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Utility Perception of English Language Laboratory by the Agricultural Graduating Students of VNMKV Parbhani

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Abstract

In this globalised era, technology is playing a very important role in linguistic changes. According to the All-India Council for Teaching Education, Language Lab is very important for technical as well as non-technical institution students. Different types of software and mobile apps are being developed for learning language. If we asked to someone talk in English, they could rarely make proper pronounce of the words. Language lab helps to develop this pronunciation skill. It also helps students as well as learners to develop all language skills; Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading. The study has been carried out in the Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, VNMKV, Parbhani. A well-equipped language lab was established in this Department during the year 2016-17. The purpose of the present study is to find out the utility of language labs among agriculture graduate students. For this study, fifty-one statements were asked to newly admitted B.Sc. (Hons) students (2022-23) who have registered for the course Lang-111, Comprehension and Communication Skills in English. Among 120 students 108 (One Hundred Eight) students submitted their responses. After analysing the received data this study revealed that there is a need for a language lab for the agriculture students for the improvement of English language as well as communication skills.

Keywords: Language, LSWR, Technology, Utility, Communication etc.

Introduction

Communication plays a vital role in human life and its importance should not be underestimated. Language is a means of communication that is used to transfer information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another. We can say that communication is just as important as breathing. When you don't have access or the means to communicate with another person for a set

period, it can impact your mental well-being. Good communication skills are indispensable for the success of any professional and the English language, in particular, has become essential in the lives of young people. English language learning has therefore become a must for any Indian student today. Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said, 'English is our major window on the modern world'. Learning the English language is very

important for understanding the world and language it is a system of communication based upon words and the combination of words into sentences. Cameron Lynne (2001), in his book entitled *Teaching Languages to Young* stated that learners applied linguistics over the last decades, it has been common to divide language into the four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, including grammar, vocabulary and phonology. Language learning is different from learning any other subject. It is not limited to writing an examination paper and getting marks or awards. Learning a language means learning the four skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSWR).

Collis and Sakamoto (1996), in *Children in the Information Age*, say that 'Educational use of computers has shown a remarkable popularity in many countries'. India is one example, our Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), has taken many decisions to promote the use of Information Communication Technology in education through different programmes for example, the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) and Study Web of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) for online courses and National Digital Library, e-PG Pathshala, e- ShodhSindhu, Shodhaganga, etc. are for online reading sources.

In the world, more than 1.35 billion people on Earth (population: 7.8 billion) speak English. It means more than 15% of the world's total population people use the English language (Gillan Ciara, 2022). This importance is not because of its more users but because it is used for. As above said learning a language means adopting the skills of LSWR. It is not just about being able to read and understand certain words. It also entails mastery of the spoken language. There are so many English-spoken classes that teach how to read, write and speak fast. However, if they are asked to talk, they can barely pronounce the words right. This is true, especially in learning the English language. This is the reason why language laboratories are essential. Mostly the concept of the lab is used for science subjects in India. Hence, a laboratory for language learning is something new to Indian students, whereas it is very common in Western countries to

train children in the laboratory to enrich their language learning experiences. Now a day some English medium school offers language labs for teaching the proper pronunciation of words.

Considering all these points and following the guidelines of the Fifth Deans' Committee for Communication Skills and Personality Development among Agriculture students, Agriculture Extension Education, College of Agriculture, VNMKV, Parbhani established one Language Laboratory. In this department, yearly UG/PG and Ph.D. students use a language laboratory to develop their language skills. For this study we are taking only UG- First Semester aspirants because they are fresh and newly admitted to the institution. They will stay here for four to five years in the institution during this period they have to participate in many activities like the culture programme, and NSS programme, in the last semester of The degree they have to visit farmers and different industries for Rural Awareness Work Experience (RAWE) but some students suffer in stage/public fear, lack of confidence and good communication, etc. These are common problems in this student if we neglect these problems the effect of these drawbacks will reflect on their employability skills and ultimately on placement. Agriculture students have many opportunities in every sector like; teaching, banking, marketing, administration, and foreign also. But in this entire sector, they will select well-communicated, confident, personality and well behaviourist employees and through this language lab we can develop all these skills.

This study aims to find out the utility of Language Labs among Agriculture Graduate Students. For this study, Fift one questions were asked to newly admitted UG- B.Sc. students. The intake capacity of the college for the First Semester is 120 students. All of them use the language lab actively as a part of the course Lang-111, Comprehension and Communication Skills in English. Out of 120 students 108 (One Hundred Eight) students submitted their responses.

The objectives of the present Study:

1. To study the profile of students.

2. To find out the utility of English language lab among Agriculture graduate students.
3. To find out constraints faced by the students while using language lab and to obtain their suggestions.

Methodology

The study has been carried out in the Department of Agricultural Extension Education and Languages, College of Agriculture, VNMKV, Parbhani. The Department of Agriculture Extension Education and Languages established a well-equipped language lab during the year 2016-17. There are ten (10) computers along with one main computer which is linked with N-computing and internet facility, licensed software (LEXIS) and all other necessary things. In this department, yearly other than UG-120 first-semester students, students from other departments PG-175 second semester and Ph.D.-15 students are using the language laboratory

to develop their language skills. This department offers three courses to UG- First Semester, LANG-111, Comprehension and Communication Skills in English which has 2(1+1) credits, UG- Second Semester, EXTN-123, Communication Skills and Personality Development which has 2(1+1) credits, and for PG & Ph.D. second year, PGS-502, Technical Writing and Communication Skills which has 1(0+1) credits.

For this study, only UG- First semester students were selected as respondents. An ex-post facto research design was used for this study. Google Forms was created as a tool for data collection. Fifty one statements were framed for reply. Among 120 students 108 students submitted their responses. Thus the total sample for the present study was considered as 108.

Result and Discussions:

1. Profile of the student

Table No.1 Distributions of the students (respondents) according to their profile (N= 108)

Sr.No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1)	Age		
1.	Upto 18 years old	44	40.1
2.	19 years old	41	38.0
3.	20 years old	15	13.9
4.	21 years and more than	08	7.4
2)	Gender		
1.	Male	52	48.1
2.	Female	56	51.9
3)	Scholarship holder		
1.	Yes	81	75
2.	No	27	25
4)	Parents education		
1.	Primary	09	8.3
2.	Secondary	05	4.10
3.	SSC	15	13.9
4.	HSC	28	25.9
5.	Graduate	42	39.9
6.	Post Graduate	08	7.4
7.	Illiterate	00	00
5)	Parents occupation		
1.	Farming	66	61.1
2.	Government Service	26	24.1
3.	Private Service	07	6.5

4.	Business	06	5.6
5.	Other	03	2.8
6)	Family Background		
1.	Rural	78	72.2
2.	Urban	30	27.8
7)	Family Annual Income		
1.	Less 1,00,000 lakh	69	63.9
2.	Between 1,00,000-4,00,000 lakh	19	17.6
3.	Between 4,00,000-8,00,000 lakh	12	11.1
4.	Above 8,00,000 lakh	08	7.4
8)	Having knowledge of smartphone		
1.	Yes	106	98.1
2.	No	02	1.9
9)	Knowledge of computer		
1.	Yes	51	47.2
2.	No	57	52.8

1.1 Age

The data presented in Table 1, revealed that more than forty per cent (40.7%) of the students are belonging to 19 years old, 38.0 % of students are belonging to 18 years old, 13.9 % of students are belonging to 20 years old and 7.4 % of students are belonging to 21 years old.

1.2 Gender

The ratio of females is larger than males. Females are 51.9% and Males are 48.1%.

1.3 Scholarship holder

In this data, it is found major students are scholarship holders. 75% of students are holders and 25% are non-holders.

1.4 Parents education

Through this data, it is observed that 39. 8% of parents are graduates, 7.4% are postgraduate, 25.9% are HSC, 13.9 % are SSC, 8.3% are Primary, and 4.6 are Secondary.

1.5 Parents occupation

Regarding the parent's occupation of the student, it is found that most of the parent's occupation is Farming which is 61.1%. 24.1% are in Government Service, 6.5% are in Private Service, 5.6 % are in Business, and 2.8% are in parents' occupation

rather than the mentioned sector. These findings are similar to the findings of Lakhamwad (2019).

1.6 Family background

More than Two third (72.2%) of the students have a Rural Family background and 25.9% of students' Family background is Urban. These findings are in line with the findings of Lakhamwad (2019). For those students who come from rich family backgrounds, their parents can provide abundant facilities to their children.

1.7 Annual family income

Through this data, it is found that 63.9 % of students' family income is less than one lakh. 17.6% of students' family income is between one lakh to four lacks. 11.1% of student's family income of the family is between four to eight lakh and 7.4 % of student's family income is above eight lakh. 1.9% of students mentioned other sectors. Mostly the students came from farming backgrounds, and parents' occupations hence climate change and natural calamities affect crop production which affects inverse annual income.

1.8 Having knowledge of smartphone

Data indicated that 98.15 % of students have a smartphone and 1.9% of students have no smartphone. In this technological era, 1.9% of

students are not using smartphones which is why they are far from the practice to handle it smartly.

1.9 Knowledge about computer

In this data, it is observed that 47.28 % of students have technical knowledge about

computers and 52.8 % of students are unaware of this knowledge. Due to their poor family background, most students cannot get facilities to use computer classes and assets. So, they are not aware of technical knowledge about computers.

Table No.2 Utility of English Language Lab among the Agriculture Graduating Students (N= 108)

Sr. No	Utility responses	Responses	
		Yes	No
1	Have you attended the practical classes in the language lab?	94.4%	5.6%
2	Do you think that you learn something different in a language lab as compared to a traditional classroom?	96.3%	3.7%
3	Does language lab help you to develop your pronunciation and all other aspects of the phonetics of a language?	99.1%	0.9%
4	Have you developed your listening skills by using the language lab?	99.1%	0.9%
5	Do you think that the English language lab enhances your consternation power?	91.7%	8.3%
6	Have you used the language lab to record your sound and playback to improve your mistakes?	80.6%	19.4%
7	Do you agree that language lab improves your speaking skills?	98.1%	1.9%
8	Do you think that the English language lab helped you to develop your vocabulary?	98.1%	1.9%
9	Do you think that the English language lab helped you to avoid spelling mistakes in writing?	95.4%	4.6%
10	Have you developed your confidence by using the English language lab?	95.4%	4.6%
11	Do you think that the Language lab is a self-learning device?	94.4%	5.6%
12	Do you agree that nowadays language labs are becoming highly valued?	100%	00%
13	Do you think that all the exercises which we have practised in the language lab are useful?	96.3%	3.7%
14	Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your personality?	99.1%	0.9%
15	Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your Interview Skills?	99.1%	0.9%
16	Do you think that the language lab provides practical knowledge of the language?	97.5%	2.8%
17	Do you think that language lab activities were helpful to improve your reading skills?	97.5%	2.8%
18	Do you think that the language lab provides required practice among the students?	96.3%	3.7%
19	Do you agree that the use of language lab helps you to build your career?	95.4%	4.6%
20	Do you think that you're reading and understanding speed is developed by using language lab?	98.1%	1.9%
21	Do you think that the use of language lab is very easy for anyone to handle?	89.8%	10.2%
22	Do you agree that language lab is very important for learning stress, rhythm, and intonation?	95.4%	4.6%

23	Do you think that the conducted activities helped you to write logically and coherently?	95.4%	4.6%
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Table 2 indicates the utility of the English lab among agriculture graduate students. Twenty-three statements were given to the student for collecting data. Here is the categorization of students' utility of language lab according to their responses, the first category is between 95 to 100% responses, the second is between 90 to 95% responses, and the third is 80 to 90 % responses. For the eighteen statements student gave their responses as; Do you agree that nowadays language labs are becoming highly valued? (100%), followed by Does language lab help you to develop your pronunciation and all other aspects of the phonetics of a language? (99.1 %), Have you developed your listening skills by using the language lab? (99.1 %), Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your personality? (99.1 %), Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your Interview Skills? (99.1 %), Do you agree that language lab improves your speaking skills? (98.1%), Do you think that the English language lab helped you to develop your vocabulary? (98.1%), Do you think that you're reading and understanding speed is developed by using language lab? (98.1%), Do you think that the language lab provides practical knowledge of the language? (97.5%), Do you think that language lab activities were helpful to improve your reading skills? (97.5%), Do you think that you

learn something different in a language lab as compared to a traditional classroom? (96.3%), Do you think that all the exercises which we have practised in the language lab are useful? (96.3%), Do you think that the English language lab helped you to avoid spelling mistakes in writing? (95.4%), Have you developed your confidence by using the English language lab? (95.4%), Do you agree that the use of language lab helps you to build your career? (95.4%), Do you agree that language lab is very important for learning stress, rhythm, and intonation? (95.4%), Do you think that the conducted activities helped you to write logically and coherently? (95.4%).

Between 90 to 95%, of respondents, submitted their responses for the following three statements; Have you attended the practical classes in the language lab? (94.4%), Do you think that the Language lab is a self-learning device? (94.4%), Do you think that the English language lab enhances your consternation power? (91.7%).

Between 80 to 90%, of respondents, submitted their responses for the following two statements; Have you used the language lab to record your sound and playback to improve your mistakes? (89.8%), and Have you used the language lab to record your sound and playback to improve your mistakes? (80.6%).

3. Overall utility

Table No.3 Overall utility of the student

N= 108

Sr. No	Overall utility	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (up to 18)	08	7.40
2	Medium (19 to 21)	60	55.55
3	High(22 and Above)	40	37.03
		Mean:22.24	S.D.1.74

This table shows the overall utility of the students as per the data collection through the Google form. After analysing this table it can be concluded that most of the students (55.55%) are in the medium category towards the utility of language lab followed by the high category (37.03%) and 7.40 percentage students are in the low category towards

the utility of language lab. It is prove that the overall utility of precepting English language laboratory by agricultural graduating students is affected due to parents' occupation, annual income, and family background followed by knowing smartphones, and knowledge of computers etc.

These findings are similar to the findings of Shinde (2016), Lakhamwad (2019) and Dhoke (2021).

Table No.4 Constraints Faced by the Student

N= 108

Sr. No	Constraints	Responses	
		Yes	No
1	Face Internet connectivity problems while practising.	64.8%	35.2%
2	Availability of computers in your language lab?	66.7%	33.3%
3	All facilities were available in a language lab.	80.6%	19.4%
4	Is the software easy to handle and all exercises are easy to understand?	86.1%	13.9%
5	Is there any need for training/workshops on how to handle computers/software?	75%	25%

For collecting the data regarding problems for the student while using language lab and software we asked five questions in table 4. Through the table, it is observed that 38 (35.2%) students are facing internet connectivity problems while using the language lab, followed by the availability of

computers 36 (33.3%), need for training/workshops on how to handle computers/software 27 (25%), Availability of facilities 21 (19.4%) and software easy to handle and all exercises are easy to understand 15 (13.9%).

Table No.5 Suggestions given by the students:

N= 108

Sr. No	Suggestions	Responses	
		Yes	No
1	The administration has to provide high-speed internet connectivity	90.7%	9.3%
2	The administration has to provide computers as per the number of students.	86.1%	13.9%
3	The administration has to provide a digital Writing Pen/Pad, a good quality Mouse, a Keyboard and a comfortable Headset to isolate students from outside barriers and enable them to focus on their work.	84.3%	15.7%
4	The administration has to make availability of sufficient and comfortable chairs.	90.7%	9.3%
5	The administration has to provide updated or new version software that offers more practice exercises.	89.8%	10.2%
6	The administration has to provide training/workshops for those students who need to become more familiar with information Communication Technology (ICT).	91.7%	7.4%

For improvement instead of feedback six statements were given to the student in Table 5. Through this data it was observed that 99 (91.7%) students agree with the given statement that The administration has to provide training/workshops for those students who need to become more familiar with information Communication Technology (ICT), followed by The administration has to make availability of sufficient and

comfortable chairs 98(90.7%), The administration has to provide high-speed internet connectivity 98(90.7%), The administration has to provide updated or new version software that offers more practice exercises 97(89.8%), The administration has to provide computers as per the number of students 93(86.1%), The administration has to provide a digital Writing Pen/Pad, good quality Mouse, a Keyboard and a comfortable Headset to isolate

students from outside barriers and enable them to focus on their work 91(84.3%).

Conclusions

In the summing part of this research paper, it can be said that the main aim of the study is completed. After analysing the collected data from 108 B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. first-semester students it is found that there is a need for a language lab for the agriculture students for the improvement of English language as well as communication skills. Because the majority of them gave positive responses towards the utility of language lab. For example, the eighteen statements out of twenty-three, student gave their responses between 95% to 100% positively i.e. Do you agree that nowadays language labs are becoming highly valued? followed by Does language lab help you to develop your pronunciation and all other aspects of the phonetics of a language? Have you developed your listening skills by using the language lab? Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your personality? Do you think that the conducted activities are helpful to develop your Interview skills? The data in Table 2 indicate that the majority of the students expressed the constraints of internet connection and handling the software.

The data also represent the need for training/workshops on how to handle computers/software. Through this study it is observed that there are some suggestions given by the students as the administration has to provide high-speed internet connectivity, the administration has to provide training/workshops for those students who need to become more familiar with information Communication Technology (ICT) and the administration has to provide computers as per the number of students. Finally, it is concluded that the majority of the students are favourable to using the language lab for overall personality development.

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