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**ROLE OF BUSINESS ENGLISH IN ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY OF ENGINEERS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIVATE COLLEGES OF MUMBAI UNIVERSITY.**



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**Short Profile**

Anuradha Singh is working at A. C. Patil College of Engineering, Kharghar.



**ABSTRACT:**

Employability of fresh engineering graduates from most of the private engineering colleges has been reported to be poor. A number of factors including language proficiency have been assigned for this poor performance. This manuscript deals with the effect of the proficiency of individuals' Business English Skills on the employability and career profile of technical people with engineering skills. These skills include presentations, briefings, meetings,

interviews, conversations, seminars, conferences, discussions, instructions, reports, proposals, letters, and advertisements and so on. In order to make this study possible a set of questionnaires was designed to generate data for fresh engineering graduates and those who have been in this profession for the past five years. The sample size selected was of about five hundred students and a methodology was developed to analyze the response of individuals. These five hundred people are the students who I have trained. These students were first been categorized according to their language proficiency, then their response to various activities ( such as games, videos, case studies, group discussions, role plays and various other activities which were utilized as tools).Their performance was evaluated and analyzed.

**KEYWORDS**

1. Drilling 2. Oscillate 3. Virtual Volleyball

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## INTRODUCTION :

Business English is interpreted as “the English which is job related or the English which is utilized in corporate world” and in contemporary world it is inevitable. Engineers need to have great language skills now days. Business English is the ability to prepare reports, write minutes, take phone calls, make presentations, take up meetings etc. Employability in terms of engineers, I have defined as technical skills, personality skills and language skills. I have prepared a set of three questionnaires, to find out their preferences in these three. Students of final year and third year too have been included in this study. 150 students are from Thakur College of Engineering and 150 students from Saraswati College of Engineering. 100 students are from Accenture and

100 are from Tech Mahindra. Overall total study is on 500 engineers from Thakur and Saraswati, these are the two private engineering colleges from Mumbai University. The objectives of this research are to find out the language competence of these students, the students’ understanding of the corporate requirements in terms of language & how do these engineers define employability and assess their market value. And analyze the role of business English in getting employment. The research work had been started with the hypothesis that business English is the topmost skill required to create good job opportunity by engineers.

## Defining Employability

The term, “Employability” refers to a person’s capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment, if required. The employability of an engineer depends on his personality skills, technical skills and language skills. Questionnaires have been prepared to evaluate the business English of these engineers, be it related to getting a Job or to maintain their careers and find out how to write Letters, faxes and memos, telephone etiquette, dealing with problems or sales and negotiation.

## An Example of the Language training provided

The session would start with an ice breaker.....

### Ice Breaker

Preparation: You need a chart paper and a pair of scissors.

Procedure: choose the biggest student in the class. Say you are going to cut a hole in the card, then asks whether he or she could climb through it. Get each student in the class to commit him or herself to a prediction. Cut the card as follows:

Step 1: Fold the card in half, lengthways.

Step 2: Make two cuts A&B

Step 3: Cut along the fold from A to B.

Step 4: Now do alternate cuts C, D, C, D, etc., cutting through both halves of the folded card.

Step 5: Shake out the zigzag circle of card and ask the student to climb through it.

Having cut the card, show it to the class and ask if they think that the student will be able to climb through it.

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Elicit the various tense forms from them during the activity and set the context.

### Activity

Stick pictures of few celebrities around the class with headings; ask the class, can you guess what The people have achieved?

### Activity

Give them few news articles to check and summarize what these people have achieved? If necessary check the meaning of the words and generate vocabulary, for example, which person do you think?

- 1.Has made a fortune?
- 2.Is exceptionally talented?
- 3.Has raised a large sum of money for charity?
- 4.Has provided an important role model for other people?
- 5.Has taken huge risks?
- 6.Has shown a lot of dedication and stamina?
- 7.Has had to cope with many unexpected problems?

Discuss the vocabulary generated out of the discussion.

Now compare and explain your opinions with your partner this activity is called as pair work the students will sit in pairs and discuss, it will proceed as follows-

I suppose Bill Gates because.....

I suppose L.N.Mittal because.....etc.

Now a circle game will be played, the teacher will make teams of four and tell to put four achievements in order 1 being the most impressive and 4 the least worthwhile.

Let them compare their ideas with other students. They will be allowed to move in the class while the teacher monitors drills lots of language....

for example-

#### 1.Saina Nehwal.....

- a.Has been playing badminton for more than 5years
- b.Has won Olympic bronze medal.
- c.Has been gifted a BMW car by Sachin Tendulkar.

#### 2. By the time she will retire

- a.She will have won Olympic gold most probably.

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b. She will have brought a lot of name and fame for the country.

### 3. Bill Gates was the richest man in the world...

a. He had made a great fortune

b. But because his company had been divided into two, now he is not the richest person.

A brief discussion will take place about present, past and future perfect tenses with the help of time lines, because these are the most effective when combined with concept questions that has been previously discussed.

### An Example of a session in soft skills training

**Warm up:** A game of virtual volleyball where the trainer tells two to volunteer as leaders and then select their teams, once the team is selected the trainer reshuffles the team leaders i.e. they do not get the team they have selected. Objective behind this game is to increase interaction among the class and initiate a feeling of team work among the students.

**Activities-** They are provided with role plays, Group Discussions and Case studies, storytelling sessions, creativity sessions, team building games etc.

Observation and survey had been two methodologies how it has been ensured that the methodology gives the desirable results. Here are the findings of the surveys.....

### Survey No. 1

The number of students mentioned here voluntarily participated in this survey. The first criterion has been fixed as their basic business English assessment & it has been made possible through, a questionnaire that has 40 objective type business English questions. These questions have been derived from Cambridge University website.

The first five questions are to assess the understanding of leaving messages in the corporate. Questions no. six to ten deal with the ability of the engineer to make arrangements for guests in the organization. 11 to 15 deals with the ability of the engineer to sell the services and products. 16 to 20 deals with complaints and adjustments to be provided. Questions 21 to 25 are about meetings, 26 to 30 are for innovations in business, 31 to 35 are for getting and providing employment. The last one that is 36 to 40 is for problem solving ability. And overall it is for language skills of the candidate to fulfill the requirements of an engineer in corporate.

The questionnaire had been given to the engineers employed in The Accenture Technologies and Tech Mahindra for about three to four years. The final year engineering students and third year engineering students from Thakur College of Engineering and Technology and Saraswati College of Engineering.

The result of first survey is shown below with help of a pie chart. 40% of the total correct answers is done by Accenture employees who have experience of around three years. 30% of the total correct answers is by Tech Mahindra employees. 20% of the total correct answers is by Thakur college students

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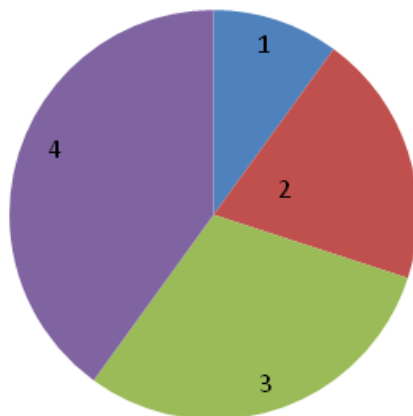
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and 10% is by Saraswati College of Engineering.

The reason behind such findings might be that The Accenture takes the creamy part of the Thakur as well as Saraswati Students, but the number of students placed through Saraswati is less as compared with Thakur College.

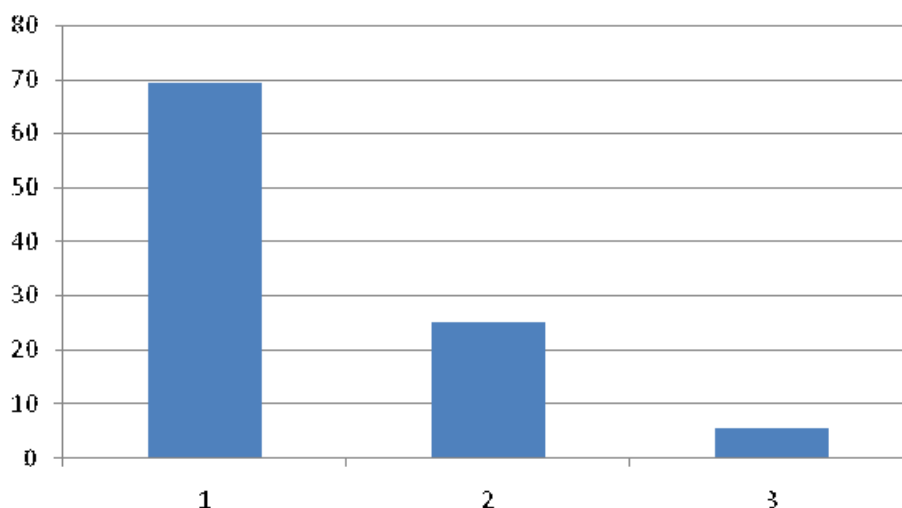


- 1- Third year & final year students of Saraswati College of engineering
- 2- Third year & final year students of Thakur College of engineering
- 3- Tech Mahindra employees
- 4- Accenture employees

Questionnaire source: Cambridge university website

### Survey No. 2

The following questionnaire was given to these students to identify their ability to cope up with routine activities in corporate. The questions were asked such as whether these engineers can draft reports, write minutes of the meetings, fill in various forms ,use web dictionary, write captions, short notices and subtitles, prepare user manuals , brochures etc.. Can they compose business letters concisely; Make an Abstract / a Summary, Draft proposals accurately, Develop content for the program /web pages (technical writing), translate the matter, Prepare questionnaires for market surveys etc.



1= Yes  
 2=No  
 3= Cannot Say

The result has been that 69% of the total said that they can, 26% said that they cannot and remaining five percent could not do a proper follow up with the procedure.

The students who are employed did better in these surveys; the reason might be because such activities are in their routine, while the students who are doing engineering are not that well versed. Here again Thakur students' performance is better than Saraswati. In fact the five percent students who have not even heard about few such activities are from Saraswati. The reason again is that the extra-curricular activities in Thakur are given more importance as compared to Saraswati .

### Business English and Employability

A questionnaire has been developed of five questions to assess the understanding of the term "Business English" by these students and its relation and impact on "Employability". These students agreed with my definition of Employability skills, which means, they too feel that Employability skills means three skills first technical skill, second confidence and personality skills and thirdly Language skills.

The first question asked in the questionnaire was "Are you aware of the skills you need to grab a good Job offer?" The engineers from Accenture and Tech Mahindra do agree that they require good language skills and personality skills to grab a good job offer and technical skills are comparatively less important. Everyone except 2% said that language skills are not important.

The second question was "Are you aware of your market value?" Everyone knows it. The gross salary per annum quoted by them is three to five lakhs, when asked for the skills needed to enhance the

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market value they rated first the technical skills, second confidence and personality and last was the language skills.

All of them felt the importance of Business English in enhancement of career opportunity as primary factor. When the question was asked as if they think Business English plays a key role in getting employment and sustaining it? They agreed.

Sustaining a job depends on the performance of the students at their workplace. Infosys Technologies recruits a very good number of engineers from various colleges but terminates half of them because of poor performance within a very short duration. Accenture and Tech Mahindra also fall in the same category, but the termination rate is only around 5 to 10 percent. When corporate feedback was taken, 80% of the engineers from these colleges got poor feedback from corporate. The reason being that at Thakur a lot of pre placement training is provided, in the form of Student Development Programmes, in Saraswati College enough efforts are not taken. Their corporate feedback is around 40% at both places. Parameters for having poor performance in the technical field as well as soft skills and language skills.

Because of poor performance these students have to oscillate from one job to another, and initially they have to struggle with their limited knowledge. When asked with the question, "Why do people oscillate from one job to another?" The reason had been quoted as they are aware of their academic status and they take a decision to keep on changing their jobs, in order to get better opportunity & to provide full satisfaction to their employers.

All students have agreed that excellent business English provides them with good job opportunities after they have good corporate experience. But initially, they have to go with technical skills; otherwise they will have to opt for BPO services and other marketing sort of services, but they are aware that for such job opportunities, proficiency in business English is most important.

## KEY WORDS

**Drill:** the process of encouraging the students to come up with new words or more and more words.

**Oscillate:** the process of changing jobs one after another.

**Virtual Volleyball:** enactment of the real volleyball game in a limited place.

## BUSINESS ENGLISH EXERCISE

Choose the best word to fit the gap.

1 There is always a lot of to attend to on a Monday morning.

A letters B correspondence C communications D information

2 Please leave a message on the answer phone if you need to contact us office hours.

A outside B over C through D against

3 The annual general meeting was in the conference centre.

A conducted B provided C run D held

4 One of the advantages of writing over talking to someone face-to-face is that you can take your time.

A remaining B related C relative D relevant

5 Make sure that the addressee's job is correct.

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A title B description C name D type

6 The delegates are booked into the Hotel du Lac but they can move to something more luxurious if they want.

A provisionally B approximately C temporarily D conditionally

7 Make sure that you allow plenty of time to at the airport.

A check up B check out C check in D check on

8 I always choose a room the back of the hotel as it's usually quieter.

A showing B seeing C overlooking D viewings

9 The conference speakers will require photocopying throughout their stay.

A amenities B facilities C opportunities D appliances

10 In the interests of safety it's a good idea to walk when visiting a place for the first time.

A confidently B convincingly C confidentially D consciously

11 Neither the customer or the salesperson wants to feel over a deal.

A checked B changed C cheated D charged

12 The retailer was allowed to order the goods on a sale or basis.

A return B revert C restore D retract

13 The service engineer was to guarantee the work for six months.

A granted B conceded C accepted D prepared

14 It was agreed that the full cost would be refunded if the goods were returned in perfect .

A condition B state C situation D shape

15 We are willing to supply the goods a discount of 5%.

A in B after C at D over

16 There was a serious staff at the time so several shipments were held up.

A shortage B reduction C decrease D contraction

17 The complaint about the cost of the item was soon out.

A dealt B sorted C taken D cleared

18 As we were entirely responsible for the confusion your account has been with the full amount.

A debited B added C given D credited

19 The poor quality of the products was on inadequate supervision of the workforce.

A caused B blamed C explained D put

20 The customer demanded a when he discovered the equipment was missing.

A return B repair C refund D reply

21 Mrs Perez is writing to the arrangements she made with you.

A conform B confer C confine D confirm

22 . I'll see if Mr Watson is available.

A Hold on B Keep on C Go on D Stay

23 I'll put you to the Sales Department.

A over B off C through D in

24 Oh' dear. I think I've the wrong number.

A put B done C through D dialed

25 I'm Miss Johnson's in a meeting.

A worried B afraid C concerned D frightened

- 26 Over the decades, the name of Siemens has become with progress.  
 A symptomatic B synonymous C systematic D synthetic
- 27 The development of new technologies means that there are fewer jobs for manual .  
 A workforce B staff C employees D workers
- 28 Buying in can reduce unit costs.  
 A bulk B amounts C volume D weight
- 29 If the workplace is a happy place, then staff is usually low.  
 A structure B turnover C changes D takeover
- 30 The Department is responsible for sending out invoices.  
 A Accounts B Purchasing C Sales D Production
- 31 For many people job is more important than a high salary.  
 A satisfaction B expectation C achievement D acceptance
- 32 The company needed to make job cuts so they asked staff to for redundancy.  
 A offer B choose C volunteer D select
- 33 Employees are allowed up to three weeks unpaid a year.  
 A absence B vacation C time D leave
- 34 Carol's reliability and confidence make her an employee.  
 A idealized B ideal C idyllic D idealistic
- 35 The interview panel's impression was that Sam was the most suitable candidate.  
 A overdone B overall C overbearing D overblown
- 36 I am ----- to have the opportunity to work with your company.  
 A very grateful B Over the moon C Made up D all
- 37 This offer of employment is made subject to the provision of -----references.  
 A Stonking B Awesome C Made up D Satisfactory
- 38 We will need to examine the situation in order to -----what can be done to rectify it.  
 A Scope out B Establish C Suss out D Satisfactory
- 39 I hope that the staff will not find the new shift working timetable-----.  
 A too much hassle B too inconvenient C too much of pain D all
- 40 I am afraid we will have to -----tomorrow's meeting.  
 A Scope out B put off C postpone D take a rain check for

Employability quiz

1. Are you aware of the skills you need to grab a good Job offer?

A yes B no

If yes mention.....

2. Are you aware of your market value?

A yes B no

If yes, what enhances it the most? Rate out of 10.....

A confidence and personality

B English language skills

C technical skills

3. Do you think Business English plays a key role in getting employment and sustaining it?

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A yes B no

4. Why do people oscillate from one job to another? Reasons given are-

A Self-Awareness

B Opportunity Awareness

C Decision Making Skills

Can You

1. Use appropriate words and phrases

A yes B no

2. Use (mobile) dictionary / web dictionary

A yes B no

3. Fill-in various forms

A yes B no

4. Write captions, subtitles and short notices

A yes B no

5. Prepare slogans, advertisements, etc.

A yes B no

6. Prepare user manuals, brochures, etc.

A yes B no

7. Compose business letters concisely

A yes B no

8. Make an Abstract / a Summary

A yes B no

9. Draft notices, agendas and write minutes

A yes B no

10. Prepare news items, news bulletins

A yes B no

11. Draft proposals accurately

A yes B no

12. Prepare questionnaires for market surveys

A yes B no

13. Write research reports / papers

A yes B no

14. Edit and carry out proof reading

A yes B no

15. Translate the matter

A yes B no

16. Develop content for the programme /web pages (technical writing)

A yes B no

Conclusion

With the help of this study an authentic picture is created that enhancement of employability is possible only when business English and personality skills are amalgamated with the technical knowledge. The kind of technical knowledge is provided to these students, its not sufficient to grab a good job opportunity as stated in this study.

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