Remedial strategies in Communication skills in the English language

By

Dr. Tessy Anthony C., Associate Professor
Dept. of English and Centre for Research
St. Teresa's College
Ernakulam, Cochin – 682011, Kerala

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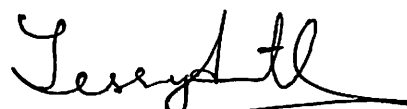South Western Regional Office, Bangalore

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Dr. Tessy Anthony C.
Associate Professor
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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the project, "Remedial Strategies in Communication Skills in the English Language" is a record of bonafide studies and research work done by me and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

Dr. Tessy Anthony C.
Department of English &
Centre for Research
St. Teresa's College
Ernakulam
Kochi-682 011

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Abbreviations

IT   -   Information Technology

L1   -   First Language

L2   -   Second Language

L3   -   Third Language

BBC -   British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN -   Cable News Network

NASA -   National Aeronautics and Space Administration

LC   -   Lower Class

MC   -   Middle Class

UC   -   Upper Class

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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on selected areas of Kerala as samples. Remedial strategies were drawn from interviews, questionnaires and personal conversations with the officials from the IT companies. The requirements were mapped to the available skills and the gaps were arrived at. Strategies for bridging the gap was devised with inputs from eminent faculty members in English and other subject experts.

A systematic collection of data is made which is categorized and the problems are identified. The data collected was carefully studied and analyzed to arrive at conclusions suggesting methods to effectively improve the communication skills. Methods like Random Sampling, selective Sampling and Collective sampling were implemented to arrive at the results. Exercises and Recordings in the Language lab were also a method of gaining data and evolving methods of problem solving.

The study will be a close scrutiny and analysis evolving remedial strategies leading to improving methods of Communication skills of Students and future candidates for the 'promising' jobs in today's scenario. This will provide better job opportunities since students with better communication skills will emerge.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origin of the research problem

Globalization has shaken the foundation of human society. It has left its impact on several fields. This study is on how it has propelled a drastic change in the English language. English as a language is subject to change, alterations and additions. As a result it has been stretched further to make it a homogeneous whole with singularities. It is generally observed that à technologically sound person would lack certain skills and vice versa. What is implied is not the basic knowledge of language and communication, but something still further, i.e., to find the right English word with the ideal technological inference. A right combination of the two abilities is apt, enviable, and rare. The gulf has broadened and it's aftershock is being experienced in every sector of the IT industry.

The IT industry is unique in that it has been and will continue to be a sphere with tremendous growth potential. This very reason makes it the first choice of any aspirant; but what precisely are the employers looking for in an ideal candidate ? Most often candidates who have a basic knowledge of English are either inhibited, diffident or lack good communication skills (verbal, non-verbal and presentational skills), especially the one's coming from non-urban backgrounds. This is a problem faced in most fields, but the focus of this study is on the strength of the communication skills of the scientific and technical manpower in the IT sector.

1.4 Review of Research and Development in the Subject

Studies have been done in the field of Linguistics regarding mother tongue interferences in the speaking of English, but not much research has been devoted to the improvement of communication skills in the present scenario. Books certainly suggest guidelines for betterment in some aspects of effective communication, but still there has been no major advancement as per the statistics in our fast globalizing world. Globalization today has thus made upgrading one's English language and communication skills an indispensable tool for better employability. In addition to those who are going through these problems and those longing to improve, subject experts in various aspects of this field have contributed most generously in finding strategies for improvement.

1.5 Expected Outcome

This study will be an interdisciplinary one, mainly dealing with students of Science and Technology and their communication skills in English. Some aspects and tools connected to Economics and Sociology will also be utilised for analysis.

This study aims at surveying and developing corrective strategies leading to improved communication skills of students and aspirants for the 'promising' jobs of today. This will provide better job opportunities since students with better communication skills will emerge.

The next step involved studying this data, analyzing it and coming to a conclusion as to how effectively improvement can be achieved in communication skills.

Once the problem was diagnosed, solutions to solve and overcome this problem were identified through recordings and suggesting methods of improvement in communication skills.

Different samples were selected from three categories,
1) Students from major Engineering colleges
2) Professionals from the IT sector (aged between 20 and 30) and
3) Language trainers from IT companies and private institutions.

Questionnaires were circulated for the collection of data from these sample groups. Interview methods were used to acquire data from language trainers working in Kerala, who have had experience training Keralites as well as non-Keralites. The sample selection was further divided based on regional margins. The colleges from an urban background of Cochin was selected and others from more rural areas. The professionals from different companies were also classified based on their place of origin. The different samples were further subdivided into Socio-Economic classes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communication Studies is a discipline of how audiences interpret information. And since it is a transmission of meaning from signifier to signified effective communication skills is required for proper required understanding. Communication creates required responses when the targeted audience comprehends correctly. For this one has to develop effective communication skills in English. Effective communication also strengthens relationships. Communication encompasses a great deal of human activity leading to the evolution of meaning.

2.1 Communication Skills Needed

In this competitive global economy, communication is one of the most fundamental functions of management in any organization and its importance can hardly be overemphasized. It is a process of transmitting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions and plans between various parts of an organization. You cannot have human relations without communication. However, good and effective communication is required not only for good human relations, encouraging ideas or suggestions from employees or workers and implementing them whenever possible but also for good and successful business. Communication is also a basic tool for motivation, which can improve morale of the employees in an organization. Inappropriate or faulty communication among employees or between manager and his subordinates is the major cause of conflict and low morale at work. With effective communication, one can maintain a good human relationship in the organization and can also increase production at low cost.

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Communication skills training should consist of the following subjects: type of communication, communication process, social style embedded in communication, assertiveness and professional feedback, verbal and non-verbal communication, listening behavior, culture and communication, how to develop versatility to overcome communication barriers and the role of feelings and emotions in communication.

Improve your interpersonal skills: the vital link between employees and productivity. Research has revealed that participants of training programs dealing with communication skills admit the need for acute interpersonal communication skills training at work: those differences in communication styles cause breakdowns, that conflicts are due to communication style differences and that low morale too is caused by differences in communication style.

Oral
Presentation
Audience Awareness
Critical Listening
Body Language

Written
Academic writing
Revision and editing
Critical reading
Presentation of Data

Communication Skills

Non Verbal
Audience Awareness
Personal Presentation
Body Language
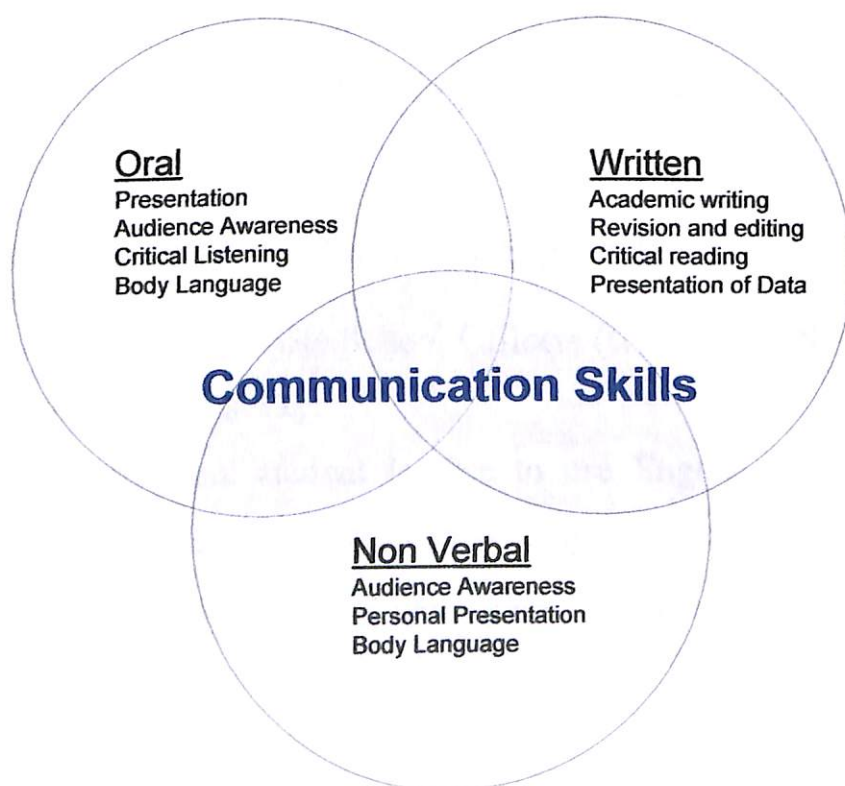
2.2 Using English as a Medium of Communication

Culture affects human behaviour in the deepest and most subtle ways. In fact it acts as a screen between man and man preventing communication. Even if language is shared customs can be different. The greater the cultural distance, the more difficult the interface. During communication the context of the message passed is important.

Each language is structured differently, and the different structures offer users different suggestions to meaning. So when we learn our first language, our mind 'tunes into' the way the particular L1 works, and we learn to pay attention to particular cues to meaning that are most helpful. When we meet a new language, our mind automatically tries to apply the first language experience by looking for familiar cues. Part of learning a foreign language is developing new understanding about the particular cues to meaning that the new language offers, and that differ from those of our first language. The transferability of knowledge, skills and strategies across languages depends closely on how the two written languages work.

2.3 Teaching English as a Second Language

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), U.S., defines English language proficiency in this way:

A fully English proficient student is able to use English to ask questions, to understand what a teacher instructs, and reading materials, to test ideas, and to challenge what is being asked in the classroom. Four language skills contribute to proficiency as follows:

1. **Reading** - the ability to comprehend and interpret text at the age and grade appropriate level.
2. **Listening** - the ability to understand the language of the teacher and instruction, comprehend and extract information, and follow the instructional discourse through which teachers provide information.
3. **Writing** - the ability to produce written text with content and format fulfilling classroom assignments at the age and grade-appropriate level.
4. **Speaking** - the ability to use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities (such as peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities, and question/answer sessions) within the classroom and in social interactions within the school. Hence, the teacher should keep these in mind while teaching English as a second language to the students.

2.4 Technical/Business English for Engineers

The Anna University, Chennai has designed the English syllabus for Engineering students comprising of the four skills as below;

a) Listening

b) Speaking

c) Reading

d) Writing

The subject title is "Technical English", a theory subject and "Communication Skills Lab ", a practical subject. The former is taught to the first year students of the four years engineering degree course and the lab course is conducted in second or third year of the same students.

2.5   Technical English-Theory

The main objective of this course is to help students to develop listening skills for academic and professional purposes.

1. To help students acquire the ability to speak effectively in English in real-life situations.

2. To inculcate reading habit and to develop effective reading skills.

3. To help students improve their active and passive vocabulary.

4. To familiarize students with different rhetorical functions of scientific English.

5. To enable students write letters and reports effectively in formal and business situations.

The language lab training is given with the assistance of Networked Computers and specially designed software. The objectives of the practical training are given below.

- To equip students of engineering and technology with effective speaking and listening skills in English

- To help them develop their soft skills and people skills, this will make the transition from college to workplace smoother and help them to excel in their jobs

- To enhance students' performance at Placement interviews, Group Discussions and other recruitment exercises.

The lab practice is divided into two categories as "English Language Lab" where the listening comprehension, reading comprehension and vocabulary and speaking tests are conducted, and "Career Lab" where writing tests on Resume/Report preparation and Letter writing are conducted. Also the students are given training in presentation, Group Discussion and interview skills.

Forty per cent of the total marks (100) in final examinations is given for the English Language Lab practice and the rest of 60% is given for the Career Lab Practice, for which the test and evaluation are decided by the examiners during final examinations.

In Tamil Nadu, a large number of students are from rural areas. They pass out from schools that use the regional language as the basic medium of communication. Hence, based on their background, they have designed a syllabus and adopted methods to improve their English language proficiency within that context. Similarly, Kerala is home to many students who have had their primary level of schooling in Malayalam and some others who were not lucky enough to get the best of English teachers. In many schools it has been found that teachers qualified in other subjects teach English to students. From the samples that were taken from Engineering colleges in Kerala, it was found that they neither have effective Communicative English classes nor language labs that are fully functional. So it is necessary to go for a detailed discussion as to whether the existing curriculum is fulfilling their need and is suitable in achieving their goals.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN KERALA

There are some general facts about the presence and use of English in India as a whole: It is more accessible to the upper classes; it is more active in urban than in rural areas; it is more valued and preserved in "the South" than in "the North"; and that it is generally still (used as) a symbol of power, prestige, and social mobility. English thus plays a major role in their (higher) education system and is highly visible in the country's print media and knowledge industry. Apart from being perceived as the essential tool for global communicative participation, particularly electronically, English is also used as a communicative medium nationally and inter-ethnically.

English works as a sociolinguistic marker for status, power, and authority. In spite of all this, English is still treated and taught as a "subject" in the school curriculum rather than as a serious communicative tool. The educational system is somewhat rigidly bureaucratic, and all matters of policy and implementation, including teaching material are "prescribed" from above. The objective of teaching/learning is not to develop any kind of ability or competence in the language but merely to fulfill the academic requirement of enabling the students to obtain passing grades in the centrally set examinations. Most institutions have such a high teacher-student ratio that teachers often have to talk at the students rather than to or with them. Finally most of the teachers are what they are, not necessarily by free career choice, but mainly because it is a job they were lucky enough to secure, which is not to say that they are inadequately trained or prepared.

Kerala boasts of a literacy rate comparable to the developed nations of the world. The high presence of Christian missions have contributed to the spread and availability of education, particularly English education (English-medium institutions are still popularly referred to as 'convent schools'). The mad rush for admitting children to CBSE and ICSE and not to State schools is for them to belong to an uppity group and for social mobility. But the desire to score marks is making parents take out their children from CBSE and ICSE schools after the X grade to do plus 1 and plus 2 at the state school for the sole purpose of securing more marks. Schools and colleges originally started by various missions are even today the powerful vertebrae in the spine of the (English) educational system, as well as motivators for institutions of a similar nature by other organizations. And, since the first communist government in the fifties, schooling has been both compulsory and free in Kerala. This has been raised to Std. XII. There are no reliable statistics available specifically about the English literacy, or English proficiency. But the general move is towards "Manglish". One is living in times when students use more of the colloquial, messaging and computer short forms.

The overwhelming presence of English in Kerala's public life is evident to visitors. Even in rural areas hoardings, sign boards and the nameplates of shops and services are all primarily in English (even when the customers are unlikely to be English literate), apparently irrelevant and seemingly insensitive to their actual intelligibility to the public at large. It is as though English is free to infiltrate any aspect of public life, and its use symbolically endorses the credibility and authenticity of any product or establishment.

This socio-economic status of English is so self-evident that urban apartment buildings and housing complexes in Kerala have names like *Sea Pearl, Riverine, Exotica, Buckingham Court, Charing Cross, Golden Heights* etc. Even where name and billboards are bilingual, English has priority over Malayalam.

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Malayalam words and names are often written in the English script more often than English words are written in Malayalam. However, most educated Keralites have enough communicative ability in English, more passive than active, and more in writing than in fluent speaking.

Like that of most non-native speakers, the English of most Malayalees have its own characteristic features. Some typical phonological characteristics (different from other versions of Indian English) are: The tendency to voice all post-nasal stops, neutralising the difference between pairs like 'ankle/angle', 'ample/amble', (????)'ante/andy', and 'winching/whingeing'. Other examples are mispronunciation of words like novel/nuvel, target/tarjet,, sorry/surry etc. For the educated middle class Malayalee, a mixture of English and Malayalam is the unmarked code of informal interaction where the use of Malayalam alone will appear non-spontaneous if not inadequate, and the use of English alone will certainly be interpreted as arrogant.

The state schooling system of ten years plus two is divided into Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary levels. All schools and colleges are run by both public and private sectors. Private sector schools mostly have English as the medium of instruction as well as a subject, while public sector schools teach mainly through Malayalam but does introduce English as a subject (at least five hours a week) by the time the children get to Upper Primary level. Thus, all children will have been exposed to English at least as a subject for six years before they leave school after grade 10, and for eight years when they reach university.

The English-teaching situation of schools in Kerala is far from ideal, and is a saga of crowded and ill-equipped classrooms, stretched, stressed, and unmotivated teachers, confused but examination-driven students, unsympathetic bureaucratic rigidity, inflexible curriculum material based on tradition rather than practicality,

and an evaluation system that tests rote memory of text material rather than actual language ability.

However, there are winds of change that indicate a serious effort to make the system more practical and more sensitive to the requirements of modern day English proficiency. Additionally, judging from the nature of the state-wide school leaving examination, the nature, approach and orientation of the curriculum, though still somewhat based on knowledge of the content of the "prescribed" texts, show some evidence of the need to make English instruction more sensitive to real-life communicative needs. There are efforts to test general language and communicative skills in terms of productive use and not necessarily memory-based.

As mentioned, virtually all higher education is in English. **But in the Science stream the medium used to disseminate knowledge is sometimes the vernacular.** All undergraduate and most post-graduate teaching takes place in the various affiliated colleges, scattered usually within a 150 km radius of the university main campuses. Private bodies and organizations run most of the colleges. *Crucial examinations are all prepared, administered, and marked centrally by the university and not by the (coaching) institutions.* In colleges, the nature and quantity of exposure to English instruction varies, depending upon the field of study. Generally, undergraduates have English lessons for two of the three years of study and Arts students have more hours and more material to go through than others.

In the eventual analysis, one can see the real reasons for a community like the people in Kerala to be concerned with improving and upgrading their English, as long as they want to participate intelligently and profitably in global life.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONAL SKILLS

There are many factors that affect the teaching-learning process in India. The students in India can be categorized into two; the one having the regional language as medium of study from the primary level and the other having English as the medium of study. Hence, the problem of teaching English as a second language to the Indian students starts from the early stages. Every parent dreams of giving their child good education.

Further, environment and family background play a vital role in the success of the learning process. People in lower classes, having a poor background in education, due to limitation of income or other resources may end up being uninterested in giving good education to their children. In contrast, they are willing to engage their children in some jobs so that they could earn extra money.

The families of middle and upper class dwelling in urban area have better access to quality education. Those who grasp the basics are seen to score good marks in the examinations conducted. It proves that they are having good writing skills in English; however, they have to be given training in oral English communication. Hence, a common program for English Language Teaching must be framed within the pre-schooling system.If the group is homogeneous the steps implemented will have better results. More teachers use the Interactive White Board and the Blackboard.

Teachers of English as a medium of communication in India toil desperately to find suitable methodologies to facilitate the students in acquiring the

communication skills. In the recent past, the number of teachers using Computer-Assisted Language Teaching has increased markedly and the role of technology in education in the 21st century is widely discussed.

Advancement in computers, in digital memory, in Internet resources, in audio and visual transmission, in virtual imaging, wire and wireless communication has created new slabs for the use of technology in the teaching of English. Web publishing, digital archives, digital video, electronic conferencing, blogging, wikis, podcasting, real simple syndication feeds, on-line gaming, virtual reality worlds are the potential new tools for teaching and learning English. MySpace, Facebook and other social sites also become important tools. These may be successfully used as a forum to teach English. However, technology is rather overwhelming to harness, somewhat like trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant (Warschauer and Whittaker 1995). In order to make effective use of new technologies, teachers must equip themselves with some basic e-pedagogical skills.

4.1   Merge Conventional Methodology with Internet Resources

By merging the conventional methodology with emerging technology, we can improve learning and performance. In higher education, the application of language learning portals and existing multimedia tools may be more suitable to the adult students. Instruction is now available as when students want it in the privacy of their residence or the browsing centers nearby.

It is evident that Internet is one of the most powerful tools for teachers to help students to collaborate, interact and participate actively in the learning process. We ought to make use of available resources in the Internet to improve the communicative skills of the non-native speakers. Native speakers widely use

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online portals for the updating all areas of academic study. They not only concentrate on the grammar part of their language acquisition, but on expression, etymology of the language, games, alphabet games, fun cartoons, quiz, etc.

Video streaming technology helps in enhancing interactive portals through pronunciation video course materials which root out mispronunciation and improper expression and ensure perfection in the expression.

4.2   Teachers' Role is still Neccessary!

A teacher cannot be replaced by technology, but a teacher would always be constrained if his/her professional experience and training in mixing education with communication is not based on specific objectives in human e-learning concepts. When information is available on the net the teacher has to become net savvy. She should learn this new language because it is new times.

4.3   Web-based English Learning and Teaching around the World

Anyone who browses the Web immediately notices the availability of resources for English language learning and teaching. Internet is a virtual gold mine for educators. Never before have we had such inexpensive access to so many valuable resources—most of which are free. In addition to files, databases, libraries, there are many resources and projects designed for teachers and students. Broadcast outlets like BBC and CNN have their own English language portals and other business outlets do also maintain language portals.

It is more appropriate here to cite the names of a few portals of English language for better understanding and significance of Internet in imparting communicative skills of English for our students in Kerala.

4.4 The Need for Imparting Basic Computer Skills

Most of our schools are still located in rural areas with several disadvantages as to the availability of educational resources. Active introduction and productive practice in operating computers and basic word processing software should begin as early as possible. In the next step, schools must be equipped with the broadband facility. Teachers and students should be acquainted with accessing Internet, using various search engines and in the processes of downloading materials, and operating voice programs. It is also important that a fair introduction is made available about the materials that would improve the language skills in English. There are also CDs available for the purpose, which can also be used. Using materials from the Internet should be made part of the language curriculum and syllabus.

4.5 Interview with Trainers

The survey scanned some of the acknowledged language and communication training centers and IT companies in the state, taking back valuable points from some of their trainers. Almost all the trainers who were interviewed felt that the first step towards learning to speak English and developing a good communicative skill should start from home. Many interviewers say students are good at rote learning but are unable to express their understanding of the subject. For eg. If asked what is the difference between Book Keeping and Accountancy they cant explain because they have not understood the context. Parents should encourage their kids to speak in English at home; this will allow the kids to imbibe the communicative skills at an earlier stage, improving as he grows. In some cases, parents may lack the capacity to speak in English as required, and in those cases they could make use of external sources like media or spoken English classes for

kids available on CDs. All trainers spoke on the importance of the role that media has in improving the English language in its daily use. Some of the trainers at the private training centers agreed that they have a huge intake during the placement period. They believe this is largely due to lack of language and communicative skill training at the college level. Most of the technology students possess the core knowledge 'the intellect' but they are unable to express themselves to the interviewer efficiently. *"We find that in most Keralites, they communicate partially in English. They understand what they hear but they find it hard to express themselves as intended when they speak.* " one of the trainers expressed this opinion. The language and communication classes at colleges are big groups which may not be of great help to students who are reluctant to express this need due to many reasons. With the individual attention that the training centers give these students, there is a better chance of them achieving some results.

All technical jobs may not require the same level of communication skills in English. There are some technical geniuses who have the brains to overcome the gap of language, as they are able to communicate among themselves effectively using their native language, and the problem arises only when they need to put across their ideas to an outsider. A country like Japan would be the best example, where some of the latest technologies are brought forth and put into practical use; this is not only in Japan but all over the world. However, globalization has made it necessary to make use of a standard language that could be easily learnt and used to communicate with everyone, so that a Japanese scientist wouldn't require a translator each time he needs to talk to someone at NASA; so an interviewer from any company would want to pick the person with the better communication skills, if two students with the same technical knowledge appeared before him.

The importance of the four language skills cannot be stressed enough namely reading, writing, listening and speaking; students should get enough practice in each of these. Interacting in English with friends is an exceptional way of improving one's hold over the language and lets a student express himself freely; trainers say that practicing this at least half an hour each day can show quite a progress. Watching English films, Discovery Channel, National Geography and News Channels like CNN, IBN can help individuals to improve their communication skills.

Trainers working at IT firms, who have had experience in training both Keralites and non-Keralites, shared some of the differences, they have come across. *'Keralites usually are introverts by nature'* most trainers quoted this fact. They get put off if they see a more dressed suave person. They imagine him to be the deal and nurture a kind of inferiority complex. Keralites are very less interactive and you could expect only a very few queries from them. They are also found to be less aggressive and assertive. Keralites never appreciate people communicating/expressing their feelings and opinions openly. Hence they really lack the ability to articulate and put across clearly what they intend to communicate. Trainers say that Keralites by nature are quite diffident and soft-spoken. They don't easily ask for clarifications, if they need any, or interact freely. *'Very often, the contrast between Keralites and non-Keralites in the classroom can be stark. I find people from other states more open with feedback and eager to learn. Although Keralites have great potential and are intelligent, their close-mindedness, I feel, often holds them back.'* a trainer shared her experience. She also stated her opinion that lack of chances in the classroom, right from the primary level onwards, to interact openly, to ask questions when you don't understand, and to think originally and creatively may be the root problems for Keralites. So this tells us that making classes more learner-centric, giving students more chances to

learn through inductive reasoning, giving them opportunities to organize, co-ordinate and present topics in the classroom, encouraging them to openly express their opinions and ask for clarifications – all these, will help students in general and Keralites in particular, to become more confident and communicative.

Some trainers stated that people from other states have a problem in pronouncing certain words but Keralites are quite good when it comes to pronunciation, though grammar and sentence formation is a hardship for them. Education in Kerala does not give proper emphasis on the use of English language. Keralites look at proficiency in academics to be everything and they ignore the fact that personal development is the most important thing.

A trainer from Mumbai, who has been working at an IT firm in Kakkanad (near Cochin) for the past few years, spoke on the problems he has to face at work, while interacting with Keralites. *'Even though they know the English language, they don't use it as much as Malayalam. Hence there is very less chance of improvement in communicational skills in English.'* When Keralites meet up no matter where, they switch to Malayalam as this gives them a feeling of belonging. The trainer also mentioned that in metro cities like Mumbai or Bangalore, most students or graduates meet up and communicate in English/Hindi and not the local languages. Even though learning English is a part of their syllabus in school, Keralites don't use the language at all in their daily life. Many new radio FM stations have been initiated in parts of Kerala, but not a single one in English. Even most of the regional TV channels are in Malayalam and the few ones that air shows in English do not have much of an audience. (Example:- Some programs on Rosebowl)

All these factors make communication training to be given to graduates as they enter a company to become full-fledged employees essential. Although most trainers feel that improving communication skills should be managed at school

level, and at college, conducting compulsory language usage courses that is periodic, systematic, result-oriented, and giving individual attention. A trainer from Thiruvananthapuram mentioned that the root cause for lack of communication skills in Keralities is because of their failure to accept and adapt to situations easily. *'If posted in a north Indian state, Keralities are unwilling to learn or speak Hindi. I have seen so many Keralites including myself, who finds it hard to talk in Hindi even though we know the basics of the language. Maybe it's because we are unconfident when using a new language as well as arrogant with the lack of psychological capacity to face failures.'* All trainers had more or less the same opinion about promoting the usage of English language rather than just learning it as a subject in school. The main problem we face with English is that we are taught grammar and everything related to English in the primary level of schooling itself, but never made to communicate in English. Now we find that just studying a language does not come in handy later on. To handle any language easily, we should interact in that language rather than mug up facts about it. Kerala as a state does not promote this enough and the people even tease the ones who decide to use the language. Focus is given more to social mobility and culture when thought you are eloquent and can communicate well in English. To bring about alteration, Keralites must first be open to change.

The big IT giants like Infosys, Accenture provide soft skill training sessions along with their technical training programme. To successfully complete training, one must not only clear the technical tests but also the non- technical ones as well. This shows the importance that such companies give to the improvement of communicative skills. The clients of these companies come from around the world, so while interacting with these clients, good communication skills become an absolute necessity. The Star Certification which is included in the Infosys training

programme, has a set of five exams namely (1) English Diagnostic Test, (2) Knowledge Transfer Test, (3) Vocabulary Test, (4) Writing Test and (5) Speaking Test. The English Diagnostic Test has listening section, reading comprehension and grammar; while the Knowledge Transfer test includes business etiquettes, social values, intercultural interaction, etc. An essay of about 350 to 400 words is to be written down by the trainees in the Writing Test and Speaking Test comprising of a 5 minute telephonic conversation. The five exams are conducted twice, once before the training is given and the other later on. The training sessions are conducted in small groups of 20 or 30; it is 15 to 20 days of fun and learning. The majority of the youth in the IT industry would not pay any attention to a boring class on business etiquettes when taken in the traditional way of teaching. So group activities and games help to capture their interest and let them enjoy the process of learning like a sugar-coated pill. The use of ample examples and exercises conveys the facts without difficulty as they strike a chord much easily and the trainees are able to agree to the lessons learnt with no trouble. The training not only aims at improvement of communicative skills but also values like teamwork, fairness, integrity and transparency, leadership. The speak up sessions are said to be a complete requirement, since most employees have a tendency of beating around the bush and not coming straight to the point while talking to a client, and the client would often lose focus. The training sessions are a great help to a trainee with an average level of communicative skills in English but without a proper base in the language, these sessions would not be much of any use.

ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The data was collected from 125 respondents from different parts of Kerala. The first sample size of 30 was taken from students residing in urban areas like Cochin and Trivandrum; and 20 from :ural areas in other parts of the state; so data from a total of 50 students was recorded. They were also divided based on the Socio-economic status of their families into lower class, middle class and upper class.

Socio-economic class with Demographic separation of Student sample				
	Rural		Urban	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Lower class	6	30.0	4	13.3
Middle class	10	50.0	19	63.3
Upper class	4	20.0	7	23.3
Total	20	100.0	30	100.0

The middle class consists of students whose parents are teachers, employees and business men of medium level with a monthly home income of not more than Rs. 25,000. The grouping in the rural area acquired data with a 30% from the lower class, 50% from the middle class and a 20% from the upper class. The same analysis done at an urban area gave us respondents of 13.3% from the lower class, 63.3% from the middle class and a 23.3% from the upper class.

Analyzing the tables derived from the information collected from the students' sample, the major concerns of the trainers and other language experts were checked against the opinions acquired from the samples. Table 1-A shows the

response to the question of what language is preferred while interacting in a group. The possible answers that they could choose from were English, Malayalam or Both. Most of the trainers mentioned that the key to improving one's hold over any language is through conversations within your friend circle; which makes one the most comfortable. The response from the rural area to the question was an absolute 0% interaction in English, while the urban area had a 5.6%. From a total of 66% the overall sample of students from both areas interact only in Malayalam, 32% uses both languages and just a 2% interact in English. This proves that a majority still uses only the regional language Malayalam and hence unable to find progress in communicating in English.

The table 2A shows the response of the professionals to the same question. Here we find that 7.7% of employees who have done their schooling in rural regions now prefer to communicate in English and a 42.9% from the urban areas; but there is still a larger majority of 61.5% from rural and a 33.3% from urban that mostly continue to communicate in Malayalam. The dire part of this factor is that in a workplace involving workers from all parts of the country and some even from outside would have a sense of being alienated when regional languages are mostly used and it could lead to all sorts of tension in the office setting. A 30.8% from the rural and a 23.8% from the urban background responded as to be using both languages as needed.

Table 1B corresponds to the reaction of students to the subject of whether English is truly implemented in campus though it has been made mandatory to speak in the language in most educational institutions. The responses of the students of the middle class from the rural and urban regions were more or less the same but there were variations in the lower and upper classes. The overall response

shows that only 16% thinks that the rule is actually implemented, while the rest of 84% confirms the fact that English is not really applied and practiced in campus.

Table 2B has the response from professionals that answers whether they could speak in English fluently for 2 minutes without fumbling. This had an overall of 31.7% that answered that they could, 15% that responded that they were unable to do it and a majority of 53.3% that answered 'maybe'. This could mean that they are not capable of speaking in English fluently but unsure if they should admit the fact or it shows their lack of confidence in speaking the language; but either way, the outcome is that they are unable to communicate effectively.

To analyze the importance given to improving communication skills in college students, the question whether language training has been given to them or not was put forward. The response has been tabulated in table 1C. An overall of 30% from both regions answered that they have received training but 70% has never been given proper language coaching despite the fact that there are a large number of students unable to communicate in English as required by industrial standards. This reveals a huge flaw in the educational system in Kerala. The table 2C shows the same question and when professionals were asked, it was found that 84.6% from rural background and 76.2% from urban had received communicative skills training when joining the company. But the fact is just a few days of language training to someone without a strong base in a language would be not much of use. So, the training should be a gradual process. Very often one finds that this system is not implemented. There are smaller IT companies that do not have any provision for language training. In such a scenario when people with lack of communication skills join, they may find it even harder when dealing with

international clients. The respondents from rural section had a 15.4% and a 23.8% from urban that said that they did not receive any training at all.

Table 1D tabulates the response of students when they were asked if they had good English teachers at school. A strong base in any language is extremely important when it comes to matter of fluency in that language later on. This tells us the need for proper English teachers to be present at all the right stages of learning. From both sections, a total of 22% answered that they did have good English teachers at school but a majority of 78% answered 'no'. Some even stated that they did not have English teachers who were specialized in teaching a language, but ones who taught the other subjects like science or mathematics also handled English. Teaching a language is quite different from teaching other subjects as language requires the use of a lot of skills and forms the basis of communication; the teacher should not only have those skills but also be able to deliver them efficiently to students.

Table 2D shows the response of professionals to the same question and they had a 33.3 % that said 'yes' and a 66.7% that answered 'no' from the rural area. From the urban, 52.4% said 'yes' and the rest of 47.6% responded that they did not have good teachers for English, so we find that there is a shift in the majority comparing both areas. This could tell us that the need for better English teachers in rural areas is higher than in the urban.

Now we need to analyze which aspect of the English language seems to be posing the biggest problem for both students and professionals when they try to communicate. Table 1E shows how the students responded with an overall of 10% that chose 'poor grammar', a 26% 'poor vocabulary', 28% said 'inefficiency to

express their ideas effectively' and a majority of 36% responded with 'lack of confidence'. Table 2E tabulates how professionals replied with a majority of 50% for the option 'lack of confidence'. This clearly proves right what the trainers mentioned during the interviews regarding Keralites to be introverts by nature. The lack of confidence when using a new language prevents them from getting further in developing their communicative skills and this makes them unwilling to use the language. The fear of failure haunts them and seemingly Keralites being as arrogant as they are said to be, would try their best to avoid such situations.

The tables 3A, 3B and 3C shows the responses of the trainers' sample, where we have 40% trainers from a rural background and 60% from an urban area. Most of them have done their training at the Metropolitan cities of India and some even abroad. The trainers from the rural area had a majority of 66.7% that said that they did not have proper English teachers at school while the ones from urban had a 77.8% that agreed that they did have good teachers for English. The response to the question of whether speaking of English is actually being implemented in educational institutions even though made compulsory had an absolute 100% that said 'no' from the trainers who did their schooling in rural areas and the ones from the urban had a 44.4% that answered 'yes' and a 55.6% answered 'no'. So the overall was a 73.3% that agreed that it's not truly implemented. The table 3C tabulates the reply to the question of Keralites having a good hold over the English language despite the high literacy rates and the overall 80% of the trainers answered 'no' and a mere 20% that implied that they did.

The cloze test was conducted on students from both sections as well as the professionals and the test had 11 columns to be filled in with the appropriate words. The results were classified into three categories as (1) all 11 correct (2) 8

and above correct and (3) 5 and below correct. The student sample had 42% that answered all 11 correct, 47% that fell into the second category and 11% that got 5 and below. The professionals had a larger majority of 71% that got all 11 correct, 24% that got 8 and above and just a 5% that fit into the third category. These results suggest that Keralites do have the capacity to communicate efficiently in English but mostly lack confidence and once he/she is a grown up, it is quite hard to change the attitude that has been already developed within. So, promoting queries and free thinking in children, giving them a chance to come out and speak for themselves in class should be adopted at very early stages like kindergarten.

5.1 Summary of Findings

- The study proves that a majority of students at colleges and employees at their workplaces still uses only the regional language Malayalam to speak and hence are unable to find progress in communicating in English.
- English is not truly implemented in campuses though it has been made mandatory to speak in the language in most educational institutions.
- It was found that 70% of the students responded that they have never been given proper language coaching in colleges despite the fact that there are a large number of students unable to communicate in English as required by industrial standards.
- There is a need for better English teachers in rural areas than in the urban.
- 'Lack of confidence' was found to be the aspect of the English language posing the biggest problem for both students and professionals when they try to communicate.

- An overall of 80% of the trainers stated that despite having high literacy rates, Keralites do not have a good hold over the English language.
- The study was successful in recording the oral and writing skills of the samples and it was found that the oral ability is where more attention is required than the written one as the cloze passage test proved.

STRATEGY

In a typical scenario, the Head of an IT Service Organisation comes across many a challenge on areas related to communication skills. He encounters occasions when his team member is not able to express what is on his mind clearly and accurately while articulating and communicating. He had also picked up a phoney accent. He could not confidently speak or sustain a conversation. Seldom could he put one idea with another. When it came to drafting a letter words would be alternated causing errors. For example what would a document look like if one used "adopt" for "adapt". Neither could the junior personnel comprehend what the global customer required in a telephonic conversation. When it came to presentation skills there were grammatical errors on his slides, his body language was ineffective and he could not deliver the goods successfully.

For communication to be effective it is important to use the best words in the best order. So that the speaker and the listener are on the same understanding level (Of course cultural differences is another problem altogether). One may speak English well but it doesn't mean one can understand English well. Only when one gets placed in an IT environment one is stuck in the real world. But by then one is at a total loss. One has to work hard to unlearn. In spite of putting in hard work, one is accused of a fake, artificial accent, usage of tenses and spellings and phrases. The regret feeling is "if I had given importance to English it could have given me an edge over the others since our knowledge in the core subject is all the same". But by then it is too late.

Observing the need of the hour, represented in an office situation as above, I have suggested strategies that can be implemented in different stages of our lives

as students, parents, teachers and academicians who feel responsible and accountable for the citizens we create in our changing times.

Most parents and adults feel they speak fairly good English. But very often their intonation pattern, voice modulation, articulation and usages will be far from the proficient speakers of English for a global audience. Parents who are not proficient in English can learn as their child learns. The language the parent speaks have a great impact on the growing child. Along with the child let the parent listen to rhymes, dialogues (CDs) in English. Thankfully in Kerala English movies are released in English. But in Tamilnadu, there is a better collection for the Tamil version of English movies released on the same day as the new English releases. This must be some Government measure or Films division strategy. But its best to see an English movie in English so what may be difficult to follow first may become understood over time when intonation and voice modulation one gets accustomed to. Listening to the CNN and IBN helps a great deal in regulating and correcting ones English accent. Accent training is a focal point where language trainers despair.

Based on the study conducted and the inferences arrived, the following strategies are recommended to be adopted in the teaching of the English Language to students of all categories in Kerala.

Pre-School

A human child is born with language acquiring skills. He learns about fifty words a day. It is better to put him in a play school where English is the medium. Language acquisition is during the critical stage up to 5 years. They pick up fast whatever they hear in the background while growing up during this period. Noam

Chomsky "On Language Acquisition says that for learning a language all children face the problem of an internal conflict because they need to struggle with grammar. The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is an instinctive capacity which enables the infant to acquire and produce language. Stories should be read aloud to children and not told to them. This method has a soothing effect on the listening child. The habit of reading is absent in many in the current generation hence and most of them don't develop the habit of reading books. Introduce them to read and let them graduate from comics to books. For the lower middle class the television is there. Comics today are translated into other languages. Malayalam channels are translating English cartoons into Malayalam.

Ages: (1-5)

Stress on: Listening + Speaking

This is the age when learning is instinctive. Language and communication training should start in early years of education; a proper base would avoid a process of unlearning the basics, which already runs deep. During the preschool years children should be taught the art of articulating sounds through reciting rhymes, learning to pronounce the words correctly using spoken English CDs and interactive games. Children should be encouraged to speak in English at home to slowly develop communicative skills. They should be encouraged to speak English as naturally as the vernacular without mentioning grammar and its rules. Some theories of grammar are hardwired into the brain and manifest without being taught says Naom Chomsky in "Universal Grammar". This must be learnt as naturally as the first language. Those children growing up with urban and educated parents speak English fluently and possess good communication skills.

Ages: (6-12)

Stress on: Grammar + Speaking + Writing

Middle school students are stuck with the text book. In many schools emphasis is given to rote learning. They will give you the correct and exact words in the text book for an answer but will not be able to express in their own words the very same answer. So they have not understood. Without understanding communication cannot happen. English should be taught in English and not as a translation. Teachers and educational institutions feel this is enough because the marks are there. School training in middle school classes must be stressed. Until age 5 parents and homemakers should take the responsibility and after this the focus for acquiring language skills is the primary job of the schools. Government and school authorities should take care of this. Reduce the class size, make children aware that English is also important as a course and should be learnt and pursued seriously especially the functional side to it. Generally it is felt English is easy and good marks is required only for science and other subjects. When students seek admissions to classes VIII, IX and X they should write the SSAT test (which is a Secondary school Assessment Test) to determine placement to private or independent schools. A standardized test for schools and colleges not based on any syllabus to ensure you can communicate in English. According to their scores admissions should be given. The Education council board which is a non profit advisory Board ensures the quality of English speaking students in schools and colleges.

Kids of this age group should be encouraged to start reading newspapers and books, which will improve their language. Teachers can prescribe books for them to cultivate this habit; they should also be encouraged to use the dictionary when

they come across new words; this will help expand their vocabulary. Word building games in groups not only helps them cultivate good vocabulary, but also helps them interact with others. Conducting poetry writing and essay writing competition will develop writing skills in kids, involving daily exercises in grammar during classes will help polish the writing skills. Overcoming stage fear in the early years is a very important task; involving activities like 'show and tell' will help the child overcome stage fear. At this age children are much influenced by media, some of the lessons can be taught using animation, cartoons, documentaries and movies. Encourage students to learn 5 new words a day and not to use a word already repeated. Children can be advised to articulate after thinking deeply on the possibility of new words, images and concepts for better expressions.

Ages: (13-17)

Stress on: Presentation + Vocabulary

During this stage teachers who can communicate well in English should engage classes and teach only in English and not use the vernacular. This is the age when children should be motivated to read avidly as this is the phase where they gather their vocabulary skills. They should be encouraged to read newspapers, books and magazines, which will add to their language and knowledge. Conducting group discussions, debates, workshops (creative) and seminars will be a good follow up to the kind of base we build in the earlier discussion above. These kinds of interactive sessions will cultivate a strong character in the pupil to speak up his views and bring about effective communication in conveying his ideas across to the rest of the group. Subject faculties can also conduct presentations which will not only help the students grasp the subject on their own but also build the confidence to speak to a group. The teacher can suggest books to read every

week and can have sessions where the students can be made to talk about the book they read, which will give the teacher a fair idea how much the student is absorbing from the books, and how far she should prod him further. Constant consultation of the Thesaurus will help students to find and use new words and phrases.

One must learn English to be able to communicate effectively. In the IT sector Literature is completely ignored. But English is pursued for its practical side ie while attending meetings, chatting to customers, mailing them the manual, downloading the software and so on. Whereas, Literature could come in handy while content writing or copy writing. From a linguist point of view Literature appeals to the senses and currently English language is changing with the times. Language is evolving as a message language and a computer language. New literatures should come. The usages in 2011 is different and changing. Doing courses like TESOL, IELTS and TOEFL is not an option because it is expensive. Code mixing is increasing. English is being incorporated into the language structure Eg. "Aa TV onnu switch off cheyyo". There is no equivalent phrase so they use it unaware. Some use it to indicate that this defines them to be English speaking people and get an access to be the upper class . Very often people resort to code switching using long sentences in English as a strategy to show they know English. Prior to placement a test must be made to ensure the language ability of students before the employment stage.

Ages: (18-22)

Stress on: Body language + personality

Body language is one of the basic yet vital part of communication, the body language should compliment the words delivered. Bold words delivered with bad posture suggest the person as having no confidence in what he says, which would be detrimental. Students should be taught about good body language and positive body postures as they are at the verge of appearing for interviews. They should also be given proper outlook on how to tackle interviews and group discussions. Conducting mock interviews, group discussions, seminars, debates and vocabulary tests will help them prepare in advance.

Appointment of Faculty

The destiny of any nation is shaped in her classrooms. And the teachers are the ones who make or break a child. If a teacher aspires to teach enthusiastically and generate a love for English in her students then this will happen like a sugar coated pill. To inducing her students to love English as the first language she has to work hard and be alert to the changing times. In educational institutions faculty are appointed based on certain qualifications. In schools it would be a Montessori training, TTC or a B.Ed. In colleges it would be based on NET, M. Phil or Ph.D. But we seldom check whether they are equipped in teaching effectively. Only a trained person who feels the importance of communication skills can be effective I an objective of the same kind. Today most of the poly-technical and technical institutes have all the appropriate infrastructure but very often the faculty handling the job are inappropriate or ineffective. They have many degrees but not the required one. Hence the objective is not achieved.

English language teaching in Technical institutes in Kerala

The infrastructure is provided by the government. There are smart classrooms and language labs which facilitate English language teaching. The software in use in the language labs does not follow any specific model. You have a mixture of British, American and Indian English so there is confusion as to what model has been accepted and is to be presented as the norm. The difficulty in using Indian English is that most of the voices used bear the burden of different mother tongues, so instead of removing the MTI which was why language labs were used initially, it serves to further confuse the students. The smart classrooms do away with the chalk and talk method and insist on using slides so this becomes helpful in facilitating communication skills.

The next tool is the text book based on the curriculum prescribed. The curriculum and the syllabus do not specify the objective of teaching English. Is English to be taught as a language or is it literature that you are trying to teach? There has to be a clear dichotomy between language and literature teaching. Primary goals and the main objective aren't stated. English teaching often digresses into imparting value education, depending on the ideological orientation of the curriculum committee.

The most important role is that of the facilitator or in the current scenario, the teacher. Unfortunately many of the English teachers at present working in Kerala do not speak English with the correct pronunciation or intonation pattern. So the students study the incorrect form of English. The Teachers are Post graduates in literature without any knowledge in language teaching, which requires a totally different skill set. So the class on communication deteriorates into the lecture method which is totally unsuitable for this scenario. The student emerges from the course without acquiring any communication skills in English as all s/he

has done is study by rote the questions and answers given at the end of each lesson. This is the reason why the same students flock to "Spoken English" institutes to acquire communication skills. The student teacher ratio is 1:60 which is an impossible situation to acquire a language.

Communication skills for employability

This should be a separate discipline in itself. And the curriculum should be designed with a singular objective in mind to teach an ideology, or to teach values, ethics or language. Only proficient teachers should be appointed to handle this field. Since educational institutions are feeders for industry a link between teacher and personnel in all kinds of industry should have a tie up to know the requirements.

Customized Refresher Courses on the Job

To date refresher courses are meant to enhance the technical skills of teachers and trainers. The very idea of such a course for employees though frowned upon can be an essential tool to enhance the English communicative skills of its employees. Apart from the usual Induction/Orientation program of any company, a regular customized English Language enhancement module can become an objective of its HR Department. The HR in turn may utilize the resources of the Quality Department to identify the areas to be worked upon. Regular evaluation and sampling of output of the various strata of employees can help us identify the deficiencies to be worked upon by the course trainers.

Apart from these, an environment that encourages the use of English day to day, i.e., availability of hard or soft copies of the tools (Dictionaries, Thesaurus,

etc.) is quintessential. Incentives can be implemented based upon the ideal performances with a focus on English in case of measurable services, i.e., call center, medical transcription, etc.

The more one practices speaking and communicating in English written or oral the better it gets. One can learn grammar, spelling and vocabulary and to some extent make English speaking and writing "cultivated English" but you have to take off from their consciously learning and following the steps mentioned if you are thinking of living in a global village. With this in mind one can speak with great finesse and élan.

TABLES

6.1 Tables for Professionals:

Table 1A - Language preferred during group interaction by professionals

	Rural	Urban	Total
English	3	9	12
	07.7%	42.9%	02.0%
Malayalam	24	7	31
	61.5%	33.3%	51.7%
Both	12	5	17
	30.8%	23.8%	28.3%
Total	39	21	60

Table 1B – Response to if one is able to speak English fluently for 2 minutes

	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes	9	10	19
	23.1%	47.6%	31.7%
No	7	2	9
	17.9%	09.5%	15.0%
Maybe	23	9	32
	60.0%	42.9%	53.3%
Total	39	21	60

Table 1C – Response to if language and communication training was received in the last 5 years

	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes	33	16	49
	84.6%	76.2%	81.7%
No	6	5	11
	15.4%	23.8%	18.3%
Total	39	21	60

Table 1D - Response to if there were good English teachers in school

	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes	13	11	24
	33.3%	52.4%	40.0%
No	26	10	36
	66.7%	47.6%	60.0%
Total	39	21	60

Table 1E – Aspect of communication that is generally faced with difficulty

	Rural	Urban	Total
Poor grammar	3		3
	07.7%		05.5%
Lack of confidence	25	5	30
	64.1%	23.8%	50.0%
Poor vocabulary	8	13	21
	20.5%	61.9%	35.0%
Inefficiency to express effectively	3	3	6
	07.7%	14.3%	10.0%
Total	39	21	60

6.2 Tables for Students:

Table 2A- Language preferred during group interaction by students

	Rural			Urban			Total
	LC	MC	UC	LC	MC	UC	
English					1		1
					5.6%		2.0%
Malayalam	5	9	1	3	13	2	33
	83.3%	88.9%	25.0%	75.0%	72.2%	33.3%	66.0%
Both	1	1	3	1	5	5	16
	16.7%	11.1%	75.0%	25.0%	22.2%	66.7%	32%
Total	6	10	4	4	19	7	50

LC – Lower Class
MC – Middle Class
UC – Upper Class

Table 2B – Response to if English made mandatory in Educational institutions is implemented

	Rural			Urban			Total
	LC	MC	UC	LC	MC	UC	
Yes	2	1	1	1	2	1	8
	33.3%	10.0%	25.0%	25.0%	10.5%	14.3%	16.0%
No	4	9	3	3	17	6	42
	66.7%	90.0%	75.0%	75.0%	89.5%	85.7%	84.0%
Total	6	10	4	4	19	7	50

LC – Lower Class
MC – Middle Class
UC – Upper Class

Table 2C – Response to if language training was received in the last 5 years

	Rural			Urban			Total
	LC	MC	UC	LC	MC	UC	
Yes	2	4	3	1	3	2	15
	33.3%	40.0%	75.0%	25.0%	15.8%	28.6%	30.0%
No	4	6	1	3	16	5	35
	66.7%	60.0%	25.0%	75.0%	84.2%	71.4%	70.0%
Total	6	10	4	4	19	7	50

LC – Lower Class
MC – Middle Class
UC – Upper Class

Table 2D – Response to if there were good English teachers in school

	Rural			Urban			Total
	LC	MC	UC	LC	MC	UC	
Yes	1	4		3	2	1	11
	16.7%	40.0%		75.0%	10.5%	14.3%	22.0%
No	5	6	4	1	17	6	39
	83.3%	60.0%	100%	25.0%	89.5%	85.7%	78.0%
Total	6	10	4	4	19	7	50

Table 2E – Aspect of communication that is generally faced with difficulty

	Rural			Urban			Total
	LC	MC	UC	LC	MC	UC	5
Poor grammar	3	2					
	50.0%	20.0%					10.0%
Lack of confidence	1	4	1	2	8	2	18
	16.7%	40.0%	25.0%	50.0%	42.1%	28.6%	36.0%
Poor vocabulary			1	2	7	3	13
			25.0%	50.0%	36.8%	42.8%	26.0%
Inefficiency to express effectively	2	4	2		4	2	14
	33.3%	40.0%	50.0%		21.1%	28.6%	28.0%
Total	6	10	4	4	19	7	50

6.3 Tables for trainers:

Table 3A – Response to if there were good English teachers in school

	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes	2	7	9
	33.3%	77.8%	60.0%
No	4	2	6
	66.7%	22.2%	40.0%
Total	6	9	15

Table 3B – Response to if English made mandatory in colleges and institutions is implemented

	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes		4	4
		44.4%	26.7%
No	6	5	11
	100%	55.6%	73.3%
Total	6	9	15

Cloze Test

A cloze test is an exercise, test, or assessment consisting of a portion of text with certain words removed (cloze text), where the participant is asked to replace the missing words. Cloze tests require the ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct words or type of words that belong in the deleted passages of a text. This exercise is commonly administered for the assessment of native and second language learning and instruction.

The cloze test that was presented to the subjects as part of the study is given below:

1. The guitar has a long history. The Ancient Egyptians ____ (1) simple stringed instruments, and the Greeks and Romans also made music ____ (2) plucking strings with their fingers. The first true guitar music came during the 15th ____ (3) in Spain. At first it was an ____ (4) for poor people and travelling musicians, but soon the rich ones ____ (5) Europe were learning to play the guitar.
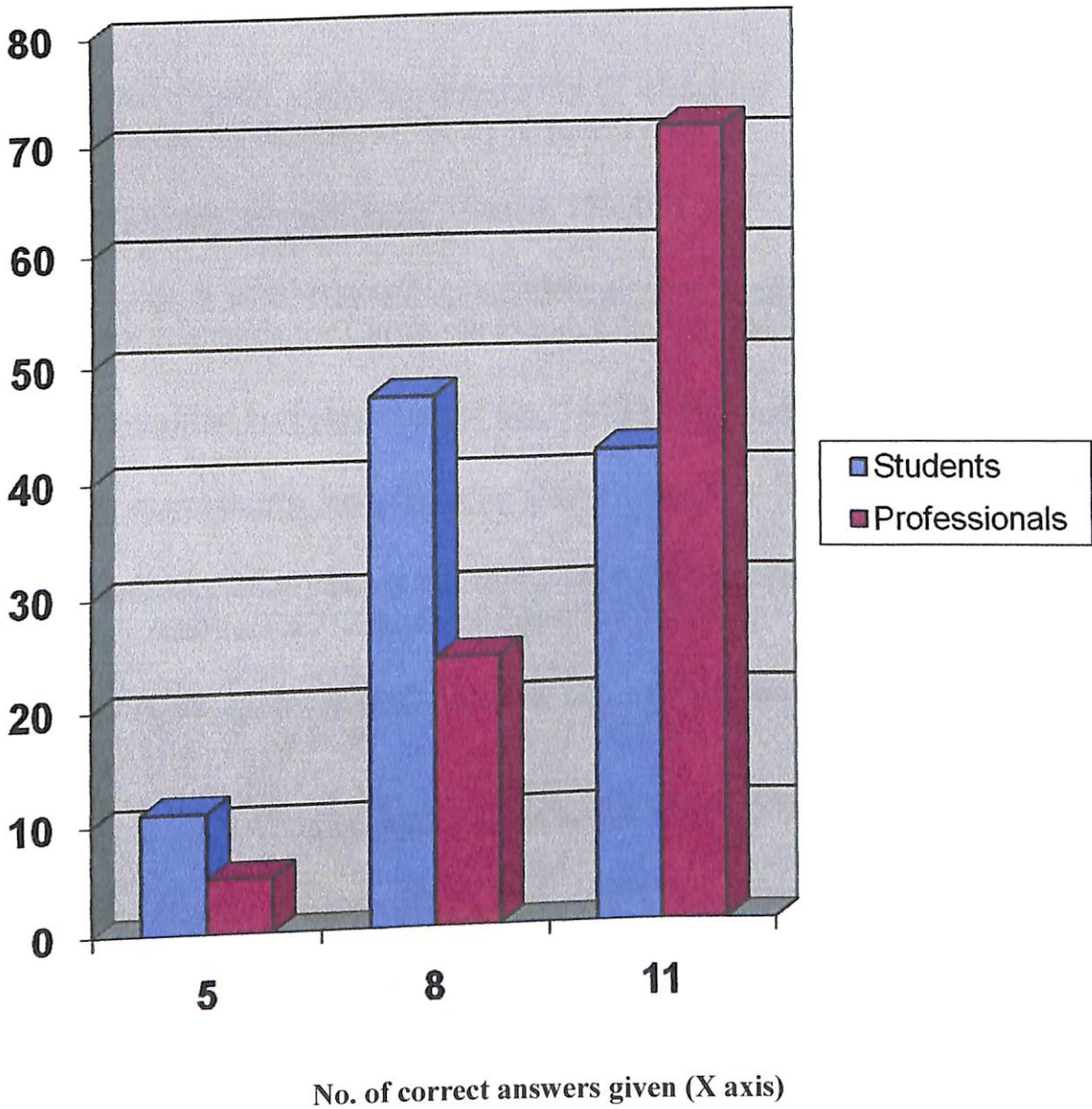
The guitar travelled far and fast. When Cortes reached Mexico in the 16th century he had a guitar player ____ (6) his soldiers. A century later, the guitar was ____ (7) played all over South America. The Spanish Americans made some changes to the instrument and developed their ____ (8) style of playing. In North America, new ____ (9) of music, jazz and popular music, led ____ (10) new kinds of guitar. In the modern world there are 4 main ____ (11) of guitar: the classical, the flamenco, the steel stringed and the electric guitars.

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The answers to the Cloze test are

1. Used / Made / Played
2. By
3. Century
4. Instrument
5. In
6. Among
7. Being
8. Own
9. Styles
10. To
11. Types

GRAPH SHOWING THE LANGUAGE SKILLS TESTED USING CLOZE
PASSAGE

Percentage of subjects under test (Y axis)

No. of correct answers given (X axis)

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SAMPLE QUESTIONAIRE FOR STUDENTS

All you have to keep in mind is-

Be very frank and honest to yourself

1. Name: -

2. Age: -

3. Course: -

4. Educational Institution: -

5. Native place: -

6. When among your group of friends which language do you interact in the most?
A] English
B] Malayalam
C] Both

7. If Malayalam, why do you choose so?
A] It is more convenient and comprehensible
B] It's difficult to express ideas in English
C] Speaking in Malayalam gives a feeling of belonging
D] Speaking in English make people label you as having lot of 'attitude'

7. Do you have a lot of ideas?
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

8. Can you express your idea in English as intended?
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. Can you speak fluently without fumbling with minimum errors at least for two minutes?
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

10. Did you get any training in language and communication skills in the last 5 years?
A] Yes
B] No

11. Which aspect of communication do you face a difficulty in?
A] Grammar is poor
B] Lack of confidence
C] Poor vocabulary
D] You have ideas but you are unable to express efficiently

12. Do you think its sufficient to know broken English as long as someone listening to you can make sense of what you are trying to put across?
A] Yes
B] No

13. If yes, would that help you withstand the increasing competition in today's competitive world?
A] Yes
B] No

14. When asked for your opinion on any subject matter, outside your field of study, are you able to voice it?
A] Yes
B] No

15. If no, wouldn't you be able to at least agree or disagree to a given subject despite your ignorance?
A] Yes
B] No

16. Do you find your inefficiency in handling the English language comes in the way of your free expression?
    A] Yes
    B] No

17. When something is explained in class or outside, do you
    A] Grasp it immediately
    B] Grasp it slowly
    C] Think after it's said and completed/after class
    D] Depend on friends/ outside help to be able to understand

18. If your answer to the above is any option other than [A], why is it so?
    A] You don't pay attention most of the time
    B] Difficulty in understanding the language

19. Did you have good English teachers at school?
    A] Yes
    B] No

20. Do you ever turn the pages of the dictionary for help?
    A] Almost always
    B] Sometimes
    C] Never

21. Do you read books?
    A] Very often
    B] Sometimes
    C] When bored
    D] Never

22. What kind of books do you read most?
    A] Science fiction
    B] Fiction
    C] Novels
    D] Newspapers/magazines

23. Are seminars conducted in your institution?
    A] Yes
    B] No

24. Do you like attending them?
   A] Yes
   B] No

25. How do seminars help you?

26. If in the company of someone who interacts in English most of the time would you,
   A] Improve your interactive skills in English?
   B] Influence her to interact in Malayalam

27. Suppose there is a smart girl/boy in your office, whose dressing is diverse and has a good hold over the English language, what would you think of her?
   A] That she/he is inclined to the western culture and has a lot of the so called attitude
   B] That it is necessary in the presen: day world to have a global outlook to things

28. Do you think speaking of English even after made compulsory in most colleges/institutions is implemented?
   A] Yes
   B] No

29. Despite having such a high literacy rate in Kerala, do Keralites have a good hold over the English language?
   A] Yes
   B] No

30. Finally, on a scale of 10, how much would you rate your fluency and ability to interact in English?

   1 < 2 < 3 < 4 < 5 < 6 < 7 < 8 < 9 < 10   (tick your option)