

ROLE OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN SOFT SKILLS: A PRACTICAL APPROACH

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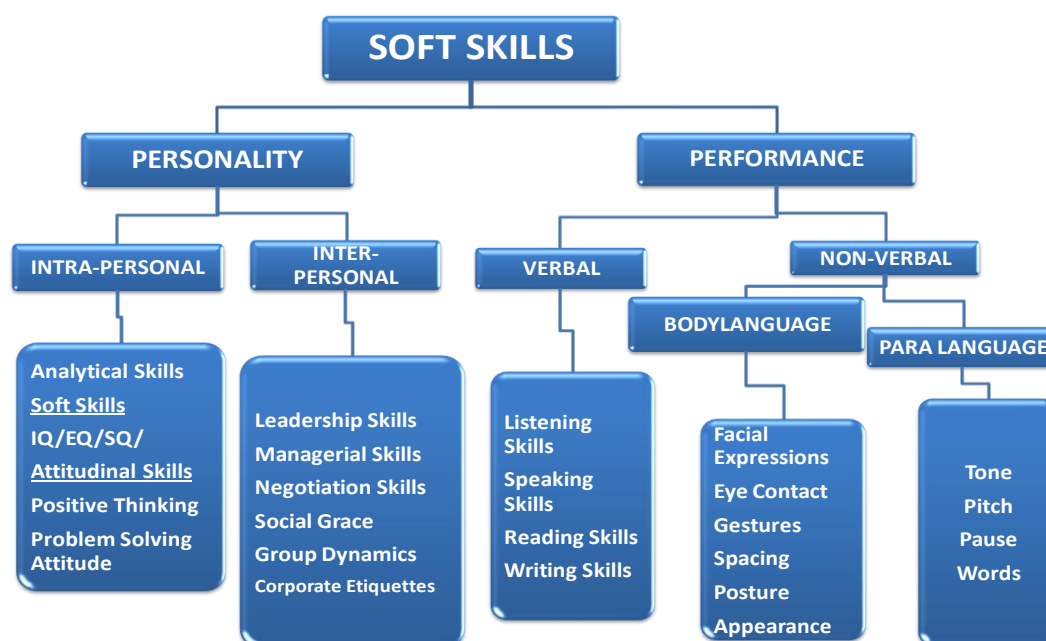
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Abstract:

As psycholinguistics establishes 'heart is the root and language is the fruit', one's language is an inevitable outcome of one's intro and interpersonal skills which constitute some core components in soft skill set. Now-a-days, most of the communication system is associated with English. The multinational corporate mania demands proficiency in English as the need of the hour for a promising employee. The present paper traces out some of the areas of proficiency in English required to be a soft skill savvy and provides some practical ways to improve them. Listening with empathy, formal, semi-formal and informal speaking, content-based reading, Net and writing etiquettes, appropriate use of words, meaningful and intonation based utterances and proper use of modal auxiliaries in situational dialogues certainly add savor and makes one English soft skill savvy.

Keywords: soft skills, English, proficiency, role, practicality etc

No student generation of India needs so much of the English language and a soft skill as the present one does. Every age and generation has demanded particular kinds of skills for their bread and butter. We are in the age of communication. This age is called the 'space age' or the 'age of information technology' or even 'cyber age'. In a fraction of a second, modern man can speak to people around the world and watch as a live show whatever happens around the four corners of the world. "Information is Power" is yesterday's quote. "Inform the Information in the Right Way" is today's one. The ability to communicate in English verbally apart from some soft skills will make a significant impact on the holistic development of a student both in his present learning and working performance in the future. Making them realize the need for these skills and providing a proper way to acquire them is an invaluable service that teaching community can do. Needless to say that a student with these skills will be on the international platform to face any kind of situation. The article outlines the set of demanded soft skills and provides practical guidelines to improve proficiency in English.



Intra- Personal Skills

Intrapersonal communication is the communication one has within oneself. Interpersonal communication is the communication that one has with others. It is a process in which a sender communicates a message to a receiver. The quality of interpersonal communication depends on

the quality of intrapersonal communication. So, basically communication is human behavior and it is a way of life.

Analytical skills: Analyzing things basis on certain factual parameters is a skill that one must possess. Scientific analysis leads to practical solutions.

Intelligent Quotient: Capacity of perceiving and retaining maximum information. The more the IQ is, the more will be performed. It is related to mind.

Emotional Quotient: Channelizing emotions in a proper way. Pent up emotions will give stability and results to reduce the possibility of errors. EQ is related to the heart.

Spiritual Quotient: Tendency of differentiating good and bad values in the light of morality. SQ gives a sense of purpose and spirituality to an individual. It is related to spirit.

Attitudinal skills:

Problem-solving attitude is essential in decision making. Creativity is doing things differently. A positive attitude is the very crux of the human personality. It generates optimism which orientation is to gain the best result.

Interpersonal skills: Leading, without imitating others, a group of people with a purpose is real leadership. Diplomacy is essential for negotiation skills. Presenting oneself in a particular climate for positive impact is a presentational skill. Forming groups and motivating them towards a specific direction is also an interpersonal skill. Communicating in a multicultural atmosphere, people, places, and policies is an emerging dimension of the soft skills

How to improve personal skills? :

- 1). Read the books on personality development. Know your strengths and weaknesses. (SWOT Analysis, Johari Window, Transactional Analysis etc, *"Unexamined life is not worthy to live" ---Socrates*)
- 2). Participate in all kinds of curricular and extracurricular activities. (Workshops, tours, awareness campaigns, social service programmers etc,) *"Hands that help are more precious than the lips that pray" --Mother Teresa.*
- 3). Have a purpose driven life. (SMART goal setting i.e. S=Specific, M=Measurable, A=Attainable, R=Realistic, T=Time bound). *"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."*
- 4) Cultivate subjective and objective spiritual belief in God. *"Disbelieving God is not believing anything but believing everything"*
- 5). Observe the world around you by following the media, both print and electronic. Discuss them with others.5). Cultivate book reading habit. *'Good readers are always good leaders.'*

Technology's role in our lives is astonishing. A multimillion-dollar research program conducted by the DMR Group, Inc., studied more than 4,500 organizations in North America,

Europe, and the Far East to investigate the nature and impact of changes in technology in relation with the language. Computing platforms in most organizations today are not able to deliver the goods for corporate rebirth as there is a need for paradigm shift in its communication system.

Therefore, English has become the dominant and prominent verbal communication among all organizational setups. Nowadays, in any corporate sector, communication is mostly associated with English. All the organizational transactions, clients, customers, data management, project works are being taken place in English. As English is the language of easy expression, technology, business, intellect, fashion, flexible, variety, simple, logical and link language, it has been acclaimed as an international language. Therefore, without English, it is impossible to get ready for a job, get a job and retaining the job. Communication through sound or language is called verbal communication. English can be learned from these four methods.

- 1) Listening
- 2) Speaking
- 3) Reading
- 4) Writing

Reading Skill as Soft Skill:

"Information is Power" is yesterday's quote. "Inform the Information in the Right Way" is today's one. If information explosion demands extensive reading, the inescapable existing knowledge in English necessitates reading books in English. Therefore, cultivating book reading habit certainly improves one's soft skills. It is generally accepted that '*Good readers are good leaders*'. The content-based reading argues that one whose brain is full of information, his or her tongue doesn't hesitate to talk. More the input more will be the output is the principle. Reading books on personality development will help to know one's strengths and weaknesses. The topics like SWOT Analysis, Johari Window, and Transactional Analysis etc will be more illuminating.

Writing & Netiquette:

In the process of getting ready for a job through retaining a job, writing skill, as a soft skill, is determinative. Its network etiquette -- that is, the etiquette of cyberspace is essential. And

Rule 1: Remember the human.

Rule 2: Follow the same standards of behavior online that you do in real life

Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace

Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth

Rule 5: Make yourself look good online

Rule 6: Share expert knowledge

Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control

Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy

Rule 9: Don't abuse your power

Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

In every case, in order to get fluent, accurate and appropriate English one has to concentrate on a) spellings b) pronunciation c) vocabulary and d) grammar. Here are some practical suggestions to follow:

Role of intonation in soft skill: Intonation is useful to identify the intention of the speaker. Rising Tone: Rising tone plays and establishes people with clarity in their conversation. It consists of a rise in the pitch of the voice from a low level to a high level. The rising tone is normally used in:

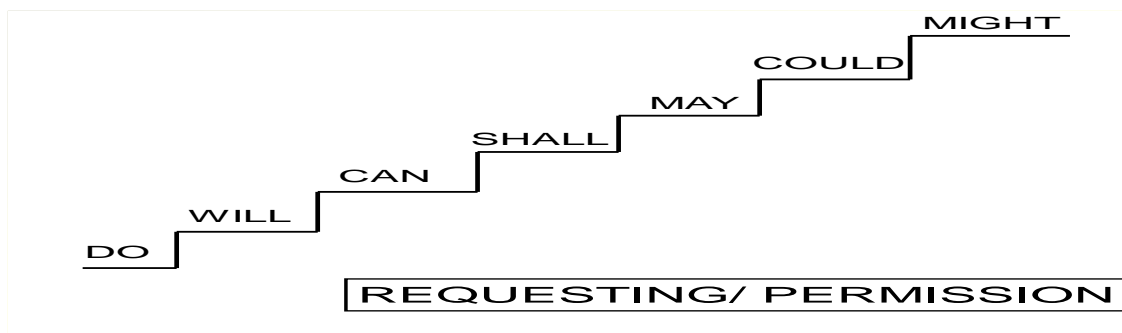
1. *Polarity type questions*: which demand a yes / no answer expect to be sharp in Conversation
2. *Incomplete statements*: Helps to understand the doubting nature of people
3. *Non-polarity (wh-type) questions*: when said in a warm/friendly way.
4. Polite requests: creates healthy and formal situations
5. *Question tags*: demands more clarification hence avoids error rate
6. *Expected responses*: develops negotiation skills
7. *Alternative questions*: gives a wide variety of options
8. *Enumeration*: Provides both quantitative and qualitative explanation for problem-solving situations
9. The rising tone used afterthought, doubt, hesitation, greetings, partings, and encouragement certainly creates interest in people and finally molds one as a people person.

Falling Tone: As falling tone consists of a fall in the pitch of the voice from a high level to a low level. It is normally used in:

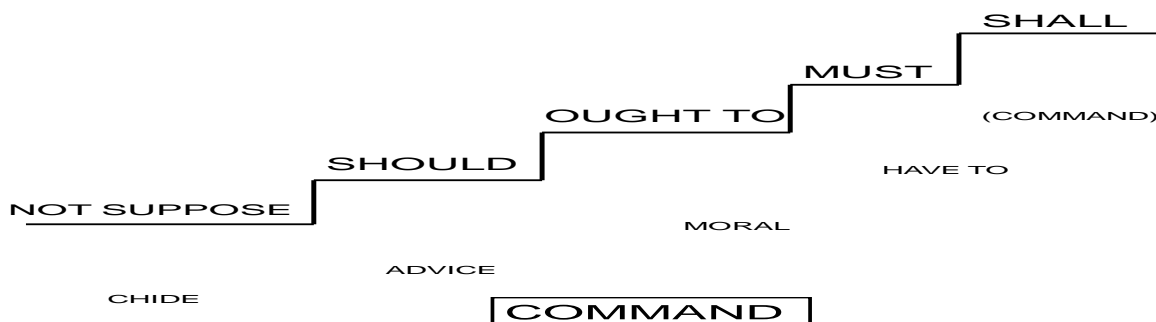
1. *Commands*: where hierarchy is demanded in higher level management
2. *Exclamations*: establishes the reality or possibility of the situations
3. *Ordinary statements*: provides merely facts
4. *Questions when said in a neutral way*: do not demand any reply from others

Falling-Rising Tone: It consists of a fall from high to low and then rises to the middle of the voice. It is normally used for special implications not verbally expressed. It can also be used for correcting what someone has said as a warning.

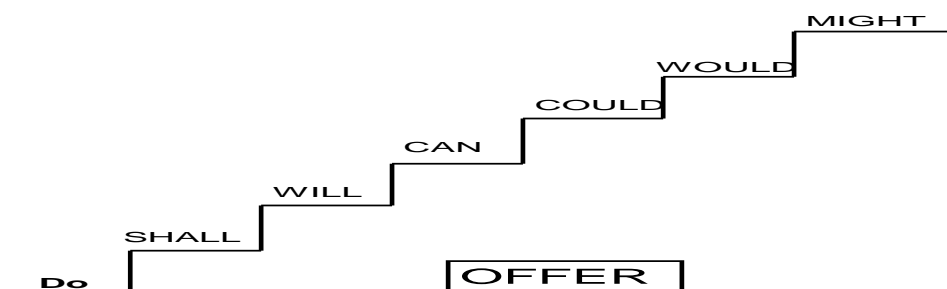
Model auxiliaries: Model auxiliaries play a dominant role in conversation and establish meaningful relationships. The following comparative presentation of models shows the differences. The more stairs go the more politeness increase. *'Do you give your pen?'* ..is informal and *'Might make a request to take your pen?'*... is an extremely polite request.



The severity and urgency also can be expressed by using different models. *'You are not supposed to do like that'* doesn't sound as *'You shall not do that.'* *'Shall'* is used for absolute command whereas *'should'* is for chiding.



'Might I help you?'..is an extremely polite offer whereas *'Shall we go for a movie?'* ...is a kind of informal one.



Words:

"Company blacklisted for poor customer skills" is Over 550 words in the English language refer to emotions. (Averill, 1980) Words have the power to *build or destroy* communication. Proper selection and use of words will certainly enhance one's relationships in the day to day communication. These are words which must be avoided in the service industry: BUT, BUSY, TRY, PROBLEM, PLEASE

The word 'but' when used with customers *shows aggression and disagreement*. Use the word 'however' instead. 'Busy'-this word demonstrates disinterest. Say 'I'll be with you in a minute... The word 'try' suggests one is unsure and insincere. Use 'ensure' instead. 'Problem' -usage of this word suggests *negativity* and one must remember that everyone has 'problem'... Using the word 'situation' suggests that you are willing to find a *SOLUTION*; When used at the end of a sentence, the word *please* 'often sounds like an *ORDER*... To make it sounds like a genuine request please use it at the *beginning of a sentence*.

Conclusion:

Therefore English proficiency has a pivotal role in soft skills. Becoming sensitive to the clues of language can help to communicate more effectively. The critical observation of the language implications can help to understand what others are saying even when they are not talking directly. One can sense when others are silent and digesting information or when they are silent and confused or when they are silent and depressed. One can share feelings too strong or too difficult to be expressed in words are decode painful messages from person to person. Finally, we can learn to be more sensitive to the language along with spirit to see how they express feelings and to see one as others see him or her. Therefore in the present corporate structure it is very crucial to study people and respond to their needs without any lapse. Hence the proficiency is required and is to be developed strategically.

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