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NEED OF ASSESSING SPOKEN ENGLISH OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN BIHAR

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Abstract

Assessing spoken English skill of technical and management students in Bihar is imperative as it helps in employment, increased performance in academia and writes a story for their success in this globalized era. Assessing spoken English will pave a way for formulating a comprehensive classroom program for them to overcome challenges in conversing in real life situations of general day to day communication, classroom, and workplace communication. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that assessing spoken English is going to be highly beneficial for several reasons. Moreover, not only students who can identify different areas of improvement and take necessary actions but also educational institutions can tailor their curriculum to better equip students in developing their spoken communication to compete and excel. There is no denial in saying that assessing spoken English will be mutually beneficial for students as well as educational institutions. For students, it can be instrumental in their professional development and future success and for educational institutions, it will create a good track record for them.

Keywords: Assessing, Spoken English, Technical and Management students, academia, globalized, curriculum, Tailor

1 Introduction

Students work very hard to get into any technical or management college. It is with a dream that after finishing their course, they can get employed to a good organization and with passing time take a leap in their career. However, for many their dreams get shattered and many fall into desperation. It has been found out that, this happens because many students are not well equipped in their English communication and specially in a state like Bihar where much emphasis

is not laid on developing English communication at an early stage. They are able to cope up with their course content but majority succumb when they have to give presentation or participate in class rooms or interact with their teachers or when they are taking an interview, their spoken English acts as a barrier for them. Many try to overcome this by joining any spoken class or work on the guidance of their seniors or some mentors. But it has been observed that there is no robust solution to this which is implemented uniformly in technical and

management colleges in Bihar. That is why, this paper suggests that there must be a proper uniform system of developing students' spoken English in such colleges. This paper also suggests that, with the enrolment of the students, there is a need of assessing spoken English of technical and management students in Bihar and based on the feedback of the assessment, a comprehensive framework for classroom program should be devised. This will enable the students to become confident, actively participate, interact in classrooms, and perform well and come out as winners. As English is not a native language to students studying in technical and management colleges of Bihar, it is a second language or for many it is a third language. So, when they use it, they compare it with their mother tongue and falter at many places because of interference of FLI and MTI. As a result, they lose confidence and a phobia creeps in. It has been observed that English communications becomes a major factor for the failure of students studying in technical and management colleges.

1.1 Why is there a need of assessing spoken English?

There is an apt need of assessing spoken English of technical and management students in Bihar because from the time they join their educational institutions, they have to study their course in English and the medium of communication and instruction is also English and after finishing their degree, they are expected to face interviews in English and if their English spoken is not at par, they face dejection and rejection. Through following points, we can show the need of assessing spoken English:

1) **Quality of education:** The ability to communicate effectively in English leaves an impact and reflects the quality of education provided. Assessment can help identify gaps and shortcomings and help them to hone those areas. Moreover, it also gives an opportunity to the institutions to work on their curriculum, teaching methodologies and faculty training to enhance students' language skills.

2) **Professional development:** Assessment can provide insights into students' strengths and weaknesses in spoken English. Thus, personalized learning using the feedbacks can be encouraged which can add value in their learning. They can use this tool to enhance their language learning to achieve future success and develop professionally.

3) **Employability:** In present era of globalization, spoken English proficiency is one of the major requirements for job in technical and management institutions. Assessing this skill and tailoring programs according to their requirements will make them more industry ready and can crack interviews to become employable.

1.2 Challenges in assessing spoken English

Assessing spoken English is not an easy task. A lot of factors influence the assessment which at times do not get us a viable result. Students during assessment have a performance anxiety because of which, they don't perform up to their potential. So, it is important to create congenial test conditions for them to get a more accurate and uniform test results.

Sometimes, our test designs are also limited which do not help us to understand and assess a student in totality. We must try to incorporate various task types and contexts to help learners speak more and give us a clearer picture of learners' ability.

Not only this but also, the assessment takers play a pivotal role in it. Lack of sufficient training and standardized approach also pose questions about test validity and public trust.

Validity has been identified as the most important quality of tests, which concerns the extent to which meaningful inferences can be drawn from test scores (Best & Kahn, 2005). Like other tests spoken skills tests need to ensure seven test qualities namely: reliability, validity, authenticity, inter-activeness, impact, practicality, and absence of bias (Akiyama, 2003; Bilal et al., 2013; Lee, 2007).

To overcome challenges in assessment, we must ensure to have consistent and ongoing assessment to keep improvising as and when required. Providing continuous and detailed feedback will foster understanding of their progress and understanding.

1.3 What to assess in spoken English

Assessing spoken English is one of the most difficult and challenging tasks. There are several parameters on which a candidate should be judged. As an assessor, one must focus on following aspects:

- 1) Fluency: Fluency in its simplest term can be defined as the ability of an individual to speak and respond without having to stop and take a lot of pauses.
- 2) Pronunciation: As far as a student is intelligible, he/she is supposed to have a correct pronunciation. However, pronunciation is an amalgamation of sounds, word stress and word ending.
- 3) Vocabulary: The lexical resources also play an important role in students' construct of sentences. The choice of words, the ability to use linking words and phrases also play important roles in determining one's command over vocabulary.
- 4) Coherence and Accuracy: The relevance in the context of speech is also crucial when one uses a language. Accuracy determines the use of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.
- 5) Interactive communication: It is important as it determines as how one is able to develop one's communication when there is an engagement with group or peer. In the professional world or in the world of academia, without successfully interacting with others, it is impossible to get success.

2 Methodology

This paper focuses and investigates on practice of assessing and teaching spoken English in actual classroom scenarios. A descriptive research design is being proposed by the researcher because descriptive study is helpful when a researcher wants to look into a phenomenon or a process in its natural contexts (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

For the assessment of spoken English of Technical and Management students in Bihar, students will undergo a diagnostic test of their Spoken English. The study will cover technical and management colleges of some districts of Bihar namely Patna, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur, Nalanda and colleges of some other district as per convenience and availability to acquire primary data. This proposition is laid by researcher as he is already engaged with such colleges for practice of teaching spoken English. The primary source of data can be first year students of such colleges which will pave a way for them for coming years. Once the data is collected after the assessment, the students can be segregated as per their feedback and levels. There is a possibility that there can be different levels of students' speaking skills. This will help the teachers and the institutions to design a framework for their practice as per their existing levels. As a result, the performances can be monitored and hence, a marked progression can be seen in their speaking skills. Not only this but also, the confidence level of the students will boost and a holistic development in them can be seen. After the assessment several activities like individual task, group and peer activities can be assigned to them in classroom sessions. These performances can be monitored, evaluated and continuous feedbacks can be given.

3 Outcome of Assessment of Spoken English

A lot of key findings can be expected from the result of the need of assessment of spoken English of Technical and management students in Bihar. It will serve as a valuable resource for colleges, universities and as well as students and act as a paradigm for others to follow. The major findings can be identifying proficiency level among students,

institutional planning and curriculum development and identification of students' improvement needs.

The assessment will also provide individual feedbacks to students about their strengths and weaknesses which they can further work upon. The onus of improvement will now also lie on the students rather than institutions totally being responsible for it. One of the most important impacts that will take place is that there will be a feeling of competitiveness among different technical and management colleges in Bihar which will help in identifying colleges that excel spoken English proficiency and those that may require additional support or resources.

4. Conclusion

To sum up it won't be wrong to say that assessing spoken English of technical and management students in Bihar will open up avenues for a holistic development and students can work for their academic and professional aspirations. Through systematic methodologies tailored to the needs of diverse learners, institutions can effectively evaluate students' communicative abilities, identify areas for improvement, and provide targeted support to enhance their language skills. Moreover, by recognizing the importance of spoken English proficiency in today's globalized world, colleges play a pivotal role in preparing students for the demands of an increasingly interconnected and competitive workforce. Therefore, investing in robust methodologies for assessing spoken English proficiency not only empowers students with essential communication skills but also contributes to the overall quality and reputation of technical and management education in Bihar.

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