

## Refining LSRW Skills of Engineering Graduates through the Digital News Platform

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to develop the LSRW skills of the graduates with the help of digital scientific news platforms. The present study indicated that the digital news platforms play an important role in honing the English skills of graduate learners. The contemporary digital era has given rise to numerous multinational companies and burgeoning businesses. Transactions in businesses have made technology an inevitable component of communication. Technology has brought the shift from industrial society to information society and industrial economy to knowledge economy. Today, we cannot think about global businesses without the internet. Internet has made the digital revolution a reality. It has become an important mode for various business activities throughout the world. Internet, a valuable technological innovation, plays a crucial role in a wide range of business interactions. These interactions or communications are predominantly done in the English language.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary digital era has given rise to numerous multinational companies and burgeoning businesses. Transactions in businesses have made technology an inevitable component of communication. Technology has brought the shift from industrial society to information society and industrial economy to knowledge economy. (Aferdita Berisha-Shaqiri 2015). Today, we cannot think about global businesses without the internet. Internet has made the digital revolution a reality. It has become an important mode for various business activities throughout the world. Internet, a valuable technological innovation, plays a crucial role in a wide range of business interactions. These interactions or communications are predominantly done in the English language.

The English language has become an inevitable facet in this digital era. Most communications happen through the English language. Email inboxes and business WhatsApp groups are flooded with business messages. Communication happens also through the voice chats, skype calls etc. Millions of messages are being transferred via these channels. This has also led to the demand for employees with adequate English skills. It is important that the corporate employees should not only be well-versed in their technical skills but also in the English language skills. Grooming the English language skills amongst graduates, which comprises of Listening, Speaking, Reading and

Writing (LSRW), has also become the need of the hour. The onus has fallen on the Universities and Colleges to equip the engineering graduates with adequate English skills. The present study aimed to develop the LSRW skills of the graduates with the help of digital scientific news platforms. The present study indicated that the digital news platforms play an important role in honing the English skills of graduate learners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of technology and business has led to the importance of the English language and Business English. "During recent years, globalization and computerization have redefined the industry, politics, culture, and social order", says (Aferdita 73). Further (Aferdita 75) adds on to say "In recent times electronic business has developed in an important business discipline". Sales and business have tremendously increased due to the internet era. Business communications that are done through e-commerce, e-marketing etc. have made organizations to depend on technology to flourish their businesses. Traditional business systems are being replaced by the online business system. The online medium has made interactions amongst organizations, clients, customers, stakeholders etc. uncomplicated and increased business profits. The e-business has become an aspect where the authority of customary information technology blends with the internet, and has brought a new foresight to run businesses.

Information technology has revolutionized the workplace environment, globally. Changes like: nine to five working time been shifted to 24/7 working hours, geography is no longer a concern; small companies can offer big projects and the demand for workforce with quality. It has become a challenge to companies to hire candidates with excellent proficiency and also retain and acquire the best services from them.(Elena-Iulia 2014).This has also given rise to the need for quality workforce which will contribute to the progress of the organization.

Various factors determine the quality of the corporate employees. One such factor is - the way they communication within the organization and also with overseas clients. This has led to the importance of Business English, which is an effective mode for business communication. Business English is a branch of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Business English is the kind of English used for business correspondences. The vocabulary and the language used in the business context vary from General English. The LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills pertaining to the business context has gained importance in the present business context. When employees speak to clients, customers, colleagues etc., the speaking skill is given prominence. Speaking the right words in the right style and tone is essential for success in business.

Inculcating the LSRW skills in the graduate level is vital. Students need to be taught the nuances of language skills and its importance. Today, getting a job in a multinational company has become imperative. Students face the acid test and feel the corporate environment during their campus placements. Placement tests assess the students writing and speaking skills. Though the students have adequate technical knowledge, applying it in a placement process has become a challenging task. In most of the placement process, the candidates are required to clear the verbal section and group discussion before sitting for the human resource manager interview. These skills are tested in the placement tests, since the companies consider good writing and speaking skill as an essential component in employees for organizational growth and professional success. The speaking skill (which is a product of listening skill) the writing skill (which is a product of reading skill) and has become mandatory for success in the professional world. Enhancing the language skills of young learners (graduate students) has become mandatory. Thus, the online platform has taken an important role to play in developing the LSRW skills of graduate learners.

The online platform is an interesting means to cultivate the language skills in graduate learners. The digital platform is an interesting means to cultivate the language skills in learners. (Krashen 5) in 'Language Acquisition and Language Education' stresses that while anxiety and lack of motivation can impede language learning by acting as filters locking comprehension, the novelty factor or the very appealing features of multimedia renders autonomy and creates greater participation from the students. Educators need to focus not only on traditional teaching pedagogies, but also the digital mode of language teaching. According to Mangayarkarasi and Preethi "This concept of 'digital classroom' or 'smart classroom' provides effective learning experiences by helping the learners to comprehend information, reflect on how it will effect a change in their lives, compare how it fits into their own experiences and think about how this information offers new ways to act in their enhancement of English language". The digital platform has revolutionized the language teaching pedagogy of English teachers. Further, Mangayarkarasi and Preethi say "Today's teacher must be intelligent, organized, creative, reflective, technologically savvy, and a learner by nature as teaching is not only a work of art but also science."

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to enhance the language skills of graduates the present study selected a group of 60 engineering students as the sample. The study was conducted in the students' laboratory sessions. Two laboratory sessions (session 1 and session 2) were taken to conduct the study. Each session comprised of two hours. The study comprised of enhancing the LSRW skill of students. The study was conducted in the following order:

- Listening to online science news from websites like science daily and science direct
- Presenting (oral or power point presentation) the news that the students listened to
- Reading an online science news from websites like science daily and science direct
- Writing a summary of the science news read.

During the session 1, the students were requested to listen to science websites and prepare a presentation. The science websites were selected for the study since the sample belonged to the engineering field and the students preferred the online science platform to other

news websites. The listening time was approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Then they were given the option to do the presentation orally or through a PowerPoint. The students came forward with their presentations and presented for 3 to 5 minutes, on the topic which they listened to. They were instructed to deliver their presentation with clarity and appropriate presentations skills. The students were already instructed on presentation skills (a component of laboratory syllabus). In the presentation, the students attempted to highlight the news points which they heard and made their presentations informative.

During the session 2, the students were requested to read news from science websites and write a summary of it. The reading time was allotted as 10 to 15 minutes. Students were requested to read and write a minimum, of two science news and then write a paragraph on each of the news. The students wrote a paragraph on various science news topics. They were requested to take 10 to 15 minutes to write a paragraph. The students found the task useful since, paragraph writing was already a part of their English syllabus. The researcher instructed the students to write a paragraph on each news article they read, focusing on clarity, brevity, organization and appropriate content.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In Session 1 and Session 2, the online news platform was used to enhance the LSRW skills of the graduate students. Session 1 focused on the Listening and Speaking skills. The online news platform was a platform less explored by the students. But, this task enabled them to listen to a constructive online content and present it. The task was a new experience for the students since this was the first time they attempted to listen and present online science news. Session 2, focused on the Reading and Writing skill. Reading science online news and writing a paragraph about it was a task the students had not attempted before. This gave them interest and they participated in the activity with fervor and sincerity.

The speaking skill has become an important aspect of academic and career development of the graduate learners. Effective speaking skill is essential for doing technical proposal presentations, paper presentations laboratory presentations, group discussion or the

interview process. The corporate arena also lays stress on effective oral communication for business purposes. Presently, the number of students reading newspapers daily has reduced to large extent. Lifestyle of the graduates has been tremendously influenced by the latest technological development. The emergence of WhatsApp and social media networks has impacted the reading style of graduates. Graduates are loaded with information load, be it academic or nonacademic. So, making them read online news is mandatory. They should be given awareness about the importance reading online newspaper, especially the science news. Exploring the digital platform not only enhances the students' LSRW but also enlarges their scientific knowledge.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The burgeoning businesses along with technological developments, have given rise to the significance of the English language skills. Graduate learners with effective language skills have a promising a career. So, it is important that the English language be seen as a means to global interactions and not just as a mere subject for exam purpose. Thus, the present study aimed to enhance the graduate learners' language skills through the effective digital news platform.

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