

**SCOPE, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF BLENDED  
METHOD IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR  
ENGINEERING STUDENTS**



**Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy in  
English Language and Literature**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “**Scope, Challenges and Prospects of Blended Method in English Language Teaching for Engineering Students**” submitted by Sowmya K.N. to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of doctor of philosophy is a bona fide record of the research carried out by her under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted before for the award of any degree or diploma or any other similar title of any university.

Thrissur

Dr. Sanilraj J.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Sowmya K.N., hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Scope, Challenges and Prospects of Blended Method in English Language Teaching for Engineering Students**” submitted by me to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of doctor of philosophy is a bona fide record of the research carried out by me that no part of it has previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or any other similar title of any university.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The gratification and elation of this project will be incomplete without mentioning all the people, whose guidance and encouragement were valuable to me.

I gratefully acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my guide Dr. Sanilraj J., Assistant Professor, Department of English, St. Thomas College, Thrissur for giving valuable guidance, suggestions and constant encouragement for the research.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Anto C. Thomas, Head of the Department of English, St. Thomas College. I am obliged to Dr. Joby Thomas, Research Council Convenor, for his support. I am thankful to all the faculty members and research scholars of the department for their invariable support.

My sincere thanks to all the family members and friends for their enormous motivation without which I could not have accomplished this work.

Sowmya K. N.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

English Language Teaching (ELT)

Teaching English to Second Language Learners (TESL)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Western English (WE)

English as an International Language (EIL)

Teaching English for Social Responsibilities (TESR)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL)

English for Special Purpose (ESP)

English for Academic Purpose (EAP)

English for Occupation Purpose (EOP)

English for Science and Technology (EST)

English Language Teaching Institutes (ELTIs)

Regional Institutes of English (RIE)

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

Situational Language Teaching (SLT)

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Community Language Learning (CLL)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

Computer Based Instruction (CBI)

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)

Internet Based Training (IBT)

Web Based Training (WBT)

Blended Learning (BL)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information Technology (IT)

Structural Oral Situational approach (SOS)

Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

Language Across the Curriculum (LAC)

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Blended Learning (BL) brings together face to face and online activities and it comprises of interactive experiences within and outside classroom. Prior to the onset of technology, teaching happened to be comparatively formal and the concept of learning was exclusively fixed in the classroom. With the advent of technology, the education system advanced and prevailed the constraints of ancient method. The learning process crossed the time and space barrier and became possible anytime and everywhere around the globe. In recent time, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a feature of every mode of knowledge gain and BL is one such technique which explores the possibilities of ICT.

The term 'blend' is self explanatory or reflective and denotes integration or adding one component to another. Numerous potential elements and methods can be adopted to form a blend. Instructor can combine guided individual study, self paced learning, project based learning and computer based instruction with each other. The blend of face to face and online materials will vary depending on the context, needs of the students and preference of the teacher. Steps in constructing a new blend are setting the course objective, selecting media and tool, formulating techniques and strategies, organising activities and finally evaluating the learning process and outcome.

The present study comprises of blended method for English language teaching of engineering students. The current status of language teaching methods was provided by regular intervention with articles and through the interaction with teaching faculties. Newspaper articles presented a glimpse of the link between

engineering students and need to enhance their linguistic skill. Working experience in an Engineering college to teach Humanities and Communication Skills paper provided a genuine description regarding English competency of engineering students. Real experience of their challenges motivated to invent a new method to enhance communication proficiency and thus selected the area of research.

Engineering is a technology based stream and it is a pertinent area to explore the possibilities of technology. Traditional teaching method offers limited opportunity for linguistic development as classroom time is inadequate to arrange and practice activities and this necessitated to formulate a novel approach. BL extends teaching and learning beyond the classroom walls. It integrates online tools and classroom presentations, which in the past consisted of notebooks, paper assignments.

Bestowing multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge is the remarkable advantage of blended method.

### **Background of the study**

It is high priority to trace the previous setting before implementing the research. Introduction of technology has influenced numerous phases of life and the persuasion is explicitly evident in the present world. Advancement of technology has offered immeasurable access to information and it made learning process easier and comfortable. The present study is a retrospective narration of English language teaching for engineering students using blended method and attempts to validate the effectiveness of the adopted strategy. After completing higher secondary education, learners dream of securing admission for a professional degree programme for comparatively high job opportunity and attractive salary pull them towards a specialised degree. Medical stream demands high rank in the entrance exam and the

next priority is obviously engineering. The mushrooming of engineering colleges during the previous decade is an unyielding confirmation for the trend. Every year different streams may be on demand and students run behind that particular course for admission. After four years, drift may be to something else and in the later stage it brings dismay to the learners. More to the point several parents will not think whether the child has genuine interest or is capable to learn the prescribed syllabus.

Engineering position carries much prestige in the society and it tends scholars to hire management seat or to seek admission in other states. Irrespective of these aspects, there are students who are inclined for engineering profession and have clear understanding about the fastidious stream. Engineering students occupy a large space among learner community and it is pertinent to focus on their communication skills.

English Language Teaching (ELT) being a dynamic arena of academic discourse has emerged with innovative trends and several categories like globalisation, localisation and inter disciplinary collaboration have influenced the transformation. Last twenty years marked paradigmatic shift regarding the role of ELT. In a globalised scenario, the concept of bilingualism has been deteriorated and people move to multilingual culture and the idea of English as a second language is outdated. The terminology in connection with ELT has altered over the period and attained new significance (Yilin). For instance, Teaching English to Second Language Learners (TESL) to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Western English (WE) to English as an International Language (EIL) and the term TENOR has been replaced by TESR (Teaching English for Social Responsibilities) and CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). Earlier period the core linguistic activity in ELT was focused on mimicking the native English speakers. Over the ages language teaching became a social and cultural movement to foster a sense of social

responsibility for language learners. For a competent language teacher, productive language teaching will be effective once the learners are linguistically competent enough to be social critics.

Student's population in an engineering college is diverse while considering their communicative competency. During personal interaction, the researcher interacted with students of different linguistic levels; those having remarkable language fluency and other learners with clear subject knowledge but lack proficiency to express their views in English. Engineering curriculum comprises a single paper related to communication skills as the syllabus is exclusively science based and the scope of improving linguistic fluency is limited. The students may concentrate on theory, lab, experiments and mostly they are reluctant to focus on communication skills classes. Even those who have language fluency may lose confidence to converse in English if they are not interacting in English frequently. Teaching experience and interface with other faculties made this aspect evident. Core subjects demand much time for preparation and this result in neglecting Communication paper. Proper training and continuous practice regarding communication skills are ignored in many institutions. Limited infrastructure and not having facilities like language laboratory also hinders efficient training.

One of the prime attractions of engineering colleges is the campus placements organised for job aspirants and it would be high time to improve their interactive skill. They may realise the significance of having proficiency in communication while preparing for campus recruitments or other professional interviews. It is important for the learners to take genuine initiative to enhance linguistic skills to express knowledge clearly and effectively. Candidates may go for training programmes or personality development classes to acquire instant tips to enhance communication competency.

Being aware of the relevance of interview skills and placement status, most of the engineering colleges have commenced placement cells to train student candidates. By exploring these opportunities, learners can improve communication skills and aptitude to perform in interviews while doing the course itself instead of brooding it on the last moment. Arranging orientation programmes by faculties or placement co-ordinators about the relevance of presentation skills will help to encompass awareness for learners.

### **English in India**

Education field has undergone major transformations over the years and it is essential to have a glance at the past. English education in India is the aftermath of British colonialism especially, the stepping in of East India Company established on 31 December 1600. The Company arrived for trading later on by involving in politics acted as an agent of British imperialism till the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Charter Act of 1813 stressed the importance of education in India and the revival and improvement of literature. Literature for them primarily meant English literature. English education had flourished intensely by Christian missionaries. They started educational activities by 1542 itself upon the arrival of St. Francis Xavier. Later the movement spread throughout the country and created a lasting influence on education in India. This paved way for a new direction by the introduction of instruction at regular and fixed hours, a broad curriculum and a clear classroom system. Lord Macaulay, in his Minutes of 2 February 1835 supported the Western education in India through the medium of English. Later, Lord Auckland's Minutes of 1839, Wood's Despatch of 1854 and Hunter Commission of 1832 suggested changes to make English education in India a permanent feature.



Altered political situation in post colonial India had raised difference in opinion about continuing English education in India. Gandhiji was against educating Indians in English as it deprived the national respect. At the same time leaders like Maulana Azad, C. Rajagopalachari and Nehru realised that abolition of English would be a great setback to progress. Nehru considered English as a major window to the world and its closure would risk our future. The Official Language Committee Report of 1955 stated English as one of the foremost languages in the world and medium of international communication. The commission argued that though Hindi is the national language English could be used as second language for specific purposes. One of the major reasons which made possible for the retention of English was the fact that, different states in India had different languages and English linked them together. English continues to occupy a unique position in India as all advanced knowledge and excellent literary works of the world are available in English or in English translations and any Indian regional language cannot claim that position.

English is one of the six official languages of the UNO and the link language of the Commonwealth countries (Richards 29). It is the language of trade, commerce and international politics. Books, periodicals and journals of international standards are available mainly in English language. English proficiency helps to advance and attain professional growth in the modern world. It is the international language and helps to link people from different parts of the world. In India all states have different languages and English serves as a medium for interstate communication. English has helped to create a better understanding among people and brought interdependence with each other. All these factors throw light on the significance of learning English. Realising the impact of English many universities and institutions have reallocated to English as their medium of instruction.

In India, English is taught in schools and colleges considering the fact that acquiring proficiency over English helps to get job and to carry on education in international level. Teaching standard is not remarkable in certain institutions as they do not follow regulations for enhancement. Lack of clarity about aims, shortage of efficient teachers, examination system centred on writing skill and outdated teaching methods Major drawbacks regarding English education. A number of teachers consider the sole purpose of teaching is training students for the examination and make them qualify the test. Lack of trained teachers having proficiency in English is hindrance for exposure to language. Inadequate system to check language competency and mere focus on written skill is the evil of current examination system. Classroom teaching is done mostly in Translation Method or Bilingual Method in which English and regional language or mother tongue is used side by side. The number of teaching hours devoted to English is also less.

Inadequacy of English teaching method can be overcome by formulating clear aims and objectives. The major aim should be transforming the learner capable to use the four communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing in meaningful context. It is easy to master receptive skills than the productive ones; listening and reading are considered as passive or receptive skills while speaking and writing are active or productive skills. Rather than merely rote memorising the answers, teachers may arrange an atmosphere to practice these communication skills. Frequent practice helps to learn language quickly. Regular practice of English will enable learners to achieve proficiency in the language. English has changed its status from a language of the Western world to a language of the modern era. The younger generation have realised that English proficiency will offer them more career opportunities. Every year, the number of graduates passing out is high in India but

most of them are not employable in Western standards and the major problem is the lack of fluency in English. Realising this issue many universities are revising their syllabus to meet the global needs, rather than teaching about the language, the recent movements are focusing on the language and its use to communicate.

### **History of English Language Teaching in India**

Tracing the background of English education scenario in India is relevant in this study. English Language Teaching (ELT) had its beginning from 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. As part of political changes English became a prominent language in Europe and later in the whole world. In England, English became a major language through Henry IV and it was declared as the official language by Henry V in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning English was taught using Latin methods. Later educationists had experimented with various methods to teach English. Fluency in English helped people to improve their career and business prospects and it was the major reason for learning the language. British colonialism and Christian missionaries played vital role to attain reputation for English language. The wide spread acceptance and popularity of language extended the reach of culture and literature of England to the major parts of the world.

Origin of Grammar Translation Method in Germany during 1780s marked a new phase in the history of ELT. Earlier English was taught as an additional language in European secondary schools and it was called Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL). In British colonies English teaching was known as Teaching English as Second Language (TESL). British educated colony citizens, to make the colonised people work under their government taught their language. However after independence also English continued as official language in most of the colonies

including India. This wide popularity was a reason for scientific study of language and to experiment with modern teaching methods. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, linguists all over the world came up with innovative approaches in language teaching.

The acronym ELT became popular with the publication of British council journal *English Language Teaching* in 1946. Establishments like Association of Recognised English Language School (ARELS) helped non native speakers to share their views, experience and knowledge about language teaching and learning. Conferences and classes organised by these associations resulted to be beneficial for teachers. People learnt English for different purposes and this necessitated the birth of English for Special Purpose (ESP) in 1970s. Based on ESP several branches evolved; English for Academic Purpose (EAP), English for Occupation Purpose (EOP), English for Science and Technology (EST). After Grammar Translation method, Direct method and Audiolingualism were the other popular methods. In Communicative Language Teaching, textbooks and evaluation procedure are based on the premise that communication is the primary need of language learning and acquiring fluency is to interact effectively and classroom activities are aimed at communication and real life experience. These developments brought out large number of textbooks for meeting the requirements of different types of learners. Over the years, ELT became more flexible and the focus was on language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Origin of English language teaching is closely associated with the socio-political atmosphere of the country. “English education in India was started by East India Company, as they ruled parts of our country before India was under British Empire. English education was given only to children of East India Company employees and Anglo Indians until the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Aslam 203). It was Charles

Grant, father of modern education in India, suggested teaching English literature and scientific knowledge to Indians. Later, Charles Babington Macaulay, president of Public Instruction Committee had the responsibility of spreading English literature and English education system in India. Macaulay in his Minutes of Education (1835) suggested for the allocation of budget for the education in India. He said by giving English education to Indians, they can cultivate a community who are Indians in colour but English in taste, opinion and intellect and these people will act as mediators between British and the natives they govern. The then governor general William Bentick accepted this proposal and this altered Indian education system and English Language Teaching in India.

Charles Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854 is considered as the Magna Carta of Indian education. This was the prominent education policy by East India Company. The recommendations included all levels of education and insisted that English should be the medium of instruction. Sanskrit and Arabic were the prominent languages in India during that time. The Christian missionaries founded schools and colleges and the curriculum included pieces from Bible and works like Paradise Lost and Pilgrim's Progress. English classics which excelled in writing style and fine examples of classical grammar were prescribed as textbooks to teach English. In India, the traditional approach of teaching was using 'kavya' (literature) and 'vyakarana' (grammar) which had similarity with Grammar Translation method (Bhat). In India, there was no tremendous change in the education system after independence and the pre independent system continued after 1947 also.

The growing influence of English language and the inability to find an alternative language acceptable to all Indians was the reason behind continuing English as the medium of instruction in India. University Grants Commission (UGC)

under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had the opinion that, learning English would enable Indians to update themselves with the events and developments around the world. The UGC report of 1951 says that development of science and technology would know to Indians only with the knowledge of English. The 'Three Language Formula' (vernacular language+ national language+ third language) adopted by all the Chief Ministers of India insisted that the third language should be English or any other European language. Until now, English is not replaced by any other European language as the third language and the prior position of English got fixed in Indian education system.

Post independent India witnessed several discussions about language teaching. In *Techniques of Teaching English in the New Millennium* A.L. Kohli and L. M. Sharma points out that, Kothari Commission of 1966 also agreed Three Language Formula. Commission recommended special units for teaching language skills than merely focusing on English literature. There was a shift from Grammar Translation method to Direct method. A number of English Language Teaching Institutes (ELTIs) and Regional Institutes of English (RIE) were established in different parts of India for guidance and as models to English language teachers. During 1950s and 1960s authorities sought the help of professionals from London in preparing structural syllabus. In 1954 an ELTI was established at Allahabad with the assistance of British Council. Central Institute of English and Foreign Language (CIEFL) was started in Hyderabad in 1958. CIEFL is now known as English and Foreign Language University (EFLU). Promoting English, along with Hindi and other local languages was the policy of central and state governments and people largely opted for English. As a result several English medium schools were started in private sector. In the

secondary and tertiary level also English became the most common medium of instruction.

### **Background of English Language Teaching Methods**

Revolution regarding teaching methods occurred through the decades. The current method for research has been opted after a thorough analysis of prior practised teaching styles. Latin was the popular language of classical period and the conventional texts were written in Latin. To understand these popular texts, 16th century intellectuals started learning Latin and they believed that conventional language develops academic abilities. Latin was considered as the language of scholars and aristocrats; it was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and officials in the Western world. In European countries Latin was taught using Grammar Translation Method. This technique followed a deductive approach; the style of learning was that learners were given rules at the initial stage and then practice and memorise these set of laws. The sequence of presenting communication skills was speaking, listening, reading and writing. Among this, reading and writing were given more importance than listening and speaking. Grammar translation method did not focus on oral communication and it was the major demerit of this method.

In the later centuries Latin lost its prominence and English became well accepted language. The classical literature shifted its focus from Greek and Latin to English. As a result of political changes, French, Italian and English gained importance. The trend of learning a foreign language was from ancient period onwards. Population of multilingual culture is increasing gradually. Bilingualism or multilingualism is a common feature in the present scenario. The aim of learning a

foreign language is to learn its literature or to advance in mental discipline or intellectual development as a result of foreign language study. Over the years the interest to learn Latin got shifted to English. The main defect in English language teaching was following the same method which was used to teach Latin. Like Latin English was taught using Grammar Translation method and this technique dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s.

In the United States Grammar Translation method is known as Prussian method. As per this system first language is maintained as a reference system in the acquisition of second language. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice and accuracy is emphasised. Words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study and memorisation. In grammar translation method instructor makes use of mother tongue to teach and this affected in two ways. The learners can easily understand the concept having explained in mother tongue. It becomes difficult to teach through first language if the learners have different mother tongues. In the beginning of language learning, students are asked to memorise grammar rules and gives an additional stress to memorisation. In a typical grammar translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated with their equivalents, and translation exercises are given to reinforce. Memorising endless grammar rules or vocabulary items and attempting to produce perfect translations became a tedious task for learners and this created distaste for Grammar Translation method.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there was rejection of Grammar Translation method and Reform Movement laid foundation to develop new language teaching methods. Increased opportunities for communication created demand in oral proficiency. The mother tongue of the learner is denoted as L1 and the foreign language as L2. While learning L2, there will be hindrance of L1, and memorising the rules of L2 alone will



not turn out effective in using the foreign language. In Germany, France, England and other parts of Europe specialists started developing methods to teach language effectively. Linguists like C. Marcel, T. Prendergast and F. Gouin discussed the need to use some innovative methods in language teaching. Marcel focused on the connection between learning mother tongue and a foreign language. He emphasised the importance of reading and believed reading must be taught before other skills. Marcel suggested child language learning as a model for language teaching. Prendergast made the observation that children use contextual and situational cues to interpret utterances and he proposed the first “structural syllabus” and advocated that learners should be taught the basic structural patterns of language. According to Gouin, teaching new items in a context that makes meaning clear is important. His method used situations and themes as ways of organising and presenting oral language. As there was no organisational structure in language teaching, their attempts couldn't be successful.

Towards the end of 19th century linguistics (the scientific study of language) evolved as a branch of science and linguists such as Henry Sweet, Wilhelm Viëtor and Paul Passy led Reformist ideas. The world wide popularity of English raised the need to find out new methods to teach language. From the traditional grammar translation method English language teaching started moving to more naturalistic approach. Linguistics as a discipline got revitalised and phonetics- the scientific analysis and description of the sound systems - was established. Speech rather than the written word became the primary form of language. The International Phonetic Association founded in 1886 formulated International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to transcribe the sounds of any language accurately. Association advocated an inductive approach to grammar teaching and new meanings were taught through establishing

associations within the target language rather than with the native language. It promoted the use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce idioms and phrases. Henry Sweet in his book *The Practical Study of Languages* (1899) set forth certain principles for the development of teaching methods. These included; careful selection of study materials, imposing limits on what is to be taught, arranging contents in terms of four communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and lastly grading materials from simple to complex.

The members of the Reform movement gave importance to naturalistic principles of language learning as seen in the first language acquisition and this led to the development of Direct method. This method was introduced in the United States by Savuer and Maximilian Berlitz. They believed that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of learner's mother tongue. Direct method had some differing ideas when compared to grammar translation method. For instance, in the new method grammar is taught inductively. The system of memorising rules and then practising are erased in direct method. According to the German scholar F. Franke a language is best taught by using it actively in the classroom. Target language is the medium of communication and accuracy in grammar and pronunciation are emphasised. The teacher replaced the textbook in the early stages of learning. New vocabulary was taught using known words, mime, demonstration, and pictures. The principles of natural language learning laid foundation for direct method. Oral communication skill is developed through carefully organised sessions like question-and-answer exchange between teacher and students.

Teaching through target language forced the learner to imbibe the new language. Differing to grammar translation method, direct method gives importance to oral skills and this resulted in good progress in the language acquisition. Direct

method was successful where the instructor was the native speaker of the foreign language. But this method distorted the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom foreign language learning. Obsession with accuracy and pronunciation was the demerit of direct method. This handicapped language and learning became a hindrance in the natural process of learning. Direct method was largely dependent on the teacher's skill rather than on the textbook and required a native speaker as instructor or those who had proficiency like the native. Critics pointed out that strict adherence to direct method was counterproductive as sometimes a brief explanation in native language would be more effective to comprehend than the target language. By 1920s use of direct method had consequently declined.

The United States took part in World War II and they needed people who had proficiency in other languages than English. Thus came the necessity to invent new methods and they adopted Audio Lingual Method (ALM). Linguists developed a method that was suitable to the conditions of schools and colleges in the US and it was the result of increased attention given to foreign language teaching. A combination of structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures and behaviourist psychology led to the formation of ALM. The fundamental theory of Audiolingualism is structural linguistics. Interest in phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax was developed as new sound types and patterns were introduced. Since many languages do not have written form, structural linguists proclaimed that language is primarily speech and not writing. Audiolingualism makes use of drills to improve vocabulary and structural patterns are taught using drills and successful responses are reinforced in this method.

Audiolingualism was influenced by Behaviourism which was based on certain concepts like foreign language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation

and language is basically a verbal behaviour. Language skills are learned effectively if the points in the target language are presented to the learner orally before seeing in written form. The approach to the teaching of grammar was essentially inductive rather than deductive. Audiolingualistic texts contain key items of phonology, morphology and syntax of the language arranged according to the order of their presentation. Instructional materials like tape recorders and audio visual equipments assisted the teacher to develop mastery over the language in the learner. During the late 1960s, theoretical aspects of this method were attacked by linguists like Noam Chomsky. He rejected the Structuralist approach and Behaviourist theory of learning. Major defects of this method are; students find it difficult to reproduce the skills acquired outside the classroom into real communication and the process of regular drilling was not interesting and unsatisfying.

The decline of Audiolingualism in 1970s and 1980s paved way to a period of innovation, experiment and adaptation and several methods like Total Physical Response, Silent Way and Counselling Learning came into practice. Other methods like Whole Language, Multiple Intelligences, Neurolinguistic Programming, Competency based teaching which were in practice in the general education field were brought to second language teaching (Richards 98). On the other hand the concern for grammatical accuracy did not disappear and continued to exist in all these methods. Audiolingualism viewed language learning as any other learning and stressed the mechanistic aspects of language. Similarities are there between Situational Language Teaching (SLT) and Audiolingualism; both the methods viewed the nature of language and of language learning in a similar way though these two methods developed from two different traditions. The dissimilarity is that, strong allegiance to linguistics and behavioural psychology was the characteristic of

Audiolingualism alone and SLT does not have connection to these two.

Communicative Language Teaching, Task Based Teaching and Natural Approach also came to practice in second language teaching.

Alternatives to grammar based approaches and methods led to different directions. The Communicative movement altered the focus from grammar as the core component of language to communication and to make the classroom authentic for communication. This method gave emphasis on individualised instruction and adopted more humanistic approach towards language learning and the primary focus was on communication, in contrast to linguistic competence. Total Physical Response (TPR) was another method which was built around the coordination of speech, action and teaching language through physical (motor) activity. TPR was developed by James Asher and it had adopted ideas from developmental psychology, learning theory, humanistic pedagogy and language teaching procedures by Harold and Palmer in 1925. Asher viewed successful second language learning by adult as a parallel process to child's first language acquisition (Richards and Rodgers 118). He considers, for young children the process of speech primarily consists of commands and they will respond to it physically before they begin to produce verbal utterances. Similar to this, adults should recapitulate the process of children's native language learning.

In Total Physical Response, learners have the role of both listener and performer. They have to listen attentively and respond physically to the commands given by the teacher. Learners have to make new combinations of previously learnt items and they could evaluate their own progress. They are encouraged to speak when they acquire sufficient basis in the language. Asher observed the teacher's role as to provide opportunities for learning and while giving feedback to learners they should

follow the example of parents giving feedback to their young children. The teacher plays an active and direct role in TPR. The general objective of the method is to develop oral proficiency at the beginning level. Unlike other methods which had structural based or grammar based view, TPR gives initial attention to meaning rather than the form of items. Grammar was thus taught inductively. Asher, the main proponent of this method stressed that; it should be used in association with other methods and techniques for best result. TPR enjoyed recognition during 1970s and 1980s because of its emphasis on the role of comprehension in the second language.

Silent Way was another prevalent method for language teaching. It was developed by Caleb Gattegno based on the concept that the teacher should remain silent as much as possible in the classroom and the student should be encouraged to generate language items. Gattegno was an educational designer of reading and mathematics. This experience influenced him and he preferred the use of colour charts and coloured rods in the classroom. He believed that, learning is facilitated at the best when the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeated what is to be learned. Learning can be made easy by mediating physical objects. The Silent way adopted a structural syllabus of grammatical items and related vocabulary. The teaching materials consist of coloured rods, colour coded pronunciation and vocabulary wall charts, a pointer and reading or writing exercises. All these are used to establish relationship between sound and meaning in the target language. The teacher uses gestures and manipulatives to elicit responses from the students. Silent Way viewed learning as a problem solving, creative, discovering activity in which the learner is the major actor. This will enhance intellectual potency and memory. This method had relation to the premises of problem solving approaches to learning and followed structural approach to the organisation of language to be taught. Gattegno

viewed vocabulary as a central criterion of language learning and the choice of vocabulary as crucial. He stated that the process of second language learning is different from that of first language learning; one cannot learn another language by the same way as he learnt first language. Thus the natural or direct approaches to second language learning are misguided. Despite the philosophical aspects, this method could not succeed as a language teaching technique.

The most common purpose of language is to communicate. Community Language Learning (CLL) is a method devised by Charles A. Curran and his associates. His application of psychological counselling techniques to learning is known as Counselling Learning. CLL makes use of Counselling theory to teach languages. Based on the counselling metaphor, this method redefined the role of teacher as counsellor and the learner as client. CLL techniques also belong to humanistic techniques which engage the whole person, including the emotions and feelings as well as linguistic knowledge and behavioural skills. The learner is viewed as a child; in the first or birth stage a feeling of security is established, in the second stage abilities of learner is improved and achieves a measure of independence. By the next stage, learner starts speaking independently and asserts own identity. In the fourth stage, learner is ready to take criticism and by the last stage, the learner works on improving style and knowledge of linguistic appropriateness. In CLL learners become members of a community and their fellow learners and teacher are the members of the community. Learning is not considered as an individual accomplishment, but as something which is accomplished collaboratively. Translation, group work, transcription, reflection and observation, listening, analysis and free conversation are the important tasks involved in this method. Inside the classroom the learners will sit in a circle and the teacher will be the observer and they

will exercise the above mentioned tasks. CLL places a high responsibility on teachers; they have to be highly proficient and sensitive in L1 and L2. Moreover they have to be sympathetic and familiar with the role of counsellors in psychological learning. Depending on topics, the teacher must shape and motivate the class. Though this method supported the humanistic sides, the critics questioned the appropriateness of counselling metaphor in the context of language learning.

Suggestopedia, Whole Language, Multiple Intelligence are other methods in the history of English language teaching. Suggestopedia by Georgi Lozanov focuses on decoration, furniture, arrangement of the classroom and authoritative behaviour of the teacher. The objective of this method is to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly. The course lasts for 30 days, consisting of ten units of study. Whole Language instruction advocated the use of real world materials rather than commercial texts. Whole Language movement is not a teaching method but an approach to learning that considered language as a whole entity. Multiple Intelligence is based on the concept that human intelligence has multiple dimensions and it was developed by Howard Gardner. He pointed out that traditional IQ tests measured only logic and language, yet the brain had some other equally important intelligences. Competency Based Language Teaching is an educational movement that focuses on outputs rather than inputs. It has similarity with performance based instruction, mastery learning and individualised instruction.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) marked the beginning of a major shift within language teaching in the twentieth century. The origin of this method was founded in the British language tradition of the 1960s. The central idea of CLT was, language learning is learning to communicate. The method was centred on the communicative functions and any device which helped the learner to interact was



accepted. The whole aim was to enable the learner to communicate fluently. The teacher motivated any way that motivated the learner to work with the language. Students were expected to interact with other people either in pair or in group. It was the teacher's responsibility to organise the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities. Fluency and acceptable language was the primary goal and accuracy was not judged in abstract but in context. CLT appeared when language teaching in many parts of the world was ready for a paradigm move. This method influenced those who preferred more humanistic approach to teaching. Today, CLT continues to exist and the wide range of course books and other resources based on this principles are the proof for its success. In addition this method had influenced many other approaches and methods that subscribe a similar philosophy of language teaching.

Every method has its own merits and limitations. Experimenting different methods made evident, how far each method would be beneficial in language teaching and learning and found that any method is not decisive. Linguists of the late twentieth century recommended Eclectic method which is a fusion of different methods and approaches. The term was first used to refer a coherent and pluralistic approach in language teaching. Eclecticism involved the use of various language learning activities of different characteristics. Based on the needs and effectiveness, the teacher can make use of different methods and this would help to overcome the limitations of using a single method. Multiple tasks, high interaction, lively learning and fast results were some of the salient features of eclecticism. It blended the principles of speaking, reading, listening and writing into a whole. This method fused participatory approach, communicative approach and situational approach. Eclectic method proved to be effective when the students are heterogeneous and of multiple intelligence levels.

Eclecticism broke the constraints of sticking onto a single procedure or approach, and the aim was to make the learner competent in language by exploiting multiple methods.

Language learning is different from other types of learning and a single method will not be sufficient to achieve all the goals of language learning. Different methods may supplement each other while acquiring communication skills. ELT experts opted eclecticism after experimenting different methods as they could not find a single method satisfactory or acceptable to teach language all over the world. During instruction, teachers have to adopt different methods and procedures based on the circumstance of teaching. Different skills and language items can be taught using diverse methods and it will help the teacher to be more flexible and the learners will get exposure to various language learning strategies. To implement eclecticism effectively the teacher has to be well versed in all the methods. While teaching practice itself, teacher trainees can be given awareness about the recent trends in language teaching. Teachers play an active role in classroom and they have to prepare finely for the smooth impart of lesson.

The term eclecticism has different manifestations. The famous theoretician Brumfit advocates that language learning programme should maintain a balance of activities which focus on both accuracy and fluency. Such a balance could be achieved by presenting and practising different methods and techniques. Another linguist Crombie points out that syllabus designers accept that eclecticism offers better opportunities for teaching an eclectic approach in syllabus design indicates combining different approaches and integrating them to produce a whole prospectus. There can be elements from Structural approach, Situational approach or Communicative approach. Tarone and Yule observe eclecticism as a movement of

choosing some procedures from one technology, some techniques from another and some practices from yet another (Kumar and Chintha 26). This method requires efforts and ability from the side of the teacher to select materials and procedures based on a set of principles.

Eclecticism had its beginning with the works of British applied linguists of 1920s and 1930s. They suggested that language teachers should adopt new ideas and accept developments in the field. Using different teaching aids and following many activities will provide better understanding of the content. Teachers can be more flexible in eclecticism. The risk in this method is that, teacher has to be careful while mixing different methods; otherwise it will create negative effect. They have to pay utmost care while choosing a method. The major premise of eclecticism is not the method but how the learner understands the content. An eclectic approach is based on the structural, functional and notional approaches to acquire proficiency and fluency in language. This method focuses on improving or improvising the existing methods rather than creating a new method. The quest is on the existing examples of the age old experts in the corresponding field and the mission is to exploit the best aspects of each method.

Tracing the background of different methods provided an apparent understanding and thus decided to mix two teaching styles for English language teaching of engineering students. Blended method is a type of eclectic method which extracts the potentials of classroom teaching and online teaching. The major objective of the research is to make the engineering students competent in English language and communication skills. Analysing the prospects of direct teaching and technology based learning helped to assert that blending these two methods will be the apt combination for the study.

## **Technology and Teaching**

The advent of technology has influenced various streams and the persuasion is evident in language teaching also. Along with blackboard and textbooks, at the present time teachers depend on multimedia to demonstrate teaching contents. Many institutions have arranged internet facilities for teachers and students. Every method in language teaching is supported by technology; in the traditional grammar translation method it was blackboard which is a perfect tool for one way transmission. Later blackboard was supplemented by Over Head Projector (OHP) and that helped to create more visual impact. In Audiolingual method, audio tapes are the perfect medium of transmission. In the 1970s and 1980s university language classes arranged sessions in audio labs, where students were supposed to perform repeated drills. Accuracy in pronunciation was emphasised in language lab. Apart from all these advantages, it had certain demerits also. The language laboratories were expensive and the repeated drilling was not much exciting. Moreover, these sessions focused only on language form and ignored communicative aspects of language.

Emancipating technology in education demands strenuous effort by teachers. Prof. R. Govinda, Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Government of India made a comment regarding the position of technology in teaching, “Higher Educational Professionals are least literate when it comes to use technology, as they do not understand the relevance of using technology” (Chitrasen 26). This trend is changing nowadays and even the training sessions for teachers are carrying out with the inclusion of ICT tools. In such sessions teachers have to do presentation and are forced to learn technology assisted teaching methods. Initially it appears to be difficult to teach by means of ICT tools but gradually teachers will get acquainted with it as the outcome will be tremendous.

Conducting training sessions with the assistance of technology may provide more exposure and practice for teachers and they can implement it while teaching.

In the 1990s, there was a shift towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which emphasised the communicative aspects of language. Internet provides more opportunities to interact and the use of internet helps to extend classroom time and offers immense opportunity to communicate. Online and offline activities are made possible through computer assisted instruction. In a networked computer lab, students can interact and practice different types of exercises. All these activities can be saved and each learner is allowed to follow their own pace. Direct interaction is possible when the learner and instructor are online at a time. This real time session is known as synchronous. Outside the classroom, discussions can be carried out by asynchronous tools in which one has to depend on offline tools. E-mails and social forums help to conduct offline activities. Computer assisted instruction assures equal opportunity to all the participants than face to face discussion classroom. The introvert students in classroom can also interact without stage fear in these online platforms. Computer assisted instruction offers more planning time for direct interaction. Language teachers prefer computer assisted teaching for these reasons.

Technology assisted learning environment is a recent trend in education. Computer, mobile, audio visual aid, blog, social networking sites are widely used in the present education system. In language teaching also these elements are included to experiment at multiple levels of learning process. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has developed as a prominent style globally. Mobiles, which are considered as miniature computers offer additional facilities like texting, gaming and recording audio and video can be exploited in language learning and teaching. Like CALL, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a recent development. All

these equipments offer social interactivity, connectivity, immediacy and portability when compared to traditional teaching tools and these are the reasons for the wide acceptance. Language lab is another upcoming feature in educational institutions. It offers more exposure and quality while learning all the four communication skills. Computer can facilitate varieties of learning tasks and have enormous potential as a teaching tool. From a single source learners can avail different types of materials.

Teachers or language trainers no longer consider grammar practice as the major goal of language training. The movement for communicative teaching with computers have clearly expanded the borders. The language learning software has incorporated graphics, video, audio recording and playing texts into learning programmes. More sophisticated error checking applications provide feedback for students to correct mistakes or to continue to next level. Those who need extra help can use small programmes focused on the corresponding items (Seileek, Farhan and Odeh). This offers additional time and assistance outside the classroom. Students feel things are more real and understandable when it is presented as pictures or video. Through simulation and other techniques computer can present abstract items in a concrete and clear way. Thus learners will not be bored and become more active in learning.

Students in a classroom may have varied learning interests and different levels of language proficiency and their learning style and learning speed also will diverge greatly. Computers help to make available the needs of all students by providing different types of materials simultaneously. In computer assisted learning students become the centre of learning and teachers become the facilitator. Unlike traditional classrooms, computer offers more opportunity for students to interact with teachers. Instructors can concentrate on those areas which are difficult in online teaching like

giving real life situation for interaction and training on presentation skills. Such instruction will promote learning with comprehension. Both learners and teachers can make use of the possibilities of internet. They can easily interact with other instructors around the world to share different teaching strategies and can download teaching materials.

Computer mediated communication offers more opportunity for learners to interact in the target language. In distance education, internet has made prominent changes by offering immense possibilities. Learners from all over the world could interact through e-mails and web based conferences. Knowledge sharing was made possible within seconds at fingertip. World Wide Web (www) has an array of resources and majority is in English (Abuseleek 202). To avail this knowledge, one has to gain proficiency in English. Accessing these information and opportunity to interact with people around the world also created a new enthusiasm for learning English. Language teaching and learning can exploit the possibility of internet and computer assisted communication. Technology will assist to reshape the process of language education. In spite of the merits, technology cannot be considered as a substitute for direct interaction and it cannot be a replacement for direct teaching but definitely will complement it. This assumption lead to mix technology based online teaching with direct classroom teaching in blended method.

Technology mediated teaching and learning is in every streams of education. Along with subject knowledge, technical knowledge has to be improved to excel in current learning pattern. The learner cannot claim that learning has been ended when comes to the stream of technology. It has to be upgraded and modified from time to time and the user has to get acquainted with recent changes. Not only for the learner, the instructor also has to update the current innovations and trends to provide more

awareness to learners. The instructor can use technology mediated aids to enhance direct teaching, based on the situation and needs of learners. In English language teaching for engineering students teaching part was mostly done in classroom and activities were conducted through online and this helped to overcome time constraint of teaching hours.

### **Online Language Learning**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has influenced every aspects of our life. In the education field also this trend is evident as internet offers learning materials 24 hours a day across the globe and the education system is committed to improve through technology. Application of Information Technology (IT) helps to bridge the gap between rural- urban division. It helps distance education learners to access study materials easily through internet. Institutions like IGNOU and Manipal University have extended their learning programmes in online to increase enrolment locally and globally. Nowadays the younger generation spend more time on computer, mobile, social networking sites and other online services and are very much comfortable with the digital media. The trend of using multimedia can be brought to language learning process also effectively. English is the major language in internet and most of the contents are published in English.

A wide range of online tools like video conferencing, forums, e-mail and social networking sites are there to explore. There should be consideration of when, why, where and how ICT tools will help to achieve learning objectives. Apart from online courses multimedia can be infused with normal teaching and learning schedule also. Anyone with internet access can learn and earn credits in online education. In the late 1970s and 1980s in the US and Europe higher education institutions began



delivering instructional content to distance learners over satellite and TV. Internet became the most common method of delivering notes from 1990s onwards. Online learning method can be divided into two types; synchronous and asynchronous. It becomes synchronous when the teacher and student have direct and simultaneous contact. In asynchronous the instructor and learner does not meet in time or space. Video conferencing is synchronous whereas sending e-mail is asynchronous. Students can depend on both these types to ask questions, have discussions and submit assignments.

Asynchronous learning offers enormous possibilities by releasing education from the constraints of time as well as space. It makes possible education anywhere and at anytime. Online learning has created a major impact in the field of education. One of the major advantages is that it makes available more subjects for more students. There is a difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning; asynchronous learning is self paced but synchronous learning is instructor based. In the former method learner can decide the learning speed and in the latter method instructor takes the decision. Online learning community fulfils the need of its members through computer mediated communication. The members share ideas or knowledge in the form of audio, video or other internet supported media via synchronous or asynchronous way.

E- Learning is the use of electronic media in education. It includes multimedia learning, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Computer Based Instruction (CBI), Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), Internet Based Training (IBT), Web Based Training (WBT), Virtual Education, Mobile Learning and Digital Educational collaboration. One of the key advantages of e-learning is that it improved open access to education including full degree programs. The system is based on self learning and

there is provision of tools to enable students to solve problems independently. Moreover learners will acquire subject knowledge and technical skills simultaneously. Comparing to traditional education system, e-learning ensures equality for all students, despite disability, geographical location, social status or any other personal prejudices.

Blended Learning (BL) is a type of online learning and it combines face to face classroom learning with computer mediated activities to form an integrated instructional approach. The aim is to join the best aspects of both online and face to face learning. Students will be benefitted of two different teaching and learning experiences in BL. The components of BL may vary based on the content, needs of the learners and preferences of the instructor. Online tools are used to communicate, collaborate and extend classroom time. In the traditional education system teaching and learning were formal and fixed inside the classroom. Technology has developed immensely and pupils are familiar with gadgets and internet. This made easier to bring technology to the teaching process. BL is considered as a powerful tool for educational transformation and it has enhanced face to face learning by mixing with relevant ICT tools.

Education networking is the use of social networking sites for education purpose. The term educational networking overcomes the negative connotation associated with social networking. Generally instructors use social networking sites for personal interaction or to get connected with others rather than for teaching purpose. Those who are depending on these sites mostly use it to get videos or notes. The major constraint for using these sites is the concern about cheating or privacy. With the development of BL instructors and learners have started exploring the possibilities of social networking sites in teaching and learning process. Faculties

mainly use You Tube, Edu Tube.org and Teacher Tube.com to download videos on the relevant topic. Privacy and authenticity are major issues in social networking sites then also the number of users of social networking sites is increasing every day. This tendency can be utilised for learning purpose, especially for language learning. The contents offered in the sites are in English and communication skills in English will help to be an active user in social media.

Major objectives behind learning are to achieve a job or to accomplish knowledge. Online learning offers great opportunity for learners. It is important to explore all the possible mediums of communication and choosing the best one which suits well. Online learning has turned out to be more in practice and many universities have started sharing their courses in online. It offers an easy and comfortable method to acquire knowledge in almost all the fields. Online courses are real boon to people who cannot afford money or time to take real time courses. After getting job those who want to continue education also can opt for online courses as there is freedom to select study time. Thus they will be able to manage studies along with their career. In a real time classroom there may be bright and dull students and their learning speed will also differ. In online learning one can follow their own pace. “Students have the chance to study in their own time and especially for free. It represents a great way to study many fields and to boost the level of self-motivation” (Armstrong 13). Online schedules are more flexible; the learner does not have to spend a whole day for learning. When one gets familiar with the system can rearrange the schedules as per convenience.

Employing computer and internet for education helps to learn various technological skills necessary in the modern world. The development of technology has made it an indispensable part in every aspects of life. With the help of internet

students can get connected to native speakers of English and can learn language in real situations. Chat rooms and discussion forums create highly interactive atmosphere for learners. Collaboration and socialisation have a strong focus on interaction and degree of anonymity makes confident to communicate without fear or embarrassment. Mistakes are easy to correct in online interaction as there is opportunity for regular monitoring the learner. Teachers are supposed to adopt professional tactics while selecting training material. Along with this students have to be given instructions about procedure and the proper use of learning materials. By taking these measures online learning can be exercised as a complement to classroom teaching.

Online learning is a 'mobile' method as learning can undertake with the possibilities of laptops, tablets and mobile phones. All these gadgets provide mobility and learning is feasible even while travelling or during any other idle time. Online learning can be done wherever and whenever you have access to such a device. Compared to classroom studies it is cheaper as learner does not have to spend money on travelling or for trainer's time. In online classes the learner can spend additional time on study items which is not clear and can skim irrelevant areas. Online learning is fast growing and different apps or forums are available to reinforce learning and to improve interactivity. Companies can arrange training programmes in online to confirm that the same content is delivered to all the members irrespective of different locale. Moreover online mode helps to save organising time and reduces expenditure. Online programmes ensure methodology and materials at low cost.

Online education is more about learner's convenience and can be considered as learner centred approach. Instructor has the role of a mentor who envisages the learning programme. Though technology supports several aspects, it is difficult to

understand concept without prior training. In order to achieve efficient output certain strategies have to be followed; prior planning to enable well equipped ICT integrated classrooms and well trained teachers should be the initial priority. Planning of activities and exercises has to be completed before implementation. Arranging an orientation or training programme about ICT for teachers who are still practising chalk and talk method will motivate them to upgrade to latest techniques. Execution of contents with accurate planning and having regular follow up will make the session more successful. While upgrading any method there should be rigorous follow up programme and maintaining the continuity relentlessly helps to achieve the set objectives.

The trend of online education is growing rapidly and the advantages of online methods are plenty. Asserting the saying “every coin has two sides” online learning has disadvantages also. A classroom not only provides knowledge, it helps to build good social relation. Students learn to co-operate, adjust, mingle and share with others. As humans are social being, these qualities are essential to cooperate and survive in a society. In internet though one can interact with others still the atmosphere of a society is missing. Though internet provides thousands of information regarding a topic, a number of students find it difficult to select the right material as per the need. Students are familiar with general classroom situation and initially they may find it difficult to cope with the new ICT based atmosphere and a sudden shift can make the students feel uncomfortable. Unmotivated or students with poor study habits may fall behind as online education is mainly learner centred. Slow internet connection and unavailability of gadgets also hamper online learning. While considering the merits, the above mentioned difficulties are not greater and that is the reason for the widespread popularity of online education.

Online teaching cannot be considered as a substitute to classroom learning or one cannot proclaim it as the prime strategy for teaching. Including ICT will offer additional effectiveness to classroom learning environment and arouse novel atmosphere. Traditional classroom adopted teacher centred approach which embodied its own merits and demerits. Along with sharing knowledge, teachers can inculcate good values among students while evocative interaction. While introducing a topic teacher can adopt various innovative methods which will kindle interest among learners. Teachers can clarify and complement textual materials. “Classroom environments promote and stimulate a dynamic atmosphere known as collaborative learning. Collaborative learning translates into a type of learning in which the pairing or grouping of students is required to complete a task or to come to a specific outcome.” (Sheahan 23). Collaborative learning enhances critical thinking of students and enhances cooperation. Live discussions in classroom encourage students to think actively and to formulate opinions and suggestions instantly. Students in a classroom will be having different thinking pattern, this will help to understand another perspectives of the topic or issue.

Live classroom atmosphere helps to build good rapport with peer learners and teacher and students will appreciate the value of social relationship. Creating such kind of communal attitude is an essential aspect of education. Classroom environment helps to figure out how to resolve conflicts, work in a team and mingle with people coming from different backgrounds. All these virtues are essential to be successful in workplace. Moreover presentation skill will get improved by regular classroom activities. Traditional set up helps to develop organisational skills like students have to follow the school timings and obey rules of the institution. This kind of regulations will shape their character for future. A company or firm need moulded employees

who nurture productive relations. Along with professional life, in personal life also, different types of communication skills are inevitable. Classroom atmosphere offers a 'human-touch' which is often missing in technology based training. For those who do not have access to technological devices also depend on traditional method for learning. Direct access to instructor is an advantage in classroom where students may have an opportunity to clarify doubts without more ado.

Both traditional classroom and online learning have its own intrinsic worth. One cannot wrap up that one method is precise and another is erroneous. Experiments from the ancient period have proved that based on the needs, teachers have to adopt different strategies to teach a language. A single method will not cater the needs of all students as the learners may have different learning style and intelligence level. The instructor has to consider all students and should engage both intelligent and dreary students. While teaching, the instructor has to organise teaching contents by considering all types of students. BL is a teaching method which incorporates both traditional teaching and ICT based learning. The learners will get benefit of traditional and modern learning methods. The population of engineering students is the apt group to implement BL for language teaching as they are familiar with technology and in high demand to possess communication skills.

### **Approaches in English Language Teaching**

Educationists or researchers cannot neglect the concept of approach as it gives correlative assumptions regarding teaching. In this experiment communicative approach has been followed which emphasises inter personal communication. The terms approach, method and technique are notable in the field of teaching and are often used interchangeably. An American Applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963

defined these three terms. According to him, an approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. A technique is implementation which actually takes place in a classroom (Anthony 63). “Approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language.” (Richards and Rodgers 112). Mainly, three different theoretical views of language implicitly or explicitly form current approaches and methods in language teaching; structural view, functional view and interactional view. Structural view has the notion that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. As per functional view, language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. Interactional view perceives language as a vehicle for the social transactions among individuals.

Structural view bestowed emphasis on structures rather than vocabulary and considered that mastery of the structures will make one competent in language. Structuralists focused on phonological and grammatical structures and practice of it. The structures were considered as basic items and frameworks of language. This approach has a number of connections with Direct method; both emphasised the structural pattern. Language items were described in terms of phonemic, morphemic and syntactic structures. Phonemic structures leading to morphemic and those lead to phrases, clauses and sentences. According to Sharada V. Bhatt, “selection of structure is made on four principles: usefulness, productivity, simplicity, and teachability”. She further adds that, “the structural approach distinguishes two types of structures, productive structures and other structures”. Structures with which other structures can be built are known as productive structures.



A language is best learnt in practice through situations and the situations can be genuine or artificial. There is connection between experience and expression as familiarity influences responses directly. Intensive practice of structures in corresponding situations will reinforce the content. This approach can be effective in lower levels but in higher levels it is difficult to implement where the circumstances may be much complicated. Another drawback is that, repeated drilling of structures will turn out to be boring. Moreover, this approach does not help to improve communicative competence but focuses on producing correct sentences. Well trained and dedicated teachers are essential to implement Structural approach successfully.

Oral approach or Situational Language Teaching was developed by British applied linguists of 1930s to 1960s. This approach is popularly known as S-O-S approach (Structural Oral Situational approach). The two famous leaders of this movement were Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby. As per the general notion during that period vocabulary was one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning and augmented emphasis on reading skills as the goal of foreign language study. “Vocabulary was seen as an essential component of reading proficiency” (Richards 2010). This paved way for the development of principles for vocabulary control. The SOS approach involved principles of selection, gradation and presentation of linguistic items. Grammatical structures have to be presented in effective, meaningful situations, initially through speech and later through reading and writing. Oral approach need not be confused with Direct method though it exercised oral procedures, lacked a systematic basis in applied linguistic theory and practice.

Language was viewed as structurally related elements like phonemes, morphemes, words and phrases. Linguists of SOS approach believed that language exists in situation and not in vacuum. Presenting a language in situations will make it

easily comprehensible. The main characteristics of this approach are; language teaching begins with the spoken language and materials are presented orally before it is presented in written form. The target language is the medium of interaction in classroom. New language items are introduced and practiced situational. Vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that general vocabulary items are covered. Grammatical items are taught using the principle that simple forms should taught first and then move to complex items. Reading and writing are introduced only after attaining mastery over grammatical items.

The objective of this method is to teach practical command over the four basic skills of language. The linguistic elements are advanced through structures. Accuracy in pronunciation and grammar is considered as crucial and errors have to be avoided. The techniques to practice consist of guided repetition and substitution activities. According to the level of class, procedures will be different to make it comprehensible. Irrespective of level difference it will move from controlled to free practice of structures and from oral use of sentence to their habitual use in speech, reading and writing. After 1975 the basics of this approach were questioned. The main allegations were; practice situation does not ensure to produce correct utterances in other contexts and it paid less attention to reading skill. The other charge was that, teachers needed lots of preparation to create situation and not to make it mechanical. In spite of all these charges this approach is widely acknowledged in countries where the syllabus is based on grammatical items.

Communicative approach focuses on communication aspects of language rather than grammar or vocabulary. This approach does not ignore the role of grammar but considers that learning grammatical rules are ineffective unless it is used in meaningful situations. According to this approach language performs certain

functions as apologising, promising, ordering, inviting and describing.

Communicative aspect focuses on the use of language on such functions in real life situations. It emphasises functional, communicative and social interactive activities.

In spite of the difference between communicative competence and linguistic competence, there is a logical relation between the two. To communicate fluently one has to acquire ease in language. “The top ten principles of CLT are communicative interaction, meaningful practice, active involvement, positive reinforcement, choice of suitable materials, changes of pace and activity, making the teaching process enjoyable, teaching English in English, realisation that mistakes are natural and that even beginners can understand when taught in the target language” (Verikaite 28). Language is a tool to communicate and both cannot be a separate entity.

Activities in communicative language teaching classroom involve realistic communication where the attention is on achieving communicative proficiency than on the accuracy of language. Such activities will be stimulation for students to interact. According to Harmer, students should focus on the content of what they are saying and writing rather than on a particular language form. Classroom activities have to be an attempt to replicate real communication. The teacher’s role is of a facilitator and not as a controller and they have to motivate students for active involvement. Dynamic participation can be made through different modes of interaction, changes of activity, change of pace, change of interaction and by offering positive reinforcement in varied ways. “The Communicative Language Teaching, having an aim to improve students’ ability to communicate, has been criticised for having eroded the explicit teaching of grammar with a consequent loss among students in accuracy in the pursuit of fluency” (Harmer, 89). Despite this criticism, communicative approach is followed all over the world as it considers primary

objective of language learning is to interact. Various approaches have shed new light to language teaching and linguists have been followed different approaches over the period.

Assignments included in the research gave special emphasis on communicative aspects. To improve speaking skill activities like debate, extempore, group discussion were included. Written assignments were integrated throughout the session to practice writing skill and enhance concept coordination. The students in the experimental group were clustered and added in online learning platform Moodle. Unrestricted practice on communicative approach was ensured for learners and communication among students and between instructor and learners were emphasised throughout the study.

## Literature Review

Frequently updating the trends in language teaching helped to comprehend the current status of teaching and learning. Relevance of English language teaching and scope of blended method has been discussed by various academicians. To substantiate the idea several articles have been reviewed. “Writing Difficulties And New Solutions: Blended Learning As An Approach To Improve Writing Abilities” is an article written by Dana Adis and Ayda Bakir which was published in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 3 No. 9; May 2013. According to them a language cannot be taught by a teacher but they can create the best atmosphere to learn language. They substantiate their opinion by quoting the phrase “A good teacher teaches, a better teacher explains, and the best teacher inspires.” As per the authors’ point of view, lack of knowledge in English reflects not alone in communication but in other subjects also which demand written assignments or exams in English. In this juncture Adis and Bakir stress the need to find an innovative method to teach English, which will create more interest in students so that there will be active participation from the learner’s side. They suggest Blended learning as a tool to improve the writing skill in English and the experiment was carried out in Palestine.

Several academicians have discussed transformation happened in teaching methods over the ages. Tatiana Krasnova and Tatiana Sidorenko wrote an article titled “Blended Learning in Teaching Foreign Languages” and it was published in the International Conference on *ICT for Language Learning* 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. They make the view that traditional teaching methods are getting changed and the recent trend is to incorporate technology in teaching. Krasnova and Sidorensko observe that English is a tool for professional communication and those who crave for global exposure

should possess remarkable fluency in language. In their opinion, one of the main reasons for the lack of fluency is decreasing learning hours of language and they suggest self-learning as an alternative to minimise the problem. Self learning can be of two types; with the assistance of instructor and the second one learner educating himself. The learner can either depend on the online learning websites or the social networking sites. The experimenters suggest Moodle as the online platform and these sites offer various audio and video materials to provide visualisation of teaching materials. Computer-aided learning will never replace teacher-student interaction and they recommend technology based education as an add on to direct classroom learning. Current research concludes that the best results come from a blended learning method. Blended learning is time saving and provides convenience and flexibility of learning and it has a tremendous potential in teaching foreign languages as it offers an opportunity to integrate innovative and technological advances of online learning with interaction and participation of the best traditional practices.

Traditional teaching method has been compared and contrasted to technology based teaching by many educationists. In *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 2014, an article titled “English Language Teaching and Assessment in Blended Learning” written by Sejdi Sejdiu was published and the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Blended method when compared to face to face learning. Case study method was the approach for the research and the experiment was carried out in higher secondary level. The students were taught the same content in different ways and the teaching material was designed by two teachers referring the curriculum. The teaching strategy included individual work, group work and feedback. After the instruction results show that the experimental group showed remarkable improvement in communication. The

researcher recommends that the teachers should be given proper training to handle classes using technology so that they can offer more interesting activities to students. Sejdiu winds up that both the methods are effective but blended method is more advantageous as it integrates both the methods.

Combining multiple teaching methods and evaluating its effectiveness in varied contexts is an area of interest for researchers. “Blended Learning In A Teacher Training Course: Integrated Interactive E-Learning And Contact Learning” is a paper written by Rita Kupetz and Birgit Ziegenmeyer from University of Hannover and their article was published in a journal titled *ReCALL17*. They examine the effectiveness of Blended learning in teacher training course. As per their opinion along with traditional methods like task based learning, project based learning and group activities, teacher trainees can be trained in multimedia based environments. According to them, Blended learning refers to the purposeful arrangement of traditional media and methods with e-learning elements and possibilities and the instructor blend the components based on the prerequisites of learners. Students were making use classroom studies, online and offline seminars, video recordings and assignments. Experts from inside and outside the campus instructed them and this provided a wide exposure. Researchers’ aim was to create a holistic concept for teacher training using a multimedia-based case story approach and a purposefully blended arrangement of activities and methods. At the end of their work they conclude that for successful implementation of Blended method in training demands active participation of learners.

Invention of technology has resulted in adding ICT to teaching and learning extensively. Zeynep Kocoglu, Yesim Ozek and Yesim Kesli from Yeditepe University wrote an article titled “Blended Learning: Investigating Its Potential in an

English Language Teacher Training Program” and it was published in *Australian Journal of Educational Technology*. This paper discusses the effectiveness of Blended method in teacher training programme when compare to face to face MA programme in English. During the research the investigators were collecting feedback from the population, in the beginning it was found that there was not much difference in content knowledge in Blended learning group and face to face group. Later when a questionnaire was given, some of the samples from the population expressed their interest in learning through Blended method as it offered more opportunity to interact. As per the researchers’ view, in Blended learning group, only those who had keen interest showed remarkable improvement and learner’s active participation is an unavoidable factor. They recommend blended course delivery method as an acceptable alternate to circulate information at a distance to provide with additional educational opportunities.

In spite of the teaching method and role of the instructor, sincere initiative has to be taken by learners for successful learning. In the article “Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates at Hadhramout University of Sciences And Technology” Atef Al-Tamimi and Munir Shuib outline the motivation and attitude of the Petroleum engineering students in Yemen towards learning English. The paper was published in *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* Volume 9(2) 2009. The study analysed students’ motivation in terms of three motivational constructs; instrumental motivation, integrative motivation and personal motivation. For the students’ motivation, the results showed the student’s greater support of instrumental reasons for learning English language including utilitarian and academic reasons. Personal reasons were also regarded as important motives by the students and regarding the



integrative reasons, the results provided evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language learning motivation. On the other hand, collected data revealed that most of the students had positive attitude towards the social value and educational status of English. Yemen is an Arabian country in which the first language is Arabic and English is not given much prominence, irrespective of this the wide acceptance of English language globally had created an interest to learn the language. The ample opportunities opened for those who have English fluency motivate people to learn the language.

Relevance of English fluency to acquire a job or for career growth is a topic for discussion in the present scenario. Mane Varsharani Shamrao highlights the importance English communication for engineering students through her research paper titled "Importance of English Communication for Engineering Students from Rural Areas and Its Remedies" and it was published in *IOSR Journal of Mechanical and Civil Engineering*. In this paper she analyses the problems of students from rural areas; they lack fluency in English and she recommends various activities like role play, group discussion, language lab session and seminar to improve language competency. It is observed that English is the language of international business, education, technology, industry and many other fields and to be competent, aspirants should learn English. Students from rural areas have intelligence but they lack confidence in communicating in English language. Inadequate opportunities to communicate in English are the main reason for their inability to interact and Shamrao says that training through integrating different methods will enable them to acquire competency. She adds that English proficiency will open a wide world both in education and in career.

In engineering field, updating the recent trend is a necessary factor for career development. Major research journals are published in English and to imbibe information from these, proficiency in English is mandatory. K. Latha, Assistant Professor of English opinions that learning English language is important for engineering students not only in their scholastic life but in their career also. Her article “Role of English Language for Engineering Students” was published in *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*. She says that English is a medium which assures employability. As the engineering student’s main aim is to get a job in renowned firm, along with subject knowledge good communication skill is also important. Moreover English helps to build relationships globally which is essential in professional and marketing sector. The author adds that through activities and by practice students can improve communication skill.

In written communication, writer has to be careful as words are documented and can be retained for future purpose. C. Indira and Meenakshisundaram, through their paper “Engineering Student and The English Language: A Fresh Look at Remediation” analyse the remediation required for engineering students with reference to writing skill in English. They point out that an engineer in multinational companies has to communicate with counterparts in all over the world and in that context English will be the medium of communication. According to them the English syllabus for engineering students should give focus to both accuracy and fluency. They suggest that students should learn basic grammar as it will help to communicate without error. Understanding the needs of learners is also very important, based on that different strategies can be adopted to teach language. Collecting regular feedback will help to identify the progress of learning process.

Prior to implementing a novel teaching method instructor has to analyse the difficulties and needs of learners. “A study of needs, problems and wants of using English of Engineering students at Quaid-e-Awam university of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan” is a review study which investigates the needs of English for engineering students and the problems they face while using this language. The study was carried out by Mansoor Ahmed Channa, Songsri Soranastaporn, Karan Supamas Engchuan and Yuwadee Tirataradol and the article was published in *Journal of Education and Practice*. They analyse the problems of engineering students while communicating in English during academic and professional environment. Authors extend their view that English for Specific Purpose (ESP) has to be included in the curriculum, so that students have more exposure to communicate; instead of just teaching English language students should get opportunities to interact.

Analysing previous researches help to understand possible challenges while carrying out a new study. In the article “The Model of Blended Learning and Its Use at Foreign Language Teaching” A. A. Kudysheva, and A. N. Kudyshev consider the model of Blended learning and its use in English language teaching and problems arise while its implementation. They observe that in many European countries technology is being incorporated in teaching and learning. Blended learning offers more freedom to learners as they can fix the study according to their convenience and one can attend classes wherever the internet facility is available. The problems are; teachers must be competent to use computer and learners should take individual effort to learn. The researchers say that Blended method is effective when it is implemented with at most care. As the learners have ultimate freedom, they will be able to analyse study materials and to make selections.

Each method has its own merits and demerits and the instructor has to choose one method based on the needs of the learners and the situation. Jessie Gleason through his work “Dilemmas of Blended Language Learning: Learner and Teacher Experiences” analyses the problems of Blended learning when compared to face to face to learning. The researcher implemented Blended method in different ways; in one method two days of face to face teaching and third day online learning and in the second method three days of face to face learning and fourth day online learning. In these two methods experimented, it was found that both the methods have advantages and disadvantages; online learning helped to save time and provided freedom to schedule study time while face to face learning resulted in building relationships and interaction among peer group. Gleason adds that for students who are introvert, online communication will be effective as they feel comfortable in their own personal surroundings.

Reading newspaper articles throws light on the recent trends and educationists peep into it with enthusiasm. “For an engineer and engineering student, English language frequency is important both in studies and career. Engineering is one of the largest fields of study and many of the works of research and academics are recorded in English” says Vidyasree in her article which was published in “The Hindu” (May 26, 2012). English is a bridge language in business, technology and research as it helps to gather information from all over the world. Most of the renowned journals are publishing articles in English and to refer these we need proficiency over English language. Writing report is an unavoidable task in engineering profession and this has to be done in English in almost every profession. She adds that, to be successful in any field one has to communicate and understand effectively. Moreover English helps to build relationships globally. In today’s world employers prefer candidates with

proficiency in English as good communication is an asset for the firm. This article highlights the relevance of English language and inspires the young talents to acquire proficiency and good communication skills.

Introduction of technology has upgraded education field to a great extent. Richard Caladine analyses the growth of communication technologies and how it will affect the later generation through his essay “The Future of Real Time Communications Technologies in E- Learning” (91). He cites videoconference as the best example for real time communication. He uses the abbreviation RTC to denote Real Time Communication and it includes videoconference, videoconference plus Virtual Networking Computing (VNC), Access Grid and video chat. To analyse the future these systems he has been done a comparison of them within the context of e-learning and distance education within a three to five year time frame. For this comparison he considered factors like participants, content, learning objectives and the infrastructure. In institutions video conference can be arranged with subject experts from other colleges or even other countries. This will provide different perspectives about the topic. Integrating videoconference and VNC may be more beneficial. VNC is a remote display system that allows a computer desktop system that allows a computer desktop to be viewed by other computers. This will be helpful while teaching subject like mathematics where there needs high demand of student participation. Other than video chat Caladine discusses about web based video chat applications like Skype, MSN Messenger, iChat AV and Windows Live. All these applications became popular because of the easiness to handle and possibility of instant chat. He concludes that in future institutions and organisations may use a mixture of technologies that will facilitate easy interactions and maintain sustainable level of cost, support and implementation. This article can be considered as a

reference material for educationists who want to examine the effects of real time communication technologies.

Possibilities of ICT in teaching and learning have been discussed by various educationists and researchers. Bridget Somekh in his article “Understanding Innovation” examines how ICT can be incorporated in informal learning or learning at home and in assessment. Most of the researches have discussed the possibilities communication technology in schools or other educational institutions. Author points out that young people prefer to use computer and internet at home and they find it more convenient than using at institutions as restrictions will be less in the previous one. This trend can be used for learning. According to Somekh “A key difference between using ICT at home and at school is between informal and formal learning”. Nature and quality of learning at informal setting is under doubt. In school computer use will be more planned to support prescribed curriculum and as there will be monitoring of the instructor chance of distraction will be less. Though informal learning is possible lots of attention and focus has to be there while choosing. In traditional methods of assessment and evaluation human emotions are also considered and it is not mechanical. Introducing technology in assessment will make the process mechanical. Author cites different examples for including the potentialities of technology and he warns that there should be strict control over accessing and using ICT to support the established system or while innovating something new.

A single teaching method cannot be considered as the ultimate learning scheme for any subject. With this assumption blended method has received wide acknowledgement in which two or more different methods are combined together. “Support Structures for Blended E-learning” is an essay written by Allison Littlejohn and Chris Pegler which explains how additional features can be used to assist blended

system. In blended learning where the components are face to face and online learning the service of instructors and mentors are extended. Support for students can be academic or non-academic. Academic includes study preparation, tutorial support, courses office which may be distribution of handouts or preparation of timetables, technical support and academic support like assessment and preparation of transcripts. Non-academic support includes financial advice on how to apply for grants, debt or loan, course and career advice, accommodation and welfare, social, culture and religious support. Counselling required for a student at the beginning in campus and one who is preparing for online learning is different. Locating a book in library and finding a material in internet is not a similar process. A well prepared student to join on campus may be unprepared to be an e-learner. In such situations learners need advice and support from the experts. Nowadays every institution has its own website. Apart from direct counselling, support can be provided through institutional or departmental course website. Large number of students from diverse backgrounds can be benefitted through this facility. Instructors who create and design blended course can handle technical helpdesk which will be very useful for those who want to experiment with similar learning style. Libraries have changed their role from a collection of books to a reference centre which incorporates technology and internet widely. Library staff can arrange discussion forums and searching tool to assist reference purpose. Online peer support also plays an important role in e-learning. The book has covered vast areas of blended e-learning and suggests different possibilities to enhance e-learning.

Several studies have been conducted regarding English language teaching for engineering students and they are guidelines for fresh researchers. “Teaching technical and business communication and technology assisted language learning are

areas that should be taken up on a priority basis while learning English for specific purpose” (Sasidharan 103). The research was carried out in several engineering students belonging to different semesters at Orissa to teach English language for specific purpose. After continuous interaction with learners and instructors the investigator could find that in the present scenario engineering students should acquire fluency in English and regular interactive sessions should be arranged for this. During the experiment it is found that, students who qualified secondary examinations in English medium also lacked proficiency to communicate in English as they did not have real exposure so far. So in engineering curriculum students should be trained to interact in real life situations that will be helpful for them. Teachers also have to be prepared to teach using recent technologies and innovative teaching methods. Both learners and teachers should involve in more interactive sessions to improve communicative competence. Additionally, teaching technical and business communication and technology assisted language learning are areas that should be taken up on a priority basis while learning English for engineering purposes.

In certain countries like Pakistan regional language alone was important and English education got prominence only during the last few years. After conducting a thorough research, Habibullah Pathan asserts this view. The reason behind this thought is that, good communication skill in English offers wide career opportunities and higher education in renowned universities. Though the country is occupied with conservative Muslims and their first language is Persian, nowadays they too are learning English; especially students who seek admission for professional courses. English became popular in India after colonisation. Britishers taught English to have communication between rulers and people and slowly the invader’s language got popularity throughout the country. Earlier Pakistanis were reluctant to accept English



as British claimed to occupy the country by toppling the Muslim government. Certain reformers showed interest to teach English in Pakistan and after independence this language became indispensable. At the start of English language course students did not show much interest, but after completion they could feel the improvement. More than teacher centred method, learner centred method was found effective. It can be concluded that proper method and interest are the factors which resulted in the improvement of English language competency and inclusion activities is an add on to language teaching.

In The University of Melbourne a study was commissioned on “The impact of English language proficiency and workplace readiness on the employment outcomes of tertiary international students”. The study was carried out in Australia and the investigators analysed both natives and students from other countries. They came to the conclusion that employers give importance to subject knowledge and other personal skills while interview. The candidate’s communication skill is also measured along with personality. Employer’s initial priority is on employee’s professional skill, but when there is high competition they consider other attributes like attitude, experience and communication skills. The researchers observe that for migrants, acquiring English language proficiency is essential as there will be demand of English language when they try for a job. Majority of the interviewees agreed that English language proficiency is a key factor to get job in their desired field and they felt that communication skill is essential in the job interview, as in future they have to interact with multi lingual co-workers and clients.

English language teaching is a broad area and has several branches like TESOL, TESR and ESP. “With the globalization of trade and economic, the expansion of scientific and technical activities in international scale and the

continuing increase of international communication in various fields, the demand of English is growing, especially, in countries where English is taught as a Foreign Language” (Kadi). The requirements have resulted in one aspect of English language learning; English for Specific Purpose (ESP). Instructors are enquiring why the student wants to learn English or what is the purpose behind learning this language? In this approach any ESP course should formulate predetermined objectives based on the needs of students and the instructor’s aim is to meet the requirements. The study was carried out in the department of petroleum engineering in Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla. The students were taught general English and they lacked fluency one or the any other four communication skills. The researcher feels that instead general English, ESP will be more advantageous for students as each will be in need of different training.

Subject knowledge and communication skill is not directly proportionate for many people. “A number of technically-sound students have not been successful in job interviews just because of their lack of communication skills and there are cases of rank holder in engineering studies who could not go for higher studies to the United States and other English-speaking countries because of their lack of proficiency in English” (P‘Rayan). The researcher asserts the need to teach Engineering English to students, as those who even know the basics of the language fail to express effectively in professional situations sometimes. More than knowing the grammar rules, it will be helpful to train the engineering students to face the real situations. The investigator formed an experimental group and followed skill based learning. He gave importance to each communication skills, and assigned them different activities like group discussion and oral presentation to enhance linguistic skills. Students found it very useful and effective. The researcher points out

that English should be taught as a life skill; which will enable the students in living to be productive and successful.

Several academicians have attempted to trace the history of English language teaching. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* is a landmark book by Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers. They outline the evolution of English language teaching methods and approaches prevalent from the ancestral period. According to them "... a teaching method or approach by which we refer to a set of core teaching and learning principles together with a body of classroom practices that are derived from them." A descriptive framework is used to highlight the similarities and differences between approaches and methods. They have presented a comprehensive picture of major and minor approaches and methods prevalent over time and it helps to get awareness about trends in ELT. After analysing several methods, Richards and Rodgers suggest that a single method will not be the ultimate solution for teaching a language as each method has its own merits and drawbacks.

Apart from Richards and Rodgers, other linguists like Debra also advocated for collaborating different teaching methods. "A range of methods and approaches are often used to introduce new language, and a variety of classroom management techniques are employed to maximize practice opportunities. In short, there is no one way to learn a language, just as there is no one way to teach it" says Marsh Debra in his book *Blended Learning Creating Learning Opportunities for Language Learners*. The author tries to assert that, unknowingly or with a conscious effort, both instructor and learner adopt different methods to imbibe a new language and technically this can be termed as blended method. With the advent of technology, recent communication devices also play a major role in blending. In the traditional methods teachers used to mix varieties of activities within the classroom itself. But nowadays, we can depend

on TV, Internet or other telecommunication methods to learn a new data. Here, instructor's role is to enable the students for self learning and to moderate their activities both online and offline. While blending different methods, students' needs should be given priority and both instructor and learner must undergo self analysis regularly.

British Council is a true guide to language learners and trainers and it always comes up with innovative ideas and training programmes. *Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course, Design and Implementation* is a book edited by Brian Tomlinson and Claire Whittaker and published by British Council. The book analyses various aspects of Blended method and its effectiveness in English language teaching. Claire has implemented blended method in one of her teaching projects and she found it effective for teaching and learning. "There are a number of areas of a blend that can be evaluated such as the choice of software and materials, the balance of time spend in each mode, the learners and teachers/tutors' attitudes towards the blend, and its effectiveness in terms of teaching and learning." (Krake 2013). Editors have accumulated opinions about this from different linguists and thus the present book offers a wide outlook on blended method.

English language became prevalent in India as an aftermath of colonisation. In *Teaching English: Approaches, Methods and Techniques* N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy observe that "English has become an international commodity like oil and microchip." They highlight the relevance of English; "English has become a global language and its use is not restricted to one country or continent. It is used in all the five continents of the world." The book traces the background of English in India and different methods experimented in English language teaching over the ages. It also gives a detailed description of how to teach prose, poetry and grammar. This

book can be used as a handbook for language teachers. Authors talk about the relevance of different education committees formed in the history of teaching. They stress that English language competency is essential in all professions as the world is becoming a global market. The four communication skills should be given equal importance as all are interconnected and correspond to each other. The book suggests many exercises to improve the communication skills.

Role of ICT in the field of education is an area of interest for researchers and several studies have done over the years. *Pedagogy and Learning with ICT: Researching the art of Innovation* is a book written by Bridget Somekh and it discusses issues like different prospects of information technology in education and what are the challenges and how to overcome the hazards. The book analyses the role of technology in social interaction also. Author points out Vygotsky's theory that learning best happens in social context especially during interaction with each other. Information and communication technology has developed the scope and possibilities of interaction. Internet is the common medium used to connect people and it not only enhances interaction but make possible easy sharing of text, video or audio files. Image management, calculation, knowledge management and in many other both teachers and students are depending on technology. ICT based syllabus are being framed in many institutions. According to Somekh, in classrooms ICT should encompass various pedagogies rather than one, but until all students have their own portable digital gadgets and internet connection whenever they need, its use for learning is inevitably constrained. Other than this, technical problems and difficulty in preparing materials and such kinds of issues also will affect ICT based learning negatively. To analyse different areas author sites examples and various case studies to validate arguments.

Synchronous communication is a type of online communication in which instructor and learner have direct contact. Richard Caladine in his book *Enhancing E-Learning with Media Rich Content and Interactions* explains the possibilities of video conference and other media based technologies which help learning. He views that videoconference can be best used as an interactive technology in learning. In two way communication model video conferencing is a best tool as it makes possible interaction between learners and interaction between learner and instructor. All the participants will be connected to the videoconference at the same time and it is a synchronous technology. Synchronous is an internet based communication in which sender and receiver have direct and real time contact, the other type is asynchronous in which direct contact will be lacking. Along with advantages, Caladine discusses some drawbacks of video conference; it is quite different from face to face interaction, the audio and video signals need to be compressed and this compression may make the picture slightly out of focus or grainy. Fast movements may result jerky picture and this rough motion sometimes referred to as 'stutter vision'. A video conference can never compare to watching television as there are several limitations. The author suggests that before considering video conference as teaching tool, one has to do several preparations; a variety of activities and inputs like document camera, student and presenter cameras, video sources, and a computer need to be included. With such preparation one can exploit the possibilities of video conferencing in an effective manner.

Effects of ICT can be seen in many fields and in education it is evident in an extended manner. Dr. S. Arulsamy and Dr. P. Sivakumar through their book *Application of ICT in Education* trace out, how ICT can be applied at different levels of education. Areas like online learning, e-journals and advantages and disadvantages

of virtual campus have been discussed in detail. They view web based learning or online learning as an advancement in education which make use of the possibilities of computers, interactive multimedia and internet. This facility has been best utilised in distance learning. With the connectivity of internet and new generation software applications, distance education has evolved to a new model. Authors consider virtual campus as an example for the electronic teaching and learning. It makes possible both real time interaction with each other and access to reference materials which can be used for teaching, research and professional meetings. In the virtual campus community network the learner can talk to other learners or professionals of similar field. In addition to advantages, the effect information technology in human psychology also been interrogated. Internet and similar technology has caused IAD (Internet Addiction Disorder) and cyber crimes. Hacking internet accounts has also become a serious issue nowadays. Writers have incorporated information regarding the psychological aspects of using technology in education and what all measures have to be taken care of. This book can be considered as a reference material for those who want to evaluate the perspectives of ICT and how it has influenced the learning process.

Employing technology in learning is for different purposes like information gathering, storing and sharing. The book written by Dr. Anjali Khirwadkar and Dr. K. Pushpanandham titled *Information and Communication Technology in Education- Interactive Multi-media Instructional Strategies for Learning Process* traces out aspects of ICT and its instructional strategies. According to them ICT play a major role in enhancing education as it offers decentralisation, school based management and learner centred education. ICT makes possible new learning model that change the role of teachers and students. Authors suggest that educational institutions need to

carry out pilot study to check feasibility before shifting to ICT based learning style and necessary modifications have to be made to overcome the shortcomings. Online communities are viewed as an effective platform, one who has an e-mail id and internet connection can be member of such communities. A classification based on function has been made; audio and video conferencing can be for gathering information, technologies such as spreadsheets, databases, word processors to process information, publishing software, drawing programmes, and photo editing to publish information. ICT can be a tool in distance learning and individualised learning. Popularity of World Wide Web has received greater attention because of its communication framework and facilities for representing, storing, exchanging, searching and accessing information. Many studies have been carried out in the field of ICT and its significant contributions in various fields. From the results it is evident that ICT can deliver information much faster and has changed teaching and learning over the years. As per this book technology and ICT based tools are useful in the field of education if implemented with testing and proper planning. Components, needs, utility and situation have to be considered while designing ICT based instruction.

Blended learning has received wide acceptance over the last few years. Incorporating ICT and traditional teaching in a single method is one of the major reasons for this recognition. Allison Littlejohn and Chris Pegler in their book *Preparing for Blended E-Learning* discusses issues like what is blended method and how to make the finest blend and the factors to be considered while implementation. They suggest that the instructor has to take care of certain measures like assumption about the outcome or result of blending, what motivates to blend, what is the expectation of students and situation. They observe that not only teachers, students also indulge in blended method. While having a group discussion or interaction they



may use instant messaging to have privacy. Teachers cannot be so casual and have to give priority to curriculum whenever they are experimenting a method. According to them factors affecting blending are purpose of learning, context of learning and approaches to teaching and learning. Learning as behaviour, learning as understanding concepts, learning as knowledge construction and learning as social practice are some approaches in teaching. Allison and Pegler say “we ‘blend’ different combinations of these teaching approaches. Then we integrate different media, e-tools, and so on”. It is very important and necessary to document all the procedures and intentions of blending. This book gives a clear picture about the different concepts of blending and to manage it effectively.

AICTE is the council for technical education and it focuses on to upgrade and evaluates technical education system. “For Blended Learning” was an article published in the website. It defines blended learning as the “mixing of different learning environments” and views that it offers learners and teachers a potential environment to learn and teach more effectively. They also observe that cross analysis of competences at stake, the nature and location of the audience, and the resources available are the three essential parameters according to which the researcher has to decide whether teaching has to be done through face to face mode or via online interaction or blended learning. The article suggests an example of English language teaching using blended method; all the audio based activities like listening comprehension and oral expression will take place in the classroom and all the text based activities like reading comprehension and essays writing through online. The article discusses about all the relevant areas of blended learning in an explicit way.

UNESCO, the agency which supports education affairs in all the countries belong to UN had supported the University of Djibouti in establishing teacher

training course based on ICT. The course was based on the UNESCO Competency Framework for teachers and would permit them to integrate ICT in their teaching and learning practices. To establish this scheme they conducted a workshop for teachers in association with African Virtual University to finalise the course and make a plan for its role in the 2016-17 academic year. This venture proves that ICT based learning is internationally accepted and it is practicing in more and more institutions day by day.

Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) is a central government agency and UGC is one of the governing bodies under it. Both UGC and MHRD run and manage several educational programmes. The Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC) is a scheme of UGC and it addresses education through the medium of TV and ICT. It started countrywide educational programmes in the year 1984. Realising the potential and power of broadcasting media such TV and ICT based tools CEC started several media centres in various universities and a nodal agency to coordinate these centres. Production of educational programmes (audio, video or web based) and promoting research activities to increase the effectiveness of educational communication are the primary concern of CEC. This mission shows the relevance of technology in the current education system as a government agency has taken the initiative to inculcate technology based learning style.

Analysis of various articles, dissertations, websites and books highlighted the significance of English language teaching for engineering students and scope of Blended method . The possibilities of technology in education also became evident. The analysed materials illustrated the wide scope of technology in English language teaching. The effect social media as a widespread information sharing platform has also been discussed. The population of engineering students has high relevance as

majority of the students opt engineering after completing higher secondary education. Different articles have showed the importance of acquiring English language competency for engineering students and the advantages of possessing better communication skills. Assessment of many language teaching methods has proved that a single method is not adequate to teach language and different strategies have to be followed according to the situation. Thus the researcher came to the conclusion that using blended method in the present study is relevant as it is a combination of face to face learning and online learning.

### **Social Relevance**

The present research is to enhance the communication skills of engineering students by adopting Blended method and help them to achieve their career goals and be successful in professional and personal lives. Lack of linguistic fluency and inability to express ideas clearly may become hindrances while expressing knowledge or interacting with others. Improving communication skills help the candidates to perform in a better manner during interviews and afterwards to maintain good relationship with colleagues and higher officials. Engineering is one of the most preferred courses for higher education and linguistic skills aid to pursue career in worldwide level. For career augmentation and healthy association, effective communication is an inexplicit factor. Thus the topic has high relevance in current social scenario.

### **The statement of the problem**

Evaluating the effectiveness of blended method to develop the communication skills of engineering students.

## **Objectives**

### **Major Objectives**

- To study the effectiveness of blended method to improve the language skills of engineering students.
- To encourage the learners to adopt the recent techniques to improve communication skills.

### **Minor Objectives**

- To identify communication ability of engineering students.
- To understand the attitude of learners and instructors towards the relevance of improving communication skills.
- To identify the instructional strategies followed in Humanities and Communication classes.
- To analyse the language learning problems encountered by students.
- To improve awareness regarding various online language learning platforms.
- To encourage learners to use technology assisted learning methods.
- To compare the effect of traditional method and blended method in language teaching for engineering students.

### **Hypotheses**

- There is a significant relation between enhanced language competency of the selected population and blended teaching method.
- There is significant difference in the calculated value of the experimental group between pre-test and post-test.

- There is significant difference in following traditional method and blended method for language teaching.
- There is no significant difference in the calculated value of controlled group between pre test and post test.
- There is significant relation between the communication ability of the learner and external factors like institution, instructor and learning atmosphere.

### **Delimitations of the study**

The study is delimited with regard to samples, method, period of experiment and variables. The sample size is limited to 50 as it is the average strength of the class and the MOODLE website group capacity is up to 50. Considering the common traits of engineering students, included them as a representative group in the research. The population comprised of students from different engineering colleges and increasing the number of learners had practical difficulties. Considering the method, blended method incorporated as a combination of online teaching and direct classroom teaching and excluded other prevalent teaching possibilities. Regarding the variable, the dependent variables are language proficiency and communication skills and independent variables are online learning platforms, websites like Moodle and Wordpress and classroom activities. The kind of standardised tests adopted in this study are T test and frequency table.

### **Population**

The selected population for the research was first year engineering students from various institutions and of different branches. The first year students were preferred as they had tutorial hours for remedial teaching and it will be convenient to conduct classroom activities during that time. Three types of management systems are

existing in engineering colleges; government, aided and self financing. Students under these three categories have been included in the study. The general assumption is that in govt. colleges students may be meritorious and their communication level will be high. During intervention it was evident that communication skills and academic merit may not be proportional all the time. Considering this aspect, students from govt., aided and self financing colleges are included in the experimental group. Students who already possessed remarkable language fluency were included in the research to analyse that, how to modify their skill and make them competent to have excellent profession and those who were familiar only with the basics of effective communication strategy were considered to revise, how to enhance their communication skills and make them capable to achieve professional goals. Sample group comprised of students from Palakkad, Thrissur, Malappuaram and Kozhikode districts. Initially the researcher met 250 students and from that 50 students were selected to form the experimental group. The researcher got prior permission from the authority in all the institutions. The photographs and data collected during survey were used only for research purpose and followed the regulations established by the institutions.

### **Inclusion criteria of the sample group**

- Engineering students of first year.
- Students who have genuine interest to improve communication skills.
- Students who can avail internet connection.
- Students familiar with online interaction and social media.
- Students with basic knowledge in English language and communication skills.

### **Exclusion criteria of the sample group**

- Students with learning difficulties.
- Students who are not familiar with technology and cannot avail internet.

### Distribution of the sample

**Table 1.1**

<b>College</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Aided	10
Government	20
Self financing	20
Total	50

### Relevance of English Language Learning for Engineering students

Multinational companies and Information Technology firms recruit candidates who have good communication skills and proficiency in English. In this scenario, English competency has become one of the employability skills. Recent surveys conducted by various IT companies show that communication skill among engineering students is very poor in India. In an article published in *The Hindu* R. Rajaram, HR head says, “The worse of it often comes out in mails - the most important medium of communication in corporate offices”. He explains, “They write incomplete sentences; their punctuation is non-existent and grammar very poor. This is why most companies have readymade templates with sentences, and employees just have to choose what they have to say.” From this statement it is evident that, those who managed to get a job also fail to interact properly in English. Many of the

students know the technical concepts clearly, but they fail to express it during interview, as they are not confident about communicating in English. One of the major reasons for this situation is the wide gap between what the students need and what is taught at the tertiary level. It will not be practically possible to teach grammar and usages at college level, instead of that students can be given tips to improve vocabulary and communication skills instantly. Initiating the habit of self learning also may be useful.

Globalisation brought technical communication to the forefront and professionals are facing new challenges in interaction. In this competitive environment success not only depends on acquiring knowledge and technical skills but on effective interaction also. Everyone has to promote their product or service successfully in the market and effective connections is the key factor in the competition. English builds confidence and enables one to compete in the global market. It has become the language of industry, science and technology around the world. People from different parts of the world widely use English and it has gained the status of lingua franca of the world. Kavitha Kishore in her article “Know Your English” published in *The Hindu* highlights the importance of communication skills in the present scenario. Communication is the central part of all activities and without communicating one cannot convey their ideas to others. Engineering is a profession which needs lots of clarity of ideas, as innovative thoughts are seeds of creation. The requirements, needs, orders and relevance have to be communicated among the team members and with higher officials. In this scenario, an engineer has to master the art of communication.

Many of the engineering graduates are unable to comprehend official reports even when the information is stated explicitly. The major problem is the lack of using



English in colleges though this language is the medium of instruction prescribed. In rural areas, classes are mostly conducted in translation method, the text books or other reference material will be in English and the instructor will translate concepts and explain in regional language. Sometimes the ideas are well understood by learners if explained in regional language and this notion tends to minimise the use of English while taking classes. The number of engineering graduates is getting increased every year, but the index of employability is not increasing when compared to the passing rate. The institutions arranging campus interviews acknowledge that, a number of the candidates get disqualified during personal interview because of their inability to express ideas clearly. Companies consider communication skill essential as employees have to deal with international clients. Even among the inter-state workers English is the medium for communication. English acts a linking factor in many contexts. Considering this aspect companies conduct frequent training sessions to improve the communication competency of their employees.

To become a global engineer multilingual skills are considered as a salient feature. English for Specific Purpose (ESP) focuses on particular terminology which needs for different professions. Engineering communication skill primarily consists of fluency in English language and fundamentals of visual communication. Lack of communication skill undermines the whole profile of a professional engineer. Globalisation has influenced industrial needs and a global engineer should easily cross national and international boundaries. As a result of globalisation, the number of international projects and cross cultural collaboration are increasing, to compete in this situation, one has to speak fluently. English is used as a medium of communication globally; to converse with British and when two non native English people interact, the same language mediates. Realising the need of English

proficiency for engineers, some international universities have already started programmes like English for Specific Purpose in Engineering Education.

The concept of team work is emphasised and it is one of the major premises of working environment in many industries. This notion stresses the need of team spirit and to proceed with joining hands collaboratively. Organisations have changed master-servant relationship to partnership rapport. Everyone has to offer individual views clearly to the team to avoid confusion. Clarity in thought and expression is vital in this circumstance and it demands tremendous communication fluency. While working as part of a team, each one has to respect other's emotions at the same time has to be in tune with one's own senses. Without hurting pride, convincing someone is a tedious task. You have to encourage and appreciate others to get back their best. Industries have realised the importance of communication and prefer employees with excellent communication skill. As English is the accepted global language, companies prefer those who have fluency in English along with subject knowledge. For a professional, regular meeting, e-mails, reports are certain areas which demand good communication skills.

Academicians like William Bentinck (English Education Act 1835) and Thomas Macaulay (Minute on Education) have an opinion that English education in India needs to be advanced in several areas. Instructions in vernacular medium will restrict the career opportunities of the learners. English is the medium of communication accepted all over the world and the aim of the instructors has to be to prepare the learners for global competitiveness. Attitude of learners towards communication, lack of teaching content and inappropriate teaching methods are the major reasons for insufficient fluency in English. Moreover, students are not getting enough opportunities to practice communication skills in engineering curriculum.

In engineering colleges communication skills are not given much importance; their primary aim is to learn the scientific and technical concepts. The post of Communication skills instructor does not exist in government or aided engineering colleges. Only a few private and self financing colleges appoint communication teachers. In schools learners are taught grammar and are asked to memorise the different rules of language usage. The outcome this method is that, students know the rules but are ignorant of using it in appropriate situations. In colleges they are not getting ample opportunity to communicate in English. Instructors can take an initiative to arrange real life situations to interact within the classroom itself. This will boost the learners' confidence to use English. Rather than merely teaching language, teachers have to make the learners to compete in the job market. English language teaching has to be based on the principles of globalism and an innovative approach which focuses on creativity, critical thinking, group communication and inter personal skills has to adopted.

Lack of learning hours can be compensated with self learning, but to be effective, this process should be organised and methodologically supported by tutors and teaching tools. In this scenario one can depend on Blended Learning (BL), which makes use of both technology based online learning and traditional classroom teaching. In Blended method we can explore the possibilities of both the methods. Broadly the stages involved in BL can be denoted as; 1. Direct face to face to learning as in classroom 2. Online learning without the assistance of instructor (learner searching information and learning on their own) 3. Online learning with the assistance of instructor (doing online courses and interacting in discussion forums). Teaching and learning hours can be extended through this innovative method. For proper result the instructor can guide the learners using online platforms. When

compare to previous methods experimented by various educationists, advantages of blended method are availability of materials at one place and easy monitoring; the notes assignments, worksheets and schedules are well organised in every online learning website and students can analyse their own scores for self assessment.

Engineering students have to see the broader setting of the corporate world and should realise the importance of acquiring communications skills, or else it will be a hindrance to achieve higher career goals. Oral and written communication skills are necessary for professionals. To become effective speaker or writer, one has to listen and read carefully. In short, all the four communication skills are equally important and inter related. Technical communication can be explained as a transmission technical information or scientific data from one source to another. Requirements for effective technical communication are; subject knowledge, linguistic competence and organisational aptitude. Solid information and appropriate vocabulary along with logical presentation will help to convey the message clearly and objectively. Technical communication involves presentation of technical data in reports, proposals, manuals and journals. This needs linguistic competence and several types of functional skills.

Development of Information Technology has influenced the way of communication and everyone prefers fast and result oriented modes of communication. E-mail, video conferencing, and tele -conferencing have replaced the traditional forms of contact such as letter, memos and notices. Whether working as a scientist, engineer, or laboratory assistant, one has to be effective in communicator to be successful in the respective profession. In the diverse, competitive, result oriented world, communication is playing a key role in economic growth and transformation. The ability to understand and explain complex information in a simple and familiar

style and ability to analyse and prioritise information is helpful to be successful in communication. Technical and professional skills will be useless if one does not know to communicate and elicit result from the application of these skills. Considering the scenario of the corporate world, every student should take initiative to develop communication skills.

To create an insight about the relevance of learning English, training sessions for teachers and mock interviews for students were arranged while implementing the research. The tendency of concentrating only on core subjects has been discouraged. Along with technical subjects, communication skills also should be given importance. Most importantly teachers have to make the learners realise about their future language needs. Secondary reading and allotting library hours may encourage the reading habit of students. Many engineering colleges have implemented language laboratories to enhance speaking skill. In engineering curriculum, language course has to be included focussing on the four communication skills. The instructor encouraged web based learning and learner autonomy. Teaching has been modified based on the target needs. Adopting these measures will help to develop teaching of English as a life skill.

Major effort has to be taken from the side of the learner. After entering to a job also one has to improve their skills and update knowledge. Attending refresher courses and self learning programmes will enable lifelong learning. Self assessment of communication tasks makes possible to identify the weaker areas and one can concentrate on that aspect while improving. The skills necessary for career improvement have to be practiced while doing the professional course itself. This may act as demonstration and reinforcement for the learners to accomplish future needs. Organising programmes to reflect the needs of the society and industry will pave way

to envisage the real picture of the world. Rather than isolating as an optional subject, English has to be included as a core subject in the engineering curriculum. Prioritising communication skills in engineering subject and integrating with mark system will arouse more seriousness among learners and this will enable to change their attitude towards the subject. Emphasis on communication activities will always enhance more active participation. Successful communication is an advantage in teamwork and it is an essential part in the field of engineering.

Tracing the evolution of teaching methods and approaches has helped to formulate a concrete objective for the study. A controlled group and an experimental group were formed to employ the study. The latter group was trained by following blended learning while the former group with traditional direct method. Blended method offered them an additional opportunity to interact with the peer group and instructor. Students were provided with more assignments in online. The selected online platform was MOODLE and activities in online were also monitored by the instructor. After the experiment it was found that there was a tremendous change in the writing abilities of the experimental group. This research shows that blended learning which exploits the possibilities of technology is effective in English language learning for engineering students.

The documented study has been divided into five chapters. Introductory chapter describes the background of English language teaching and explains the purpose and population of the research. The next chapter is about the theory and method followed and narrates various online platforms. The consequent chapter is methodology which gives details of procedures undertaken to carry out the investigation. Fourth chapter validates the actions taken and evaluates the collected

data. The final chapter sums up the whole research and peep into further scope for research.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORY AND METHOD

The selected teaching technique to carry out the research was blended method in which online learning and face to face learning were the components to teach. A range of schemes and approaches are in practice to learn a language and variety of classroom techniques are employed to familiarise the linguistic items. Reasons behind learning a foreign language are diverse and the task of language learning puts forward various challenges for the learner. There is no ultimate way to learn a language or to teach it and after many researches and experiments, an optimal condition for language learning was suggested than a decisive distinct method or approach. Here optimal condition means an atmosphere with minimal distractions or hindrances and maximum opportunity to practice language skills. In a formal situation, classroom is the setting for learning and the suitable environment has to be created within the four walls. Learners have to involve in authentic tasks and interact in the target language as far as possible. Teachers' role is to guide the learners to attend the learning process efficiently. Considering the language learning atmosphere in engineering college, online teaching and direct classroom teaching were chosen as the ingredients of the blend.

In every classroom, individual learning preferences will be there as they come from different backgrounds and have diverse goals behind language learning. Each student may have altered abilities and learning style, some will be highly intelligent; a few with average intellect and others may be very dull. While assigning a task, the teacher has to consider all types of students and the activity has to trigger the learner's interest and learning style. Motivating the learner to interact in the target medium is



an important part in language learning. In engineering colleges, teaching time for communication skills is limited and there was a necessity to provide the students with opportunity to practice the target language in varied contexts. Creating an environment that closely resembles the definite usage of the target language is extremely important and several resources are available to create such an ambiance. In the present research, using online learning platform Moodle, atmosphere similar to classroom was created and added the 50 students from different engineering colleges to the learning group. Language laboratory, newspaper and video players cater access to the content. Activities like group work, pair work, individual learning and collaborative learning encouraged the learner to practice the language and had incorporated in the study.

Use of ICT tools in the teaching process has modified the role of teacher and learner and the learning environment has also changed tremendously. E-learning, web based learning, blended learning, distance and open learning are the recent trends. Research over the past few years have indicated that students learn successfully in online environments as in traditional face to face classroom settings (Donnelly 21). On the other hand, researchers have found that online learning with a single course delivery mode may not provide most advantageous condition for successful learning. At this instance educators have started combining online materials along with face to face teaching objects. “Blended learning, which brings together traditional physical classes with elements of virtual learning” (Finn and Bucci 24). This combination of e-learning and traditional learning is termed as blended learning. The objective is to complement each other to bring out the best aspects of both the methods and create a favourable learning environment.

Proper awareness of the term ‘Blended Learning’ (BL), facilitates teachers to mix different types of approaches and methods to create the finest environment for learners. BL is not a novel concept in the field of education. The novelty is the range of different learning opportunities, and environment made possible with the advent of technology to support teaching and learning. Learners of the present use technology in and out of the classroom as part of the learning process. The traditional tools like blackboard and charts are replaced by whiteboards and projectors to create more visual impact. Apart from higher grades even in the primary classes, teacher uses technology to enhance their coaching. Students are given computer education in the primary classes itself to make them familiar with recent technology based learning trends. Along with subject knowledge teachers should learn to use all these latest gadgets. Technology has proved as an effective tool in capturing student’s attention quickly and even small children are familiar with mobile phones and computer. Teaching with the assistance of technology will be more enthusiastic for the present generation.

In a broad sense BL can be considered as a mixing of different learning environments. Face to face teaching is considered as the building block of any teaching environment. To enhance direct teaching, when internet or other technologies are integrated, it can be termed as Blended Learning. This type of education can be undertaken both inside and outside the classroom and the possibilities of it have been exploited in the research. The limited teaching hours for communication skills in engineering curriculum was extended through Moodle group and there was mediation of teachers aiming to achieve the needs of the learners. Maintaining the classroom instructor as admin of the online group helped to monitor the learning procedure as in classroom. The term ‘blending’ means fusing or mixing and the concept of assimilating different approaches, methods and strategies are not new. The effective teaching

methods have always fused different learning strategies as per the demand of learners to maximise knowledge acquisition and skill development. Teaching methods like guided individual study, self-paced learning, project based learning and computer based study can be fused together to form a blend. Excellent teachers always use different methods and brilliant learners will follow various strategies for learning. The best learning programme combines lectures, seminars, group and individual assignments. The trend of BL may be considered as a type of eclectic method which is a mixture of different methods.

The term BL was initially used to denote the concept of supplementing traditional classroom activities with e-learning. It became popular around 2000 when the technology was advancing tremendously. Since 1960s computers have been used in language teaching extensively. Initially there was scarcity of technology needed for language learners and this drawback was modified by internet which makes possible immediate access of information. Worldwide community provided authentic resources through its interconnected network. Emergence of web 2.0 was a turning point in the history of internet. This allowed users to interact and collaborate with each other in social media in contrast to websites where people are limited to the passive viewing of content. Social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites and web applications are examples of web 2.0. Although, majority of the language teaching activities can be carried out in classrooms, growth of technology and internet have persuaded teachers to use web based communication to explore new learning styles.

Network mediated learning have attracted many learners recently and it has become an important component in the learning process. Role of computer is generally considered as a complement to classroom activities. Integrating technology into classroom based teaching and learning is the implication associated with the term BL.

It provides more individualised learning environment and personalised support. BL encourages both collaborative and individualised learning. Blended method endows with an opportunity to practice target language items beyond the classroom and accommodates a variety of learning styles. This method offers more flexible study environment anytime and anywhere as per the learner's requirements. It helps to learn language skills in a less stressed atmosphere. Rather than traditional tools learners will be more enthusiastic with technology. Approximate implementation of BL will definitely improve the learning experience.

Richness of resources, pedagogical innovations, cost effectiveness, higher possibility of interaction, learner control, ease of revision are some of the factors behind the allegiance for BL. In higher education, BL is defined as “a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognises the benefits of delivering some training and assessment through online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training programme which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs” (Banados 98). In such a method the different modes can be classroom instruction, technology and self study. The innovations of technology have shrunken the vast world into a global village where distance is not a barrier for communication. The spatial distance has been overcome by technology and brings users more close to access information or to interact.

BL leads to an excellent new approach in teaching and learning. Internet can be used in different levels of training process; assignments, notes, and projects are shared quickly with the help of internet. In the research, as an application level students were given orientation and performed activities like extempore and group discussion in classroom and written assignments and interactive sessions were conducted in Moodle. This type of arrangement provided longer learning hours. Institutions or different

batches formed their own website or social networking forum to share their ideas and could act together. All the members in the Moodle group got connected through the forum whenever or wherever they are across the globe and it helped to fulfil the purpose of the research. Such kind of learning environment complemented or supplemented traditional face to face learning atmosphere which had time and space restrictions. While designing a blend, the aim has to find the most effective and efficient combination of learning modes for learning. The focus should not be on to choose the most innovative items as opposed to traditional items but to create a learning environment which acts as a whole unit. There is immense range of possible components for a blend. Mixing information and technology items with face to face learning will not be sufficient to exploit the potential of BL. A detailed background study and understanding each component are very essential before blending.

To formulate the objectives of blending, it is essential to consider the needs and understanding level of students. The ingredients of the blend have to complement each other. A disparity between elements will confuse and frustrate the learners; moreover it will create adverse effect. Bringing together matching elements helps to construct a coherent learning experience. To form an effective blend, the instructor should possess good knowledge in both subject and technology and needs to identify the learning outcome, student's requirements and availability of materials. After securing job also there is necessity to update knowledge and create an attitude for lifelong learning. Considering this fact, IT has included in teacher training programmes for the last few years. The choice of learning material is crucial in the training session and within the language learning framework to offer the best result. The elements have to be methodologically sound to evocate the learners.

Participation of learners in peer to peer and group interaction is ensured by forming different online forums. The academic time can be extended to anytime by using blended method is one of the estimable advantages. Inside the classroom, the teacher is there to clarify doubts and to motivate learning, but after school time learners lack this boosting. By adopting blended method students can be in touch with teachers later school time also. Students who are shy to perform in front of others also can participate actively in online discussions. Thus they will be encouraged and empowered. E-mails are generally used for teacher and student interaction. Video conferencing, online chatting, social networking sites, e-mails are some of the platforms which enable regular communication. During the intervention learning management system in Moodle enabled the teacher to have an overview of the students' progress as the learners who did not show progress were easily identified through this system and the teacher exhibited special attention to improve them. Conducting test papers for each and every topic in classroom was a tedious task and this part was done in online to save teaching time.

Tools that promote communicative aspect of technology are vital in supporting learning community. Over the years the learning trend is shifting from teacher centred classroom to student centred classroom. The role of the teacher in a learner centred class is to hold up and motivate the learning process and the teacher has the responsibility of a guide or mentor. Teacher's role is not relinquished in the present context but the student became more active and started participating as per the recent classroom trend. In blended method also teacher plays an indispensable role and it is the instructor who provides a structured and interactive learning environment. Teacher acts as an organising force for the integration of learners' online and classroom learning. Many roles of the instructor in a traditional classroom like, to

motivate, to give feedback and to boost confidence for the learners remained unchanged in a BL classroom also. The same person who is handling classes in direct teaching continued to monitor online activities and this created more coordination between instructor and learner and helped to continue learning process without bothering time or space.

Learning becomes meaningful when the topics are relevant to the students' needs or interests and they actively engage themselves in learning process. The learners should be able to correlate the imbibed knowledge with their daily life. In BL there has to be active participation of students and should take initiative for learning outside the classroom to fulfil the requirements. The students may have good computer skills and integrating technology in teaching will not be a challenge for them. The teacher's role in BL cannot be underestimated. They often need training and support to implement technology in learning. In BL there is more opportunity for students to self directed learning and teachers have to motivate them for individual learning and to employ technology.

BL encourages autonomous and collaborative learning. It allows students to decide when and where they would like to study. Extraneous freedom may create some difficulty to students who have poor time management and are not familiar with learner autonomy. It is the teacher's responsibility to prepare and motivate the students to learn independently. In the early stages of the research, classroom time was allocated to develop learning skills and to suggest tips to improve learning habits. The created online forum used for discussion, queries and suggestion. Encouraging students to work in pair and in peer group in online was proved to be beneficial. Language tasks were created to work in group, either online or inside the classroom. Allocating deadline for both online and offline assignments will make the learners

realise the importance of time management. Helping the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses will give them an idea on how to improve. Autonomous learning does not indicate students learning their own; a friendly social environment is essential for successful learning. Creating different forums will be helpful for regular interaction and by this way classroom time can be extended.

One of the basic tools for online communication is forum or bulletin board. The teacher can manage and facilitate meaningful interaction through these forums. The teacher's role is as an e-moderator. Creating individual profile for students helped them to know each other quickly. Students were allotted to initiate discussions on various topics. Discussion on topic unit as per their interest instigated active participation of learners. Assigning a different student to monitor activities on weekly basis to assist the admin will provide opportunity for each student. Apart from the topic members can initiate relevant discussions. Both students and teacher get adequate time in online discussion. In classroom, teacher may not have time to encourage the dull student and to control the outspoken. This limitation can be overcome by sending personal mails to learner as per the situation demands. Unlike classroom situation, in online forum each student will get chance to raise questions, opinions and doubts.

To carryout BL activities students should be provided time to adapt and develop as per the new learning environment. A clear course plan including the starting and ending date of each unit, workload, and dates of unit test were provided during the initial stage of the study for more clarity and then students were aware, how to prepare and manage their study time. When compared to classroom studies, students could have flexible schedule and study time in online and were able to overcome the constraints of fixed classroom hours. Students were reminded that



flexibility does not mean keeping all the work for the last minute and in blended method at the same time there is deadline for online activities to make it time bound. Reviewing study plan regularly will help to check whether it is realistic and progressive. Students can take complete advantage of online community if it is being carried out in a well planned manner under proper guidance.

Working collaboratively will encourage team spirit among learners. Conducting group work regularly in class time has plenty of practical difficulties. Short duration of teaching hours and physical structure of classroom may act as barriers for such activities. Online forums offer space for frequent discussions. Through such interface students will get confidence and assurance that their peer group is there to help and give suggestions. Along with online forums online study materials are also functional. There are thousands of video and audio lessons prepared by subject experts on various topics. Learners can download and exercise it. Moreover online assignments provide opportunity for self correction. Most of the questions need just a click to answer and students will come to know the right response immediately. Achieving correct response will provide a sense of progress. The wrong response can be corrected after practice. Monitoring self progress will provide a clear idea on individual strengths and weaknesses. List of reference materials are provided in most of the websites to review and practice. Doing activities again after thorough preparation will help them to have consolidated learning.

In BL, both online and classroom tasks are mixed together. These two elements are not contradictory to each other but are complementary. The aim is to expose the utility of online and offline teaching to its limit. A number of ways are there to blend different components and it offers immense learning opportunities. There has to be a balance between number of classroom teaching hours and

independent activity in online. The teacher has to monitor and give guidelines for both types of learning. Detailed planning will help to manage online and offline time effectively. Areas which need face to face interaction can be done during classroom teaching and discussions of various aspects can be arranged through online platform. Dividing learning hours will enable the students to have a deep understanding of the topic. Teachers can encourage students to find more resources in internet and setting a collaborative online area helps to share the resources they found.

Several academicians have suggested different ways to form a blend effectively. The selected components can be used in innovative manners. According to Mei-Ya Liang and Curtis J. Bonk steps in constructing a new blend are;

- 1) Setting course objectives: - It can be decided based on the needs of the students. If the aim is to learn second language (L2), the course objectives can be; a) To improve L2 ability through uses of online tools and resources. b) To enhance strategy by communicating in different formats of texts with peers online. c) To develop text comprehension and production by constructing online content.
- 2) Selecting media and tools: - Selection of media and tools depend on the availability and practical environment of the course. Online news sites, text chat rooms, wikis, blogs, digital story books are some of the media and tools.
- 3) Formulating techniques and strategies: - Based on the objectives, using the media and tools instructional techniques and strategies are employed to blend online components into face to face learning.
- 4) Organising activities and technologies: - Different learning activities and supporting technologies are organised into a sequence of three phases, the first

phase involves with student interaction with somewhat familiar and relatively easy to use technologies under teacher guidance. The next level of interaction incorporates more elements of social and technological interactions. In the final stage various networked activities and media types are integrated in BL.

- 5) Evaluating student learning: - In the last stage formative evaluation is used to understand student's perceived learning and affective outcomes (23-24).

Following proper steps gives scientific outlook for the method. The five stages make easy to identify the progress or change by adopting blended method.

Scope of technology in teaching is enormous and the possibilities have been explored widely. ICT will not replace classroom teacher, however technology may assist the teacher in the teaching process. Teaching will be more productive by combining technology with classroom teaching. Students can interact with teacher both online and offline. A language is best learnt by using it. Getting more opportunities to interact in the target language will definitely improve the communication skills. Teacher can dedicate the classroom time to introduce the lesson. Conducting assignments and discussions in online will help to save teaching time. Uploading reference materials and notes will be useful for the students. They can download and save the materials for future purpose. Arranging video conference with subject experts will help to know different perspectives of the subject. This method can be utilised effectively if implemented with a clear planning.

Blended method has many aspects conversely it is not used widely for language teaching. The major reason is the anxiety of teacher to experiment with a new method. Lack of computer literacy also hinders the teacher to depend on technology for teaching. When they completed teacher training course they might not

have learnt computer or got familiarised with any technology. Moreover incorporating technology needs lots of preparation. The teacher has to assist, monitor and encourage for online and classroom learning. There are pros and cons for each and every teaching method. As technology is developing every day, it will be beneficial if the subject being taught with the assistance of technology. Scientific and technological development has made digital technology an effective learning device. The teacher and learners have to realise the importance of technology in the current situation and make use of it along with classroom teaching and learning.

Factors to be considered to accomplish an effective blend are the strategy of learning, identified outcomes, constraints which may occur and number of hours allotted for classroom learning and hours for teacher assisted online activities. In this method, as there is enough time for interaction outside the classroom, classroom time can be used for other efficient activities. Maximum opportunity for review is possible in blended method. Teachers can introduce grammatical items and vocabulary before class itself. This can be done through online. Some students may need more time to understand new vocabulary. Such kind of students can practice the items in online till they become confident. Learners can directly interact with native speakers of the target language and that will give them direct experience of accent and usages.

Acquiring native like fluency will help the candidate to achieve career goals globally.

Possibilities of online learning are revealed in the study as students made use of the wide range of resources available in internet. The materials are available in text, audio and video. Users can rely on the authenticity of sources by downloading contents from recognised official websites. In an efficient teaching pattern, teachers have to motivate students and check their previous knowledge. By doing such portions in online, instructor could save classroom time. Students can work together

in a forum and can formulate a collaborative vocabulary notebook. In addition to knowledge gain from the classroom, students can search for notes in internet and can share it in groups, so that each student will get a variety of notes on the same topic. An online document sharing area will be useful to upload and share all the resources. Before and after the direct classroom teaching, students can discuss the topic in online and can depend on texting and audio or video conferencing for interaction.

Along with several advantages BL has some disadvantages like the teacher needs thorough knowledge of the topic and technology, if the instructor is not available or is in offline, the learner has to wait for clarification and feedback. Sitting alone and learning may cause emotional insecurity for the student. Some students may need motivation for active participation in learning process. This is not possible in e-learning. In direct classroom teaching, teachers can check the previous knowledge of learners and can introduce a new topic based on that. In e-learning sessions this is not an effective procedure. A high level of self discipline is necessary for the learner to be successful in blended method. The above mentioned drawbacks can be minimised if the learner and instructor is well executing the method.

During class hours teachers can focus on activities through pair and group works that encourage using real life language. Student's speaking skill will be developed through such activities. This enhances skill to communicate in real life and motivate them to learn. While the study, a survey was conducted to identify the topics on which students had interest and they gave a list of topics after discussion among peer groups. Learners were allotted to facilitate discussion to boost their leadership skills and it gave an opportunity to monitor how they were conducting the session. Along with discussion, other activities like debate, individual presentation and self introduction were organised in classrooms. As all these are necessary in their future

career, students were enthusiastic. To improve writing skill the teacher assigned a topic to write an essay or to elaborate an incident as per their interest or imagination. Direct feedback was given for classroom activities.

Incorporating technology will create a new impact in teaching and learning and communication activities must not end in classroom. Stephan Krashen views that, language is acquired through meaningful activities and not by deliberate instructions. These activities can be continued outside the class with the help of various internet tools. Students are familiar with technology and they can improve language skills by using different applications available in internet. Active participation in blogs will improve writing skill and vocabulary. Software is available to improve specific skills; some of it focuses on grammar, some on vocabulary, and other on idioms or phrases. Learners can select a specific programme as per their need and interest. These applications are available for beginners and in higher levels. The usages may be well explained for learner's clear understanding and exercises will be there to check the progress of learning and students will be given immediate feedback.

BL is an outstanding pedagogical innovation and a new habit to mix any kind of teaching and learning methods. The goal is to provide the most efficient and effective instructional experience by combining different delivery modalities. Face to face learning is enhanced through BL by making use of relevant ICT tools. Instructors can make use of the possibilities of social networking sites, websites and other online platforms and can post notes and lectures in Facebook, Twitter or Blog in which students have account. The links of informative resources, audio or video lectures also can be upload in these sites and learners will find it more interesting as they visit online forums frequently. The teacher or the institution can form special groups including the learners or website for their own activities.

Use of virtual world, simulation, augmented reality and multiplayer gaming technology for learning are expected to increase in the next few years. Great challenge has been brought into education in the ICT age. Blended method is growing every day and refusing to include it in the learning process will be futile. Students are no longer the generation of the past education system and it has to be upgraded as per the needs and trends. Tomorrow's world map may be designed not according to the world mass but according to the internet users. Learners have to compete with this situation. Gaining subject knowledge and technological skills simultaneously will open new career vistas for them.

Blended method can be implemented effectively with preplanning. In the present experiment classroom hours are preserved to motivate the students and to give awareness about the relevance of acquiring English communication skills in the nearby situation. Activities like group discussion, individual presentation, and different writing assignments are arranged inside the class. Facility of language lab is also well explored. Development of all the four language skills is achievable by using language lab. Teacher can assign various segments based on the level of students. There is option to assign the same segment for every student or each one can be assigned different sections. In addition to this, instructor can create online forums class wise or for the whole institution. Even during holidays and after class time, teacher and students can interact through this forum. Including members who could accomplish successful career will be a motivating factor for other members. Teacher can follow several innovative tactics to make the forum interactive and boosting for the learners. Language games, new vocabulary, current social issues, career opportunities and other relevant items were shared through online platform with such intention.

## **Social Constructivism**

Theoretical background gives framework for educational concepts and it is relevant to validate research on the basis of a theory. A paradigmatic shift has been marked regarding the educational theories during the last few decades. The change was from Behaviourism, Cognitivism and to Constructivism. The most influential learning theory at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century was Constructivism. “Constructivist perspectives on learning have become increasingly influential in the past twenty years and can be said to represent a paradigm shift in the epistemology of knowledge and theory of learning.” (Applefield and Huber 21). The term Constructivism might have been derived from Piaget’s reference to his views as ‘constructivist’ and Bruner’s description of discovery learning as ‘constructionist’. Social Constructivism is otherwise known as Dialectical Constructivism. In contrast to Individual Cognitivism, Social Constructivism focuses on collaborative social interaction. Through this highly interactive process learner defines meaning and helps others to find meaning in the learning process. Thus knowledge is mutually built and this concept is a reflection of Vygotsky’s Socio Cultural Theory of Learning. This study aimed at improving communication skills through relations by following blended method and which will lead to effective social interaction.

Social Constructivism is a sociological theory which applies the general philosophical Constructivism in social settings. It focuses on the individual’s learning as a result of interaction in a group. This concept had been emphasised in the study and encouraged communication throughout learning. This theory was propounded by Lev Vygotsky, who was a cognitive psychologist and shared many ideas of Piaget’s



children's learning, but Vygotsky gave importance to social context of learning. Social constructivists give importance to both the context in which learning occurs and the social contexts that learners bring to their learning environment. It stresses interaction over observation. An active research area in Social Constructivism is computer supported collaborative learning. One recent branch of social constructivist perspectives focuses on the role of social technologies and social media in facilitating the generation of socially-constructed knowledge and understanding in online environments. Telecommunication tools such as e-mail and internet provide an opportunity for dialogue, discussion and debate; interactivity that leads to the social construction of meaning. Students can talk with other students, teachers, and professionals in communities even when they are far from the classroom. These elements are incorporated to carry out the experiment.

Social Constructivism stresses the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding. This concept has close association with theories like developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory. The basic ideology of Social Constructivism is that meaning is not created but constructed by the interaction with the society. For social constructivists, reality is constructed through human activity. Knowledge is also a human product which is constructed socially or culturally. Learning is also a social process and meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. This theory focuses on the collaborative nature of learning. Vygotsky was against the assumptions of other cognitivists like Piaget and Perry. They believed that learning can be separated from social context. Vygotsky considered that (1978), every function in the child's cultural development appears twice, first on the social level and later on the individual level;

first between people (inter psychological) and then within the child (intra psychological).

Constructivism believes on the idea that humans generate meaning by the interaction between experiences and ideas. During infancy, it is an interaction between their experiences and their reflexes or behaviour-patterns. Piaget called these systems as knowledge schemata. His theory created wide impact on learning theories and teaching methods of education and is an underlying theme of many educational movements. Earlier, constructivist ideas were not valued and children's play was seen aimless and less important. Piaget did not agree with this and he viewed playing is an integral part for cognitive development. Involving in games will improve interactivity and good social relationships. Thus learners will be encouraged to learn themselves. Theoreticians who influenced Constructivism were John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and Herbert Simon.

Social constructivists consider both the context in which learning occurs and the social contexts that learners bring to their learning environment as crucial. Within the framework of Social Constructivism, there are four general perspectives which make learning possible (Gredler). Firstly, cognitive tools perspective which focuses on the learning of cognitive skills and strategies. Students engage in social learning activities and together they produce a product as a group. Secondly, idea-based Social Constructivism gives education's priority on important concepts in the various disciplines; part-whole relations in mathematics, photosynthesis in science, and point of view in literature. These basic ideas expand learner's vision and become important foundations for learners' thinking and on construction of social meaning. Next is, Pragmatic or emergent approach, it asserts that the implementation of Social Constructivism in class should be emergent as the need arises. Knowledge, meaning,

and understanding of the world can be addressed in the classroom from the individual learner's view and the collective view of the entire class. Fourthly, Transactional or situated cognitive perspectives: This perspective focuses on the relationship between the people and their environment. Human beings are part of the constructed environment including social relationships. Human mind is functioning when it is interacting with the environment. The tasks of each individual changes if the environment and social relationships among group members change. Learning does not take place in isolation from the environment.

Computer supported collaborative learning is an instructional strategy based on Social Constructivism. In the blended method based learning experiment, traditional classroom teaching has been augmented by internet and online teaching. In such manner the research explored the possibilities of Social Constructivism. This strategy gave opportunities to students to practice 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in communication, knowledge sharing, critical thinking and use of relevant technologies. Student discussion in the classroom was also based on Social Constructivism. Conducting discussion results a wide range of advantages like participation in group discussion helps students to generalize and transfer their knowledge, it also builds a strong foundation for communicating ideas. Discussion plays a vital role in increasing student ability to test their ideas, synthesise the idea of others, and build deeper understanding of what they are learning. Tele communication simplifies the interaction process. Contacting someone or gathering information became an easy task for the learner with the advancement of technology and internet.

The use of technology to connect rather than to separate is very appropriate based on social constructivist theory. Vygotsky believed that children develop in social or group settings. To substantiate Vygotsky's assumption that a context was

created for learning in which students could get engaged in interesting activities that promotes and facilitates learning. The students were encouraged to work in groups and to think about issues and tackle problems. Thus cognitive power of students would be developed. Technology provides essential tools with which we can accomplish the goals of Social Constructivism. Telecommunication tools such as e-mail and internet provided means for dialogue, discussion and debate. Using these tools learners could interact with people even far from them and helped to access to different types of resources.

Social Constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds. The learner is also seen as complex and multidimensional. Wertsch considered that Social Constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process. This theory gives importance to the background and culture of the learner. It encourages the learner to draw out his own conclusion influenced by the background, culture and embedded world view. Language and logic are inherited by the learner as a member of particular society and culture. Learner's interaction with knowledgeable persons of the society also helps to improve ideology. Young children develop thinking capacity by interacting with other children and elders. It is important to consider the background and culture of the learner as social background helps to shape the knowledge and truth the learner creates, discovers and attains in the learning process. At the initial stages of the research a questionnaire was given to the students to analyse their background.

Social Constructivism emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding about what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding. Social constructivists believed that reality and knowledge are

constructed as a human product and they view learning as a social process. It does not take place within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours that are shaped by external forces. Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. “For the learner to construct meaning, he must actively strive to make sense of new experiences and in so doing must relate it to what is already known or believed about a topic. Students develop knowledge through an active construction process, not through the passive reception of information” (Brophy 1992). Learner must build his own understanding and bringing pre-existing knowledge to the understanding process is also important. Current understanding may provide immediate context for interpreting any new learning. To validate this concept during the online session, students were asked to reinforce the knowledge they gained in classroom activities.

In Social Constructivism, the role of a teacher is that of a facilitator who helps to understand learner’s own meaning of the content. The design of learning environment should also support and challenge the learner's thinking. Vygotsky in his work suggests that knowledge is initially constructed in social context and is then appropriated by individuals. There should be dynamic interaction among task, instructor and learner. This means that the learning experience is both subjective and objective; culture, values and background become an essential part of the interplay between learners and tasks in the shaping of meaning. Collaborating learners with different background and skills help to arrive at a shared understanding of the content. Contradictory to traditional approaches, most social constructivists stresses on collaboration among learners. The social constructivist model emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the student and the instructor in the learning process. Reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, problem-

based instruction, web quests, anchored instruction and other approaches that involve learning with others stress on interactive learning.

Reality is constructed through human activity, members of a society together invent the properties of the world are the essential concepts in Social Constructivism. Social constructivists believe that people create meaning through their interactions with each other and the objects in the environment. They consider learning as a social process and it occurs when people are engaged in social activities. Social Constructivism and Social Constructionism are confused with each other. According to Social Constructionism meaning is constructed and there is no inherent meaning. Constructivism is a branch of Social Constructionism. Vygotsky's Social Constructivism has the idea that social learning precedes development and social interaction helps cognition. Social Constructivism is closely related to Social Constructionism in the sense that people are working together to construct artefact. However, there is an important difference: the former focuses on the the work of art that are created through the social interactions of a group, while the latter focuses on an individual's learning that takes place because of their interactions in a group artefacts.

The Social Constructivist paradigm views the context in which the learning occurs as central to the learning itself. The central notion is that, authentic or situated learning occurs when the learner's activities are relevant to the application of learning and that takes place within a culture similar to the applied setting. Activities like mock interview and role play were included in the research to give real life experience for learners. The concept of dynamic assessment is a way of assessing the true potential of learners that differs significantly from conventional tests. Interactive nature of learning is extended to the assessment process. General notion of assessment

is a process carried out by an instructor. Here, it is seen as an interaction between instructor and learner. The instructor gave suggestions to improve the learner's subsequent performances. Assessment is viewed as a continuous and interactive process that measures the achievement of the learner, the quality of the learning experience and course materials. The feedback created by the assessment process serves as a direct foundation for further development.

Several cognitive psychologists and educators have challenged the central concepts of Constructivism. As per the neo-Piagetian cognitive development theory, in mathematics and science, learning is considered as; if the requirements of the concept to be understood exceed the available processing efficiency and working memory then the concept is not learnable. Therefore, no matter how active the child during learning process, to be effective the learner must overcome the developmental and individual learning constraints. Some critics questioned the 'learning by doing' theory. According to them everything cannot be studied by experimenting, a few concepts have to be memorised and sometimes assume certain conditions. Kirschner, described Constructivism as unguided instruction and according to him it will be effective only for highly intelligent students. Mayer (2004) argues that not all teaching techniques based on Constructivism are efficient or effective for all learners, suggesting that many educators misapply Constructivism to use teaching techniques that require learners to be behaviourally active. He describes this inappropriate use of Constructivism as the "constructivist teaching fallacy". Mayer suggests learners should be cognitively active during learning and instructors should follow guided practice. Above all these criticisms, Constructivism has created its impact in educational theories.

In recent decades, constructivist theorists have extended the traditional focus on individual learning to address collaborative and social dimensions of learning. This theory promotes social skills and learning in group. The students' role is to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. It means that the students construct the meaning of certain things by assimilating and accommodating it to their own experience. This tends to create active students. Based on this idea, activities are given due importance in both classroom and online sessions. The constructivist teacher encourages and guides the students in order to assess the activities which help them to get the understanding. Language plays an important role in this process as it is the tool to represent thinking in communication.

Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructivism are the two types of Constructivism. The former theory was developed by Piaget and he conceptualizes learning as the result of constructing meaning based on the individual's experience and prior knowledge. The Socio Cultural Constructivism was developed by Vygotsky. He assumed that constructing meaning is through understanding and interaction with others in the social environment in which knowledge is to be applied. Although there is difference in the assumption between them, there is a similarity also, both create the learners to construct the meaning of thing by their own sense by building the connection through experiencing.

In traditional classroom there was emphasis on basic skills and adherence to fixed curriculum. Study materials were primarily textbooks or workbooks and learning was based on repetition. Teachers were considered as those who disseminate knowledge and students as the recipients of knowledge. Instructor's role was directive and rooted in authority. In constructivist classroom, curriculum emphasises on large



concepts beginning with the whole and expanding it into parts. Student's interest and pursuit of questions are valued. Study materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials. Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows. Teacher's role is active, rooted on negotiation and they have active interaction with students to construct their own knowledge and inferences.

Knowledge is seen as dynamic, and changing with our experiences. Students work primarily in groups and learning process is considered as important as the product.

Constructivism helps to create active students by building the connection between what is being learned and reflecting it through experience. Moreover, Constructivism promotes social and communication skills by creating a classroom environment that emphasizes collaboration and exchange of ideas. Major premises of the theory rightly fit into the study. Blended method had been adopted to create more exposure for learners to work together. The Social Constructivism theory is applied in the present research as peer interaction and increasing opportunities to communicate and enhancing linguistic skills are the objectives of the study.

## Connectivism

Learning theories are changing over the years along with the progress in technology. Connectivism is a learning theory for the digital age. In the current blended method the components are online learning and classroom learning and online teaching exploits the best possibilities digital technology. This far-reaching theory of learning was developed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes. They have analysed the limitations of Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Constructivism to explain the effect of technology on our learning, communication and life style (Siemens 2004). Siemens has published a book titled *Connectivism: Learning as Network Creation* and Downes' book is named *An Introduction to Connective Knowledge* and both the books elaborate their concepts regarding Connectivism. Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Constructivism were developed when the use of technology was not in widespread use. Differing to other theories, Connectivism includes the scope of learning by human beings, organisms, organisations, machines, systems and networks. This theory represents the modern learning environment in which internet plays an important role.

Use of ICT has caused a substantial and qualitative change in the learning environment. Learning and knowledge rests on the diversity of opinions is the principle of Connectivism and it is a process of connecting specialised nodes or information sources and it may reside non-human appliances. Learning that is known but not necessarily actuated may rest in a community, network and on a database. Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning. Capacity to know more critical than what is currently known is important. Ability to see connections between fields, ideas and concepts is a core skill. Currency (accurate up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all Connectivist learning activities. Decision

making is in itself a learning process. Integration of cognition and emotions in making meaning is important as these two elements influence each other. Learning has an end goal - namely the increased ability to implement in application level. This increased competence can be in practical sense to develop the skill to use a new software tool or learning how to skate or the ability to function more effectively in a knowledge era; self-awareness or personal information management.

Different approaches and personal skills are needed to learn effectively in the present world. Learning happens through different ways like courses, communities, e-mails, conversations, reading and blogs. Organisational and personal learning are integrated tasks. To assert this view all the four communication skills were highlighted throughout the learning programme to enhance learners' interactive ability. Personal knowledge comprises of a network which includes organisations and network and it gives feedback into the network and continues to provide learning for the individual. Connectivism tries to provide an understanding of how learners and organisations learn. Decision making is also a learning process. Choosing what to learn is important and learners have to be careful while selecting materials from the website. Authenticity of the materials has to be verified before downloading it. The correct response or information may get altered due to later innovations and the learners have to update materials every now and then and should check the date of online contents. Learning means not only consumption, it is a creative process.

Connectivism emphasises the role of social and cultural context in learning. This theory proposes a concept similar to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), an idea later transposed to Engeströme's Activity Theory. As the name suggests, the idea of connectivity is central to Connectivism. It has assimilation with Bandura's Social Learning Theory which proposes that people learn through contact.

Knowledge can exist outside us and this can be learnt by connecting to specialised information sets. The central aspect of Connectivism is the network with nodes and connections. In this, a node can be a network, data, information, feelings and images. Connectivism sees learning as a process of creating connections and expending network complexity. This theory has similarity with Connectionism, as per which cognitive sciences see mental or behavioural phenomena as the emergent processes of interconnected networks of simple units.

Online courses are a trend setter in the later 21<sup>st</sup> century. Downes states that, at its heart, Connectivism is the notion that knowledge is distributed across a network of connections, and therefore that learning consists of the ability to construct and traverse those networks (46). He commends on the teaching and learning procedure as; to teach is to model and demonstrate, to learn is to practice and reflect. In 2008, Siemens and Downes delivered an online course called ‘Connectivism and Connective Knowledge’. It was an attempt to implement their ideas about learning. The course was free for candidates and around 2000 students were enrolled worldwide. It was following the model of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). Learners had the freedom to select synchronous or asynchronous tools as per their convenience. The course was repeated in 2009 and 2011. One of the MOOC platforms Moodle has been used elaborately for online learning in the research. The researcher created a learning platform in Moodle and added students in the experimental group as members of the group.

The general trend of previous generation was completing education and entering to a secure career and settle down being content in the same profession for life long. This concept has been altered and knowledge is growing exponentially nowadays. The growth of technology happened over the decades and not in a short

span of time. In many fields, the life of knowledge is measured in months and years. According to American Society of Training and Documentation the amount of knowledge has doubled in the last ten years and is increasing every year. Based on this, organisations and institutions are developing new methods to deploy information and new strategies for instruction. Earlier, the system was of stopping learning or upgrading knowledge after getting a job. Now the trend has changed and everyone has to update themselves to improve career. As part of this, different methods have been followed to continue learning. Learning has become a continual process, lasting for the lifetime. Learning and work related activities cannot be separated to each other in the present competent world.

Behaviourism and Cognitivism view knowledge as external to the learner and learning as the process of internalising knowledge. Behaviourism views learning as unknowable and observable behaviour which is important than internal activities. In Cognitivism knowledge is viewed as symbolic mental constructs in the learner's mind and learning as the process of imbibing these constructs into memory. Constructivists believe that learners create knowledge as they try to understand their experiences. Constructivism emphasises learner's meaningful activities to pursue learning. Most of the learning theories consider learning as a process which happens inside the person. These theories do not address learning that occurs outside individuals which stored and manipulated by technology. They also failed to describe learning which happens within organisations. Learning theories are concerned with learning process and not with value of what is being learned.

Learning theories get revised as the conditions of learning change. Sometimes, revising the existing theories may become difficult and modification will not be sensible. At this point an entirely new approach has to be introduced. Acquiring

knowledge is not just restricted to linear manner; learners can imbibe information from varieties of resources. Technology is playing an inevitable role which was performed by learners earlier; like storing and retrieving information. In this rapidly evolving atmosphere students have to update themselves. Learning environment is full of interconnections and networks. In the digital age, learning is inclusive of technology and connection making activities. Karen Stephenson observes that, experience has long been considered the best teacher of knowledge. Since we cannot experience everything, other people's experiences, and hence other people, become the surrogate for knowledge. Learning is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing.

Connectivism addresses the challenges faced by knowledge management activities of corporations. For effective learning knowledge in database has to be connected to the learner in the right context. Information flow within an organisation is important for organisational effectiveness. An additional element in understanding the learning models of digital era is analysis of social networking sites. The preliminary point of Connectivism is the individual; personal knowledge is comprised of a network, which feeds into organizations and institutions, which in turn feed back into the network, and then continue to provide learning to individual. This cycle of knowledge development (personal to network to organization) allows learners to remain up to date in their field through the connections they have formed. Creating new nodes will help the learners to manage learning in a more flexible manner. Amplification of learning, knowledge and understanding through the extension of a personal network is the epitome of Connectivism.

In Connectivism, the starting point for learning occurs when knowledge is actuated through the process of a learner connecting to and feeding information into a learning community. Siemens (2004) states, “A community is the clustering of similar areas of interest that allows for interaction, sharing, dialoguing, and thinking together” (6). A learning community is represented as a node and always connected to a larger network. A network is connected of two or more nodes to share resources. Nodes may be of varying size and strength, depending on the concentration of information and the number of individuals who are navigating through a particular node (Downes 36). Knowledge is distributed among these networks and can be stored in a variety of digital formats.

Information is constantly changing its validity and accuracy may also change over the period. Connectivism points out that, two important skills which contribute to learning are the ability to seek current information, and the ability to filter secondary and extraneous information. Siemens observes that, the capacity to know is more critical than what is actually known and the learner has to develop an ability to take decisions on the basis of information that has been acquired during learning process. Learning is a cyclical process and learners will connect to a network to share their knowledge and to acquire new information. Learners may transverse networks through multiple knowledge domains and they may create interdisciplinary networks. Connectivism believes that knowledge does not reside in one location, but rather that it is a confluence of information arising out of multiple individuals seeking inquiry related to a common interest and providing feedback to one another.

Three predominant factors are influencing and instigating change in the dissemination and retrieval of information and each of it fundamentally alters the

formal educational landscape. Learners' needs are not sufficiently being met by traditional training models of instruction, information growth has necessitated new means by which to navigate and filter the information that is available, and advancing technologies are increasingly enabling learners to connect to one another and to knowledge networks of their own making (Siemens 2008). In the changing technological era, Connectivism fits as learning theory. Increased influence of internet and online connectedness has created implications over educational practice also. Internet, along with Web 2.0 and mobile developments, makes new and different educational structures, organisations, and settings. The online and face-to face networks that people build-up throughout their lives will provide expertise knowledge, in addition to the guidance that local or online tutors can offer. Learners will be at the centre of the learning experience, rather than the instructor and the institution. Learners will be instrumental in determining the content of the learning in addition to decide the nature and levels of communication.

Connectivism involves in making connections with others, and building upon the work that has come before. In short it is return to the basics which emphasises learning from one another and a strong sense of mentorship between each other. Active participation of all the learners involved in the learning process was required for the successful implementation. Each member of the Moodle group formed as part of the research helped to ensure individual involvement. This theory is an integration of instructional technology and digital technology. The classroom session has been considered as instructional technology and online teaching as digital technology and both have been fused to get the best output. It is a model for life-long learning. As per the theory, individuals co-create knowledge in a global society. A real challenge for any learning theory is to actuate known knowledge at the point of application. As



knowledge continues to grow, access to learner's need is more important than what the learner currently possesses. Connectivism presents a model of learning that acknowledges the tectonic shifts in society where learning is no longer an internal or individualistic activity. How people work and function is altered when innovative tools are used. Connectivism provides insight into learning skills and tasks needed for learners to flourish in a digital era. This study which fuses technology with traditional teaching to instil communication skills is an application level of Connectivist theory. Blended method promotes collaborative learning and self learning with the assistance of modern tools and digital technology.

## **Language Across the Curriculum Approach**

Improving linguistic skills will definitely enhance student's learning and outcomes. In institutions, along with English teacher all other faculties can take effort to improve the linguistic ability of learners. English can be the regular medium for communication and instruction. Every subject has its own terms and way of expressions; scientific report and review to a literary work require different style. Only by proper training and practice learners can get acquainted with these dissimilar modes. Learning every subject in English will help the learner to get acquainted with the corresponding terms and methods. Thus, extending language learning process to all classes will be more beneficial. Along with English teaching faculties, all the instructors can take effort to improve communication skills and linguistic abilities of students. This aspect is emphasised in the research. LAC is an abbreviation for the term Language Across the Curriculum. It is an innovative approach as it integrates language learning and content learning. LAC holds the view that the process of language learning is not restricted to English classrooms alone but it takes place in each and every subject, in every learning activity and across the whole curriculum (Quong and Linder 61). Institutions can form a teaching plan based on this concept. As part of the intervention of experiment, along with subject teacher, instructors from other streams are also given orientation regarding the relevance of improving communication skills.

Language Across the Curriculum is a recent trend in language teaching and it was developed in the late 1970s and earlier 1980s. It originated in Great Britain and received wide acceptance along with the publication of Bullock Report entitled "A Language For Life". Communicative Approach and communicative competence was the most discussed terms among socio linguists. Language is for the purpose of

communication is the basic concept of this approach. Some of the notions of Communicative Approach have relevance for LAC; procedure rather than product, message rather than medium, learner's potential rather than teacher input, and language learning through tasks. Bullock Report of 1975 focused on three elements mainly; 1) Language crosses the curriculum 2) Every teacher is a language teacher 3) Every school should have a language policy. Though the report was made in the context of mother tongue it is also applicable in foreign language learning context. Foreign language acquisition or second language learning can be while learning each and every subjects and activity. The development of language skills and competencies has to be integrated into subject specific teaching also. Activities like group discussion and debate were encouraged in classes of other subject also. Most of the instructors gave positive response to this gesture.

LAC acknowledges that language learning not only takes place in English class rooms but it can happen in each and every subject and learning activities. This approach emphasises that linguistic development is the responsibility of all faculties across the school and all the subject areas. Language plays an important role in every learning process; whatever may be the subject, the concept is explained with the help of language. Students assimilate new ideas when they listen, read, write and speak about what they are learning. Speaking and writing is the representation of their thought. So improving language will lead to better expression. Learners were made aware of the relevance of enhancing communication skills at the personal interaction stage itself.

In examination point of view also LAC plays an important role as each subject requires different styles of representation. Along with teaching the subject the teacher explained how to use particular terms and how to answer questions which are likely to

appear in exams. If every educator is ready to take this effort obviously the student will be competent in all the areas. Initially, students have to acquire good reading and writing skill. Along with adequate vocabulary, thorough practice will make them confident, mock exams and quiz were conducted for practice. LAC demands a structured, monitored and assessed approach to teaching. Training on subject specific terms, subject specific word formation, forms of expression, competency and skill required for comprehending and integrating information were given.

LAC holds the view that language is not a passive medium for instruction but it takes the foremost role in forming and handling new concepts. Whether the subject is mathematics, science, history or music, language is the tool for learning and it makes the learning process in a meaningful context. Normally language teaching will be focused only on linguistic aspects but LAC concentrates on both language and knowledge. Language is used as tool in inculcating knowledge among learners. The learner, teacher and the institution play significant role in LAC. Learners use listening, speaking, reading and writing to view, analyse and represent thoughts. Subject teachers have to integrate language and content by introducing relevant language items and English teachers have to reinforce language skills from time to time.

Different forms and aspects of language learning within the curriculum are brought together in LAC and it emphasises the importance of language in non-linguistic subjects and in a broader sense it suggests the importance of whole language policy in the curriculum. The latter includes mother tongue and foreign language (as second language or third language) and the language dimension in all other subjects. As a concept, LAC acknowledges that language learning occurs while mother tongue learning and foreign or second language learning and in the classes of

other subjects. In a subject specific context, language is viewed as a tool to comprehend and analyse the corresponding content. As an extension to this concept, new linguistic forms can be learned while handling every subject. For instance, the following table exemplifies this approach, as the students learn new vocabulary while comprehending the specific details in their syllabus.

**Table 2.1**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Linguistic Terms</b>
Subject specific vocabulary	Balance sheet, Emulsifier, Steriliser
Word formation	Prefix, Suffix, Word root
Forms of expression	Justify, Elucidate, Substantiate
Comprehension	Identify, Select, Analyse

Accordingly, in all the subjects, new forms of language usages are being introduced. There emerges the need of central educational experience which will have marked effect on learner's understanding and learning experience. Non-linguistic subjects require slightly different skills and competency. This should lead to specific ways of proceeding new insights in topics and integrating it with previous or existing knowledge. Sometimes there will be requirement of overlap in competences in subjects like the association between basic language items and specific discourse components. Academic language skills do not develop by themselves or by merely using it in subject specific contexts alone, the learner has to be stimulated and trained through systematic development and language improvement measures.

The primary goal of LAC is to support the language development in each and every learner; in all domains of language usage and in each learning activity in the institution. This approach proclaims that each educational institution should possess its own language policy. The field of language teaching have witnessed several methods and approaches. Similar to other development in the field of foreign language learning, LAC cannot be the ultimate explication; instead, it is an exciting new way of looking at language learning. Like in all areas of foreign language teaching there should be an eclectic and well balanced approach which is a combination of different approaches based on the needs of learner and circumstances. In order to implement this, essential preparations on progressive curricula and appropriate teaching materials are mandatory. Every teacher has to be a language teacher by inculcating academic language related to the contents in students, such an approach will result in enhanced linguistic competency. In order to validate LAC, one faculty from engineering stream started using Moodle to teach his subject and included plenty of activities to engage learners. In the present research, LAC has been given importance and along with communication skill classes faculties of different streams have been motivated to concentrate on linguistic elements along with corresponding subjects.

## **Communicative Approach**

Communication is the prime function of language and several approaches have been formulated based on this premise. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has made major changes in the history of language teaching in the twentieth century. Situational language teaching and Structural approach were prominent before this movement. Linguists felt the call for a change and focus on mere mastery of structures has to be shifted to communicative proficiency in target language. Scholars who advocated this view were Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson. The main concepts of Communicative approach are that the goal of language teaching is to make communicative competence and to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. This notion was the key objective of the research. Finocchiaro and Brumfit observes that in CLT meaning is paramount and contextualisation is the basic premise (116). Dialogues used in teaching are centred on communicative functions and are not normally memorised.

The prerogative of the current research is to promote language learning through its use in meaningful contexts and not by memorising language items. Drilling occurs peripherally and any device which helps the learning procedure is accepted varying according to their age, interest and need. Instructor has encouraged learner's attempt to communicate from the beginning onwards. Judicious use of native language and translations are allowed if students benefit out of it. Reading and writing skills can be started from the first day onwards if desired. Supporters of communicative approach consider that the target linguistic system will be best learned through the process of struggling to communicate. They did not consider 'language is habit', for them language is created by the individual often through trial and error. By

communicative competence they meant, ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately. Fluency is not measured in the abstract form but in context.

Teachers are supposed to motivate learners to work with the language. The intention to include more activities in both online and classroom sessions was to offer more opportunities to communicate and get acquainted with the language.

A linguistic structure is best acquired when the learner's attention is on meaning and is preoccupied with understanding, working out, relating or conveying messages in the language (Wah Kam). There is logical distinction between linguistic competence and communicative competence. Communicative competence is related to real life communication purpose of language. Patrik C. Kameen names constructive components of this approach as participants (speaker, hearer, sender, and receiver), setting (psychological or cultural setting), the actual form of a message or a linguistic description of the message, topic; what is the message about. Purpose, goal or intention about communication, channel; whether oral or written, code (language or variety within a language), norms of interpretation (how different norms of interaction or violation of them interpreted), genre (casual speed, poem, prayer, form, letter). Attention to grammar is accidental as per this approach and incorrect utterances are rectified by the teacher.

Communicative method includes communication through conversation, reading, listening comprehension and writing. One can use contemporary elements of tele-communication, radio, visual communication which are usual in the world of exchanging information. These elements are incorporated in the study as part of online teaching. While selecting a textbook the teacher should keep in mind that it should be interesting and accessible to students. Even the most attractive textbook will not give any results, if its contents (drills, exercises, rules) are separated from the



communicative learning. The teacher must be aware of the laws according to which language functions. Generally communication is exchange of ideas, information, concepts or facts. It has close association with written and oral discourse.

Communication also includes a gesture, a poster, movement, sometimes even silence.

The wide aspects of communication were tried to inculcate in students of the experimental group and they were divided into small groups and prepared them to practice conversations in different situations.

Testing is an integral part of any learning process. As per communicative approach testing must be done in terms of communication. Teacher can follow different strategies to measure student's communication skills. Testing part of the research was to check all the aspects of language; listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking and writing abilities. Communicative system tests attempts to check what students know but it does not test what students do not know. The examination can be taken according to the students' level. Student's active participation in class conversation helps to improve communication skill naturally. Communicative method determines communication without preliminary preparation. Teacher has not only to teach how to use language but should give awareness about how to avoid colloquial usage and interference of mother tongue. In lower levels it will be difficult to teach communication skill as their vocabulary will be limited and they may find it difficult to identify with the created situations.

In the initial level, communication is more focused on fluency than accuracy. Accuracy is emphasised when they want to deal with students getting things right, take an opportunity for correction, or gauge the success of their teaching. Liberated interaction involves more choice, therefore more ambiguity, and less teacher intervention but this does not mean they are un-structured. The teacher plays an

important role in the process, to set up activities when communication actually takes place as a lot of preparation is essential for equipping students with vocabulary, structures and functions, as well as strategies, to enable them to interact successfully. Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence, referred to by Guangwei Hu, includes four sub-categories, namely grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic. They consider someone competent in English should demonstrate both rules of grammar and use.

Several academicians have made observations about communicative approach. The famous linguist David Nunan classifies the five features of CLT as- an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself, an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom (148). Practitioners claim that communicative approach is designed to give importance to learner's needs as well as emphasising the connection between language inside the classroom and its real use outside the classroom. Any teaching practice which helps to improve the communicative competence in an authentic context is considered as acceptable and authentic form of instruction. Teacher can organise pair and group work, fluency based activities, and grammar based activities to develop the confidence level of learners.

There are linguists who disagree with some of the aspects in CLT. Noam Chomsky opines that, the then linguistic theories focused on linguistic competence that enables speaker to produce grammatically correct sentences as the aim of learning

a language. Such a concept was unsatisfactory as it failed to picture all the aspects of language. He advocated for a theory which incorporate communication competence. The four dimensions of communication competence are; grammatical competence- refers to what Chomsky calls linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence which means an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place. Discourse competence indicates the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that participants use to initiate terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication.

The communicative approach focuses on the use of language in day to day life or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures. To validate these concept different kinds of activities to enhance various communication skills were adopted in the research and blended method was followed to ensure maximum opportunity for learning linguistic skills. There should be balance between the functional and structural aspects. It gives priority to meanings and rules of use rather than to grammar and rules of structure. A major principle underlying this approach is its emphasis on learners' needs and interests. This implies a heavy responsibility for teacher as she should modify the syllabus to fit the needs of the learners. Several requirements of learners may be difficult to accomplish as not all classrooms can afford group work activities and providing teaching aids and materials also sometimes may not be easy. In spite of all these criticisms communicative approach received wide acceptance around the world as the basic purpose of language is to communicate.

## Language Lab



**Fig. 2.1**

Possibilities of technology are exploited in teaching and learning immensely and it is relevant to analyse some of it in application level. One of the components of blended method in the study is online learning and language lab is made a part of it. Regarding mother tongue learning, involuntarily we follow the order of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). The child listens to elders and naturally starts speaking and in each stages of growth their communication level improves further. In foreign language learning class room, this order is reversed. Initially the student will be taught alphabets, then words and sentences. The next stage is to speak without any exposure to auditory sources other than the instructor who is also a non native speaker and might have learned language in the same manner. Thus learners lack opportunity to listen native accent and diction. Inhibition to effective communication, learning incorrect pronunciation and inability to comprehend native

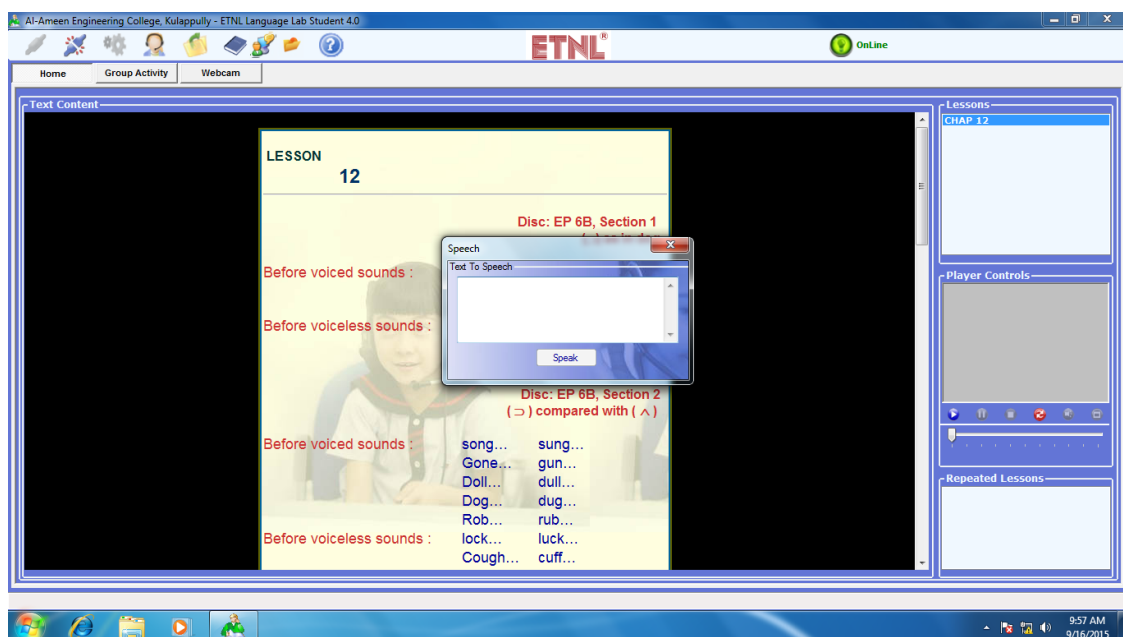
accent are the disadvantages of learning through this system. To overcome these shortcomings of learning, language laboratories were introduced in language teaching.

Through lab, students can listen to recorded voice of native speakers and they can repeat and record the same. It is possible to compare accent and pronunciation and learner can identify both weak and strong area in own utterance. In the experiment students were assigned practice hours in language lab along with classroom teaching to enhance their listening and speaking skill.

Language laboratory is a modern tool used in language teaching. It comprises of audio and video lessons to enhance linguistic skills. Nowadays it is commonly encouraged in schools and colleges. The first known lab was at the University of Grenoble in 1908. Until 1990s, language labs used tape based systems or cassettes. Current installations are commonly multimedia based personal computers. Though student centred approach is followed in language lab training it is the teacher who assigns lessons to practice. The students' systems will be connected to the administrator's system and each computer will have a head phone and a microphone. Through the administrator's system teacher can observe all the learners' activities. Two way communication is possible through the intercom facility. The administrator's system can be operated only by inserting the master key (a gadget similar to a pen drive) and it prevents any kind of misuse of the software.

Acquiring fluency and right pronunciation will enhance oral communication and language lab enables such advancement. The learner has freedom to practice the assigned lesson as per expediency. There are options to play, pause, stop, repeat and compare the lessons. Learner can view the text or the video on the monitor and listen to the audio through the headphone simultaneously. They can listen to the audio and can repeat the same to record in his own voice to identify the accuracy in

pronunciation. It helps to compare the articulation and accent with that of a native speaker. This is known as an audio active-comparative system. From a technological point of view, this overdubbing is made possible by the use of a two-channel tape recorder. Repeating this drill helps to acquire native like accent. Aspects of language lab and advantages of regular practice were explained to the students who were the target group of the research. At the intervention stage, it was evident that students get bored by hearing only audios and to avoid this instructor assigned interesting video, conversations, plays and movies to listen and compare. In addition to this, students were asked to type words or phrases in the 'text to speech' area and they could listen to the typed text's pronunciation thus they were able to clarify doubts regarding pronunciation and accent of any words. Apart from the installed portions of the software, new contents were added to the lesson.



**Fig. 2.2**

During 1970s and 1980s reel to reel tape system was used in language laboratories and this was not much successful. The tape was difficult to handle and

data storage was also limited. As there was no electronic system the instructor could not control all the systems at a time. It had no option to rewind or forward wind of the running tape and it caused waste of time. In the later years tape recorders in language laboratory became more complex, being capable of multi tracking and electronic remote control. Repeated recording of audio during practice demanded regular replacement of control panel and this aspect created practical difficulty. The installation of language laboratory is usually done by some agencies or service engineers and they may have a wide area for service and it is not possible to get their assistance every now and then. Consequently if a system gets malfunctioned for a long time it will be out of utility. Language lab has some disadvantages like; the instructor can assign only preset lessons which demands preparation time. Moreover language laboratory is expensive to acquire and maintain. Installing a large number of systems and allotting trained faculties for lab may cause high expense for the institution. Subsequently self financing institutions maintained language lab comparatively well and govt. or aided institutions found it difficult to manage for economic reasons.

In the 1990s multimedia capable personal computers were installed in language laboratories and software and hard drives in place of analogue tape became popular. It allowed extended functionality, in terms of better administration of audio with some levels of internet and video formats. This offered more quality in experience for learners. Today manufacturers depend on proprietary networks or expensive sound cards to deliver their media successfully. Though technology has changed over the years, the principle behind language lab essentially has not changed. Language lab is a teacher-controlled system connected to a number of student booths, containing a student's control mechanism and a headset with a microphone. It is the

teacher who decides and assigns the lessons and student activities will be regularly monitored.

Language lab software can be installed and accessed on any networked personal computer anywhere in a school, college, or university campus. Software-only systems can be located in one room, from room-to-room or campus-to-campus. This helps to cross the barrier of space. In a software based language laboratory, teacher can correct simultaneously; instead of waiting to correct student recordings after they have been recorded and collected back. The next generation digital language labs allow teachers to monitor, control, deliver, group, display, review and collect, audio, video and web based multimedia content. The student player will be linked to the teacher console and they can play audio, video and web based formats. Learners can rewind, stop, start, go back to last sentence, record, fast forward, repeat phrase and bookmark. As the teaching system moved from teacher centred to student centred approach language lab also became more flexible for learner under teacher's surveillance.

In modern language labs the teaching contents of audio and video can easily be integrated and the instructor can alter the materials as per the requirements. Learners could interact with each other and with the teacher and this helped to have group activities or pair tasks. Traditional classroom learning does not offer much opportunity to speak for the learner. Teaching will be mostly monotonous and students will be inactive listeners. For them the only exposure to language is hearing. With the aid of language lab, along with listening, students could practice speaking skill also without distracting each other regardless of the class size. As they are sitting together and learning, it appeared to be more interesting than practising alone at home. For the teacher language lab was beneficial as large number of students can be



taught pronunciation and accent at a time and lessons were in the format of records which may be used for other batches of learners.

Language lab is a technology assisted system to improve LSRW skills. Accesses to different types of materials encourage the students for independent learning. The automated learning environment removes learner's fear and creates a comfortable learning atmosphere. Direct transmission of audio through headphone provides unambiguous clarity of lessons. In certain situations, the teacher will have doubt regarding the word's actual pronunciation or the voice may not be audible. The well scrutinised lessons facilitate to avoid such errors. Dissimilar to class room, it is possible for the teacher to pay individual attention to learners as each student will be accessing different systems. Even the shy student has the opportunity to practice linguistic activities without stage fear inside the lab and one can repeat the exercises as the number of attempts while practice is not a concern. The ultimate aim of language lab is to improve the quality of communication skills and enhance confidence level. Language laboratories represent the single largest investment and instalment of audio resources in education. The quality of the language proficiency will be more when students learn it from multimedia based, digital and computerised Language Lab. A well trained teacher can utilise all the possibilities of technology in language teaching for the benefit of learners. Majority of the engineering colleges have established language lab and it assists language training in a great manner.

## MOODLE



**Fig. 2.3.**

In the current research, possibilities of Moodle have been explored and made as a part of blended method. Moodle is a free and open source software learning management system developed on pedagogical principles. It is widely incorporated for blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other e-learning projects in educational institutions, work places and other sectors. This platform is used to create private websites with online courses for educators and trainers to achieve learning goals and aids to extend learning environment through online communities. A forum including the students of the experimental group was created and used it widely for practicing communication skills. ‘Moodle’ is the acronym for Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. The website was developed by Martin Dougiamas with an objective to help educators to create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content. The first

version was released on 20 August 2002. Now the project is led and coordinated by an Australian company Moodle HQ and which is financially supported by a network of sixty Moodle Partner service companies across the globe.

Moodle as a learning platform enhances existing learning environments by offering virtual learning setting and acts as e-learning tool with a wide range of innovative features. Plugins (flexible tool set) allow users to extend the features of the site. There are hundreds of plugins which extends the features of core functionality. Each plugin is maintained in the Moodle plugins directory. As of April 2015, there are over 1,000 plugins available for Moodle with over 7 million downloads. Moodle has been available over 100 languages to install and responsive web design allows it to be used in mobile devices. The mobile application is available in Google Play, App Store (iOS), and the Windows Phone Store. Users can download and install Moodle on web browser. Pre-built combinations of Moodle with a Web server and database are available for Microsoft Windows and Macintosh.

The pedagogical philosophy of Moodle includes a Constructionist and Social Constructivist approach to education which emphasises that learners along with teachers can contribute to learning experience. Based on this principle, Moodle provides opportunities for learning communities. Ideas of these two learning theories have been incorporated in the study. Institutions can install as many Moodle servers they need without paying license fees. Learners of the experiment were asked to download Moodle app in mobile phones or computer. MoodleMoot is a conference option for community members to learn about Moodle, to share learning experience using the platform and to discuss research in related educational technologies and contribute ideas to future development. Sometimes students may feel introvert to interact in these forums as it is viewed by all the members. In such cases, Moodle

allows users to create individual wiki private to each learner and teacher. This option helped to have collaborative document exclusively between the learner and instructor while the study.

As an aftermath of technological development, everyone has access to internet and familiar with various websites. Majority of the users are interested in chatting and spending time on social networking sites. When students need to locate information from internet, most of them fail to find the right links. Many of them are lethargic to use the internet facility for learning purpose. When the process of learning through internet is under the supervision of teacher, learners may feel more stern and active. Generally students have the tendency to communicate in English only when the situation demands and this restricts the use of language. Creating a discussion forum in Moodle under the control of instructor opens opportunity for meaningful interaction. Moreover it helps to carry out communication outside the classroom. Tools provided by Moodle can be used to integrate any level of course and to experience cooperative learning.

Moodle supports conventional classroom learning system as a courseware package and learning system. It can be exploited to do additional work outside the classroom and as a delivery system for course materials in blended learning, or as standalone online learning platform. These aspects had been used in the research and different assignments and activities were arranged through this forum and the teacher was able to evaluate each student's performance. The instructor can assign marks or credits based on the performance and such experience may contribute to support the use of innovative technologies in language learning to increase foreign language proficiency. The teacher has to prepare the platform and its parts before initiating the activities, considering that each language skill has to be exploited, and then the

students be invited to join the integration course. Interaction between learner and instructor has to ensure as a continuous process.

Students were assigned to answer the exercises and send it back for correction to the teacher via e-mail or through the chat forum in the platform. The teacher had the discretion to decide the type of assignments and had to regularly monitor students. Varieties of written assignments were given through Moodle while online teaching. Communication skill learning through Moodle was innovative experience for learners. Teachers who had several years of experience acknowledged that quiz making is one of the most effective functions of Moodle. Different types of quizzes like multiple choices, true/false, numerical, matching the correct option and description were organised as per the need and relevance to language teaching. The time limit and number of attempts were optional and were preset by the instructor. The intention of Moodle is not to exclude textbooks from learning procedure but to collaborate e-learning with conventional methods. Initially the teacher has to select the learning objects from textbooks which can be used and reused in various learning environments. Dividing the learning objects into small pieces will help for easy handling. Audio and video files are available to save in the directory as resource material. Many sites like BBC offer learning material which can be linked or downloaded to use in the platform. Teacher can prepare additional audio or video material to contribute to teach or to give assignments. Moodle proves to be an effective component for online teaching.

## WORDPRESS.COM



**Fig. 2.4**

Wordpress was used in the research to advertise and publish the communication programme organised as part of the study. Wordpress.com is a free website to create personal and business blog or site and using this platform one can showcase objects or market products easily. It is a powerful and versatile area to explore. Wordpress was started in 2003 and now it has grown to one of the largest self hosted blogging tools in the world. The website is an open source project and millions of users are visiting to this site every day. The user can download and install a software script called Wordpress and to execute this, user needs a web host. The site is completely customisable and can be used for any purpose. Those who do not want to download have to depend on wordpress.com. The hosting will help to publish and share links in the home page and other social networking areas. The available different themes allow users to change the look and functionality of the website. The plugin architecture allows users to extend the features of the blog. Increase in the

number of users is an evidence for the success of the website. The intention behind using this platform was to introduce new online forum for learners.

## **ONLINE LEARNING WEBSITES**

Online learning is a technically advanced trend in education system. Online courses are advantageous for people who want to continue education at home or through non-traditional learning style. Generally learners of online courses are looking for career advancement, career changes or want to finish a degree course. There are hundreds of study programs and online schools and choose among the right one is the task of learner. Several universities and institutions conduct online courses along with regular programmes. Online websites offer multidisciplinary courses in art, literature, science, medicine, technology, philosophy and many other streams. While selecting the course, the learner has to be careful about the authenticity of institution which offers the course and the study materials.

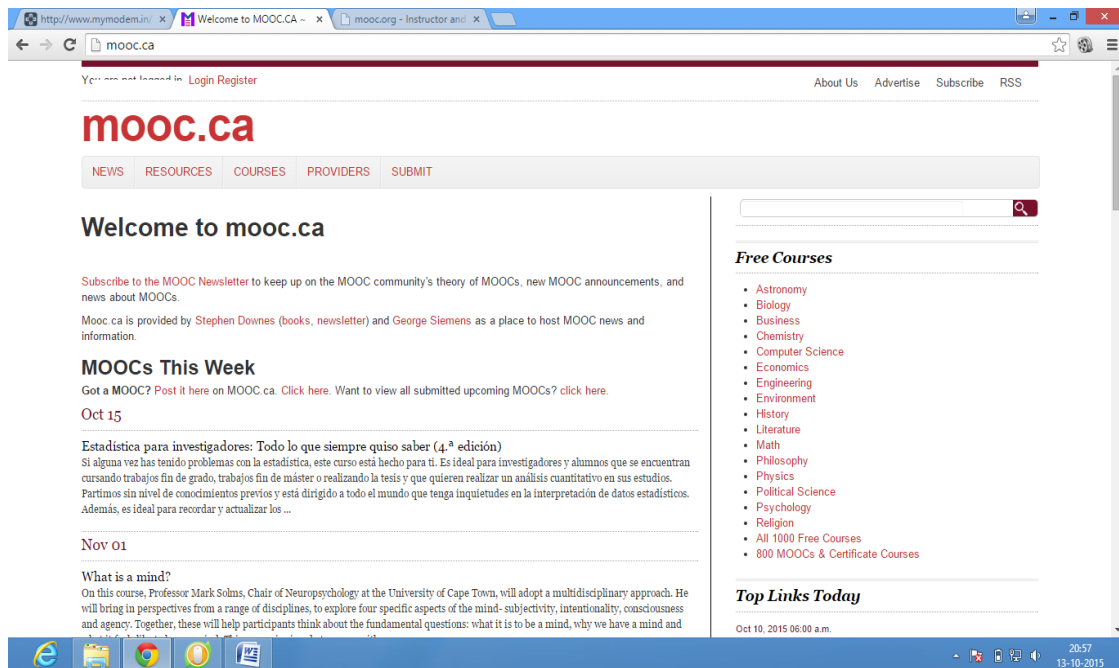
Different universities offer varieties of degree programs and classes through online and the major attraction behind getting into online courses is lower expense compared to traditional schools as the student does not have to pay for travel or printed books. Usually students are able to download all the materials needed for their class including lectures and assignments and they do not have to worry about textbook price since all classes are online. As students are not expected to sit in the classroom they can save time to a great extent. In online courses, students have the freedom to choose study time and they can fix a time as per convenience. Schedules may not be as strict as in the traditional classroom and students can work and complete assignments at their own pace. Only criterion is to submit assignments before the deadline to ensure the course plan. Online courses help to stabilise career

and learning for working persons. People who enrol online degree programs are able to manage their time and learn the prescribed materials and complete assignments on their own schedules.

Along with several above mentioned advantages, online courses have some disadvantages also; learners with low motivation and weak study habits may fall behind, moreover students may feel isolated from instructor and classmates. Managing computer files and online learning software seem more complex for students with beginner level computer skills. As the students are accustomed to conventional learning style, they may take time to get familiarised with online courses and this may cause lag in learning process. When compared to the disadvantages the positive aspects of online courses are stronger as it encompasses more flexible learning environment. Thus the learning community is moving towards the latest trend. Technology is developing remarkably and learners must acquaint with the latest move. To cope with recent innovations even the students who are doing regular courses are also enrolling to online courses. The researcher gave general aspects of online courses and shared the experience of completing one course in Moodle to motivate the learners. In India the two famous universities which offer online courses are Pondicherry University and Manipal University and they conduct degree and post graduate level online courses in multiple areas like arts, literature and management.



## MOOC



**Fig. 2.5**

It was relevant to introduce the well established online platforms to students as technology was an inexplicable ingredient in the experiment. MOOC is the acronym for Massive Open Online Courses. It is an online course platform aimed at large participation through web. Traditionally course materials were available in web in the form of videos, audios, readings, quizzes and problem sets. In addition to all these items MOOC provides interactive user forums which help to build online community for the students and the professors. It is a recent revolution in distant education. MOOC was originated in 2008 within the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement. Many of the courses are based on Connectivist theory which holds the view that knowledge emerges from a network of connections. The term MOOC was coined by Dave Cornier of the University of Prince Edward Island, and one Senior Research Fellow, Bryan Alexander of the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education in response to the course designed and led by George Siemens of

Athabasca University and Stephen Downes of the National Research Council, Canada.

The New York Times observed 2012 as 'The year of the MOOC!' This became possible because of the emergence of several well-financed providers, associated with top universities, including Udacity, Coursera and edX. In the end of 2011 Stanford University launched three courses and each of which has an enrolment about 100,000. For the commercialisation of online education, MIT launched the MITX not for profit courses, but an effort to develop a free and open online platform. There are connectivist MOOCs and broadcast MOOCs. The former rely on crowd-sourced interaction and feedback through network in the form of peer-review or group collaboration. The latter rely on automated feedback through objective or online assignments like quizzes and exams. Coursera and Udacity are examples for broadcast MOOCs. There is another classification also, MOOCs that emphasise the Connectivist philosophy, and those that resemble more traditional and well-financed courses, such as programmes offered by edX and Coursera.

The openness of the programme is the advantage and demerit at a time. The number of students enrol to online courses may be high; still a large number of them are not completing the courses as the candidates having strong determination to focus on online learning may be low. Moreover the course completion will not provide a University valid certificate and students feel discouraged on this aspect. In addition to this, candidates should possess digital literacy to understand the procedures and it demands time and effort from the participants. The learner needs to be capable to regulate the learning procedure. These are certain disadvantages. As the course contents are free, some educators find it difficult to upload data. To avoid this, certain

institutions have started charging registration fee to enrol their courses and at the completion of course they are providing valid certificates to the participants.

Three types of activities are usually conducted in MOOC courses; direct presentation of information such as a lecture or video, interactive exploration of the material such like discussion boards, and assessment such as exams and quizzes. Two most common methods of MOOC assessment are machine graded multiple –choice quizzes or tests and peer reviewed written assignments. MOOCs typically do not offer academic credit or charge tuition Fees. The goal is to re-define the idea of a ‘course,’ creating an open network of learners with emergent and shared content and interactions. MOOC allows participants to form connections via autonomous, diverse, open, and interactive discourse. One can organise a MOOC in any setting that has connectivity. The learner can get connected across disciplines and learning happens in a more informal setting. Above all the demerits, MOOC has strong advantages and it is a fabulous platform for technology based learning environment. Engineering courses are offered by MOOC immensely and learners were attracted to know further prospects of it.

## COURSERA

**Fig 2.6**

Coursera is a prominent online platform under MOOC which offers multi disciplinary courses. It was founded by Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller from Stanford University is an online educational website. The website launched in April 2012 and the users are about 2.7 million in the beginning of 2013. Coursera works with universities to make their online courses in various levels. The website provides free online courses in the fields of science, literature, history, medicine, finance and various other areas. Students who had interest in other fields apart from engineering could exploit this opportunity. Each course includes short video lectures on different topics and assignments have to be submitted usually on weekly basis. There are both audio and video lessons prepared by world class professors or subject experts and the study materials are downloadable. The learner has to login to the site and can attend

classes. To evaluate the understanding and progress regarding the content, students have to submit online assignments at the end of each course. At this instant the courses are not considered for University credits. Learners join to these courses to update their knowledge and to have world class exposure of the topic. Some critics raise the estimation that free online courses may diminish the value of traditional classrooms and institutions. Educationists who support online courses, as a reply declare that technology is not a substitute for the face to face learning system but it makes learning procedure easier. In this technology based era we cannot close our eyes to online courses or tech-assisted learning. Some of the courses related to engineering were modern robotics, digital manufacturing, structural engineering and designing. These topics are directly connected to the curriculum and learners were motivated to join.

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Fig. 2.7

edx is Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platform founded by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University to offer free online university level courses in wide range of disciplines. This site launched in 2012 is a non profiting platform to offer best of higher education to the students around the world. In addition to educational offerings it can be used for research and distance education. At the successful completion of courses learners will be awarded certificates but not credits. Apart from MIT and Harvard partners of edx include universities of California, Berkeley, Toronto, Boston, Texas and leading institutions in Asia, Europe and Australia. Span of courses and variety of subjects vary in different ways. Courses include science and technology to humanities. Cyber security fundamentals, psychology for personal growth and science of happiness were some of

the courses. Edx offers interactive online courses by world class professors. The brief description included in the homepage about the website is useful for new visitors to understand the learning pattern. The website offers flexible schedules for learners and the viewers can go through the list of available courses and can select as per the demand. Before joining a course, learner can go through demo and understand in detail how rewarding the course will be. Apart from Moodle, edx also was introduced to students of the experimental group to learn online courses. In popular media interviews, founders of several start ups admitted that they have done courses in these online sites and it helped to update awareness of several affairs. Learners were eager to know this experience.

## WizIQ

The screenshot shows the WizIQ website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Product Features, Case Studies, Blog, Courses, and Plans and Pricing. The main heading is "Making online teaching and learning easier for everyone" with a sub-heading "Over 200,000 teachers and 3 million learners use WizIQ". Below this, there is a large image of a woman smiling at a laptop displaying a video conference. Text on the page says "Connect face to face with your students, anywhere in the world" and "A true learning experience with clear, unlimited, echo-free audio and 6-way video in high quality." There are two buttons: "Try it Free" and "Plans & Pricing". Below the main banner, there are three columns of text: "For Teachers and Trainers", "For Organizations", and "Integrate WizIQ". At the bottom, there are three sections: "e-Learning Resources", "What Our Customers Say", and "Latest from Blog".

Fig. 2.8

Multiple websites are open for learners in MOOC. WizIQ is an online learning platform launched in April 2007 by Harvnan Singh, an Indian. This website is designed to help students and teachers to find each other and to provide an online virtual classroom learning environment. WizIQ virtual classroom runs using a web browser and Adobe Flash. On the site, there are tutorials, online tests and recorded classes. It also serves as a social networking site to bring together educators and students around the world. For interaction, the site provides virtual class room with live audio, video, white board and text chat elements. WizIQ helps to initiate contacts between members, to exchange knowledge and content, and to help each other who work towards common goals such as preparing for an exam or assignment. Members can create content and either they can attach it to the forum or share the link on blog or other online platforms. The site gives exposure to learners and instructors; teachers



are able to upload their profiles for advertising their experiences and credential to have wide exposure in career. Students can find classes to watch or teachers to work with on the topic. WizIQ offers features like audio, video lessons and assignments which are provided by other online learning platforms. Differing to other online learning websites WizIQ pays attention to instructors and their career enhancement. Learners were more enthusiastic about online courses for exams such as IIT, AIEEE and various English tests.

The online learning websites mentioned in the study provide open, short term, multi disciplinary courses and preference to select study time offer convenience to learners. Regarding these aspects, online courses are more flexible than regular courses. It was evident that one cannot avoid direct teaching, though online learning is beneficiary. To carry out the research, blended method was found to be the suitable method as it encompasses both classroom learning and online learning. Blended learning incorporates the concepts of Connectivist theory and the theory of Social Constructivism. In this research, the components of the blend were classroom learning and online learning. During the learning process different activities like debate, group discussion and extempore were planned as part of classroom learning and websites like Moodle and Wordpress for online learning. Apart from this, several free online learning websites like Coursera, WizIQ and EdX were suggested for students to join and do several multi disciplinary courses. The students were more interested and active in social networking sites and considering this aspect the learning possibilities of social media or educational networking were also analysed in the study. Without delimiting into one area, the research has employed multi dimensions of teaching and learning. Improving communication skills through utilising the scope of technology and without neglecting classroom learning was the major objective of the research.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Methodology

The present chapter encompasses with the course of actions adopted to carry out the research. It comprises of theoretical analysis, methods and principles associated with the study. As mentioned in the first chapter, plenty of researches have been conducted regarding communication skills and its related field. Studies in connection with different teaching methods and its practical application at various levels of learning also have done over the years. On the other hand the need to enhance communication skill of engineering students by adopting blended method and analysing the implications are relatively less. This research attempts to work on the area where only a few studies have been undertaken and investigated so far. The online component Moodle has not been fused with classroom teaching in most of the blended method based studies for language learning. The implication of communication skills on engineering students and its real significance over the learners can be evaluated by proper implementation of the framed methodology.

This research employs both quantitative and qualitative data sources- for qualitative, personal interaction and direct observation and for quantitative, questionnaire and test paper. Personal interaction and questionnaire analysis have been carried out throughout the study. The sample group had been observed thoroughly to analyse the changes during the study. At the end, a test was conducted for participants to evaluate the success of the research programme. Both the students and faculties handling communication paper were regularly contacted. The

investigator visited several institutions of different areas as part of the research. Based on personal interaction, students were classified into several groups and implementation of method was based on the classification. Learner's interest to involve in a new learning style was the relevant criterion for the grouping. Students from different colleges were clustered into one online group as in a classroom.

Teaching faculties were given broad plan about the study to make them realise the relevance of enhancing communication skills. An interactive session was arranged with each corresponding faculties to understand their background and teaching style. As they did not have a prescribed text or suggested teaching method, each institution followed individual style as per expediency. During the research programme they were introduced to recent trends in teaching and learning. Those who were unaware of technology assisted instruction were given orientation. In each institution, regular interaction was done with students at different levels of study. Introduction about the research was given during the personal interaction. Teaching and evaluation was carried out through online and offline mode.

### **Pilot study**

The pilot study in order to evaluate the time, cost, feasibility and effect of the method prior to the full scale research has helped to develop the research design of the experiment. A pilot study is usually carried out on members of the relevant population, but not on those who will perform the role of final sample. The ultimate sample is avoided as it may influence the behaviour of research subjects if they have already been indulged in the research. This kind of preventive measure helped to get more absolute result.

Pilot study was conducted to test and confirm the procedures, tools and ideas to be adopted in main study. The purpose was to confirm the effectiveness of blended method in English language teaching for engineering students. The selected group for pilot study included ten members. All of them were first year engineering students and were interested to improve communication skills. It was ensured that they had internet access and familiar with different learning websites. They were given awareness about the details of blended learning and how to involve in online and classroom activities. Several online learning websites were introduced and motivated them to do different courses as per interest.

Data related to their communication skill were collected through personal interaction and questionnaire and observed their attitude towards language learning, online education and classroom activities. The questionnaire included twenty five multiple choice questions and divided it into different sections like; language skills, technology, learning habits and online learning. The observation pattern was common for all the ten learners. Analysis of the observed data explained that they were unaware of the possibilities of language learning through online courses and potential of technology as a learning tool remained unexplored. Even those who heard about online learning websites did not try to attempt or experience online course. Instructors included power point presentation and projector in teaching but they too neglected or did not concern to mix online possibilities with classroom teaching.

Pilot study supported to have more clear perspective about blended learning and it gave practical experience regarding implementation. The different levels of teaching were analysed and collected feedback from the learners to make necessary changes in the research programme. It was rearranged in such a way to rectify the problems encountered in pilot study. In practice session of the experiment, more

activities were included for each communication skill and ensured participation of every learner. The researcher decided to give more awareness about blended method and its strategies before implementing the session to the experimental group.

### **Research Problems**

Identifying problems are the initial step to propose solution. Communication skills training are not given importance in the engineering curriculum and students are unaware about the relevance of improving linguistic skills. The research programme was organised to facilitate the learners to improve communication ability through blended method which may offer ample time to practice various activities.

The identified problems during the study were;

- Inadequate teaching hours for Communication skills paper.
- Lack of trained teachers and proper teaching method.
- Poor enthusiasm in students regarding non-engineering subjects.
- Neglecting the relevance of communication skills in professional courses.
- Lack of motivation to improve linguistic skills.
- Unexplored possibilities of technology to improve communication skills.
- Unaware about the global opportunities for which communication skills is essential.
- Not having enough opportunities to participate in literary activities.

### **Variables**

#### **Independent variable**

In this study the two independent variables employed on which the researcher had control in the research setting were;

- online teaching
- classroom teaching

### **Dependent variable**

Dependent variable exhibits the effect of manipulation of the independent variable and is dependent on the latter one. In the present research dependent variables are;

- Listening skill
- Speaking skill
- Reading skill
- Writing skill

### **Objectives**

With respect to review of literature and identified research problems, certain objectives were formulated;

- To explore the possibilities of technology in teaching and learning.
- To introduce innovative methods like Blended method in teaching and learning of communication skills.
- To encourage the students to improve linguistic skills.
- To make the students aware that communication skill is one of the employability skills.
- To develop the habit of self learning.

## Working plan

**Table 3.1**

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Stage I	Institution visit
Stage II	Interacting with the faculty
Stage III	Interacting with the students
Stage IV	Introducing Blended method
Stage V	Conducting classroom activities
Stage VI	Conducting online activities
Stage VII	Facilitating the concerned faculty to reinforce the activities

### **Stage I- Visiting the institution**

Personal interaction had played an important role in understanding the communication skills of students and different methods employed by teachers. The investigator visited several engineering colleges to interact with students and corresponding subject faculties. As blended method is a new term, in the preliminary stage it had been explained clearly. Different components of blend were introduced to make them familiar with the concept. The relevance of improving communication skills and how blended method would be helpful to accomplish this had been stressed throughout the session. In each institution response was positive to reassure the

confidence level of the researcher. Until last year, the Humanities and communication skills paper was allotted in first year syllabus. Engineering courses under different universities in Kerala have been affiliated to a single entity, Kerala Technological University (KTU) from 2015 onwards. At present the first year students all over the state have registration under KTU and other students under the corresponding universities. To get a uniform group, the first year students alone were considered for the investigation.

### **Stage II- Interacting with the faculty**

Inter relating with the concerned faculties played vital role in the study as they will be mediating the experiment in the researcher's absence. Humanities and Communication skills paper was prescribed for engineering curriculum in all the universities in the previous curriculum still the govt. has not sanctioned a post for Communication faculty in engineering colleges. In spite of this certain colleges have appointed qualified faculties as guest lecturers or in self financing colleges as permanent staffs. Presently, KTU has not recommended communication skills as a subject in the curriculum and has suggested practicing language lab alone. Institutions have arranged communication classes for the first year students during remedial teaching and first semester students alone are included for this remedial class. The faculties have prepared own syllabus to teach as per their notion and available teaching atmosphere. Those who are qualified in English have general awareness about how to teach language and they are giving emphasis to phonetics, basics of grammar and communication skill based activities like seminar, extempore, debate and group discussion. Faculties from other streams do not have a clue about language teaching and they are handling classes like searching in the darkness. As the hour is scheduled under remedial teaching, each batch will be getting only one hour per



week. Public holidays will further reduce the allotted time. Faculties face time constraint and lack of guidelines for teaching as obstacles throughout the year. The research was intended to intrigue into these aspects in detail and the concerned staff member was given a questionnaire. It aimed to understand the details in concern with their teaching methods and professional background.

### **Stage III- Interacting with the students**

The primary objective of interacting with students was to give awareness about the importance of improving communication skills. Conversation with faculties helped to get an idea in general about students' attitude and level of communication competency. At some stage of the interface, it was evident that students knew the relevance of communication skills in technical and technological fields and they extended positive response towards the session. Learners showed enthusiasm to know about a new learning program. In all the institutions, the concerned faculty introduced about the researcher's topic and the purpose behind the interaction. 50 students were selected from different branches as members of the experimental group from five colleges. The students belong to different streams like; Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering and Production Engineering. The investigator raised certain general questions to get an overview about the activities with which they were familiar and inured to do in the classroom.

### Stage IV- Introducing Blended Method



**Fig. 3.1**

Familiarising teaching method at initial stage helps to get adopted quickly. Students were given an outline of blended method by showing power point presentation. They were well explained about communication skills, different types of it and barriers in communication. Blended method was introduced as a combination of online teaching and direct classroom teaching. It was explained that these two learning types could be combined and used for language teaching. Students were introduced to online learning websites like [www.nptel.com](http://www.nptel.com) which delivers audio and video classes based on engineering curriculum and run by NIT and IIT professors. The website covered more than seventy subjects related to the engineering stream. Other sites like Coursera, WizIQ and edX also offered free online courses. Those who want to attend courses can create an account and register for the course as per interest. Students were motivated to create an account in online learning websites and to

register for multidisciplinary courses. General activity of youngsters by using internet is for creating accounts in social networking sites and searching information in Google. Apart from online learning, students were introduced to Educational networking which is the use of social networking sites for educational purpose and M-Learning which is learning by using mobile phones. A general list of useful mobile applications was given to them. After creating awareness about these sites, students were asked to fill a questionnaire and it covered areas related to their learning habits, internet usage, instructor's attitude and level of communication skills.

### **Stage V- Conducting classroom activities**

The next stage was conducting classroom activities and it was the core part of the research. The students from five institutions with different personal and educational backgrounds were considered for the research included. As the engineering allotment is state wide, students belong to all the districts are mixed up in every institution. Regarding school education, students complete higher secondary from CBSE or ICSE or State syllabus either in English medium or in Malayalam medium. The three systems follow different approaches for teaching and learning. Compared to Central Board Syllabus State syllabus gives wide scope for activities. Activity based learning is one of the maxims of State Board and students are trained according to that from primary level onwards. Central Board pays more focus on instruction and students get lesser free time compare to students from other systems. They may have comparatively good fluency over language as they are using English language to learn all the subjects. Each institution follows different strategies for training; while the interaction with students it was evident that their schooling and the strategies followed there had been influenced their communication and personal skills.

Learners who have inborn talents can modify and polish their abilities through proper training and institutions can offer excellent platform to stage their skills. To substantiate this concept, the general classroom activities were group discussion, debate, role play, word games, various written assignments and doing presentation on a given topic. Two types of students were there; one group felt that while doing professional course they have to focus on technological aspects rather than spending time on communication activities and another group expressed genuine interest in activities and they felt it helps to relax in the midst of tight schedule. In the same class itself, researcher could find students with these two dissimilar attitudes. After the introductory session different activities were scheduled to implement. With the help of other faculties, group discussion and debate were conducted in the preliminary session. In the next class the activity was extempore and role play. Through different sessions the selected fifty students were made to participate in more than three activities. Some students were introvert and they hesitated to come forward and speak up and needed repeated effort to interact with others. Another group of students were very active and took initiative to conduct the sessions. A few had good general knowledge and they excelled in debate and group discussion. The faculties were requested to carry out the activities in the next classes also as communication is a skill and requires regular practice to excel. After interaction it was identified that students are familiar with these activities and majority are participating actively and they needed opportunity and support to enhance their linguistic skills.

## Activities

Table 3.2

No	Item	Aim	Objective
1	Group discussion	To improve speaking and listening skills	To consider the different perspectives of the topic To create team spirit To arrive at a common conclusion
2	Extempore	To develop speaking skill and presentation skill	To create awareness about different areas To practice quick presentation
3	Debate	To improve speaking and listening skills	To examine the pros and cons of the topic To create competitive attitude
4	Role play	To advance speaking skill and presentation skill	To experience the different roles in real life To use imagination and creativity
5	Paragraph and essay writing	To improve writing and reading skills	To be familiar with written tasks To know how to organise and present ideas in written scripts
6	Technical writing- memo, letter	To enhance writing skill	To be acquainted with different styles of letters and memos
7	CV& Resume	To boost presentation skill	To prepare attractive and reliable profile

**a) Group Discussion****Fig. 3.2**

On a daily basis we involve in many discussions with family, friends and colleagues and developing group discussion skill is considered as one of the necessary communication abilities. Group discussions can be conducted for various purposes like, decision making, problem solving, to share opinion or to formulate a plan or idea. While having discussion, the participants will discuss about all the aspects, pros and cons of the selected topic. Listening and speaking are the main linguistic skills focused on this activity. Along with it several sub skills are also improved; ability to analyse, persuade, to control emotions and to support each other. Before discussion the topic has to be analysed in detail and participants have to control emotions and preconceived notions for being unprejudiced. During discussion participants should maintain mutual respect and have to avoid interrupting others while speaking. One

can raise argument without irritating or hurting other participants. These basic manners can be best learnt only by practice.

In each institution, group discussion was conducted as part of the study. A group of ten or twelve students was selected randomly. Regarding the topic, students were given freedom to suggest topics and gave preparation time to think and plan the discussion. While selecting the topic the current issues were given more prominence. The investigator provided general instructions about time limit, importance of active participation, use of appropriate language, audibility, body language, eye contact and mannerisms or gestures. Students were informed that, they can substantiate ideas by quoting suitable examples and relevant similar issues. The researcher took the role of moderator. Generally the discussion was for ten minutes and those who did not participate in the discussion and remained as audience were asked to observe and evaluate the performance of each participant. Once the discussion is over both the researcher and audience gave feedback and suggestions on each participant. The group members were given opportunity for self evaluation also. This helped to identify their mistakes and how it can be clarified during the next presentation.

The participants were asked to sit in a semi circle shape so that each participant will have face to face contact and the audience can view all the group members. Each participant was allowed to introduce themselves. While having discussion members were asked to clarify if they are not clear about the other participant's opinion. After discussing the various aspects of the topic some general conclusions were drawn out at the end of each session. Both linguistic items and knowledge about the topic were given focus in the discussion. Group discussion is one of the important elements in job interviews and interviews for professional course. By conducting group discussion we can analyse the candidate's general

awareness, analytical skill, presentation skill and how co-operative will be in a group. Rather than learning theoretical aspects, these gestures can be improved by regular practice. The researcher showed videos of group discussions and asked them to view more on internet as watching it will be a motivation for the learners. Being a facilitator, the researcher attempted to encourage silent learners and tried to control who did not give chance for others to speak. The Communication skill faculty was requested to conduct similar activities in the future.

Usually the students are silent or inactive in classrooms and the class will run by the monotonous speech of the lecturer. It is difficult to maintain focus and interest by adopting this kind of monotonous way. Group discussion helps to hear another voice as well as different view point from the participants. Whatever may be the topic, students were asked to analyse and find answers for 5 'wh' questions (what, when, where, why, who) and how or to the maximum problems. This kind of guidelines provided more focus while discussion. When the group members tried to explain, it was easy to recognise the level of students' understanding and their presentation skill. As a moderator, the researcher clarified the aspects which they were not clear or familiar and those who remained as audience were asked to report the points discussed so far. For their convenience major points were noted down on the board by the moderator. Two or three students were called upon randomly to read out the report so that they will do the report writing with seriousness. Thus all the students were involved in the activity. Evaluation part was always focused on as it makes the students more alert and they are ensured that their work is being assessed.

In group discussion all the members have to share their opinions on the topic and by monitoring their activities the observer can identify participants' attitude and presentation skill. Candidates are judged by their ability to initiate and conclude



discussion, make their opinions heard, speak audibly with good pronunciation and grammar, and behave politely without irritating or hurting others. Generally the focus will be on the topic being discussed rather than the norms of speaking. As the primary aim of the research is to improve their communication skills focus was more on presentation style than their knowledge. Focusing on two features simultaneously is a tedious task for learners and they will not be able to manage to sequence ideas in proper presentation style. So the initial task was to make them speak however it was made clear that in real situation both aspects have to be given equal importance.

The topics given for discussion were examination system, current education system, social media, technology, old age homes and entrepreneurship. In one group only ten or twelve students were there and the activity was repeated with other students to accommodate majority of them. In some sessions the role of moderator was assigned to a student to motivate leadership spirit. Students were made to realise that after entering to a job they may have to work in a group and have to co-operate with the team members and can consider these discussions as a mock session for the future purpose. The content knowledge, presentation, body language and mannerisms were evaluated after the presentation. While interacting with the concerned faculty it was confirmed that students are participating in all the activities. Those students were inactive in the initial sessions were given topic for discussion in one class before itself, so that they can prepare even after going home. This attempt was proved to be effective as they took effort to express themselves in the next class. It was observed that group discussion can be included as an activity to improve communication skills if conducted with well defined objectives.

**b) Extempore****Fig. 3.3**

In a professional environment employees have to attend meetings, make presentations, participate in discussions and work with groups. To prepare the learners of the experimental group, extempore, which is similar to a brain storming session was another activity conducted for students. This act aids to think about the topic and to voice ideas in front of others. Oral communication skill is necessary in both personal and professional life. Extempore is an unrehearsed speech delivered without preparation and it requires great effort to deliver an extempore successfully as it has to be spontaneous moreover with little groundwork. Corporate world considers extempore as one of the evaluation techniques while recruiting employees. At present, organisations pay more prominence on employing wholesome individuals who have analytical skill and resort to wise and quick action. Employees have to regularly interact with top-level management and clients with utmost ease and resourcefulness

apart from completing individual responsibilities. Creating general awareness and competent to prepare any topic is a fundamental quality to participate and excel in extempore. Updating on a regular basis of what is happening around the world is an essential criterion for active participation. All these primary information was given before starting the session.

In day to day life we involve in different communication activities like listening, information exchange, advising, persuading, instructing and group discussion for problem-solving. More than written communication frequently we indulge in oral communication in interpersonal, group level and organisational level. It was identified that students were tensed regarding expressing their knowledge than learning it. Standing in front of the audience, organising ideas in a sequential manner and expressing it clearly appeared to be a tedious task for learners. Oral communication can be of two types; one is done with clear agenda and thorough preparation as in a formal meeting and the second kind is spontaneous and the speaker will not get time to plan or prepare. Extempore motivated the students to practice the second variety of oral communication. As in any other oral communication speaker has to take care of pronunciation, accent, audibility, clarity, eye contact, body language and mannerisms. One has to be presentable and calm in front of the audience as a tensed look will create the impact that the speaker is not confident about what he says. Adding suitable examples or citing relevant incidents may create clear understanding. Students were provided with such kind of general tips for improvement.

Oral communication is a combination of several factors like understanding by active listening, non-verbal communication style and conciseness of topic. The general assumption is that students pursuing professional course like engineering are aware of basic linguistic rules and therefore teaching speaking skill is irrelevant at

that stage. It was observed that this is a misconception and there are lot of students even do not know how to write a leave application. The challenge of the experiment was to identify the needs of the individual learners and the best way to figure out their difficulties was to monitor and understand how the learners perform a task in the class. A few students were called randomly and gave easy and familiar topics to speak in a few words and many of them faced difficulties due to lack of confidence, lack of familiarity with the topic, stage fear and introvert nature. To acquire such skills, task-based approach was the effective method. As a beginning, one day before itself a list of twenty topics including shopping, in a hospital, in airport and attending a ceremony were given and asked the learners to prepare all the topics. This made them familiar with topics and they felt relaxed. Once they were confident to address the audience, as in real extempore, the topic was given on the spot and the student had to speak instantaneously. Repeated practice motivated them to update their knowledge and to express ideas within a short span of time effectively.

The objectives behind conducting extempore in classroom were to build confidence to speak in English, to provide learners an experience of spontaneous interaction, to give a chance to benefit from noticing how others express similar ideas, to engage learners in using language purposefully and cooperatively, to make learners participate in a complete interaction, to offer chances to try out different communication strategies and make the learners confident that they can achieve communication goals. More than practising in front of mirror communication skills can be improved better by interacting with others in live situations as suggestions and feedback from the audience may act as guidelines to develop further. Acquiring communication effectiveness is the purpose behind practising different activities. Teaching language is out of question at college level and what teachers can do is

make the students to improve vocabulary and motivate to achieve communication skills. The prime focus of engineering students will be on the core subjects and it was a tedious task to draw attention on communication classes.

In extempore, students do not know beforehand which topic they have to choose from, for this reason, presenting extempore require both language proficiency and presence of mind. Formulating ideas and presenting it logically and instantly to the audience is the real challenge for the speaker. To confront all this requires both confidence and familiarity with a wide range of vocabulary and linguistic structures. In those institutions, where language lab was functioning, the students were taken to laboratory and played several audios and videos to make them familiar with speech style and presentation techniques. While one student was making the presentation, others were asked to evaluate them. A score sheet was created for this purpose including features like language fluency, topic explanation, sequencing ideas, audibility, pronunciation and body language and the mark has to be put out of 30. Along with the students, the researcher also evaluated the performances. As a positive note, certain students requested for a second chance for presentation expecting that they can do better than previous performance.

In group discussion, audience's attention will be on all the performers and every one can speak in a relaxed sitting posture but in extempore focus will be on a single person and it is high responsibility for the speaker. Students needed more time to be comfortable with extempore speech than group discussion. Learners viewed it comfortable to speak for 2 or 3 minutes without preparation, on a given topic if the topics are within their areas of interest.

Initially they were hesitant to come forward and speak up, but the training altered their attitude and it appeared to be an interesting task and they acknowledged that performing extempore make them more confident to speak in English while participating in other oral performances.

## c) Debate



**Fig. 3.4**

The purpose behind learning a language is to use it meaningfully in appropriate situations. In the research, the next strategy to make the learners capable to use the language as per needs was to adopt Content Based Instruction (CBI). Debate plays an important role in CBI as these tasks definitely integrate content, language, and strategy objectives. Activities like debate necessitate students to master content and gain conceptual knowledge, while using language in meaningful ways. It involves critical thinking, give emphasis to research skills, enhance public speaking skills, promote autonomous and collaborative learning, and encourage positive assessment. Conducting debate in classroom has many advantages; rather than group discussion, in debate there will be more competitive spirit, since it is like argument, both groups will always find ways to oppose the other group and to substantiate the ideas of their own group. The real aim is not to fail the opposite group but to find the pros and cons of the topic through healthy arguments. In future, students may need all

these linguistic skills and activities like this will prepare them to face those real life situations.

To initiate the task, general instructions about debate were given and then selected two groups of students, each group included six students and they were made to sit in a semi circle form so that each member would have face to face contact and the audience also could view all the participants. For learners' convenience general topics of their interest like grading system, reservation system and age of marriage, whether social networking sites boon or ban? Do we need reservation in education system? Do we need politics inside the campus? Urbanisation and its aftermaths were selected. Participants were given five minutes to think and organise their ideas. It was highlighted that along with participation they have to take care of body language, eye contact, audibility and clarity in presentation. The participants were guided to respect each other and not to interfere or hurt while the other member is speaking. Like in group discussion, initiating the session and supporting co- members is considered as a positive note in debate also. The session was for ten minutes and the researcher took the role of moderator. The audience were also asked to observe and evaluate the performance. As the debate will be conducting again with a new topic, those who watched the session also showed keen interest as in next session, audience will be the participants. Debate can be considered as a problem solving method also. All the aspects of the topic will be evaluating critically in debate so one reach to justifiable conclusion after the sitting. One needs in depth knowledge on the issue to argue and validate the view point. This skill is essential to present the findings of a study which will be useful in future as engineers.



From ancient period onwards the general notion of learning a foreign language was to learn the rules behind the language. Sometimes those who know the grammar rules well may not be able to make use of the language to convince others or to explain ideas. Participating in events like debate will make them confident to argue and fix on to their views. In many conversations participants may have different points and opinions about the topic. The techniques and strategies to perform can be learned by observing and listening to other debates helps to understand how to speak and defend own ideas while performing. For this purpose students were shown some videos. As it is like a training session one has to learn the basic manners to be followed in debate. Participating in debates is the best way to platform the skill and show how well informed you are about the topic and the capability to convince others.

After interacting with the faculty in charge of placement cell, it was evident that most of the candidates showed poor performance in debate while attending interviews. Even those who scored good result in written examination found it difficult to excel in performance based tests. In personal interview, one way or the other they manage to express ideas by thorough preparation of the topic and with a well organised self introduction. In debate and group discussion they will be getting the topic on the spot and will not get time to prepare and this makes them less confident to speak up. Those who had language fluency and general awareness about things happening around the world could deliver better presentation. Repeated practice was suggested to improve presentation skill and to make confident them confident.

Students follow different styles for learning and instructors have to adopt different strategies while teaching. Especially in language teaching one method will not be the ultimate solution for teaching. Adopting multiple methods will improve

linguistic skills and a single activity will not be enough for classroom practice. Different students will be interested in diverse activities. Debate is an activity which involves critical thinking and it nurtures and assures active engagement of students. Not only analysing and arguing, students will learn how to clarify ideas and present it clearly before the audience. Simultaneously it develops speaking skill, listening skill and critical thinking skills. Apart from language learning, debate can be conducted in other Engineering subject classrooms also. Subject like Mechanics which is based on concepts was selected for debate and for more clarifications and assistance the concerned faculty was requested to be present there during debate. Students acknowledged that it lead to better understanding than just hearing the theories from the lecturer. When they were asked to write the scientific idea which was chosen for debate, they could write it more clearly than the previous attempt.

The theory of Constructivism points out that we generate knowledge and meaning by the active interaction between experience and idea. It was found that information and facts which have learned and even memorised, will stay passive unless it is used or reproduced and will not entail active building of knowledge. Learning diminishes if the student takes passive role and remains inactive in classrooms. All these aspects lead to the importance of conducting activities to transform the learners from passive to active mode. To cater the students' attention teacher can include different activities. Debate was suggested as an activity across the curriculum as it was found to be successful in other subjects also. For better and deep learning of course contents, debate can be used as an effective tool. To create more interest, a score board was maintained during the debate and the moderator marked points for each view and if one group failed to counter argue or contradict one's own view, negative point was also marked. This made the participants more active. The

final score of each group was displayed on the board. The students who remained as audience were asked to find the best performer. By this way, debate was an exciting and challenging activity for learners. After few sessions students gave the feedback that they are now trained to think multi aspects of the topic and are interested and enthusiastic to identify issues. Activity like debate encourages interaction among students and develops multi faceted thinking and comprehension skill.

#### d) Role play



**Fig. 3.5**

Several approaches have been adopted from ancient period onwards to teach language and one of them was Activity based learning or Task based learning. Tasks are the core unit of language teaching in this approach. Linguists consider it as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching as both the approaches have similarities in basic concepts. The fundamental ideas of Task based learning are; activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning, activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks promote language learning. Tasks are proposed as useful vehicles for applying these principles. Theatre activities such as role play and dramatisation can be considered as meaningful tasks to be used in language learning. Role play, simulation and drama are the terms associated with acting and language learning. Role play is enacting a particular role in an imaginary situation, simulation is taking the role of a character which may happen

in real life and drama is depicting an incident or situation. These activities can be implemented effectively if there is thorough preparation and good coordination between teachers and students.

Students were inactive in classrooms and remained as passive listeners. For this reason, it was planned to introduce different kinds of activities to ensure their dynamic participation. To involve all the students, the audience were assigned to give feedback for the performance. Getting an immediate response was an opportunity for further improvement. Regular participation will develop pronunciation, vocabulary and usages. An atmosphere in which teacher and students are comfortable was the primary requirement to conduct such activities and students' need and requirements were considered while selecting the situation. Teachers can select an act that will arouse the interest of students gives an opportunity to practice the learned subject. One way to keep the role play interesting is to let the students choose the situation themselves. They were asked to suggest themes that are familiar and students referred to books and watched other performances to get more options.

Seminars and conferences are being organised by several institutions on the topics related to theatre, role play and dramatisation. In connection to this, the researcher has attended and presented a paper on role play and participation throughout the session helped to explore innovative aspects of theatre. Factual preparation and concrete description of roles offer clear picture for the students and bringing real life situations will be helpful to understand how to behave in such circumstance. To get the correct pronunciation and accent several video clips were showed and students watched it as model. The class was divided into different groups to manage conveniently. As home assignments, students were asked to read several books and to write their own script to be enacted at their turn. Selected situations for

role play were a doctor, shop keeper, teacher and politician. The preparation enhanced not only speaking skill but reading and writing skills of the learners also improved.

After the performance, time was spent on debriefing and it was not to point out or scrutinise to correct mistakes. After role play, the students may feel satisfied for using their linguistic knowledge in a useful manner and the sense of fulfilment will disappear if every mistake is being analysed. The aim of feedback was to discuss what had happened in the role play and what they have learned. Drama and role play are learner centred activities and the teacher has the role of a mentor or a director. It integrates language skills in a natural way as one has to listen, read and comprehend during the preparation. The preparation combines both verbal and non verbal aspects of language, thus bringing together both mind and body, and restoring the balance between physical and intellectual aspects of learning. Drama and role play bridge the gap between thought and expression, rote memorising and real usage. It was observed that participation in such activities foster self awareness and confidence.

#### **e) Interview skills**

One of the major objectives of education is to achieve job and it was relevant to give orientation on interview skills. After completing studies attending interview is the stepping stone to enter into a profession and along with subject knowledge communication skill is essential to excel in interview. Realising the situation, the research focused to improve the presentation skill of learners. Excellent presentation focuses on elements like pronunciation, speed, clarity, audibility and most essentially confidence level of the speaker about the subject matter. By concentrating on these aspects interviewee can do an enhanced oral presentation. Along with oral features body language has to be maintained in a proper manner. Generally it is considered

that the interviewer may observe the candidate from the moment candidate enters to the doorstep and the learners were cautioned to concentrate on the manner of walking, sitting posture and crucially to avoid unwanted mannerisms and gestures. Dress code is also another significant part while going to attend interviews. Learners were advised to avoid colourful costumes and gaudy accessories. Formal dress and minimum make up will be suitable for such kind of official visit. In short, while preparing for interview the candidate has to focus on many elements and it needs overall development.

Mock interview was organised to practice interview skills. Subject experts and placement cell coordinators were included in the interview board and this made the session more realistic. Interview was conducted in two levels; personal and subject oriented and it was scheduled for fifteen to twenty minutes. This session was arranged in front of the classroom so that others could observe and appreciate. Both the faculties and students gave feedback to improve. Some students requested a second chance to perform when they realise the mistake and wished to rectify it. The placement coordinators assisted to follow the formal interview style and this made the session more effective. Students found it useful and they responded that it was a like a training session before attending the real interview. Students were suggested to follow formal way of communication and concentrate on body language whenever they do oral presentation.

**a) Writing Assignments****Fig. 3.6**

Group discussion, extempore, role play and debate were the activities conducted to improve speaking skill as part of classroom activities. Several sub skills also would be enhanced by practising these acts. The next focus was on to improve writing skill. According to traditional linguists speaking and writing are known as productive skills as these two help to express thought and idea. Several written activities like writing short note, fill in the blanks, letter writing and report writing were included during the session. The basic concepts were thoroughly explained before assigning tasks; whether the passage is too long or short, there should be a beginning, middle and an end. By reading the introductory sentence itself, reader should get a clear idea of what the passage is about. The middle portion is the explanatory part, where the concepts are explained one by one. For more clarity, suitable examples or relevant ideas can be included. In the conclusion or end, the



above mentioned ideas can be summarised or can give a gist of the whole passage, this will help to emphasise the main concepts. Students were reminded that while writing examination also these steps can be adopted.

Organising ideas and presenting it in clear language are the essential factors for a written document. Keeping this order in mind, one can write a rough draft first. Dividing the whole passage into several parts will help to have more clarity. Collecting data related to the topic is also very important. It is not important to collect a large number of reference materials, fundamental aspect is to collect relevant matters according to the topic. Noting down the source of information may help to re-check materials for future reference. Editing and re-writing will make the final draft more refined. Learners were recommended to maintain a working bibliography along with data collection.

Paragraph writing was the first task assigned, students were asked to write a paragraph on a topic as per their interest. The format of beginning, middle and end were asked to follow strictly. The researcher asked to write about their goal in life or about their favourite profession. The next task was assigned to improve note taking skill; while listening to a lecture or reading a book, it is very useful to take down notes. Reader can note down all the relevant points briefly without leaving the connection or can write significant points. Practice will improve note taking skill and these notes can be used for future reference. Initial task is to make a rough draft and to design what all points they have to include and how they can present it in a sequential order. While editing the rough draft one can delete the unimportant idea or include more points, then can move to the final draft. As it is a short paragraph, the total time given was half an hour. This method can be adopted for writing long passages also.

For note taking, three methods are there; a) Outlining, b) Mind mapping, c) Cornell system. The learner can adopt different techniques for outlining; to give hierarchical structure alphabets, numbers, Roman numerals or bullets are used. Outlining is very useful while taking notes from books and presentations, for lectures it has some limitations if the speaker is not maintaining connection. In case of books and formal presentation, there is assurance of sequential progress and the reader or audience can find the relationship between ideas. For lectures, the learner has to adopt mind mapping method. As per this system, the central idea is written on the middle of the sheet of paper. When a new topic is introduced, a branch from the centre is drawn and writes the subtopic at the end of the branch, if the subtopic has further divisions, more branches can be drawn further. The advantage is that, if the point is under first heading and we are on the fourth one, we can easily draw it on the first branch. Likewise, if a point connects to two different ideas, by drawing a branch the two ideas can be connected easily.

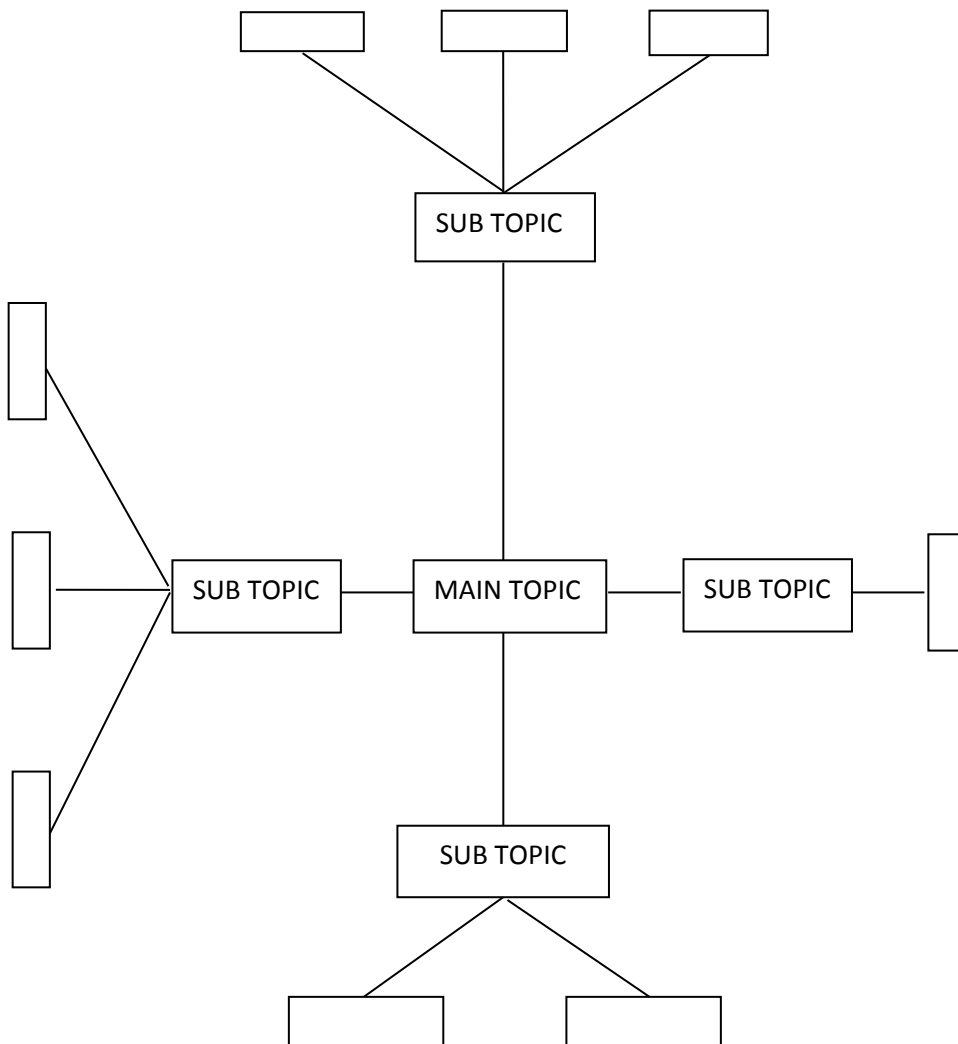
The Cornell system was another effective method for note taking. It was developed by Walter Pauk, professor of Education at Cornell University, New York. In this method, the sheet of paper will be divided into three different sections; 3.5 inches space from the bottom of a sheet and draw a line across the width of the page to mark this space. Draw another line to top, about 2.5 inches from the left- hand edge of the sheet. The largest section is the note taking column, in this space one can follow outlining or mind mapping as per convenience. The column on the left is 'recall column', here hints, questions about the corresponding item of the note taken can be written. The third and last column is the summary column, where the summary of the whole notes can be written in two or three sentences. Students were asked to practice different outlining methods in note taking and to develop this as habit

whenever read a book or attend class. Along with good comprehension, writing skill also will enhance by this act.

**a) Different Outlining methods**

- |    |      |    |   |
|----|------|----|---|
| 1. | i.   | a) | * |
| 2. | ii.  | b) | * |
| 3. | iii. | c) | * |
| 4. | iv.  | d) | * |
| 5. | v.   | e) | * |

**b) Mind Mapping**



**Fig. 3.7**

**c) The Cornell System**

**Table 3.3**

RECALL COLUMN	NOTE TAKING COLUMN
	SUMMARY COLUMN

**b) Summarising**

Briefing helps to understand the core content easily and it is a skill to condense the matter without losing essential points. Summarising was another task assigned to practice written skill. It leads the learners to comprehend the text materials and to reproduce it in own words. Summarising notes helps to reduce the text to main points. While preparing for exams it is very useful to maintain summarised versions of reference materials. A good summary gives clear idea regarding what the text or article is about. In journals, there will be abstracts which gives clue concerning the whole article and in that context abstracts are similar to summaries. To get an overall idea about summarising, the students were asked to read several abstracts or plot summaries of novels. In school level, students have to summarise a given passage in language exams. Two common mistakes commit in that situation are; either writing down everything word by word or a few sentences or forgetting to write important points and finally it will be too little to be helpful. Making good summary is a tedious task and only by practice one can acquire this skill.

Students were given a newspaper article to summarise. All of them were assigned the same article so that it will be easy to compare and evaluate. In textbooks the key points are either in bold letters or highlighted by some other methods. In a well written article, usually each paragraph will have at least one important point. Learners were asked to mark out the important points by underlining it or by using highlighter. The next step was to write down the underlined sections in their own words. The general concept is that if the chapter is of 2000 words, summary has to be around 200 words. From a good newspaper article reader should get answers for 5 'wh' questions (what, when, why, where, who) and how? The investigator suggested that after summarising also these questions or at least to the possible numbers have to be answered, and then only we can claim that the summary is effective.

Instead of summarising, when the student has to write on a new topic, the first work is to do research. To collect data, one can depend on newspaper, book, internet, magazine or can interact with resource person. After collecting information from various resources, the next stage is to combine them and turn into one set of notes and comments. Once the materials are collated, then have to organise the points and can include own ideas while arranging it. Sequencing of materials can be based on chronology, importance or division of sub topics. After organising, the writer can prepare a rough draft to get an outline of the write up and in the next stage is of editing the rough draft for addition or deletion of materials or to change the order of presentation and then can move on to final draft. While writing stage, one has to consider certain aspects like; how long the essay has to be? Whether it is analytical, descriptive or chronological? Who is going to read it? Analysing these aspects will be helpful to make the writing more effective. The researcher explained these concepts clearly, so that learners can explore and practice it while doing written assignments.

The different stages of writing are easily represented by the acronym ‘CODER’ - **C**ollect your ideas, **O**rganise your ideas, **D**rafting, **E**ditting the draft, **R**evising the draft. Based on the topic, materials can be collected from different resources. Noting down the list of reference materials may be helpful for future reference and clarifications. According to the relevance or chronological order the materials can be organised in a particular manner. At the drafting stage, ideas can be noted down devoid of bothering about the language and tone of a formal description. The next stage is of editing the rough draft, either one can seek the help of subject experts or peer group members for suggestions to improve. The writer can also do self editing by referring various resources. After revising the edited draft, the final stage is to write the fair draft. The final writing up can be typed or handwritten based on the situation. In formal occasions it is advisable to type and submit the content. Irrespective of subjects, learners were asked to summarise several materials as it will help for exam preparation and better understanding. They were also assigned to summarise speech and distribute among classmates to evaluate. The corresponding teacher was suggested to evaluate and comment on the learners’ writing. Summaries prepared on prescribed syllabus were made available to everyone by uploading it on Moodle. In this way classroom learning and online learning were integrated simultaneously.

### **c) Writing Memos**

The next intention was to introduce several formal written communication tools and one of it was memos. In office and business communication, day to day information has to be sent to specific group of people. Memos are the simplest form of written material and are written like letters, but are different in two aspects. One is that, memos are not meant for one particular person and are therefore less impersonal;

secondly, format is also less formal when compared to a business letter. Memos can be of two types; short memo and a detailed one. The researcher provided adequate samples for the students to refer and asked them to write on an imaginary situation like a memo written by an institution director addressing to non- teaching staff members.

**Table 3.4**

TO: (Readers name and designation)

FROM: (Sender's name and designation)

DATE: (Current date)

SUBJECT: (Highlighting what the memo is about)

Delivering the message/ information briefly



**Table 3.5**

Internal Memorandum	
TO: (Reader's name and designation)	}
FROM: (Sender's name and designation)	
DATE: (Current date)	
SUBJECT: (Highlighting what the memo is about)	
Presents the information/ message in detail.	
Yes, I agree	}
No, I disagree	
Signature	

**D) Writing an Essay/ Article**

In business and engineering communication writing descriptions and manuscripts is an important task. Formal writing can be done by following certain steps; and the common stages are represented by the acronym TOWER. Each letter stands for one process;

T- **Thinking** about ideas related to the topic

O- **Organising** information by outlining, flow charts or mind mapping

W- **Writing** the first draft

E- **Editing** for re-arrangement and correction

R- **Rewriting** the final version

The pre-writing stage includes thinking, making notes and organising your ideas. The writing stage is at which all the ideas turn into sentences. Focusing on certain elements will help to make the writing more of use; i) use language appropriate for readers- understanding the level of readers will help to decide the writing style. If the readers are not related to that particular profession the writing should not include jargons (technical terms related to profession), if jargons are unavoidable, it has to be explained clearly, ii) use a reasonable sentence length- long sentences are difficult for readers to keep the ideas connected, so average sentence length can be around 20 words, iii) organising ideas in space and time- while describing events or processes, iv) Ensure coherence- coherence means logical relationship between the ideas and the presentation. A logical order has to be maintained among sentences.

The post writing stage is also known as editing stage. The first draft can be considered as rough draft. Editing is required to make the writing more refined. The article prepared by a single person can be given to someone who is well versed in the corresponding area for reviewing and if it is a group work, at the final stage, every member can sit together and discuss about the materials of each member and can compile each section to a single draft. Accuracy, completeness, logical presentation and the language can be evaluated while editing. When the article is prepared as a group work, there is a chance of difference in style and lack of coherence, so while

compiling it has to be given extra care. Word choices, spellings, grammar, punctuation and form can be checked in both contexts. If it has to be submitted, it is advisable and type and give in. The standard format is Times New Roman font and size 12 and title centre aligned. After providing samples learners were made to write articles and evaluation and feedback were also ensured. The researcher suggested practicing this format as it will be constructive while preparing a project report. An organised style of writing helps to create manuals and manuscripts.

### **Technical Report Writing**

Learners were prepared to write different types of written records as part of the research. In the field of engineering communication, technical writing is one of the key elements of communication. It is different from expressive or descriptive writing and mostly it takes the form of reports. Technical report is a form of document where processes are described, recorded and analysed, it can also be of the different phases of a product life cycle or responses to a certain experiment or exercise. Purpose, audience and tone are the three fundamental aspects to be considered while technical report writing. The purpose and audience help to decide the tone. If it is addressed to higher officials or superiors the tone has to be requesting or recommending action and if it is to junior or subordinate, it can be directive or instructive. When the report is to present a proposal or to convince others, the tone has to be persuasive. Technical reports are very specifically aimed at achieving certain purposes and a well written report can fulfil, exactly what it is intended to do. The students were given awareness about the relevance of technical writing and asked to go through several samples to get acquainted with the style.

For a well written and well designed piece of writing, several factors have to be considered even before the process of writing begins. The objectives have to be defined very specifically at the outset itself. The writer should possess clear idea about the purpose of documentation, whether it is to simply record a process and to keep it for reference or is it a proposal or plan which needs acceptance and have to analyse whether it is desirable or undesirable. Generally technical writing is to convey information. As mentioned earlier, presentation is an important part and it can take the form of; i) points and sub-points- presenting the relevant aspects as easily accessible to the readers, ii) using tables- including tables to compare or contrast factors or for highlighting features, iii) flow charts- if a lengthy procedure has to be explained in a sequential order legibly, the easiest way is to use flow charts.

Technical writing has a very specific audience unlike other writings and it is important to identify and analyse the audience and prepare report accordingly. Learners were well explained about various situations to prepare reports. For technically literate audience, there can be prolific use of technical terms and it will help to make the document precise and compact. If the audience is non- technical, jargons and technical terms have to be minimised and when it is unavoidable, have to be well explained. When the report is meant to educate the audience on technical matters, it can take the format of a text book and if it is to issue instructions for the use of gadget, the writing can be a list of instructions or a flow chart. After giving various situations students were asked to prepare reports on each context. Another assignment was to collect different types of technical reports and arranged a discussion to make them familiar with diverse aspects. More than theoretical explanation practice of every item was ensured throughout the session.

### c) **Writing Resume & CV**

The initial item that an employer comes across regarding the candidate will be a resume and it gives an overall idea about the employee. Resume is a French word means summary, popularly it is used to denote a brief account of an applicant's details to secure a job and known as professional horoscope. It is a document which contains summary of the personal details, relevant job experience, educational background, skills, goals and interests of an applicant. Every job seeker has to prepare a resume or CV while applying for an occupation. The presentation mode of resume gets changed from time to time and one has to update and prepare a relevant job profile. The general trend is to prepare a resume and taking multiple copies of it and submitting the same along with every application irrespective of the employment requisites. This tendency has to be changed, based on the type of the job; the resume has to be designed. Different profession demands diverse job skills and the applicant may have qualified a variety of courses. Based on the requisite, the candidate can highlight the relevant qualification. Considering this aspect it is very important to prepare resume clearly in a well defined manner. By referring several models and by interacting with seniors, fresh applicant can get familiarised with recent trends.

CV is an abbreviation of 'curriculum vitae', which is a written record of the candidate's education and experience while applying for a job. Superficially, CV and resume appear to be similar and comparable but there are certain basic differences in purpose, layout and approach. CV is a traditional method of presenting data, while resume evolved much later. A resume is used for business employments, HR fields and private sector jobs, whereas a CV is used while applying for academic, scientific, research, university, fellowship and other educational positions. Resume is brief and concise and has a free style enumerating the candidate's relevant credentials in

reverse chronological order. A CV is a longer version providing applicant's personal, professional and educational details and information will be chronologically arranged extending up to four or five pages. Name, full address, phone number, other personal details, educational qualification, extra-curricular activities, work experience, achievements, activities and interests, references are the essential credentials in resume or CV even though the order and presentation style differ in both. While including reference, it is very important to get permission from the concerned person and the official details and contact details have to be included in the resume or CV. It is advisable to include reference of those persons who are experts in the corresponding field and they must be known to the applicant personally. All the students were asked to prepare and submit their own resume and CV after explaining the related aspects. Discussions were carried over on the submitted scripts and gave suggestions to modify.

#### d) **Letter writing**

Technology has developed immensely but in certain contexts we make use of written documents and it is relevant to practice corresponding formats. After practicing several written works, the next intention was to familiarise with leave application and letter to a friend. Writing leave application is an essential step while applying for leave and as it is a record the format and style have to be clear and in proper manner. In formal situations, leave applications are submitted either by hand or by mail. The researcher could witness several letters with conspicuous spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Instead of 'grant me leave' many write 'grand me leave' and for 'yours' write 'your's' like this, several mistakes could be seen regularly.

Letter writing includes both formal and informal letters and is required in various situations. Leave applications and covering letter for job application are the most common and frequently used types of formal letters. Before introducing one sample for both formal and informal letter, all the letters written by the students were collected and shuffled among them to review. They were asked to do an overall evaluation of the letters and to note down comments. After that certain hints to make the letters were discussed. In formal letters it is advisable to follow the format strictly and to convey the matter precisely as possible at the same time clearly. The essential details to be included in a formal letter are; place and date, from address, to address, salutation, subject, the content, conclusion, name and signature. Usually these are left intended and when a letter is to be submitted in an office or institution, it is better to type and print it in the standard format. It is advisable to mention complete address with contact number. The initial task is to getting familiarised with the format. The content or the body part can be learnt by observing several samples.

More than informal letters, formal letters were focused in the training part. During informal situations recent trend is not to depend on letters and sharing of information is done mainly through phone calls or text messages. Though technology has developed tremendously, leave application and covering letter for job application are still mandatory. The submission format may be different but the format is at most similar to the earlier periods. Several samples of letters were distributed among learners to refer. All were given imaginary situations and asked to write a letter as the situation demands. The content part can be written in a short paragraph of four or five sentences including all the essential details. As the content part will be precise including the relevant details, the general notion is that the personality of the individual is reflected in the letter he writes. The importance of letter is not

completely diminished and it is constructive to practice the art of letter writing.

Learners were asked to submit different types of letters on various situations.

### Stage VI- Conducting Online Activities

#### Distribution of activities

**Table 3.6**

No	Item	Aim	Objective
1	Audio/ video	To enhance listening skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To analyse the script of audio/ video and to reproduce it</li> </ul>
2	Phone in interview	To improve speaking skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get exposure to different types of interview</li> </ul>
3	Comprehension passage	To develop reading skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To examine the text and to respond accurately</li> </ul>
4	Description of a topic/picture	To practice writing skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explain a situation/event</li> </ul>

Several classroom activities were conducted as part of the intervention of research to improve different communication skills. Limited time allotted for



classroom teaching and inadequate infrastructure were the constraints to carry out various activities. To overcome this, the convenient solution was to conduct online activities, which can be done without physical constraints and time barrier. Teacher assisted online activities and activities without monitoring of the instructor were arranged for learners. Students were familiar with social networking sites and all had the habit of searching Google for gathering information and clarifying doubts. Even those who could not afford a laptop or personal system were using internet on mobile phones. They also made use of college internet lab and internet browsing centres. There was not even a single student without e-mail address.

Popularity of mobile applications like whatsapp and hike also raised the number of internet users. Students are frequently using social networking sites and chat groups in whatsapp and messenger. They used to share question papers and assignments through whatsapp groups and they acknowledged it is very easy and convenient to share text, audio and video message instantly. During vacation or holidays or when they are absent, notes or doubts are shared and clarified through such groups. In some institutions even teachers form online groups with students. Most of the institutions have their own whatsapp groups including all the staff members and they confirmed it as very useful to share information instantly. At this juncture it was planned to explore the possibilities of online forums in communication skill training. Two online platforms were created for training purpose, [communication.moodlecloud.com](http://communication.moodlecloud.com) and [communication869.wordpress.com](http://communication869.wordpress.com). These two websites offered immense opportunities to conduct different activities and training sessions.

All the staff members who were interested to improve communication skills apart from those who handled Communication classes were given awareness about

the learning websites and its possibilities. They were motivated to create one such website and upload their subject content in it. They were also suggested to form a group including other staff members from the same institution or other colleges who handle the same subject to discuss academic perspectives. Uploading notes regarding each topic and previous or model question papers also will be beneficial for the learners. Instructors can model on official sites of KTU or IIT and other prominent institutions for guidelines. Materials based on the syllabus will help the students for exam preparation and reference. As these websites provide clear guidelines for how to create and manage contents, even the learner with basic computer knowledge can manage the sites easily.

The online activities were organised in a manner to focus on all the four communication skills. During classroom interactions several activities were conducted to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Online activities were mainly uploaded in the form of assignments. Audio and video bits were assigned to analyse the listening skill of the learners as only by active listening they will be able to explain the main ideas of what they heard. In most of the interviews especially for jobs abroad, phone in interview may be one of the selection criteria. To have an exposure, the researcher conducted mock phone in interviews and different subject experts assisted the session to ask over subject related questions. Comprehension passages are the usual assignment from school level onwards. Similar to that, passages on various topics with social relevance and questions from the given essays were uploaded to enhance reading skill. After reading the passage thoroughly they had to give appropriate answers. Related to extempore students were given topics to describe and along with it some pictures were shown to explain. In this manner, all the communication skills were practiced and analysed in online activities.

## a) Moodle activities

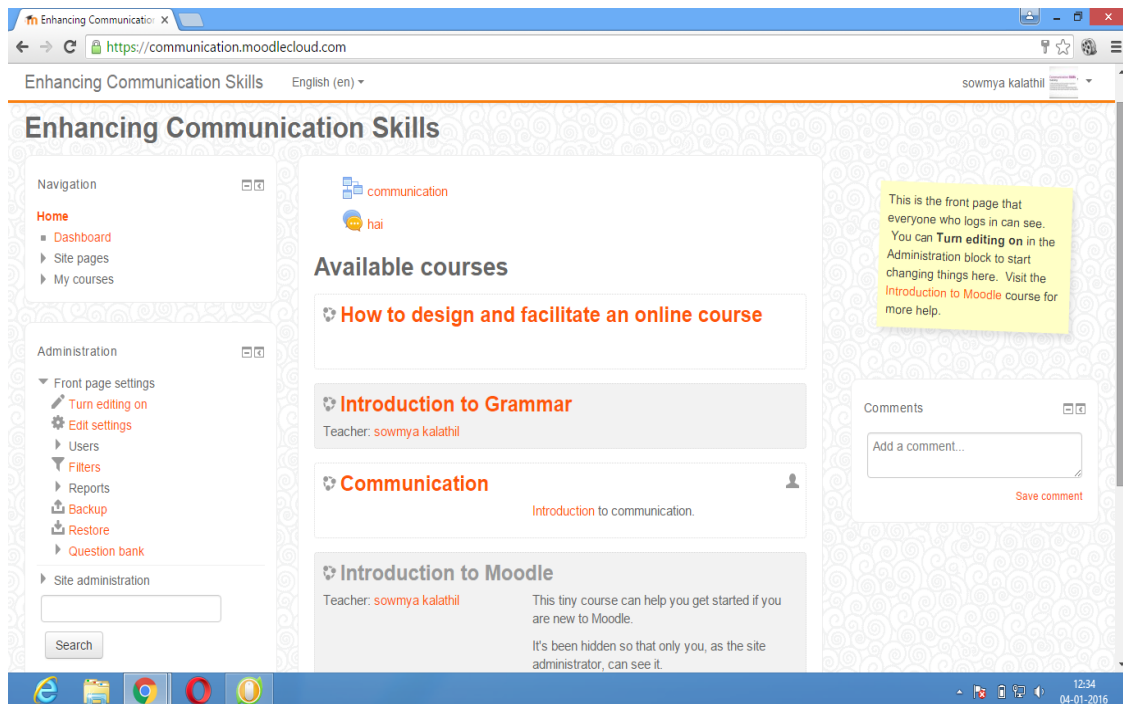


Fig. 3.8

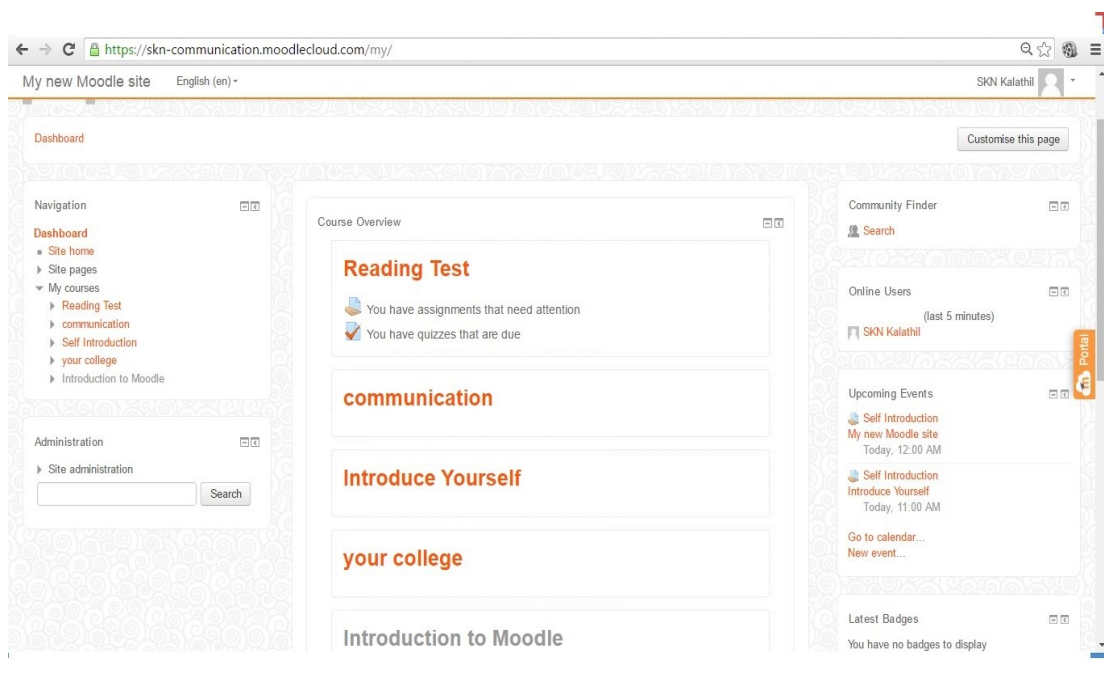
Activities to enhance communication skills were divided and conducted in both online and offline to manage the teaching hours. Group activities like debate and group discussion were mainly conducted in classroom and written assignments were carried out in online session. A website named Communication. moodlecloud.com was created to teach and interact with students through online. A general introduction about online courses; “How to Design and Facilitate Online Course” was included as the first module. It was incorporated with the intention to get a formal introduction to online learning so that students will be familiar with a new learning pattern. A lesson regarding “Introduction to Moodle” was also added and this helped to have a beginning about Moodle and how to manage online courses. The course was useful and effective for both instructors and learners. Even students could start their own

Moodle site and manage different lessons among classmates when the situation demands.

Selected fifty students were added as users and they were enrolled to each course one by one. The researcher was the administrator of the site and by enrolling students it was possible to monitor learner's activities individually. Each student had their own account and they could sign-in and go through the contents whenever they are free. Different modules regarding communication skills were added to the website; 'Introduction to Communication skills', 'Presentation Skill', 'Comprehension Passages', and 'Basics of Grammar and Usages' were some of the items. At the end of each module either objective or descriptive type of assignments were given and responses were duly evaluated and graded. Comments for correction and suggestions for further improvement were included in the grading section.

In each section, a comment box was included to express opinions or suggestions. To interact among each other and with the instructor a chat room named "hai" was created. Through this forum, learners could interact and share their ideas. As the website was greatly user friendly, it was comfortable to handle activities. After each session, an assignment was given and it could be uploaded directly or typed in a word file. Announcements regarding the course and activity were regularly given by group messaging or through e-mail. The fifty students enrolled were from different colleges and different branches. This provided exposure to interact and understand the atmosphere of other institutions. Learners were assigned course contents both individually and group wise. The group members were shuffled once in a while and a group leader was assigned to monitor the progress of the session.

Quiz and descriptive assignments were arranged at the end of each topic. Pictures were given to explain as per their imagination and dialogues with certain blanks to fill suitably were some of the questions. There was an option to set password for assignments and also could set particular time to attempt the question. Thus the student could open the task only with the password and that too during the assigned time only. Number of attempts also could be restricted if necessary. Through the reminder or calendar settings the learners were alarmed about future projects. Options like these offered more accuracy and objectivity for the test. If anyone does malpractice, the administrator could deactivate the particular account. The contents and all activities could be taken back up for future use.



**Fig. 3.9**

In the descriptive session some basic questions like self introduction and to introduce their college were given. During classroom interaction, already they had attempted these questions and repetition in online session was to verify how their attempt and to assess the improvement. Regarding content most of the students

confirmed improvement and made correction on errors committed during face to face session. A number of students had doubts regarding file uploading but with personal assistance it was rectified easily. Students were very much interested as online learning is an innovative experience to them. After the initial stage students were clustered and each group had a leader. The group leader at times took the role of a teacher. Apart from learning, group members were given current issues for discussion. This activity made the session more active. All started collecting information and updated knowledge regarding present issues. Word games, puzzles, linguistic items like idioms and proverbs were also added in between the lessons.

Students were motivated to create groups in social networking sites to share information. They were suggested to take account of people with similar interests in that group. Students were asked to use formal English even in social networking sites and to avoid short forms and slangs. Majority of students admitted that most of the time they even forget spellings of simple words and are depending on dictionary and prediction while typing. While writing by hand most of them were not confident about spellings or grammar and even in a short paragraph they committed several mistakes. They were encouraged to practice writing on any topic at least ten or fifteen minutes daily. Learners were also suggested to write diary everyday as it will familiarise to record incidents. Regular interaction in the target language for a period of time will improve their linguistic skills.

Other than Moodle, students were enrolled in websites like NPTEL to learn various courses. Faculties were requested to share notes through online and they acknowledged that it saved a lot of time and it was easy to handle soft copy of notes. Apart from Communication faculties some other instructors also showed interest to create Moodle sites especially those who had less teaching hours for classroom

teaching. Colleges which had poor infrastructure and difficulty to afford smart classrooms found online teaching effective. With Moodle teachers could easily share images, video, or any type of technology based study materials. Including other subjects made the students more familiar with the website and they learned quickly to handle the site activities.

## Using websites



**Fig. 3.10**

A website titled “communication869.wordpress.com” was created to publish communication skills developing modules. The contents were mainly prepared in the form of power point presentation and the major points were highlighted to make it more attractive. A general introduction about communication skills and topics like presentation skill, interview skill, writing CV and resume were included as modules. The website was like advertising one’s products. The posts could be shared in Twitter, facebook and other social networking sites as it will draw attention of more users. Learners could view the contents of wordpress site by logging to the website. It was like similar to any other website in use and there were no complicated or confusing aspects. The website has many elements to make it appear more attractive to the audience. The uploaded contents could be edited and modified after getting reviews and feedback. The administrator could get the status of viewership and messages from



audience. The website provides detailed user guide and instructions to manage the site. Apart from creating contents one can download or share links from other websites to the personal wordpress site. The modules can be in text, power point, audio or video format. There is no limit for the number of viewers and any number of users can watch the contents if they know the website address. The web address was shared through social networking sites and asked the learners to share among their peer groups. The objectives were to publish announcements regarding the course and make the learners aware about the possibilities of the site. Students who had interest in co-curricular activities or in entrepreneurship showed interest to use the site for future ventures. Faculties were also enthusiastic to exploit the platform to advertise their profile.

Evaluation is an indispensable part in learning process which gives feedback for the completed action. Classroom activities are usually monitored or done as per the instructions of the faculty and this directions help to conduct the correction part efficiently. The consciousness that the performances are being evaluated made the students to do their part seriously. Online activities are of two types, activities administered by the instructor and without the monitoring of the instructor. As the students were familiar with social networking sites, learning through these websites was not scrutinised by the instructor. Initially tips were given to take advantage of the possibilities of social networking sites for language learning. Facebook groups on various topics and links to quiz programmes help in learning process. All were suggested to download a good dictionary with phonetics in mobile phones. Mobile dictionaries are very useful to refer meanings instantly and it is advantageous to clarify meanings wherever and whenever the learner needs. Learners were recommended to join online interactive forums on various topics as per their interest.

The online forums will have members from all over the world and active groups will regularly update the content. Thus the viewers can get wide perspectives on different areas immediately.

Teaching communication skills was done through both online and offline, the next stage was giving evaluation test. Different activities for speaking, listening, reading and writing were assigned. Students showed remarkable improvement in communication skills and they had a strong inclination to improve linguistic ability. Faculties were suggested to continue activities because once they are discontinuing classroom or online activities gradually they may lose interest. The most important element was to make the students to continue the practiced activities regularly and faculties discussed about this aspect with students. Conducting mock interviews was another way to make them conscious of the significance of communication skills.

Learners were unaware or neglecting the learning possibilities of social media and they were more interested in chatting and updating status of their accounts. Instant sharing of messages, voice call and video call offer great possibility for learning. But most of the students were avoiding this opportunity and what they did generally was creating a group of friends or college mates and sharing information and commenting on that. For improving linguistic skills students were asked to read online articles regularly as once they are familiar with reading, in the next stage will be able to write comments or reviews for the materials. Those who are introvert or not confident can create a peer group and can upload the writings in the group so that other members can give suggestions and feedback. Practicing this regularly for a time period will improve confidence to write in blog or twitter. The effective way to improve communication skills is to practice regularly and social networking sites offer excellent platforms to showcase linguistic abilities.

**Stage VII- Facilitating the concerned faculty to reinforce the activities**

The objective of visiting students and arranging interactive session in the classroom was to make them realise the relevance of improving communication skills and to introduce various methods to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Before conducting activities in classroom the researcher had detailed discussions with the corresponding faculty in each institution. It helped to have understanding of the learning style and communication level of the learners. Factors like academic excellence of students, whether the faculty is subject expert or from some other streams, infrastructure and allotted teaching hours influenced the learning pattern. In several institutions especially in self financing colleges infrastructure was comparatively better and most of the colleges have set up language labs but the academic excellence of students was relatively not good as in government or aided colleges. These features influenced each other in case of language training.

Improving communication skills demand factors like good physical atmosphere, trained faculty and most importantly genuine effort from learners. The institutions which had trained English faculty allotted specific hours for communication and language labs were also functioning effectively. In some colleges other subject teachers were handling these hours and they did not have an opportunity to attend training programmes to teach English language and they taught as per their convenience and experience. While installing language laboratory the respective company will give training to run the system and may provide a manual regarding how to assign programmes in the class. This session is the only guideline for faculties and they find it difficult to train different communication skills as language is a dissimilar subject from science and it cannot be taught like other engineering subjects.

One of the significant aspects of the present research is to motivate the faculties in the visited institutions to organise various activities to enhance linguistic skills. Throughout the institution visit, the researcher had interaction with the faculty and welcomed them to be a part of classroom activities. Active support from them helped to conduct the performances more easily and as students are already familiar with the faculty they could adapt the new system quickly. The concerned teacher was introduced to different online platforms and they were requested to experience some of the online forums. Interaction with different faculties paved way to have innovative ideas and modify the planned methods. Each of them played an indispensable role in the training programme. Enthusiasm and positive response from the students motivated them to continue with more activities in communication classes.

### **Final Test**

Pre test and post test were the two important elements in the research. Pre test was conducted before implementing the blended method and post test carried out after the teaching programme. The four communication skills were concentrated in the study and the same were tested and analysed in both pre test and post test. A two hours test was arranged for students and was conducted through Moodle website. Question paper was prepared in four sections in such a manner to test listening, speaking, reading and writing. Total mark allotted was out of 20 and each section carried 5 marks. To check listening skill an audio of 3 minutes was uploaded and it was a speech on global warming. Students had to listen the speech and upload a summary of what they understood. For speaking skill learners were called over telephone and had to speak on a given topic for three minutes. To evaluate reading skill a passage on the importance of wearing seat belt was added and readers have to attempt ten multiple choice questions and one descriptive type question based on the

passage. To analyse writing skill, an image was uploaded and asked to describe it in around 150 words.



Fig. 3.11

All the fifty students of the experimental group participated in the final test. The exam was open to attend only during a fixed time and they had to finish it within the allotted time. Students were given a single chance to write the exam and editing was not possible once they upload the answers. Grading method was followed during the evaluation and along with grade comments for each response were given. The errors committed and how the answer could have been improved was noted in the comment box. Some responses were remarkable and the researcher enormously appreciated it. A badge with the logo of Moodle was designed to award for the high scoring learners. 90% of the students showed improvement in their communication

skills. Regular practice in both face to face interaction and online learning had made a tremendous change in their linguistic skills.

The study materials were downloadable for learners and they find it useful for reference. As per their request notes on several topics were uploaded after the exam also. The grading system was very convenient and all the responses of candidates were evaluated on the same day itself. Using the option 'notify student' the researcher could immediately inform the candidate about the result. Along with four communication skills, the current method of incorporating online and direct teaching and its impact was also analysed during the test. Majority of the students responded that blended method is more effective and motivating than the traditional teaching and learning style. Convenience in study time and immense opportunity for interaction are the remarkable and attractive elements in the recent method.

### **Digital Literature**

In the present study, digital literature was introduced to learners as a modern trend. Blended learning makes use of the possibilities of technology and incorporate latest aspects in teaching and learning. The new generation look into the digital world and the upcoming trends enthusiastically. Digital literature or e-literature is works that make use of the capabilities and contexts provided by the single or networked computer. Some among the broad e-lit category are; hypertext fiction and poetry (on and off the web), literature presented using Flash or other platforms, computer art installation, conversational characters also known as chatter boxes, literary apps, novels that take the form of e-mail, sms or blog, poems and stories that are generated by computers. Many collaborative writing projects allow readers to contribute to the text which may develop new ways of writing. The field of digital literature is an

evolving one and nowadays literature is not only migrating from print to electronic media but increasingly 'born digital' works are being created enormously. The basic difference between e-books, digitalised version of printed material and e-literature is that, the first one written and upgraded to digital format whereas e-lit is born digitally. The latter often include conceptual sound art but reading and writing remain the central objective.

Electronic literature do not include print literature in digitalised form and incorporate work of art which is created on a computer and meant to be read on a computer. In brief e-lit is to promote writing, publishing and reading in an electronic media. The varieties of digital literature are splendidly diverse and associated to print literature to some networked communities. Story space was one of the first hypertext authoring programme created by Michael Joyce, Jay David Bolter, and John B. Smith and then licensed to Mark Bernstein who has improved and maintained it. Earlier it worked for CDs or disks Macintosh or PC platforms. It was the major programme choice for digital writers of 1980s and 1990s (Hayles, 2007). With the advent of World Wide Web new authoring programmes were made available for writers. Options for graphics, colour and sound were more advanced in web.

In the 1990s e-mail novels were popular which were spread through mails. Later we could see literature dependent on mobile technologies which ranged from short fiction delivered serially over phones to geographical location narratives based on GPS technologies. Some stories were mixed with games or vice versa and the receiver could enjoy both game and fiction. Along with novel and stories drama was also set in digital format. In the twentieth century there was an explosion in interest of readers towards books and in the twenty first century digital literature came to field. To create more effect some writers associated with graphic designers and painters

while creating their work. Such kind of upshot provides three dimensional experiences for readers.

Creative Commons, Archiving the Avant Garde, Archive IT.org and the Library of Congress are some organisations which circulate and preserve e-literature. While taking membership in such associations one has to consider common areas of interest. Affiliation with many organisations will help to have extensive network of people who involve in producing works and audience who read, discuss and teaches e-lit. Collection and circulation of literary works among each other will help to develop serious discussions about works of art which exists at present and to develop and create further in the field. Discussion about printed books and gathering many audiences to interact is a difficult task to arrange. To overcome issues like this, online forums and above mentioned organisations have helped. The modern literary world was introduced for the learners and asked them to be familiar and make use of the possibilities.

In classroom, a discussion was conducted about famous blog writers like Obama, Narendra Modi, Sasi Tharoor and many other political figures, celebrities from media and renowned public figures. Blog is well known and commonly used digital platform. In the introductory level before thinking about or start writing digital literature one can opt for blogging and it gives wide opportunity of discussion. Because of publication issues many young writers start writing blogs which is very convenient and less expensive. Comments and feedback from the followers help to improve the writing. Political leaders publish their plans and updates views through blogs. The written materials can be readily shared without much effort and readers can access it instantly. This is a great advantage in digital literature as immediate response is an inspirational factor. Students were motivated to note down and publish



their writing in a networked community or through any social media as it helps to improve reading and writing habit to a great extent.

### **E-Books and E-Readers**

Online learning was the component of Blended method and other pioneering technology based movements were also familiarised for learners as part of the research. Reading is an inevitable part in learning and E-books or e-readers help to carry a wide variety of books wherever we go. Book available in electronic format is called e-book and it can be downloaded to any computer like PC, Mac or laptop. Generally e-books have numbered pages, table of contents, pictures and graphics exactly like printed books. Internet facility helps to purchase and download e-books. After making the payment the customer will be directed towards the link to download book and in this way one can avail materials from any part of the world. E-books are available in PDF, EXE-compiled HTML pages and PDA format. As electronic books are becoming popular mobile phone applications and e-book reader devices are available in market. Gadgets which are used only to read e-books are known as e-readers and it is available in various format, size, storage capacity and specificity. The Kindle from Amazon and the Nook from Barnes and Noble are the most popular e-readers. The screen size of e-reader is of 5 inches to 9 inches diagonally. Storage space varies in different e-readers and in addition to internal memory some companies offer additional storage capacity through memory card. Earlier e-readers needed connection to computer to download books but recent devices can access books in the e-reader itself. Some offer additional facility of music, games and personalisation. Read out function is also available in a few models.

Technology offers tremendous opportunities to improve literacy. E-books have many advantages as lots of e-books are available in lower cost or free when compared to printed books and it is more convenient to carry especially for young readers, moreover it takes only less storing space than a book shelf and above all, reader can take anywhere the huge collection of books without physical strain. Along with these advantages e-books have certain disadvantages also; it may not be able to return if the format is not compatible with the reading device and once the storage material is damaged nothing can be done, like printed versions it cannot be shared with other people and only certain books can be lent from one person to another that also for a short period of time. Still younger generation prefer e-books as it offers wireless downloads and save time for a trip to book stores. The technology of e-books and e-readers is still advancing. Several enhancements are added to make it more attractive to consumers. Companies are experimenting with display technology and they are trying to make it possible to read under any type of light. Certain textbooks are also made available in the format of e-books. In the future, the student has an e-reader and all the text books and reference materials in the format of e-books may be the trend. Tablets and ipads may also become the integral part of future generation's learning and reading.

Paper books cannot be completely replaced, though e-books have several advantages. The feel and emotional satisfaction get from printed version will still exist and it cannot be fully abolished. Technical failure is a great threat regarding e-books or e-reading and this kind of errors do not subsist with printed books. Present society is fast paced and more attractive towards instant gratification. Instant downloading and ease of handling e-books make them choose latest technology based reading. Though technology fails in certain aspects on the other hand it advances

always. Technology is progressing and once we reach the goal only we can conclude what are the effects produced. E-books can be electronic version of printed book or written as e-version itself. The first mentioned category is produced from pre-existing hard copy generally by document scanning or with the use of robotic book scanners or by re-entering the text with the keyboard. Commercially published and sold e-books exist without printed version and they are intended to read in e-readers or any such devices like computer, tablet and smart phones. In the US nowadays more books are publishing in online than printed versions which have to be distributed through book shops. Price, comfort to handle and effortless buying procedure attract more people to e-books. Slowly this trend is getting popularised in India and other third world countries.

The most common explanation for poor reading habit is lack of time to go to library or to purchase books. The younger generation like to spend time with gadgets than spending time with book or with fellow beings. The researcher informed the learners about mobile applications like Kobo books, Cool reader, Aldiko, Tom's guide, Talk Android and computer applications like MOBI, EPUB, Kobo desktop reading, Kindle, Google books, Magic Scroll which all help to access and read e-books. Not only fiction, reference books and nonfiction materials are also available in e-book format. Teachers can make use of e-books and they can attempt to write books for students. It is possible to publish an e-book, chapter by chapter as each chapter is written. Technology is changing everyday and it is important to update knowledge regarding latest trends. In a printed version it is a tedious task to change and publish again. As an attempt several writers publish printed version as well as e-books. Instructors can try to write e-books related to their topics and update it regularly. Students can write and publish articles in electronic format which may inculcate their

research aptitude and investigating nature. Printed books cannot be avoided completely but as engineering is a field related to latest technology and application it is advisable to experiment recent trends. With this intention learners were motivated to attempt e-books and e-readers.

Inculcating interest to language learning and improving communication skills was the primary mission of the research. Teaching fundamental aspects of language for tertiary level students was a difficult task and by considering the practical difficulties, the sample size was limited. In engineering colleges the number of students in one class may be above 50 and analysing communication skills of each student individually will be a tedious task for the instructor. Considering this aspect, focus was on the development of linguistic skills and suggested multiple ways for self study. More than individual activities, group activities were conducted in classrooms to include more students simultaneously as group activities will give more confidence for learners to interact as they may have feeling of togetherness. Along with this, individual activities like presentations and extempore were also conducted. Individual activities were mostly scheduled in online programmes, where time is not a constraint.

Online teaching and face to face interaction were intended to enhance all the communication skills of learners. In the introductory level activities like group discussion, debate, extempore, written assignments were conducted in classroom. This helped to have an exposure during online interaction and communication was at ease. Among linguistic skills, speaking skill based activities were programmed for classroom session and text based assignments, giving notes and written projects considered mostly for online programmes. Thus there was a balance between online and offline activities. After classroom interaction all the activities were continued in online course.

Including online and classroom activities together was more beneficiary for regular and thorough practice. Written assignments were given both online and offline. Faculties who handled Communication hours were motivated to conduct activities and to ensure student participation. The four linguistic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing were trained by incorporating both online and classroom methods. Activities were organised in such a manner to maintain balance between online and offline activities. Merits and demerits of online and offline teaching methods were identified and discussed with the learners. Students were asked to analyse and explore the possibilities of both the methods.

Need for self study was emphasised in the research as the classroom time limits the learning opportunity. In individual learning also learner can follow blended method; can depend on websites for referring study material and can have direct discussion with peer groups or experts to get more clarity on the topic.

Communication is a skill and it can be improved by practice, blended method offers further opportunity and exposure to practice different linguistic skills. Limitations of online learning such as loneliness and lack of motivation can be avoided in classroom learning. In the same way demerits of classroom teaching like time limit, lack of individual attention and physical barriers can be rectified in online learning. Thus by blending both the methods, most of the limitations of learning may be reduced.

Concept of collaborative learning or peer group learning is also promoted in the study. Communication is essentially to convey ideas and regular interaction with others will help to improve language abilities. Exploiting online and offline measures offers ample opportunities to enhance communication skills.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS**

Effectiveness of the method and procedure implemented in the research as part of methodology is described by analysis of the results and interpreting the data in an appropriate and scientific manner. This chapter illustrates the explanation of collected records and the drawn out results. It begins with the presentation of the scores of the gathered samples followed by analysis. For analysing the effect of the research programme, values are evaluated using statistical measures and hypotheses of the research are being tested. The four communication skills and teaching method adopted in the research are analysed by this means. Pre test and post test including all the credentials of the research were conducted for the experimental group. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the students are tested before and after teaching them through blended method. Outcome and impact of the current method has been compared with the traditional method.

#### **Testing of Hypotheses**

Formulated hypotheses are the driving force of the research and have tested statistically; both qualitatively and quantitatively. Among the five hypotheses, three are tested quantitatively and two are evaluated qualitatively. In this study, for quantitative analysis paired t test and for qualitative analysis frequency distribution table method has been adopted. This kind of substantiation set the root to prove hypotheses.

### **Paired Sample Test**

Paired t test helped to identify whether the study has helped to improve communication skills of learners by analysing and comparing the recorded scores before and after the implementation of the method. In the present study the population is normal, large and the sample size is small. The researcher used paired sample test to find out the correlation between the values of pre test and post test. The values of both the tests are normally distributed and there exist a correlation between them. T test of the responses made the analysis possible. In this study, the significance level taken is 0.05.

### **Listening skill**

#### **Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in listening skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

#### **Alternative Hypothesis**

There is significant difference in listening skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

#### **Analysis of responses**

#### **Mean& SD table of pre-test, post-test& follow up**

**Table 4.1**

Variable	N	Pre- test		Post-test		Follow up	
Listening skill	50	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		3.5600	.95105	4.4200	.70247	4.3600	.80204

**Repeated Measures of ANOVA****Table 4.2**

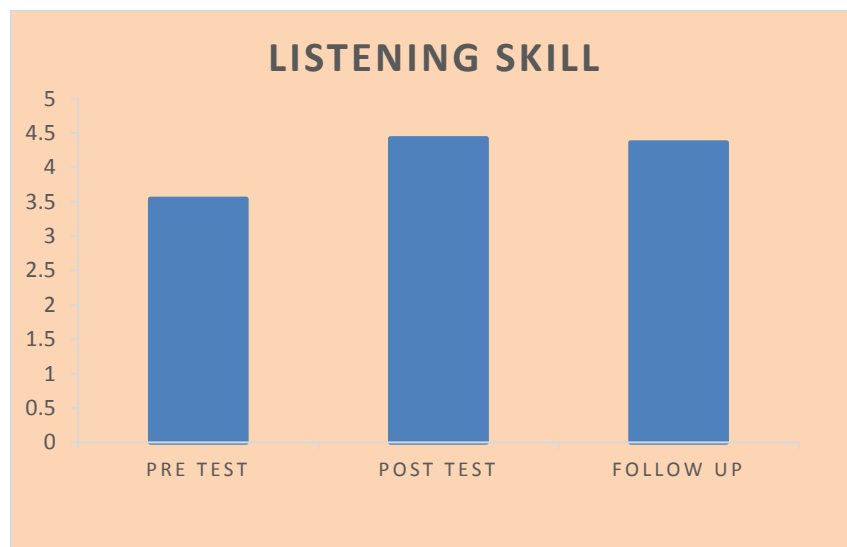
Sources of Variation	Variable	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within group variance error	Listening skill	23.053	1.730	13.326	49.228	.000

**Post-Hoc test for Pre-test, Post-test and Follow up****Table 4.3**

Variable	Phase (I)	Phase (J)	MD	Sig
Listening skill	Pre-test	Post-test	-.860*	.000
		Follow-up	-.800*	.000
	Post-test	Follow-up	.060	1.000



\*- Significant at 0.05 level



**Fig 4.1**

As the calculated value is less than the level of significance at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in listening skill of the students before learning through blended method and after the course. Compared to pre-test, post-test and follow up phases show remarkable improvement. The analysis proves that blended method helps to improve listening skill. Regular listening practice and exercises are the reason for the positive change. Activities arranged during the session and active involvement of participants resulted in an excellent way. In traditional classroom students are monotonous listeners and there is no ample opportunity to test their listening skill. Blended method offered technology based means to analyse listening skill and helped to give regular feedback to students.

## Speaking skill

### Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in speaking skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Alternative Hypothesis

There is significant difference in speaking skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Analysis of responses

#### Mean& SD table of pre-test, post-test& follow up

**Table 4.4**

Variable	N	Pre- test		Post-test		Follow up	
Speaking skill	50	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		3.5600	.92934	4.3800	.63535	4.2400	.84660

### Repeated Measures of ANOVA

**Table 4.5**

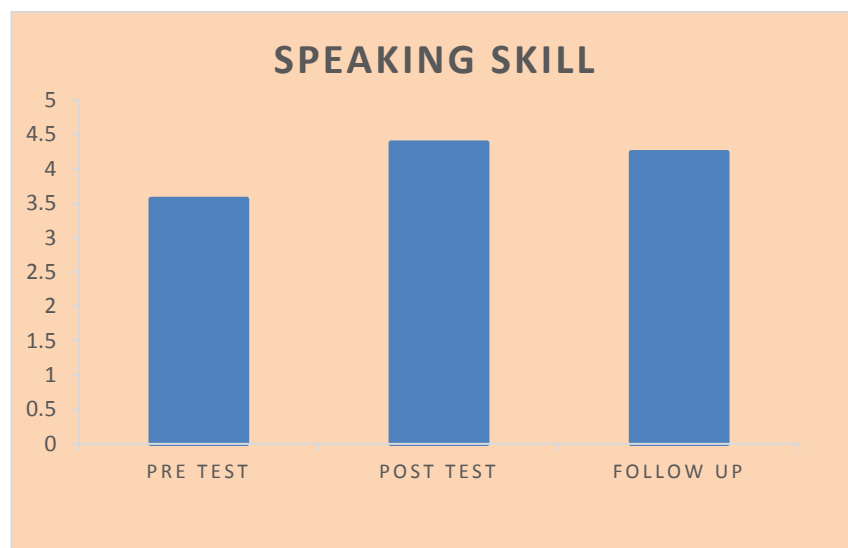
Sources of Variation	Variable	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within group variance error	Speaking skill	19.240	2	9.620	37.078	.000

### Post-Hoc test for Pre-test, Post-test and Follow up

**Table 4.6**

Variable	Phase (I)	Phase (J)	MD	Sig
Speaking skill	Pre-test	Post-test	-.820*	.000
		Follow-up	-.680*	.000
	Post-test	Follow-up	.140	.491

\*-Significant at 0.05level

**Fig. 4.2**

As the calculated value is less than the level of significance at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is significant difference in the speaking skill of students before learning through blended method and after the course. The analysis verifies that blended method helps to improve speaking skill. More than regular session, blended method provides more opportunity to interact and speak and this reflects in students' speaking skill. Extempore, topic presentation and debate were

frequent activities and the researcher ensured participation of every students. The conscious effort and combined attempt from learners and instructor showed tremendous progress in speaking skill and confidence to address audience. The method adopted during pre-test was teacher centred and students were not getting ample chances to speak. Activities were limited inside the classroom for various restrictions. Blended method extended learning time and students were given enough freedom to interact.

## Reading Skill

### Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in reading skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Alternative Hypothesis

There is significant difference in reading skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Analysis of responses

#### Mean & SD table of pre-test, post-test& follow up

**Table 4.7**

Variable	N	Pre- test		Post-test		Follow up	
Reading skill	50	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		3.5200	1.01499	4.3200	.65278	4.4000	.75593

### Repeated Measures of ANOVA

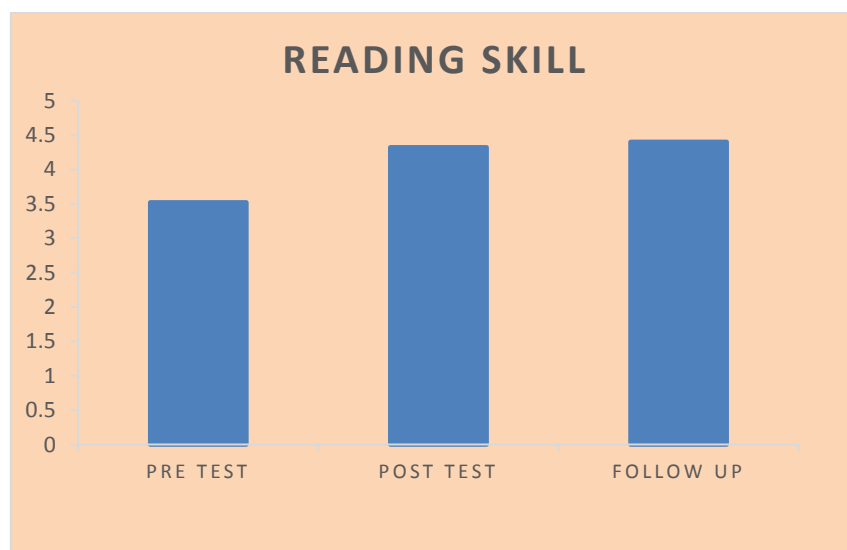
**Table 4.8**

Sources of Variation	Variable	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within group variance error	Reading skill	23.680	1.582	14.967	26.580	.000

**Post-Hoc test for Pre-test, Post-test and Follow up****Table 4.9**

Variable	Phase (I)	Phase (J)	MD	Sig
Reading skill	Pre-test	Post-test	-.800*	.000
		Follow-up	-.880*	.000
	Post-test	Follow-up	-.080	1.000

\*-Significant at 0.05level

**Fig. 4.3**

As the calculated value is less than the level of significance at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is significant difference in the reading skill of students before learning through blended method and after the course. The analysis confirms that blended method helps to improve reading skill. Online and offline reading materials and comprehensive and discursive exercises offer more focus on

reading skill and facilitates enhancement. Apart from study materials general reading habit is also motivated and discussions on different literary genres created excitement and made learners enthusiastic. In normal classroom teaching method correcting reading comprehension exercise is a tedious task as it is time consuming. Online platforms simplified this task and offered students an opportunity to practice till they are satisfied. Learner satisfaction and improvement was evident in new method.

## Writing Skill

### Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in writing skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Alternative Hypothesis

There is significant difference in writing skill of the students between before learning through blended method and after the course.

### Analysis of responses

#### Mean & SD table of pre-test, post-test & follow up

**Table 4.10**

Variable	N	Pre- test		Post-test		Follow up	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Writing skill	50	3.4200	.90554	4.4600	.64555	4.4600	.64555

### Repeated Measures of ANOVA

**Table 4.11**

Sources of Variation	Variable	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within group variance error	Writing skill	30.453	2	15.227	50.504	.000

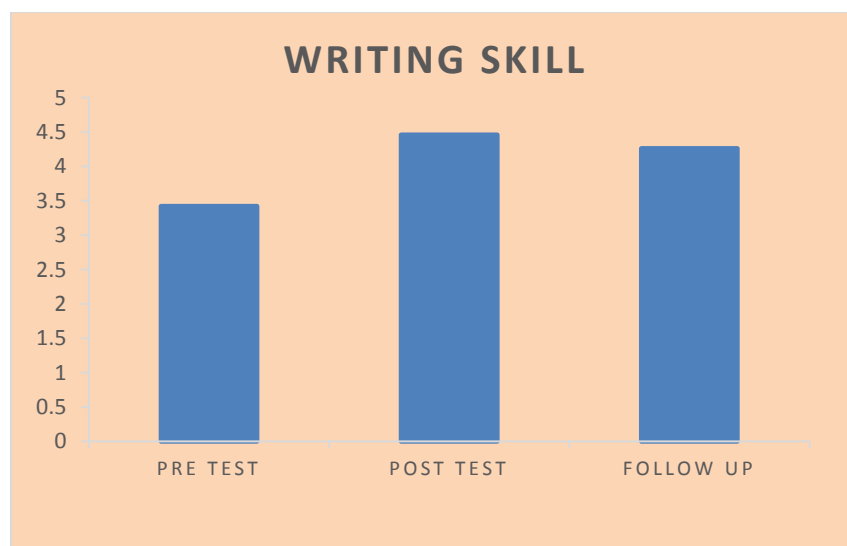


### Post-Hoc test for Pre-test, Post-test and Follow up

**Table 4.12**

Variable	Phase (I)	Phase (J)	MD	Sig
Writing skill	Pre-test	Post-test	-1.040*	.000
		Follow-up	-.840*	.000
	Post-test	Follow-up	.200	.120

\*-Significant at 0.05level



**Fig 4.4**

As the calculated value is less than the level of significance at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is significant difference in the writing skill of students before learning through blended method and after the course. The analysis establishes that blended method helps to improve writing skill. Repeated practice and correction proves to be effective for writing skill training. More than classroom tasks, written assignments were given in online as individual attention is possible in learning

website. Correction and feedback by peer group were proved to be effective. Giving frequent assignments and after correction making students to re-do or modify the write up proved to be successful. This strategy was adopted in blended method as part of the research.

## Teaching Method

### Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in communication skills of the students in traditional method and blended method.

### Alternative Hypothesis

There is significant difference in communication skills of the students in traditional method and blended method.

### Analysis of responses

#### Mean& SD table of pre-test, post-test& follow up

**Table 4.13**

Variable	N	Pre- test		Post-test		Follow up	
Communication skill	50	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		14.1600	3.20942	17.5400	2.29649	17.2600	2.62492

### Repeated Measures of ANOVA

**Table 4.14**

Sources of Variation	Variable	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within group variance error	Communication skill	351.880	1.639	214.722	81.541	.000

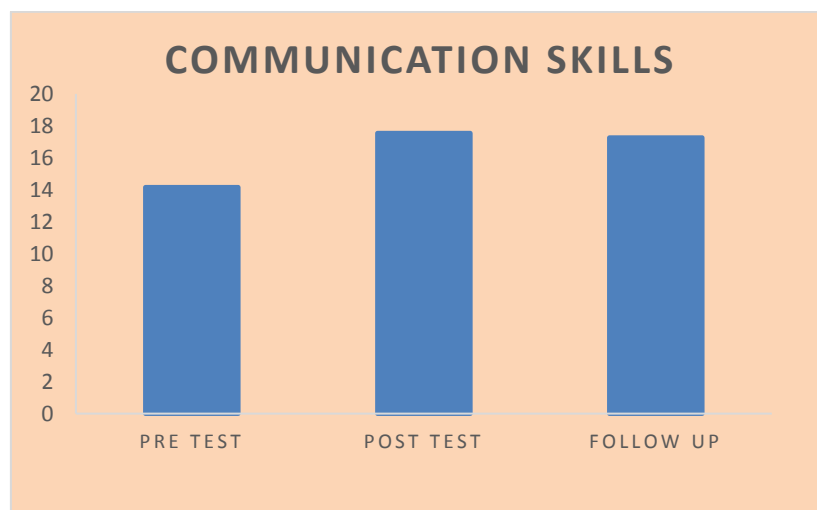
Significant at 0.01level

### Post-Hoc test for Pre-test, Post-test and Follow up

**Table 4.15**

Variable	Phase (I)	Phase (J)	MD	Sig
Communication skill	Pre-test	Post-test	-3.380*	.000
		Follow-up	-3.100*	.000
	Post-test	Follow-up	.280	.818

Significant at 0.01level



**Fig. 4.5**

There is significant difference in the three phases of assessment; pre test, post test and follow up, thus it can be assumed that communication skills of students have improved by following blended method. As the calculated value is less than the level of significance at 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is significant difference in communication skills of the students in traditional method and blended method. The analysis ascertains that blended method helps to improve communication skills. The experimental group have trained and experienced in both traditional and

blended method. Regarding communication skills, blended method makes possible more practice for learners and to eradicate constraints of classroom learning. All the four communication such as listening, speaking, reading and writing were focused in the research. Repeated exercises and regular interaction among peer groups and with instructor had immensely helped to enhance communication ability. Inclusion of various activities and regular feedback and corrective measures were also resulted in the success of blended method.

## Frequency table for questionnaire analysis

### Background

**Table 4.16**

Background	Confidence		Reading Habit		Familiarity with SNWS		English as medium of interaction		Extra reference	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	25	50.0	15	30.0	38	76.0	10	20.0	8	16.0
Sometimes	13	26.0	20	40.0	10	20.0	13	26.0	28	56.0
Rarely	7	14.0	10	20.0	2	4.0	21	42.0	12	24.0
Never	5	10.0	5	10.0	0	0	6	12.0	2	4.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Five questions were given to analyse the background of students' confidence level to communicate, reading habit, familiarity with social networking sites and habit of extra reference were the factors considered to comprehend the general conditions of samples. Among 50 students only 25 were confident to communicate in English, and 5 among them never felt comfortable to converse if the medium of interaction is English. Responses towards the question regarding reading habit proved that learners have poor reading habit. Generally their reading is limited to text books or reference materials. Only 30% of the students had comparatively better reading habit.

Majority of the students are familiar with social networking sites or social media and most of them were frequent users, 4% of the students used these sites rarely. During personal interaction the researcher could understand that Facebook and Whatsapp are the most popular social media. From responses it was evident that English is not the medium of interaction regularly. According to the survey, 42% of the students admitted that they rarely used English to communicate and 12% of them never preferred English. The habit of extra reference was only if the situation demands or forces to do so. Generally students are satisfied with classroom learning and they may not turn for extra materials. The researcher could assume that even those are confident to communicate do not prefer English as medium of interaction if the situation allows to use regional language.

### Communication skills

**Table 4.17**

Communication skills	Curriculum		Profession		Likes to improve		Hindrance		Employability skill	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Strongly agree	40	80.0	23	46.0	33	66.0	30	60.0	30	60.0
Agree	8	16.0	16	32.0	15	30.0	15	30.0	13	26.0
Neutral	2	4.0	7	14.0	2	4.0	3	6.0	5	10.0
Disagree	0	0	4	8.0	0	0	2	4.0	2	4.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Enhancing communication skill is the major focus of the research. Regarding curriculum, importance of communication in profession, improving communication skills, what are the hindrances, and communication as one of the employability skills were the concerned questions under this section. 80% of the students responded that engineering curriculum has to give more focus on English language and communication skills. Even a single student did not disagree with this opinion. It was evident that learners have realised the importance of acquiring English proficiency as it is a global language. The next question was to analyse whether they consider communication skill is essential to be successful in profession and 78% of the samples recorded positive response. 8% of the learners think communication skill is not fundamental in engineering profession.

96% of the students expressed their wish to improve communication skills. No one was unwilling to develop linguistic skills. Even those who do not think it is not necessary in professional life also acknowledged that good communication helps in personal life. Grammatical errors, inadequate vocabulary, fear and lack of confidence were the major hindrances for communicating in English for most of the students. Only 4% of the learners had other difficulties. Nearly 86% of the students agree that English is one of the employability skills and they feel good proficiency in English will provide more career opportunities. The researcher could understand that samples had positive attitude towards developing communication skills. Identifying problems and giving suggestions to improve may help them to enhance linguistic competency.



**Relevance of technology****Table 4.18**

Technology	Internet access		Internet for learning		Familiarity with websites		Online platforms		Online language learning	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	33	66.0	36	72.0	20	40.0	10	20.0	15	30.0
Sometimes	15	30.0	13	26.0	14	28.0	20	40.0	20	40.0
Rarely	2	4.0	1	2.0	9	18.0	10	20.0	7	14.0
Never	0	0	0	0	7	14.0	10	20.0	8	16.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Technology has influenced every fields and internet connection is one of the basic needs nowadays. In this section, questions were regarding internet access, internet for learning purpose, familiarity with websites, online learning platforms and online language learning. 66% of the learners had internet access at every time they need. Most of the institutions provide internet facility for students or else they had smart phones with internet connection and all have reasons all the students have internet access through some means. Googling or searching in internet is the most common new generation way to find information or to clarify doubts. Even for dictionary they prefer mobile applications than printed versions. Nearly 72% of students depend on internet for learning purpose and they consider it as most convenient way.

Social networking sites and internet is habitual among students but the popularity of learning websites is not much. Only 40% of them had basic ideas about online learning platforms and 14% of the samples never heard about such websites, even those had clue about online learning did not take effort to experience it. 20% of learners have tried out some websites and registered an account but most of them never bothered to complete the course as there was no compulsion. While responding, 30% of students agreed that online interaction will help for language learning and it may be effective method. 16% of them could not imagine out of traditional learning style and they did not support online language learning. After analysing the feedback it was assumed that technology has become part of daily life but learning style is traditional. Technology could not completely transform the old system, definitely it has influenced and created great impact in teaching and learning.

### **Role of instructor**

**Table 4.19**

Instructor	Motivate		Activities	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	25	50.0	20	40.0
Sometimes	20	40.0	16	32.0
Rarely	5	10.0	10	20.0
Never	0	0	4	8
Total	50	100	50	100

In the teaching and learning process instructor takes the role of mentor, guide and director on different situations. Communication skills can be improved by proper training. 50% of the students responded that their instructor always motivate to enhance abilities. Their feedback showed that instructors encourage sometimes or the other. 40% of the learners are satisfied with classroom teachers and they felt regular performances will improve communication skills. The researcher could identify the need to focus on communication skill based activities and regular practice of it.

**Role of institution****Table 4.20**

Institution	Placement cell		Job hunt	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	15	30.0	17	34.0
Sometimes	23	46.0	25	50.0
Rarely	10	20.0	9	18.0
Never	2	4.0	4	8.0
Total	50	100	50	100

Educational institution holds the position of second home in student's life as their future is moulded in schools and colleges. All the engineering colleges considered in the research had placement cells and 30% of the students responded that placement cell is very active and help to achieve career goals. 46% of the students are not wholly satisfied with the activities and they felt it has to be improved further. 34% of the samples answered that their institutions conduct personality development programmes or job hunt effectively. From the responses it is assumed that institution can do much to shape career goals of students.

## Students' Background

**Table 4.21**

Student	Activities		Job opportunity		Watching English shows		Interaction		Dictionary use	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	27	54.0	25	50.0	18	36.0	15	30.0	18	36.0
Sometimes	15	30.0	12	24.0	16	32.0	27	54.0	20	40.0
Rarely	8	16.0	9	18.0	12	24.0	6	12.0	8	16.0
Never	0	0	4	8.0	4	8.0	2	4.0	4	8.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Engineering students are the samples of the research and analysing their background is significant in the study. Interest to participate in classroom activities, awareness of job opportunities in the corresponding streams, how they are spending free time, interacting in English, how often do they use dictionary were the areas considered while analysis. 54% of the students were very keen to participate in classroom activities and always they showed interest to take part. As classroom activities are meant for all the students everyone participated but half of them were not much enthusiastic. More than public sector engineering students may have opportunities in private sector and only 50% of the students were aware about wide opportunities in their streams. Nearly 26% of them were ignorant about the recent trends and career prospects.

Leisure time also can be planned and use for productive activities. Watching English programmes and reading English newspaper or magazines may be useful to develop linguistic skills and to imbibe vocabulary. 36% of the students were interested to watch English movies or other TV shows. There were students who are not at all curious to watch such programmes. Researchers have proved that audio visual aids are effective for language learning. Speaking skill can be improved only through practice and instructors have to encourage students to use the target language whenever there is opportunity. Only 30% of the students preferred English while interacting with instructors and majority of them favoured regional language. Students who were careful about word meaning and grammar were nearly 36% and most of them were satisfied if they could convey information and did not take effort to refer dictionary for clarification.

### **Influence of internet**

**Table 4.22**

Internet in daily life	Chatting		Shopping		Free time		Updates		Learning style	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	31	62.0	21	42.0	30	60.0	23	46.0	17	34.0
Sometimes	17	34.0	16	32.0	13	26.0	18	36.0	20	40.0
Rarely	2	4.0	8	16.0	4	8.0	7	14.0	10	20.0
Never	0	0	5	10.0	3	6.0	2	4.0	3	6.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Smart phones and internet connection have become extremely common and even small children are familiar with technology. Gathering information, chatting, spending free time, shopping, are the common areas where internet is being exploited. 62% of the students used internet for chatting and this was the major internet consumption area. All the students were familiar with internet chatting. Growth of online shopping websites is a proof for its wide acceptance. 42% of the students felt online shopping as comfortable and they responded that they prefer it most of the time. Those who have traditional mind set preferred going to shops for purchasing and 10% of the students never depend on internet for shopping.

Passing free time and internet usage are closely knitted for youngsters. Surfing during leisure time is very common and smart phones have increased this trend. 60% of the samples spend free time in internet. More than interacting with people or doing some activities new generation prefers chatting in mobile phones. 46% of the students gave feedback that internet helps to get recent updates and offer faster information gathering. 34% of the students acknowledged that internet has changed their learning style and way of living. For doing assignments, reference purpose, interacting with people most of these done with the help of internet nowadays. From the responses the researcher could acknowledge that internet has influenced daily life to a greater extent.

## Questionnaire for faculties

### Background

**Table 4.23**

Background	Teaching style		Students' level		Qualification		School grades	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	8	80.0	1	10.0	6	60.0	4	40.0
Sometimes	2	20	5	50.0	0	0	5	50.0
Rarely	0	0	4	40.0	0	0	1	10.0
Never	0	0	0	0	4	40.0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

During the study the researcher had interaction with the concerned faculties and arranged awareness session about the research and considered their suggestions while planning activities in classrooms. Teaching background, their assessment about students, teaching style and school grades of students were the areas considered to analyse background. While interacting with students they had positive response towards improving communication skills. Discussion with faculties was to understand the current status of teaching communication skills. 80% of the faculties responded that the current style of communication skills training in engineering colleges has to be improved. In their opinion the present system is not adequate to improve



communication skills. According to 50% of the instructors' opinion students' communication skill in English is comparatively poor and they should be given proper training for professional communication.

In most of the engineering colleges Communication skills paper is handled by faculties from other departments and they are not subject experts. Among the ten faculties four were from engineering backgrounds and they were not trained to teach English language or communication skills. 40% of faculties agreed that those students who scored higher grades in school level excelled in communication skills also. The researcher could assume that there is close association between the background of teacher and students and the level of communication ability.

### **Effect of technology**

**Table 4.24**

Technology	Familiarity		Impediments		IT as teacher		Disadvantages	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	4	40.0	6	60.0	0	0	3	30.0
Sometimes	3	30.0	3	30.0	7	70.0	4	40.0
Rarely	3	30.0	1	10.0	3	30.0	3	30.0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

The younger generation is quite familiar with technology and they explore the possibilities in different fields. To investigate the effect of technology in language teaching, questions regarding familiarity with technology were included; what are impediments in IT based teaching? Can IT take the role of a teacher? Whether online teaching has disadvantages? Only 40% of the instructors were always comfortable and familiar with technology and 30% of the faculties stick on to traditional teaching and occasionally they depended on technology for teaching. The major impediments in teaching for 60% of the faculties were lack of training to incorporate technology in teaching, infra structure, time limit of teaching hours and disinterest of students. Those who are unfamiliar with technology seek help of students or colleagues while using power point or LCD. Among ten instructors, none feel that IT can always play the role of a teacher. 70% of them agreed that possibilities of technology can assist instructor or IT can be a guide at times. 30% of them responded that technology can play the role of a teacher very rarely. 30% of the instructors felt that IT based teaching has disadvantages in all the situations. Four of the faculties gave a feedback that the disadvantages are limited to certain areas or else online learning is useful. Nobody responded that IT is an ultimate solution without any demerits and can be a substitute for classroom teaching. From the responses it is evident that possibilities of technology are immense and it can be incorporated in teaching and learning effectively with accurate plan and organisation.

**Communication skill training****Table 4.25**

Communication	Necessity		Classroom activities		IT tools		Language lab	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	9	90.0	8	80.0	5	50.0	6	60.0
Sometimes	1	10.0	2	20.0	4	40.0	3	30.0
Rarely	0	0	0	0	1	10.0	1	10.0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Enhancing communication skills of engineering students was the major objective of the research. The faculties in the corresponding colleges were given understanding about the necessity to improve communication ability. As a preliminary stage the researcher analysed their view about improving communication skills of engineering students. 90% of the faculties gave positive response and they consider it as a necessity in every circumstance. Even though engineering is a technology based profession they too need communication skills to explain things. 80% of the instructors agreed that classroom activities, good reading habit, online interaction and peer group interaction are useful to develop communication skills.

Technology is developing every day and gadgets like computer, mobile phones and tablet are available in plenty. 50% of the instructors felt that these IT based tools help language teaching and learning. Rest of them consider it as an added facility to traditional teaching method. Language laboratory has made part of the curriculum in most of the colleges. 60% of the faculties strongly believe that laboratory training provide better exposure and enable to learn native accent. 30% of them consider language laboratory can be one of the learning aids and in addition to that several other trainings are further required. Though there are differences in opinion, from feedback it is evident that unanimously all agree to the concept of improving linguistic skills.

**Classroom activities****Table 4.26**

Classroom	Lecturing method		Activities		Regularity		Clustering	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	0	0	6	60.0	5	50.0	3	30.0
Sometimes	7	70.0	4	40.0	4	40.0	5	50.0
Rarely	3	30.0	0	0	1	10.0	2	20.0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Traditional education system gives more focus on classroom learning and it is limited within the four walls of the room. Lecturing method is the most popular teaching style of classroom learning. In the present situation, nobody consider that lecturing method will always help to improve communication skills. 70% of the faculties believe that lecturing will be effective in certain situations. The general assumption is that lecturing can be used for explaining rules or usages but that will not improve communication ability. According to 60% of them, the regular classroom activities are debate, seminar, individual presentation, group discussion and assignments. 40% of the faculties conduct other innovative activities along with regular sessions. All the instructors responded that these kinds of activities improve confidence level of learners.

Activities have to be conducted on regular basis for better result. 50% of them conduct one or the other activities regularly. But there are physical barriers like lack of infrastructure, noise and there may be time constraint also. 40% of the faculties could conduct activities only occasionally because of above mentioned limitations. The number of students in a classroom may be high in most of the engineering colleges and including all the students in activities will be a tedious task and in that circumstance dividing students into different groups may be an effective strategy. 30% of the instructors always prefer group activities for convenience. From the responses the researcher could assume that inside the classroom several methods can be adopted to nurture communication skills.

### **Instructor's role**

**Table 4.27**

Instructor	Interaction with students		Online forum		Refresher course		Interaction with colleagues		Updating	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	5	50.0	0	0	0	0	3	30.0	2	20.0
Sometimes	4	40.0	2	20.0	3	30.0	6	60.0	7	70.0
Rarely	1	10.0	4	40.0	5	50.0	1	10.0	1	10.0
Never	0	0	4	40.0	2	20.0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Teachers are the role models for many students. Apart from inculcating knowledge a good instructor can be a guide or mentor. Especially regarding communication skills training, instructor can motivate learners to a greater extent. How often faculties interact with students? Are they using online forums in teaching? Are they frequently attend refresher course? What is their opinion about interacting with other faculties who handle same subject? Do they have the habit of updating the recent trends in teaching and learning? These were the factors considered regarding instructors. 50% of them maintain regular individual interaction with students and they consider it is beneficial to analyse student's improvement and to have feedback for their teaching. A few of the faculties consider individual interaction is not possible frequently. Even though technology and internet is familiar, very few faculties depended on online teaching forum. 40% of them used very rarely to share teaching materials.

Refresher course or training programme for instructors is not so common in engineering stream. Certain individual agencies or private institutes conduct such sessions and even a single faculty is not attending every time. 50% of the instructors attend very rarely and that might be for self appraisal or promotion purpose. Every teacher will have their own teaching style and forming a group among faculties handling same subjects may be useful to have more exposure. 60% of them responded that they do such discussions from time to time. Only 20% of the instructors were ready to update with latest movements in teaching and try to incorporate it regularly. From the responses the researcher could assume that after entering to profession also one has to persist on learning and has to take an active role to mould the learners as per the needs.

**Institution****Table 4.28**

Institution	Internet		Placement cell		Career opportunities		Employed rate	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Always	3	30.0	2	20.0	4	40.0	5	50.0
Sometimes	6	60.0	8	80.0	6	60.0	5	50.0
Rarely	1	10.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Success of an institution is measured in terms of the achievements scored by the students. With regard to professional colleges, result and number of students who get placement from institution will definitely influence the next year's admission rate and this leads to a competitive spirit among institutions. Parents and students compare the facilities and infrastructure of each college before admission. Certain institutions have arranged free wi-fi facility inside the campus to avail for the students and faculties. In this research only 30% of the colleges have internet facility throughout the campus and other institutions have arranged internet lab for browsing and further requirements.



Placement cell can arrange numerous programmes to give awareness about different streams and to craft the students employable. The main activity of placement cell may be conducting mock interviews and organising campus recruitment programmes. 80% of the faculties responded that activities can be improved further to create better placement rate. 60% of the instructors feel that institution can conduct programmes to improve interview skills of students to achieve career goals. Regarding employed rate of students after course completion, 50% of faculties responded satisfactory and the rest consider more can be placed by adopting further measures. From the responses it can be assumed that success rate of institution and student can only be achieved by joined effort of teachers, management, faculties and students.

### **Validating hypotheses**

#### **Hypotheses**

- There is a significant relation between enhanced language competency of the experimental group and blended teaching method.
- There is significant difference in the calculated value of the experimental group between pre-test and post-test.
- There is significant difference between following traditional method and blended method for language teaching.
- There is no significant difference in the calculated value of the controlled group between pre test and post test.
- There is significant relation between the communication ability of the learner and external factors like institution, instructor and learning atmosphere.

The above mentioned hypotheses have been validated through paired t test and frequency table. Standard statistical tests have adopted to explain the collected data. It was significant that there existed a relation between enhanced language competency of the selected population and blended teaching method. The researcher could prove the second hypothesis by analysing pre test and post test score. The post test score of learners was high when compared to pre test score and it is evidence for improvement in communication skills. The pre test score is considered as the result of traditional teaching method and post test score as the result of blended method. There is difference in the values and it is regarded as the two teaching methods have created different results for the same students. To establish the effectiveness of blended method in experimental group, the score of the controlled group is also analysed and there is no remarkable difference in pre test and post test and can be concluded as no improvement. From the questionnaire analysis and direct observation it is obvious that external factors like institution, instructor and other learning atmosphere directly influence the learning habits of students. Motivation and positive responses from such factors inspire the learners to score high result and self development. Blended method confirms to be successful for language teaching and it is validated statistically in the present empirical research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

The present millennium has witnessed remarkable progress in the field of technology and strenuous efforts have been undertaken by researchers and educators to explore and integrate its possibilities in the realm of ICT. The current study examines various teaching strategies of blended method in English language teaching and its impact especially on engineering students. Effect of integrating online and classroom teaching to improve communication skills of learners has been analysed thoroughly. Another dimension of the experiment was to motivate the learners to concentrate on the linguistic aspects of English language along with their subjects and to assert the significance of enhancing communication skills in varied phases of life.

The experimental group comprised of students from different engineering colleges and belonged to multiple branches. An attempt has been made to develop the communication skills of learners by incorporating multiple classroom activities and by arranging several online programmes. Possibilities of social networking sites and online learning websites were also explored. As an extension to this learning style, potentialities of BL were suggested to use in self study also. To validate the experiment theoretically, the effectiveness and application of the theory of Connectivism and Social Constructivism in online learning method has been integrated as both the theories highlight the importance of interaction and regard learning as a social process and assert that interaction with people result in improving communication skill.

The learners considered for the research belonged to different levels of communication competency and their major hindrances to communicate fluently were lack of vocabulary, faulty use of grammar and intimidation to address the gathering.

Activities in both online and offline were organised in such a way to add in all the four communication skills. Along with improving communication proficiency an attempt was made to make the learners confident in presentation skills by overcoming a range of limitations. Regular interaction between teacher and learner is an essential element in learning process and this type of relation was useful to identify the limitations and exertions of the study and to modify further for enhanced outcomes. Despite the students, the corresponding faculties of each institution were given awareness about the programme.

In the present research multiple social media platforms have been incorporated for the purpose of language learning. It was motivating to include popular apps as teenagers spent plenty of time in internet. Activities to inculcate communication skills were focused in every stage of the research. Individual interaction and support of the concerned faculties helped to explain the relevance and purpose of each activity to the target group. Classroom activities enabled the learners to overcome the inhibition towards communication classes. It was evident during the teaching experience in an engineering college that students consider communication classes irrelevant and were not much interested to take part in interactive sessions. Support of placement coordinators was inevitable at this juncture to make them realise the significance of acquiring communication skills and how they can furnish better performance by acquiring good linguistic skill. Along with explaining the common hindrances and problems students were prepared to undergo self analysis to find out, what hampers them to express their ideas with clarity and to prioritise the areas which require specific attention. The next stage was to motivate the target group to participate in various online activities and the possibilities of the web platform Moodle was explored at a great extend.

Moodle has been proved to be an effective tool for online teaching across the globe. More than facebook and other social networking sites Moodle offer the ambience of an official learning site. It is similar to any other online learning site run by renowned universities such as MIT and Edinburg. This sort of international reputed platform was extremely functional to convince the learners about the relevance of approaching online assignments with due importance. During classroom interaction, especially while the power point presentation, the online learning websites like edx, wiziq and coursera were introduced. Activities and lessons in online learning were well planned and scheduled as in the classroom teaching. The Moodle course on communication skills was divided into different modules which included notes, assignments and quiz. Major advantages of online learning are flexibility for learners regarding time, pace and repetition. Feedback from learners was positive and it was observed that there is tremendous progress in the communication level of students. It was established that the formulated hypothesis, there appear to be a significant relation between teaching method and the level of communication fluency of the learners and the linguistic fluency of students is elevated in post test when compared to pre test are valid. Thus the implementation of blended method for English language teaching of engineering students is a successful selection to enhance communication requirement.

The study as such is an in depth analysis of contemporary trends, especially on the impact of technology in the field of ELT. The introductory chapter gives an outline of the research and introduces the method, theory and sample incorporated in the study. This section provides a summary of the background of English language teaching in India and different approaches and methods adopted in various situations. The research discusses on the necessity and relevance of improving communication skills of engineering students. Similar researches and studies have undertaken in the thrust area

have been analysed deeply and a detailed account of such an investigation is included in the related literature area. The chapter also encompasses an overview of the present study.

The following chapter incorporates the theory, approach and method followed in the research. Connectivism and Social Constructivism theories focus on the relevance of social interaction and communication, how these are incorporated in the present research is explained in detail. Language Across the Curriculum approach stresses the need to enhance linguistic aspects in all the subjects and how language teaching can be brought into all the classes instead of sticking alone to linguistic course. Implemented method is blended method and here the components are online teaching and face to face teaching.

The methodology introduced in the previous chapter has been analysed in detail and its practical implications are exemplified in the third chapter. Selection of sample group, preparing teaching contents, execution at different level, observing the changes of students while undergoing blended learning are narrated in a detailed manner. The sample group is selected from various institutions to ensure the inclusion of different types of students. Teaching contents are prepared on the basis of prescribed syllabus and practical needs of learners to excel in communication skills when they interact in various levels form the prime focus of the experiment.

The study involves executing the prepositions with the current theories and the method adopted is to collect data by means of experimentation and the fourth chapter analyses the available data. Statistical measures have been used to explain the results. Questionnaires and tests are conducted to understand the background, relevance of

particular research and the effect of the experiment. To analyse the effect of the teaching programme pre-test and post test of the sample group has been conducted.

The final chapter brings to a close overview of the whole research and concludes with findings, further scope, suggestions and implications of the study at multiple levels. Significance of this research in the present scenario is emphasised by affixing suitable examples.

### **Prospects of the Research**

#### **Theoretical Implications**

- The study confirms the effectiveness of Blended method.
- The research analyses the application of theory of Connectivism and Social Constructivism.
- The study examines the need of communication competency for engineering students.
- The study evaluates the relevance of online learning websites and social media in language learning.
- The research considers the influence of ICT in teaching and learning and how it modified traditional education system.
- The research interrogates the traditional way of following a single method for teaching and learning and advocates for eclectic method for better result.

#### **Practical Implications**

- The results of the study assure that Blended method is effective for language learning.

- The findings can be practiced to teach English language for learners from other streams also.
- The findings of the study can be incorporated in researches related to online learning.
- The results of the study may motivate engineering students to enhance communication skills.
- The method of BL can be employed for self study.
- Instructors can depend on Blended method to conduct part time courses or for tuition.
- Researchers can experiment with other elements of teaching like mobile assisted learning or educational networking as components of blended method.



## **Findings**

- Blended method is efficient for language teaching.
- Learners easily comprehend the contents while following Blended method.
- Samples of the study asserted remarkable improvement in communication competency before and after the experiment.
- There was a notable difference in communication skills of experimental group before and after the experiment.
- Technology assisted teaching is appropriate for engineering students.
- Exploring more online platforms will improve the learning habits of students.
- Along with teaching curriculum based subjects, BL can be adopted for personality development and orientation classes.
- Language learning enhances confidence level and presentation skill of students.

## **Suggestions for Improvement**

- Training programmes for instructors have to be conducted at college level and university level to familiarise different teaching methods.
- Assessment sessions to evaluate the teaching system at the end of each academic year may be implemented.
- Arranging orientation programmes by experts will facilitate to acquire suggestions to improve.
- Forming social media groups of teachers handling same subjects may be effective to share ideas and perspectives.
- Publications of institutions such as magazines, newsletters and various literary activities should pay due attention to communication skills.

- Placement cell can play a dynamic role by conducting mock interviews and personality development classes.
- Exploring the possibilities of language laboratory will help to learn language in international standard.
- Providing internet facility for students at campus may initiate independent learning.
- Forming students club will be useful to conduct extracurricular activities thus inter personal skills can be improved.
- Engineering college library should include literary texts, magazines and newspapers and allotting library hour on weekly basis may instigate reading habit.
- Apart from language training, Blended method can be experimented in the teaching and learning of other subjects also.
- Institutions can consider Language Across the Curriculum as the educational policy which will ensure linguistic competency of all subject teachers and learners.
- English has to be the medium of instruction and interaction inside the campus.
- Appointing communication trainer will be useful to provide professional training for learners.
- Participating in interactive programmes may initiate communication competency and enthusiasm for public speaking.
- Inviting renowned academicians and former students who accomplished higher professional goals as guests for interactive sessions will motivate students.

- Arranging training sessions to improve communication skills by experts and a pre test and post test can be conducted to assess the improvement.
- College radio or similar ventures can be organised in institutions, which will be exciting and students will come up with innovative ideas.

For all the above mentioned activities, blended method can be utilised with a scientific approach and thus it will bring new dimensions in the field of ELT.

### **Limitations of the study**

- The study being very vast, it was limited to first year engineering students.
- Two components such as online learning site Moodle and classroom teaching alone were used in blended method though other learning applications like M learning are currently in use.
- The sample size is restricted to 50 as it is the average strength of a class.

### **Issues encountered by the researcher**

- Considerable time had to be spent to identify the problems related to communication skills and the reasons behind it.
- Variations had to be made in time framework.
- Great number of methods had to be reviewed to find the apt one.
- Action plan had to be rescheduled during the intervention.
- Making aware the corresponding college authorities regarding the relevance of implementing blended method for language teaching.

### **Scope for further research**

The current study explores a significant aspect of technology based learning, yet a substantial area of this realm remains unexplored. For instance, in blended method, instead of online learning platforms, mobile applications or webinars can be added as a component. Plenty of instant online learning contents are available in internet but there is scope to create syllabus specific study materials both by learners and teachers. Researches in these areas may be innovative. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and LAC are the two imminent approaches in English language teaching and both focus on the link between language learning and content learning. Studies based on these concepts cater wide range as both cross the limit of language learning narrowed in language classrooms. Generally, the target group consider for research are students, professionals or learners with specific needs and groups like housewives remain unexplored. Such kind of population can be studied in future experiments.

### **Scope, Challenges and Prospects of Blended Method**

Technological innovations are part of education and English language learning cannot stay away from the trend. Thus, possibility of the selected area for the present research is enormous. ICT is an inevitable branch in the recent education system and it is highly significant to incorporate technological elements like online learning along with classroom learning. The challenge encountered during the intervention was mainly about the attitude of engineering students regarding communication skills. Their focus is on core subjects and it was a tedious task to bring attention to communication classes and motivate to improve linguistic proficiency. Prospects of blended method have been unveiled in the study. The method proves to be an effective strategy in language

teaching for engineering students as they are familiar with technology and without distracting regular teaching hours can improve communication skill by combining online and classroom teaching.

Students and parents consider engineering degree as a trail to improve learners' career and wish their education to be significant. Communication skills help to accomplish professional goals and to excel in career. It is essential to formulate awareness among students in relation to know a language rather than know about the language. The initial concept indicates acquiring proficiency over the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, while the latter is learning grammar rules and usages without practising and it may be like learning to swim by means of various resources without having real practice in water. Learning rules and regulations of a language will refine the language use but it alone may not bring into being a good communicator. The primary concern of the research is to make the students to use the language in numerous situations.

Skills are primarily acquired through practice and it is similar to habit formation, additional regular practice will enhance communication competency. Obtaining proficiency in language skills and adept in communication is directly proportionate to practice. Though speaking is the most regularly used skill which is natural and biologically oriented than other skills, one cannot concentrate on speaking skill alone as speech without listening is an incomplete process. When considers the great impact of reading and writing in human civilisation and culture that two are also important proficiencies. All the four skills are interrelated and are given equal credence in the research. Using blended method, in both online and classroom teaching the four folded language skills are focused and more than teaching English the approach was to

facilitate communicating in English. Activities based on interaction which will be useful in real life are given more importance.

The research has attempted to find out the efficiency of both synchronous and asynchronous learning style. In direct teaching various activities to improve the four communication skills were practiced and performance of learners was evaluated thoroughly. Online activities offered more opportunity to practice learned skills and assessing improvement was also more convenient. The other areas of focus are to raise the self esteem of engineering students to communicate fluently in English and to improve the learning style. The habit of self study is also motivated during the research. Communication skills, learning habits, use of online platforms are the areas of focal point in the research. Engineering is a profession related to innovations and improvisation, though the base is technology or technicalities, communication plays a key role in professional success. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected and acquiring proficiency in communication means mastering all the four skills.

In engineering curriculum, one of the effective ways to improve communication skills is to follow Language Across Curriculum approach. As every instructor will take initiative to inculcate linguistic elements, there will be visible progress in communication level of students. In the tertiary level of learning, effort for self learning has to be motivated and in necessary situations instructor can assist learners for doing assignments or for task evaluation. According to LAC approach every class has to concentrate on linguistic aspects and vocabulary related to each subject is highlighted in the syllabus. It may help to create an impact that language has to be focused in all the areas. Technology based tools can be used to create visual impact as highlighting new or difficult vocabulary while doing power point presentation will seek learners'

immediate attention. During the intervention, it was evident that whatsapp is a common medium for interaction and students are included in group among classmates or with instructors. In addition to entertainment they use it to share notes, pass information, for discussion and to clear doubts. Social media like this will be more beneficial in language learning purpose if the interaction focuses on linguistic aspects.

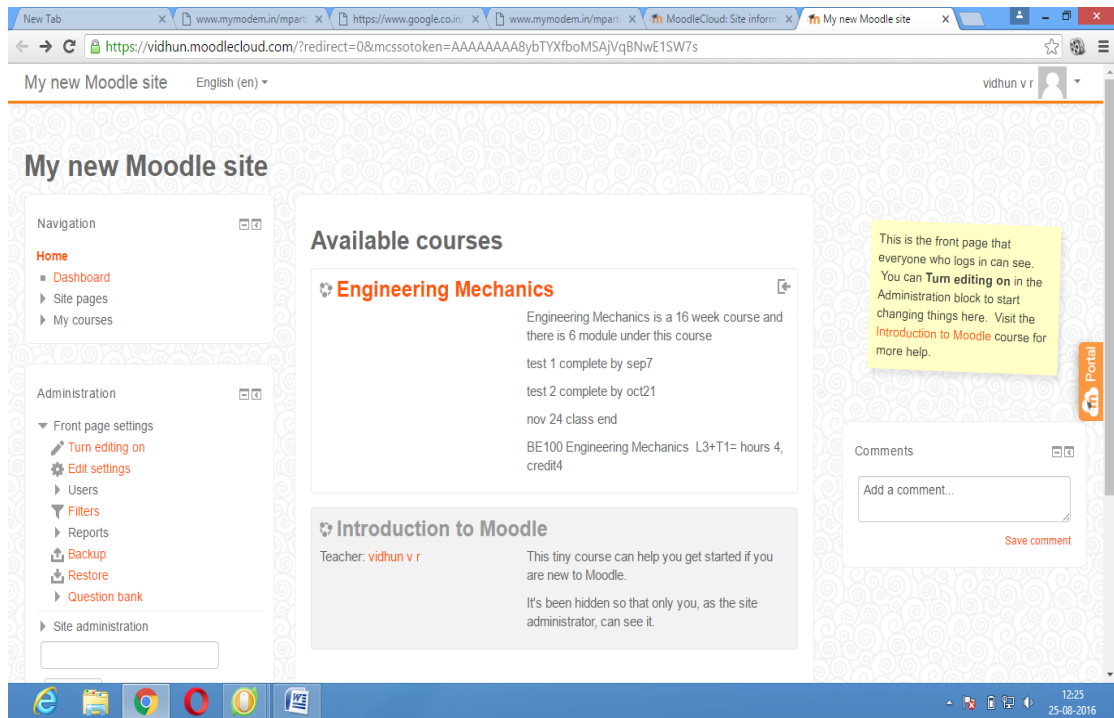
LAC was made a part of the research and faculties had a positive attitude towards this approach. During the interface with other subject faculties, a discussion was initiated about how language elements can be the focal point along with subject teaching and the possibilities of implementing such kind of method. Circulating articles and journals was another successful act for developing language. As journals and articles publish recent information it will help to acquire knowledge and facilitate to have good vocabulary. During free hours students were encouraged to make use of library and read books. Online journals and e-books were also introduced. E-books provide a great opportunity to access books at low cost or occasionally free of cost. Websites like Attano which deliver e-books were initiated during the orientation. Mobile applications like adobe reader and pdf viewer help to read books and articles in both online and offline. Students were interested to carry out this act as they could access and read matter whenever they are free and wherever they go.

Moodle, which is a recognized online learning platform was introduced as an element of blended learning. Learners accessed materials uploaded in the Moodle website, which was the online tool for teaching in blended method. Digital literature was another area made familiar for the learners. Digital literature or e- literature is literary works that take advantage and capabilities of stand – alone or networked computer. Young generation wishes to correlate everything with technology and in every field, learning material are getting converted to digital format. Old archives, film,

books and other valuable materials which have to be treasured for future generation are being transferred to digital form. This kind of technology provide more opportunity to express thoughts even when they do not have pen or paper and it is easy to save and share through internet to mass media.

As an upcoming trend, even in school level, teaching is carried out with the assistance of technology and projectors, power point presentation, digital board are being widely used in classrooms. For better understanding of the concepts teachers make use of different videos and animated images. Certain measures are essential to incorporate technology in teaching and learning. Good infrastructure, knowledgeable instructors, technical experts and enthusiastic students are the factors behind successful implementation of blended method. In this study these elements are included for a flourishing result. Effectiveness of blended method influenced faculties from the corresponding colleges regarded for the research. In one such instance, a Moodle site (Fig. 5.1) was created to teach Engineering Mechanics along with classroom instruction. All the students of mechanics class were added as users to the site and notes, assignments were uploaded regularly. It was evident that conducting tests and quizzes in online were more convenient for both learners and instructor. Graphs, diagrams and other type of illustrations were used and learners could refer and download all the reference materials. Such freedom is lacking in classroom even when the teacher uses technology based projector or LCD. Feedback from students assured that blended method can be adopted for subject teaching also.





**Fig. 5.1**

Implementation of any teaching method demands systematic preparation and thorough background study and when the strategy proves to be effective the next step is to implement it in a larger framework. After conducting the research, the communication skill instructors were requested to maintain online interface with students to make them more acquainted with online interaction. During follow up it was evident that learners retained the proficiency and fluency acquired during the experimental stage. Interest from other teachers to interact with students through online mode and to use more technology based aids for teaching is observed as a positive sign. As the technology and equipment considered in the study are assisting regular classroom teaching, students get advantage of both online and offline learning. A hasty switch over from the traditional method to technology based teaching may not be possible and blended method can act as a transition component which incorporates both conventional and modern techniques to prepare students to achieve their career goal.

At the time, when the research was initiated, students registered under the University of Calicut were included as samples. During the intervention, engineering courses all over Kerala were brought under a single university titled Kerala Technological University (KTU). This transformation brought remarkable changes in the curriculum and the examination system. Regarding Communication skill paper, language lab is mandatory in every institution and such amends are positive notes to gain prominence for communication skills and linguistic proficiency in engineering curriculum. Teaching and learning system is keen to incorporate latest technology and current trend substantiates the findings of the research.

Recently UGC has formed regulations regarding SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) and initiated more than 2000 courses delivered by IIT or IIM professors for students to indulge in online learning. Similar to NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning) KTU has started online courses for B.Tech first year students run by renowned professors and eminent scholars. These ventures at government level assures the booming of online courses and selection of combining online learning platforms with classroom teaching for English language teaching in the present research is apt in the current scenario.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Questionnaire for the Faculty

- 1) The present status of English language teaching in engineering colleges is to be improved
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 2) In your observation students' communication skill in English is poor
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 3) Are you familiar with using internet in teaching and learning process?
  - a) Always
  - b) Sometimes
  - c) Rarely
  - d) Never
- 4) Lack of training, infra structure, time and student's response are the impediments in applying IT in teaching?
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 5) Internet, computer, mobile phone and tablet are the IT tools to be used for language teaching?
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 6) Is it necessary to acquire English language proficiency for engineering students?
  - a) Always
  - b) Sometimes
  - c) Rarely
  - d) Never
- 7) Classroom activities, reading habit, online interaction and peer group interaction will be useful to improve communication skills?
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 8) Do you think IT can play the role of a teacher?
  - a) Always
  - b) Sometimes
  - c) Rarely
  - d) Never
- 9) In your opinion online learning has disadvantages
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree
- 10) In classroom, lecturing method helps to improve students' communication skill
  - a) Always
  - b) Sometimes
  - c) Rarely
  - d) Never
- 11) As part of classroom activities do you conduct debate, seminar, individual presentation, group discussion, assignments?
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Disagree



## **Personal Details**

Name -

Designation -

Qualification -

Experience -

Institution -

Contact-



### Questionnaire for Students

- 1) Are you confident in communicating in English  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 2) Do you have the habit of reading English books/ newspapers?  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 3) Do you think engineering curriculum has to focus on communication skills  
a) Strongly agree    b) Agree                      b) Neutral                      c) Disagree
- 4) 'Communication skill is essential to be successful in a profession.'  
a) Strongly agree    b) Agree                      b) Neutral                      c) Disagree
- 5) The medium of instruction in classroom is English  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 6) Do you have an internet connection  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 7) Are you familiar with social networking sites  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 8) Do you use internet for learning purpose  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 9) Are you familiar with online learning platforms  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 10) Would you like to improve communication skills  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 11) Grammatical errors, inadequate vocabulary, fear and lack of confidence are the major hindrance for communicating in English?  
a) Strongly agree    b) Agree                      b) Neutral                      c) Disagree
- 12) Did you feel that lack of English knowledge badly affects your learning?  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 13) Does your instructor motivate you to interact in English?  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 14) Do you have the habit of referring materials other than prescribed books?  
a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Rarely                      d) Never
- 15) Does you instructor conduct activities to improve communication skills?



**Personal Details**

Name -

Department-

Institution –

Contact no& mail-

Medium of schooling-

## Feedback Questionnaire

- 1) Including communication classes in the curriculum are effective?  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    c) Neutral    d) Disagree
- 2) Active participation in classroom activities helped for self development  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 3) Group discussion, debate, extempore and other activities helped to enhance communication skills  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 4) Group works are found to be more interesting than individual assignment  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 5) Learning English helped for clear understanding of other subjects  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 6) Technology assisted learning style will be useful even after getting a job  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 7) Regularly surfing in online learning websites help to locate study materials easily  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 8) Interacting through online forums provide more opportunity for communication  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 9) Active participation in online discussion forums help to get acquainted with new vocabulary  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 10) Internet provide more opportunity to improve language and communication skills  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 11) Blending classroom learning and online learning find more interactive  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 12) Online language learning with the assistance of teacher is effective  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree
- 13) Regular communication activities has improved confidence level in interacting with others  
a) Strongly Agree    b) Agree    b) Neutral    c) Disagree

- 14) After classroom study, submitting assignments through online will help to save time  
a) Strongly Agree      b) Agree      b) Neutral      c) Disagree
- 15) Forming an online group for discussion will extend classroom time for language learning  
a) Strongly Agree      b) Agree      b) Neutral      c) Disagree
- 16) Sharing material through online make the saving process more easier  
a) Strongly Agree b) Agree      b) Neutral      c) Disagree
- 17) Online learning has created an interest to interact with native people  
a) Strongly Agree b) Agree      b) Neutral      c) Disagree
- 18) Using internet effectively will help to update knowledge easily  
a) Strongly Agree b) Agree      b) Neutral      c) Disagree

Name:

Department:

Institution:

# ONLINE COURSE CERTIFICATE

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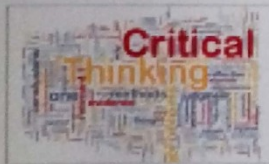


APRIL 08, 2013

## Statement of Accomplishment

### SOWMYAKALATHIL

HAS COMPLETED THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH'S ONLINE OFFERING OF



#### Critical Thinking in Global Challenges

This introductory undergraduate-level course in critical thinking aimed to help participants to develop a better understanding of what critical thinking is and to practice and enhance their critical thinking skills.

PROFESSOR MARKAM DUTTA  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, UK

DR. CELINA CAQUERAN  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, UK

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