

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP): A POTENTIAL TOOL FOR EMPLOYMENT IN CORPORATE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, the importance and demand for proficiency in the English language have increased and it has become a vital element in one's professional world and for career growth. This paper presents the impact of English Language Proficiency (ELP) as a potential tool for employment in the corporate world. There can be no doubt that English Proficiency has been identified as an essential workplace tool for success in business and have been correlated with career success and increased financial rewards. It is also found that English proficiency is assessed in the recruitment process by all industry sectors. This need persuades employees to fulfill their potential required to reach their goal. Thus, the researcher attempts to draw attention to factors leading to poor command of the English language and tries to explore different steps to improve English Proficiency to grab the global opportunities that are available for individuals and to enhance one's career in the global business landscape.

KEYWORDS: Corporate World, Employability skill, English Language Proficiency (ELP) etc

INTRODUCTION

English is now widely recognized as a lingua Franca or a 'window of the world'. English being the link language helps in sharing any kind of information fast and clear and also connects people across the nation despite the diversity of regions, cultures, and nations. The job seekers and employees are aware that English can aid them to get prospective jobs with rich salary if they have a good command of English.

English being the primary language of global trade and commerce plays a vital role in the professional life of an individual and also leads to greater opportunities in pursuit of academic and career goals, social empowerment, security, and stability. Consequently, the English language is highly preferred in the employment domain of the corporate world. Thus, mastering English communication skills is very much required to remain employable and will win half of the battle in today's corporate world.

English has become a 'welcome' phenomenon all around. It is working as an instrument to bring success in life. The knowledge of English language has become an important deciding factor in order to nurture and flourish in all the spheres and to become more and more visible in the global world. More importantly, English has become a part of our everyday life. We need English to help us grow economically and maybe socially. This seems to be the common perception in our country, especially among younger employees.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims at the following

- To know the manipulation of the English language in the corporate world.
- To value the importance of English language in the career of an individual and in the growth of an organization.
- To find out the main factors leading to poor command of the English language in the workplace
- To find out the necessary steps to improve English language skills of individuals

WHAT IS EMPLOYABILITY?

In the new backdrop of worldwide employment, most business institutions necessitate employees to possess employability skills. Employability skills are characteristics other than industry-specific technical knowledge which contributes to effective and successful participation in the workplace.

John Yates, CEO, Manipal City and Guilds said: "Employability is a vital concept in India. It means a person's ability to get a job, keep that job and move on to their next job. Language and communication skills are the major criteria for employability. This important report recommends actions we can take collectively to build an India-specific framework for language and identifies a new entry level for English language skills that will be of great benefit to many industry sectors, employees and those looking for work."

ADVANTAGES OF USING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

While professions may vary, the need to be proficient in English is a mandatory requirement or a basic skill for any professionals working in a global business environment. Here is an overview of the most important advantages of using the English language in the workplace.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

There are several factors that make English language essential for communication at present. "English is without a doubt the actual universal language," said Carlos Carrion Torres of Brazil. Though English is not an official language in most countries, it is the common language most widely used in many parts of the world. Excellent communication brings out a fine atmosphere and rapport with everyone in every organization, especially if it is a business everyone needs to know the English language in order to interact at international level.

THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

English is the most important language for conducting business throughout the world. In an international business environment, English holds an important role to make the business go well. In most of the international business, English is the language often used between people from different nations. English is very useful when a company builds cooperation with other international companies from a different countries. It has become almost a necessity for an employee to speak English if they are to step into a global workplace. The businessman also must be able to understand and use English well in order to become the winner of the hard competition in the business world.

SAVES TIME

An employee having an ability to communicate effectively in the workplace is one of the key elements in time management skill and a good command over language can help to make sure that messages are delivered and received promptly. Proficiency in language helps to minimize confusion when an employee decides to file a complaint, send an instant message to a project team member or voice her opinion in a staff meeting. Delivering a correct message across in a business communication can also lessen the time wasted on translation and follow-up and potentially usher to higher yield.

REFLECTS PROFESSIONALISM

The level of proficiency in English language influences how others feel about and act in response to each other, which carries a lot of significance in the business domain. Through the usage of proper language an employee can maintain an air of professionalism by making a good impression on customers as well as colleagues and can show others that he really cares about his job and his company's products or services.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Being fluent in English opens the door to many new and exciting jobs and employment opportunities in countries and markets all over the world. Companies running a business internationally are likely to employ people who speak English as a first or second language on a regular basis, making the ability to use English in the workplace a very valuable skill.

Many recruiters appraise the English Language as an employability skill because it helps in building a better relationship between a company and its customers; it increases reliability from existing customers and stimulates goodwill. Some companies that deal with international clients and suppliers depend on English-speaking employees to help with day-to-day operations to interpret, translate and communicate directly with English-speaking customers and clients. Thus, the proficiency in the English language in addition to native language can be an added advantage in the global workplace, if an employee is seeking job opportunities with international companies.

ADVANCING ONE'S CAREER

Learning to speak English easily is no more a matter of reputation or style; however, it is in greatest need for a good career and to flourish in one's job. For employees interested in advancing in the business world, English is the base to reach the platform of success. Employees who use good English are more likely to succeed at their jobs because their writing and speech will reflect a "level of professional competency" that will be noticed by supervisors and clients. Establishing this level of English proficiency could be one of the main factors that lead to a promotion in a title or pay in the future.

BUILDS INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND INDIVIDUAL CO-OPERATION

In an international business domain, employees use English for a variety of purposes including meetings, negotiations, for managing, writing reports, giving presentations and social situations. It is fundamental to understand the different tones and styles used in business contexts and have the ability to determine which is suitable in order to build a successful relationship. A good command over English Language allows employees to communicate effectively with international clients, helping the customers to trust them and their organization resulting in strong and lasting business relationships. Being able to communicate and negotiate successfully with clients who speak English builds international collaboration and individual co-operation.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an essential and the most significant one in the era in which we live. More over, English is the language used in many software programs and for those that are technologically minded. The knowledge of English can provide the employees some useful benefits and knowledge.

The need for new technological developments in the global workplace allows different platforms for remote communication such as Skype, WhatsApp, Tango, etc., which act as a tool for carrying out business meetings and for in-house conversation between workers from different countries.

English, in general, is the technical language of the most recent version of applications and programs and social media networks and websites. The primary language of World Wide Web is also found in English. Software manuals, hardware installation guides and product fact sheets of popular consumer electronics and entertainment devices usually are available in English first before being made available in other languages.

THE INTERNET

On the internet, there is a lot of information written in English such as email, blog, and social networking sites which allow people for communicating with the millions of people online who know to speak English. Thus, the competency in English opens up a world of information and communication for an employee in a small window.

Accessibility to ample information can make a real difference in one's professional life, even if one doesn't work with colleagues or clients who speak English. Anyone can find that information from a website written in English which may help them to understand a project better or provide some useful information for a report.

FACTORS LEADINGS TO POOR COMMAND OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The poor command of English causes employees to be one of the most excluded groups in society and the global market. Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita (2012) presented the possible factors that result in poor command of the English language:

- English is always being viewed as a difficult language to learn and speak.
- While using English for conversation, most of the people are afraid to be wrong, always refuse to use the language in public and feel less confident in their grammar.

- Some individuals do not perceive English as an important medium for communication as they use mother tongue both for academic and personal interactions.
- Employees, especially those who are from a small town or rural area have inadequate or insufficient exposure and opportunity to use English outside the workplace.
- Employees express unwillingness and high anxiety to use English to communicate despite acknowledging that English is important for their future.
- Some individuals are found to have a limited vocabulary as English, reading materials are not always available.
- The negative attitude of individuals toward using the English language is one of the causes of the poor performance in the English language because they consider it foreign or not theirs.
- Fema (2003) viewed that major cause can be attributed to the interference of mother tongue in the performance in the English language.

STEPS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TO ENHANCE ONE'S CAREER IN THE GLOBAL BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Further, some necessary steps should be taken by the individuals themselves to improve their English proficiency. The following list offers few steps to master English to create the greatest potential for success for all employees in the global workplace.

- Pick up good English by enrolling in English as a Second Language (ESL) course.
- Use Dictionary to strengthen your spelling ability. Try to learn and use a new word every day.
- Visit places where you can speak English such as a place of worship, or a social organization. Try to spend as much time as possible speaking English.
- Exposure to good English helps a learner acquire good pronunciation. So, listen to good speakers of English. Listen to the radio. Learn how to pronounce the words correctly from the native speakers.
- Speak in English whenever and wherever you get an opportunity. Surround yourself with people who speak English fluently and have a chat with them in the language.
- Read books and magazines in English. The available reading materials will help you to build your vocabulary.
- Read newspapers regularly. Make it a habit of reading news items of your choice. This will help you improve your vocabulary and develop your reading skills.
- Maintain a diary. Write 10-15 sentences of what you do every day. You can also sum up a news item that you read that day. This will help you develop your writing skills.
- Watching English news channels 10-15 minutes every day will help in developing listening skills.

- Watch English Movies to practice pronunciation of new words.
- Get help from friends and family circle who are proficient in English. Ask them to correct your pronunciation and grammar.
- Upgrade English through free English learning apps available in the mobile phone.

Don't be afraid of making mistakes. Find an interesting way to learn the language. Reading and listening alone is not enough. Foremost, do practice speaking English regularly. Don't be frightened or discouraged by negative comments made by colleagues. Throw away negativity and discouragement and March forward. Treat challenges as opportunities and not as problems. These are opportunities to get exposed to an English-speaking environment and learn the language.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of an effective English proficiency to secure a respectable job and achieve greater opportunities in the global job market has been highlighted. The job market, in general, is so competitive that we need to do more than just presenting our background and qualifications. The job seekers tend to fail because they never display or communicate their employability skills, only presenting their facts-credentials. The major obstacle that an employee must overcome in the global workplace is proficiency in English Language.

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