

Evaluate English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS) of Engineering Students through Cell Phone Assisted: An empirical study

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Abstract

In current academic scenario engineering students are completely addicted by the android cell phones. These cell phones in the hands of each graduate have turned into an essential piece of their life, without these smart phones can't imagine their life. Teachers and parents restrict them conveying cell phone into the classrooms for the reason that such device cause interruptions and also are the way for deviation from focusing on the lecture. Here are some of possible outcomes to transform this interest of utilizing the cell phones into an enthusiasm for learning language and test their language abilities. One such probability is presenting them to various devices accessible for learning English through application based on tests.

The present study is focused on evaluate the ELCS of engineering graduates using Cell phone Assisted Language Learning (CALL) tests which are online devices. These tests asses English language proficiency of engineering graduates and give them confidence to enhance their language. This paper revealed the advantages of assist cell phones for acquire the skill benefitted, firstly in developing the engineering graduate students' English Language and Communication Skills. Outcomes of online tests are explored in this article. The article ends with result of the assessments and with some suggestions for progress. Students must be exposed to available online tools and the most important one is to improve their ELCS.

Keywords: *English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS), Cell phone Assisted Language Learning (CALL), English Language Proficiency, Application based Tests, Online tools.*

I. Introduction

At present generation android cell phones are a devise that makes many tasks of a computer with a touch screen which has web access with large storage. These can do miracles and wonders in every field of professional. Now a day's engineering graduates know a lot about mobile phones and they are completely passionate towards

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them. According to Marc Prensky, (2009) [1] they are “digital natives” and he extend to say that “Digital wisdom is a twofold concept, referring both to wisdom arising from the use of digital technology to access cognitive power beyond our innate capacity and to wisdom in the prudent use of technology to enhance our capabilities.”

While in journey time and waiting with the help of the cell phones many of the students can easily use the digital technology. In this context students can take advantage of acquiring knowledge but need to be use the technology wisely to improve their skills. Mobile phone technology brought a great change in education. Some of the literature reviews collected from experimental studies of mobile usages published in the literature are revealed here.

Kusulska. H and Traxler (2005) [2] says that “Mobile phone learning is both a new perception and on that has some common nuances. Those learners should be able to engage in educational activities with the constraint of having to do so in a tightly enclosed physical location”. The stage of undergraduate study plays a crucial role which determines the student’s further education and career. The students need to assess themselves and be assessed by teachers to realize their level of language and to improve further.

- “Assessment is an activity that engages both students and teachers in judgment about the quality of student achievement or performance, and inferences about the learning that has taken place”. Boud.D, and Falchikov.N, (2006) [3].

-“The nature of the assessment determines the learning behavior of the students as well as the teaching behavior of teachers. Strong impact of assessment on the language learning process has been noted by a large number of researchers” (Crooks, (1988), Heywood, (1989), Newble & Jaeger, (1986) [4].

English is an international language. Professionally, learning English language has created a huge demand for everywhere in the world. The most of the students are connected with globalization for their career opportunities. So there is necessary to improve English Language and Communication Skills for every engineering graduate. Present age, many of the MNC companies search for the students who have sound English language and communication skills apart from their academic results or performance. The engineering graduates have to be trained to master English language to certify language proficiency exams like IELTS, NPTEL, and Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) etc., with assurance for acquiring a place in the global world.

1.1. Significance of English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS):

The Language skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) are very essential in every human life to express their ideas and thoughts with others. In this communication process they build good interpersonal relationship in their family and public. We can’t imagine the life without language and communication it becomes lonely. In present generation IT and multinational companies require to do the work in better way and with good communication skills with co employees. Mostly they look for who can convey their ideas and manage the entire group of colleagues and teammates. So in this regard very shortly after complete the engineering course, the engineering graduates have to enter into such careers where they need to be conscious of this reality and furnish themselves be able to communicate well.

1.2. Role of Smart phones in Language learning:

Smart cell phone or mobile with a touch screen which has an internet access performs many functions of a computer. With these smart phones people can communicate their information and either oral or written with others in effective way through chatting on whatsapp, facebook, emails and twitters. Besides all these communication process, students mostly the professional engineering graduates need to be good at their English language and communication skills. In this aspect there are numerous ways a graduate can make this a best accomplish using cell phones for improving their language skills.

The following a few ways to improve English Language skills (LSRW) and Communication Skills through smart phones for engineering aspirants.

1. By **Listening** to English language learning podcasts and conversations through downloading apps in smart phones which are freely available such as *English Phonetic, Speak English Pronunciation, English Conversations, and English Listen Offline, etc.*

2. By practicing these sounds, pronunciation and conversation with others, one can improve his/her **Speaking** skills. Some of the apps for improve speaking skills are *Hello English, Duolingo, Speak English fluently* and so on.

3. By **Reading** e-Books, e-Journals and daily news paper through downloading apps such as *DAILY HUNT, KINDLE, and NEWS HUNT* etc. students can improve their reading abilities.

4. By taking up online and offline grammar , sentences correction tests and English writing practice tests helps the students' **Writing** skills ability. Some of the apps for improve writing skills are *NPTEL LITE, OBJECTIVE GENERAL ENGLISH, IELTS WRITING, ENGLISH GRAMMAR e-BOOK* and so on.

Finally by watching and listening to several Google sites like www.indiacelebrating.com YouTube tutorial classes, and *IMPACT foundation* training program videos which are focus on personality development to UG, PG and unemployed youth. All these apps and channels available include free version as well as paid versions and some can used offline and online can improve the students' English Language and Communication Skills.

II. Assessment Process

Around one hundred and fifty students from various engineering branches (MECH, CIVIL, IT and ECM) were selected to evaluate their Listening, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills in English language.

2.1 Data collection tool

There are so many English language testing apps available in Google play store to assess the language abilities but one of them is STEP app. It is available for individuals, educational institutions and corporate for free access. STEP -it means 'Standardized Test of English Proficiency'. It is an initiative by The Hindu Group in the education sector in 2016. *STEP* helps Indian youth assess and improve their LSRW skills (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking). Over 600,000 users have benefited from personalized courses that go beyond grammar and help learners appreciate the language. With STEP, learning English has become faster and easier.

So, the researcher thought the TEP app is apt tool to conduct the tests and collect the data by taken up English language tests.

III. Data collection

Regarding data collection one hundred and fifty engineering students of first year from various branches were spontaneously selected for this STEP exam. Having downloaded the STEP app on their mobiles of the selected students took the test following the instructions given on the app, recorded their score and the analysis given by the app. These selected students submitted detailed explanation regarding the exam by the section English faculty. The English language teachers who were appointed as an examiners pointed the score and analysis for support to improvement of LSRW skills.

3.1 Analysis of the collected data:

Evaluated the language proficiency of selected students based on the STEP app through the smart cell phones and the course progress was recorded by the language faculty. The score was as follows:

S. No.	Branch	No. of Students	No. of Students got average result	No. of Students got good result	No. of Students got proficient result
1	MECH	70	38	21	11
2	CIVIL	30	12	10	08
3	IT	30	10	14	06
4	ECM	20	11	07	02
Total		150	71	52	27

Table1: STEP app outcome of different branches students' Proficiency

The same information has been shown in bar graph as below:

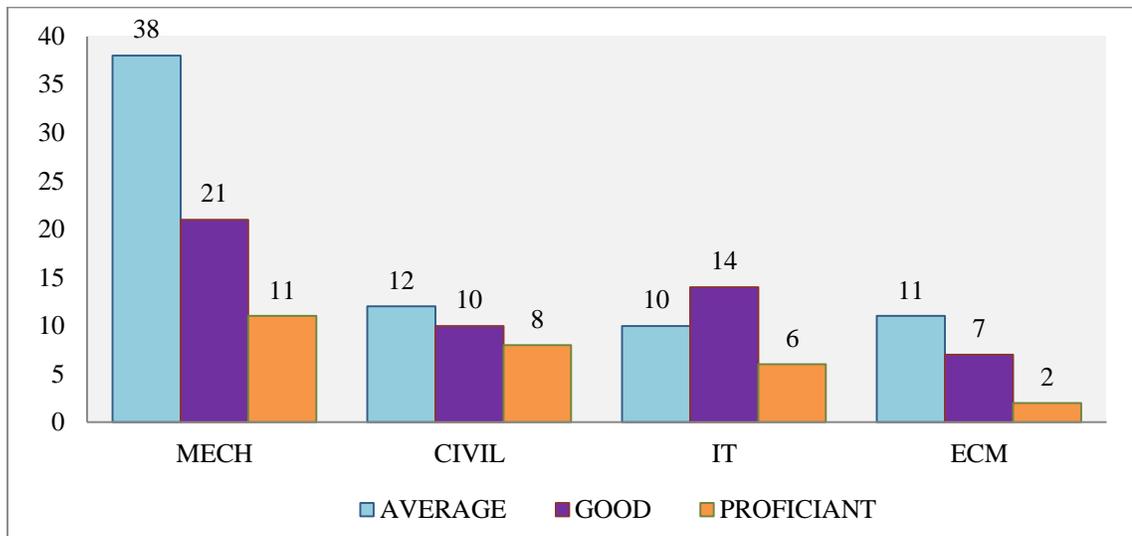


Figure 1: STEP app outcome of the different branch students

IV. Results of the research study

The students from Mechanical, Civil, IT and ECM were given STEP test by using smart cell phones for testing their English proficiency and those score was shown in the above table and bar graph. There is 71 students were got average results, 52 students were got good results and 27 students were got proficient results out of 150 students from various selected engineering branches. Due to lack of proper writing and listening skills 27 out of 150 students were got less performance in proficient area of English language. The proficient results students need to check their grammar and vocabulary and they need to focus on basics of spellings and grammar. The learners with 71 students got average score were came from rural back ground and poor family, 52 students who got good results were English is not used in their communication purpose and below average category and with proficient in English were 27 out of 150 students who were come from urban areas and used English language as communication purpose from their schooling.

After completed the test and verified the course results, the students were share their experience that, by use of smart phones can learn and improve their language skills and they showed a lot of interest in taking these type of tests and desire to improve their employability skills.

4.1 Findings of the research study:

The following findings were collected orally from selected engineering graduates and shown the problems regarding lack of English Language and Communication Skills:

1. The students who have come from rural background were not get good score due to they never use English language as communication purpose at their house and with friends.

2. Some of them measured that English language is one of the subjects like science but not skilled subject from their schooling.
3. The parents were not used the language in their daily communication, most of the cases parents were used their mother tongue for communication with their children.
4. Especially the students who were in Mechanical and Civil branches have poor writing and reading skills in English language.
5. Most of the students from the primary education onwards they gave least important compare to other subjects.
6. Some of the schools and intermediate college management not provided language lab to practice LSRW skills for their students and they gave less important for English theory classes
7. Improper teaching methods and learning process were followed in the college and school level.
8. Intermediate college management make the students focused on the science group subjects marks only not bother about the students' language proficiency.
9. The language faculty in intermediate level can't able to focus on the rural back ground students due to the large class rooms, equipped with 70-80 students in a class.
10. Poor performance in the college level English examinations due to inadequate of grammar and vocabulary.

4.2 Recommendations to improve English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS) for Engineering Graduates:

1. Special focus should create on English language as it is skilled subject from intermediate level.
2. Implement a quality time and teaching learning process for English language classes.
3. Should give more importance on language skills improvement than completion of curriculum of English subject.
4. Awareness classes should conduct from schooling about the importance of English in students' career.
5. Provide a well equipped Language lab to practice pronunciation, intonation, phonetics and accent to avoid the mother tongue influence.
6. Instructed the students to speak in English only with teachers and friends in the class rooms and corridors.
7. Motivated the students to listen BBC news channel and daily news paper reading to improve new vocabulary and phrases in language. It can develop the students' language fluency also.
8. To enhance the students' vocabulary and grammar, initiate group discussions, debates, role play and storytelling in class rooms by the English language faculty.

9. Make the students ready to participate in online tests like NPTEL course, BEC exams and practice IELTS free tests.

10. Instead of downloading games and movies in smart phones, students have habituate to download English pronunciation apps, off line dictionary and some speaking audios and should do daily practice.

V. Conclusion

The main objective of this study is focused on learning English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS) more effectively through technology based for engineering graduates and they became aware their communication ability levels in English language. The testing tool for evaluate the levels of language skills was practically helpful to identify the selected student' problems in their language and communication process and steps to taken in their further to improve the LSRW skills. Whoever the selected engineering graduates from various branches after completed their analysis of the STEP test course score came to know their levels of English language abilities and they learnt how to improve those skills through android smart phone. Mainly students became aware of their insufficient vocabulary, lack of grammar mistakes, poor listening and reading skills.

Finally they expressed that by using the smart phones in a positive way one can easily improves new vocabulary and grammar knowledge with a confidence manner. This is the major challenge to acquire effective communication skills and gaining language proficiency for better employment or qualify various competitive exams after engineering graduation.

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