



“NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE LAB FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS”

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ABSTRACT

Communication skills in English have emerged as the major means of empowerment as well as human resource development. Many of our brilliant engineers fail to make an impact on the global market mainly because they lack the required communicative competency. They are academically brilliant but find it difficult to express themselves with proficiency in interviews and group discussions. It is time we realized that our engineers should know not only engineering skills but also English for engineering. Our engineering curricula cannot afford to ignore the importance of English for engineers for professional purposes. Language labs motivate students to talk freely and lose the shyness when talking in front of their friends. The problems and requirements of engineering students are taken into consideration. The Language laboratory helps to improve the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The Computer Assisted Language Laboratory definitely develops learner's language proficiency.

KEYWORDS : engineers, proficiency, interviews, group discussions

INTRODUCTION

English is the most accepted mode of communication internationally. In the existing universal scenario where countries don't have borders, English became the indispensable media for communication. For engineering students whose mother tongue is not English, mastering English is even more important, not only for their academic life but also for their prospective career. In order to master the engineering knowledge and skills better, engineering students should own the English language competence. Most of the scientific papers or journals in the world are published in English. Most of the engineering graphs are also marked in English. Moreover, most engineering professors in various universities are also conducting their lectures in English. Hence, engineering students should at least master the Basic English ability to deal with the countless English lectures, tutorials, labs, projects and papers. Finally, they have to submit their important theses, still in English. A good communicator knows what to say, to whom, when, where, Why and how. The language lab helps in the learning of English language in a pleasant atmosphere. They are sure to be empowered with the required communicative competence to face the challenges of the world today.

What is Language Laboratory?

The language laboratory is an audio or audio-visual installation used as an effective device in modern language teaching. Perhaps the first lab was at the University of Grenoble in 1908. In the 1950s up until the 1990s, they were tape-based systems using reel to reel or cassette. Current installations are usually based on multimedia PCs. The principle of a language lab basically has not changed still. They are now also a teacher-monitored system connected to a number of student booths, containing a student's control mechanism and a headset with a microphone. Digital language labs have the same principle. A software-only language lab changes the concept of where and what a language lab is. Software can be installed and accessed on any networked PC anywhere on a college or university campus. Software-only systems can be located in one room or from campus-to-campus. The content that is now used in the new language labs is much more affluent and self authored or free. Now not just audio, but video, flash based games, internet etc. and the speed and variety of the delivery of media from teacher to student, student to teacher, is much faster and that's why much more engaging for both teacher and student. The student can listen to the native speaker's lessons and pronunciations see video clippings and read the text. The student can repeat the lesson assigned by the teacher, record, and replay. Continuous repetition of the correct pronunciation gives fluency. This paves way to excellent communication. The Language Lab has harnessed this communication skill with highly developed technology.

Role of English Language Teachers in English Communication Lab Shortage of English teachers is a globally faced problem.

Language lab helps learners to develop good listening. There are a large number of learners willing to learn this link language. It is observed that working class who learns English their motive is to get a good job. Students learn it to make their study smoother. Hardly any student learns it to teach so a teacher with systematic knowledge of English is not available even in city areas. Some years ago, the role of an English teacher was only to teach English lessons and explain the lessons in regional language. But in the modern age, English language teachers are expected to play different roles: As a communication skills consultant, English teacher works out and plans for improvement of students communication skills by introducing new activities like group discussion, debates, situational dialogues or other activities. He must train the students to empower them. Though the teachers today have had students who are quite experienced with computers, they have also had some students who had seldom used a computer; lacked basic knowledge such as how to operate a mouse or open a folder; and lacked the vocabulary, reading, and listening skills to follow instructions for using the computer. Most of the students have the communication problem. Sometimes they do not have adequate language proficiency. Communication and soft skills and ability to learn on their own are very important for those who join the company. Teachers of English have a responsibility to help the students in overcoming their fears about communicating and to assist students in developing more positive perceptions of communication activities.

Need and Importance of English Language Lab:

Significance of Language lab has been much understood in the field of communication. Language lab can help in acquiring strong communication skills which are indispensable in the career of all the professionals. The use of language learning system encourages learner to talk freely and lose their shyness when talking in front of the people. In the current digital age, we are all connected despite of the geographic distance. Progress in technology has brought the world into our living room in the form of TV or internet which allows us to watch events taking place in other countries or talk to friends and family living in other continents through internet. Accordingly, we are exposed to different languages, traditions, cultures and of people from all over the world. As we live in multilingual and multicultural world, language lab can greatly help students to learn English language, because it will allow students to learn at their own pace. They are able to record and assess their performance and pay attention to all aspects of phonetics such as pronunciation, accents and stress etc. The language lab provides access to native-speakers through audio-video aids so that they learn correctly. A large number of students pursue higher studies outside their home country. Language lab would help them in studying the language of the country where they are planning to pursue their higher education. For instance, non-native English speaking students are required to succeed in GRE/IELTS/TOEFL. There are several benefits

to language resource center but there should be proper protection in place to regulate and monitor the use of technologies used in the teaching learning process so that students do not misuse them. It is also important that the outline of the lab is conducive for effective communication and keeps an eye on the students.

Disadvantages:

It is very expensive to set up the language lab. In recent times students do not have enough patience to listen to pronunciation and practice them so the recording of pronunciation is useless. As the teacher listens to students randomly the response can be unorganized and ineffective as there are many students to attend to. The teacher should be well trained in executing the language lab effectively. Given the nature of teaching, a language teacher may need an assistant in taking care of the technological part while teacher attends to the instructional components. As technology changes rapidly, there should be a provision for upgrade in the medium of instructions.

Suggestions:

English Language Labs should be installed in all the engineering colleges. All the educational institutes with computer lab can easily install Language Lab. Computer can store all necessary detail and can present when required. Any teacher with little knowledge of English can handle it if required. Engineering students with some basic knowledge of English can take training on their own. That's why English Language Learning is in great demand. In most of the software levels are being provided from elementary to advance level. In any other special demand software can be designed according to prerequisites. In this way Lab can save human hours as well as gives a chance to learn at suitable time. Students and working people can get the opportunity of learning English with language lab facility. This can be the best use of technology. Technology can't replace human but it can work as a supplement that is for sure.

Conclusion:

Today's engineer has to communicate with more number of his colleagues across the world and has to travel to many continents and work away from their home country. Engineers usually work in groups. In order to understand and co-operate with their colleagues and accomplish their projects fluently, engineers have to speak good English. Text materials about the subjects of engineering and technology are existing simply in English. Language labs motivate students to talk freely and lose the shyness when talking in front of their friends. Considering the above facts, learning English, the universal language, as a second language becomes inseparable. The problems and requirements of engineering students are taken into consideration. Language Lab not only sharpens communicative mastery of the English language but also evaluates your reading and listening skills while scoring learner's vocabulary and grammar comprehension and delivering instant scores that help them acquire better proficiency.

Thus, the Computer Assisted Language Laboratory definitely develops learner's language proficiency. It gives opportunity to the learner to lean on his own. They are sure to be empowered with the required communicative competence to face the challenges of the world today.

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