topics with enthusiasm as well. The growth of language and literacy, in general, happens only when we comprehend messages, claims Stephen Krashen (1985). The students' capacity to discuss their cross-cultural encounters with the society was one significant effect. Most of the applicants were apprehensive and unable to speak English well during the admissions process. They frequently spoke in their own languages. The same students could converse in English with ease and a high level of communicative competence by the conclusion of the first year of the B.Tech. programme. The first-year B.Tech students' communication skills are improved in this paper, "The Need for Effective Communication Skills in English for Engineering Students," and feedback from the students is also gathered for future reference and curriculum modification.