

**English Language and Placement of Engineering Students: Special
reference to Madhya Pradesh**

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Abstract

English is a dominating language of communication in the field of Engineering and Technology around the globe. The proficiency of English is an important criterion for young Engineers to get good employment. Having a high proficiency in English language, a fresh Engineering graduate gets good opportunities in Industries, Academic field, Research & Development, Business etc. In India the English proficiency of people of Central and Northern part is lesser than as compared to that of Western, Southern and Eastern part. In the state of Madhya Pradesh (Central region), Hindi is the main language followed by English. Many students begin to learn English at the primitive level of their Engineering education and therefore they have less proficiency in English. This affects their chances of better placements. However, the English proficiency may be enhanced by taking systematic steps by students, teachers and curriculum framing authorities. This will reflect a positive result in placements.

Key words: Language, English, Employability, Proficiency.

1. Introduction

Language is the medium to express information, knowledge, thoughts, feelings and ideas. Due to this language has become a source of communication. As English language is the most spoken on the globe and thus has emerged as a universal language for communication. The fields of modern Sciences, Technology, Medical and other professional studies have been elaborated in English languages. Most of the

authentic literature relating to these subjects in English language. English is the leading language in the field of education, business, arts and commerce.

The field of Engineering education or technical education is not an exception. Technical students must have high proficiency in English. It becomes greatly important to them to know good English. During their curriculum the technical students have to perform discussions, conversations, presentations etc. and thus it is essential for students to learn English. English language enhances the chances of employability, and prepare the students placement ready. The technical students should have great command over English with Listening, Speaking, Writing and Readingskills¹. The linguistic landscape in India gives a complicated terrain for English language acquisition, especially among college students. There are more than 1000 mother tongues and more than 20 officially recognised languages in the country. These regional languages or mother tongue languages dominate, and thus significantly influence English communication of students.

2. Impact of English Language Proficiency in Placement of students:

Proficiency in English for Technocrats is important as it is the predominant language of Technology and Science². Further, proficiency in English also opens the doors for good academic fields, R & D etc. The technical education in India can be broadly classified into two components: (i) the technical component, which includes knowledge of physical and mathematical principles, analytical techniques and (ii) effective communication, team work, critical thinking approach problem solving approach (Soft skills, Hard skills). Thus, all engineering programs/degrees should ensure that students develop substantial ability to achieve above two components during their education.

But as per a survey report³ 97% Engineering students in India cannot speak English, which is a preliminary requirement for getting a job in technical field. In India, from employment perspective, Engineering is the most popular program for aspirants at under graduate level⁴. The percentage employment increase data for Engineering students in India as shown below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Employment	57	49	46	55	57	64	71

3. Status of English Language in India and Madhya Pradesh

All over the globe, there are about 1.5 billion people who speak English with Chinese at second place and Hindi at third place. India ranks at 74th position out of 123 countries in English Proficiency Index⁵ (EFI). In India even after nearly eight

decades of independence, Hindi or any other regional language has not replaced English in various fields like education, technology, business, arts etc. English proficiency in cities of Madhya Pradesh like Bhopal, Indore have English proficiency scores of 557 and 554 respectively which is slightly higher than that of Gwalior. Over 90% of the people in northern states such as Madhya Pradesh, UP, Rajasthan, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh mostly Hindi, indicating low English proficiency⁶. In Western, Southern and Eastern parts of India a greater number of people speak and know English well. In Madhya Pradesh the Engineering education is governed by a state level Technological University and some private universities. Following observations have been noticed about Engineering students of these universities:

1. They lack in primary English language skills and thus unable to understand the subject well.
2. They are poor in English grammar and thus it becomes difficult for them to express themselves for writing text.
3. They are weak in spoken English and pronunciation.
4. They lack in knowledge of phonetics and due to this their oral presentation becomes unacceptable at higher level of education and employment platform.

Because of the above, the students feel less confident in facing opportunities coming across for employment. Even technically strong students do not succeed in interviews due to lack of communication skills. Also, there are some examples of merit holder students who could not continue their higher studies at foreign universities. A number of Engineering students were removed from the job due to lack of effective communication skills.

4.Improving English Proficiency of students

At under graduate level, initially English learning may be made stress free using students own mother tongue/language as a tool of instruction. Later on, students may be encouraged to participate in presentations, seminars, cultural programs etc not only to increase their vocabulary but also becoming confident enough to face placement drives⁷. Technical English is not as complicated as Literary English because in Technical English many difficult vocabulary terms are replaced by simpler substitutes.

This gives rise to a simple documentation at the reader's end. This generates a good connect of Engineers with the client to implement their ideas into actuality. In order to develop English proficiency among Engineering students following steps may be suggested:

- (i) Students from rural backgrounds generally struggle with English. This problem should be addressed by students themselves to take initiatives to improve their English language.
- (ii) Technical English Teachers should encourage and promote the students gradually so as to improve their English. This can be achieved by monitoring the students to appear in corresponding steps like seminars, presentations etc
- (iii) Technical English courses need to be better fused with the core Engineering curriculum so as to give effective impact in English learning process.
- (iv) Presentations should be made compulsory and appropriate weightage should be given in final evaluation.

5. Conclusion

The above discussion shows the significant role of English language proficiency during the placement opportunities of Engineering students. Proficiency in English improves multi cornered success in a student's life. The students become successful in academic field, employment, participation in several activities in global technological world etc. By improving technical communication skills, the students overcome the language barriers and get involvement in competitive world. In order to increase English proficiency in state of Madhya Pradesh, the students, teachers and the curriculum framing authorities should work in a collaborative way so as to address the demands of present century to prepare them for globalised society⁸. In India, more than 70% students come from rural background and attend regional language as primary language and thus they lag behind in grasping English language. This problem may be addressed by developing curriculum depending on the past education of a student prior to Engineering. The role of curriculum and teacher becomes predominant to produce English proficient students.

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