

## Effectiveness of Current Curriculum in Enhancing Speaking Ability: A Study Based on Technical Colleges

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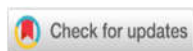
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### ABSTRACT

Technical education around the world holds a prominent position in the adult learning process as it directs them towards better employment opportunities. Technical education in Sri Lanka also plays a significant role as the qualification of technical education is a valid ground for receiving a job. Thus, with globalization and communication development, many organizations encourage employees with English language competency which acts as the linking media of multi-languages. Today, technical education worldwide encourages students to have a fair knowledge of the English language, so technical education in Sri Lanka also promotes the English language as a communication competence. Hence, the research was carried out to find out the effectiveness of English in developing communicative skills in prompting the above purposes. The study was done in Technical College Matara, Balapitiya, and Ratmalana about the compulsory English subject for the course, National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice. Questionnaires and interview were taken as the primary data collection methods and secondary data was collected from books, journals, and electronic sources. The primary data presentation was done through charts and comparative analysis was made among three colleges to evaluate students' abilities. Thus, the content of the syllabus is also analyzed along with secondary data sources. The analysis revealed that the existing curriculum is still applicable to some extent even though it doesn't address speaking competency. Finally, the research suggests having more practical methods of teaching to enhance communicational skills in English deems important.



## INTRODUCTION

The Sri Lankan government requires to make greater investments in its personnel if it wants to maintain its hyper-robust workforce in the foreseeable future on respectively a global and national scale. In order to create professionally knowledgeable and skilled people assets for invention, learning is thus a crucial component, fueled by international

competition. Quite precisely, having a good degree of internetwork English language proficiency is one of the indicators of skilled personnel assets in today's worldwide market.

Technical and vocational education is known as offering formal or non-formal education and training to those who need to develop skills regarding specific employment. Technical and vocational education is meant to be important for participation in the world of work. Both young and adult people recognize the necessity of developing vocational and technical skills. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) seem to be essential for enhancing economic competitiveness and for contributing to social inclusion, poverty reduction, and sustainable development of a country. Public TVET is expected to equip learners with basic skills and to support personal and social development to meet the demands of the labor market as well.

TVET has a significant political allure and is often regarded as something that will solve all youth and unemployment problems. It is not an astonishing solution but can offer opportunities for earning either a livelihood in the formal or informal sector of the economy. As a result, Asian countries have paid considerable attention to improving technical and vocational education and the Sri Lankan education system also introduced technical and vocational education to produce a quality workforce that matches the world of work.

Technical colleges in Sri Lanka arose from the Technical School, which was established in 1893 as a center for higher education in technical and scientific subjects. The technical school's name was changed to Ceylon Technical College in 1906. By this time, the college had begun to produce technically qualified individuals and was supplying skilled staff to government technical departments. In 1972, these institutes were converted into higher education institutions.

In the 1950s, the first junior technical colleges were founded in Galle, Kandy, and Jaffna. There are currently 38 Technical Colleges located across the country. The Department of Technical Education and Training, which is part of the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational and Technical Education, oversees these institutions. One of the primary agencies that provide technical education and training is the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET). DTET is in charge of all technical institutions in the country, including nine technology colleges that will offer NVQ levels 5 and 6.

English language teaching for technical fields defines as English for Special Purpose (ESP). ESP is learned by adult learners for special purposes such as scientific, occupational, business, and technical purposes. Language teaching for technical course followers is categorized under occupational purposes. Language teaching has highlighted the usage of language in real-life situations. For instance, the language curriculum for technical courses is included the relevant vocabulary for their field of work which helps learners to communicate in their workplace. ESP teaching is different from the traditional teaching of language. "Traditionally the aim of linguistics had been to describe the rules of English usage that is the grammar. However, the new studies

shifted attention away from defining the format features of language usage to discovering how language is used in real communication" (Hutchison & Waters, 1987).

It contrasts with English for General Purposes. "If English is taught as a second language along with other subjects for educational purposes as some useful subject to the learners in the future, then this is EGP. In this type of learning, there is generally no immediate requirement for the learners to use English for any real communicative purposes. In contrast, if English is taught to specialized learners with some specific vocational and educational purpose in mind, then this is ESP. ESP is learning and learner-oriented, with a conception and preference for communicative competence (Tahir, n.d.)". Consequently, language teaching in technical colleges emphasizes the use of the English language as a communication skill.

Globalization drives Sri Lanka to embrace the English language to overcome communicational barriers in the industrial world. Sunday times cited that "The first junior technical colleges were established in Galle, Kandy, and Jaffna in the 1950s. There are now 38 Technical Colleges in the United States. These institutions are supervised by the Department of Technical Education and Training, which is part of the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational, and Technical Education. The Department of Technical Education and Training is one of the key providers of technical education and training (DTET). The Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) is responsible for all technical institutions in the country, including nine technology institutes that will offer NVQ levels 5 and 6." (Anon., 2011). Today both government and private sectors have increasingly emphasized the need of new "soft" skills, such as communication, cooperation, and team working, in addition to technical knowledge and ability. So, English has become a "skill" that demands by both local and foreign organization. Although English is not the official language in Sri Lanka it has become the most used language in the working world because it can link Sri Lanka with the world. And employees who can communicate in the English language have a considerable response from employers. So, the trainees in technical colleges should be enriched with English language skills to match the requirements of the job market.

Technical colleges conduct many courses, and the training is an important professional qualification for employees. Technical and Vocational education allows trainers to achieve a high level of professional qualification step by step. Though employees in minor levels are not often communicated in the English language it is very important to have the ability to communicate in the English language when they gradually reach the upper levels in their professional carrier. "Communication skills are regarded both as essential for employability and carrier progression. Because of changing nature of today's employment picture, employees need creative, flexible workers who have a broad range of interpersonal and managerial skills" (Lankard, 1990). On the other hand, this qualification is an accepted level of qualification for foreign job opportunities, and it is important to teach English in Technical colleges.

## *1.2 Justification of the study*

The trainers in technical colleges are trained in one specific occupation to produce a quality, efficient and effective workforce to suit the job market. Nowadays Technical and Vocational education stands in a prominent place in Sri Lanka since both government and private sector highly consider NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) as a valuable qualification. Hence it is important to produce a professionally qualified and skilled output. The Technical Colleges taught the English language as a communication skill to meet the requirements of the job market.

In the contemporary Sri Lankan education sector, around 170,000 students take the GCE (Advanced Level) each year, with roughly 22,500 of them being accepted into the relevant universities. The remaining 147,500 students are enrolled in Technical and Vocational Training to prepare for the employment market. As a result, it is critical to provide students with the required skills to compete in the employment market. In addition to that, the NVQ Levels 6 and 7 which offer technical and vocational education are equivalent to the degree qualification. Then both graduates and NVQ level 6 and 7 holders can get the same job opportunities and enhancing communication skills in English holds a significant place. Thus, the Sri Lankan Technical education curriculum is included English as a communication skill. At this commencement, this study will find out whether communication skills are enhanced by the current curriculum for the English language. So, the research will be progressed in evaluating the communication competency of students of Technical Colleges.

### ***1.3 Objectives of the study***

1. To find out whether the current curriculum is effective to improve the communication skills
2. To find out whether the students in Technical Colleges acquire the communication competence

### ***1.4 Research Problem***

Is the current curriculum for the English language in Technical and Vocational Training Colleges effective in enhancing communication skills?

Today many school leavers are engaged in Technical and Vocational Education Institutes to have a formal technical education. Since the Technical and Vocational Training Centers produce an effective and efficient workforce the employers pay significant attention to them. Apart from technical knowledge nowadays employers look for other skills, mainly communication skills and English language skills. Hence, Technical Colleges have introduced a compulsory English language course unit to improve professional skills. This study is done to find out whether the current curriculum for the English language in Technical and Vocational Training Colleges is effective in enhancing communication skills. Since the qualification awarded here is directly related to the employment market. Therefore, the students ought to have more practical skills and

should be confident in speaking in English. Hence, it is of vital importance to investigate whether the present curriculum fulfills this demand.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is vital to discover what prior investigations have explored the subject area of interest. Arguments that are supportive and refutable have been thoroughly examined by the investigator. It is essentially expected in research to provide evidence relevant to the subject matter investigated by the researcher, which enhances the knowledge of the researcher as well as the readers.

Most education policy participants are reluctant to support education reform that is exclusively focused on the viewpoint of administrators. Stakeholders have critical roles in supporting and offering input on the world market. According to Taylor (2005), stakeholders should be involved in all stages of developing a curriculum, including designing, implementing, and assessing it. According to Dharma (2008), stakeholders play a crucial role in syllabus design by making sure that the material is relevant to modern needs in the fields of business, industry, and social life. The difficulties and differences in the education system can be minimized by involving both parties: the government and stakeholders in establishing the curriculum (Thanosawan, 2017). The revision of the English curriculum is therefore thought important in order to reorient community and English learners in the ability to adjust to forthcoming expectations that are necessary to just be successful in the international economy and commerce where the advancement of the country will indeed be our aims.

Excellent English communication proficiency, according to Kirubahar, Santhi, and Subashini (2010), is strongly correlated with employment mobility. Employability refers to a person's capacity to enter the labor market, remain there, and/or advance to the leading rank. In several situations, particularly in the modern Indonesian setting, this will depend on the ability to read, write, and speak English fluently and consistently in addition to acquiring those skills. Nevertheless, the curricula frequently don't complement the organizational abilities (Lie, 2007). Therefore, despite the individuals' six years of English instruction, neither their effective communication nor their readiness for the challenging job market was at the desired level.

With worldwide technical development, many employers demand that employees be competent with technology. So technical and vocational education plays a prominent place as the trainees are trained to work in a specific field of work. Vocational education, which has been stigmatized as an out-of-date, dead-end path for students, is becoming increasingly relevant, with ever-increasing returns on investment in education. Now, there is a lot of focus on developing Vocational Education on a strategic level (Zhang, 2008). When we consider the importance of the English language, it plays a significant role today in every field. Especially the job market demands English as it becomes the international language with globalization.

The end of World War II in 1945 signaled the beginning of an era of unprecedented international scientific, technological, and economic activity. This development resulted in a world controlled by two forces: technology and business, which quickly created a desire for an international language as a result of their unrelenting progress. This position fell to English for a variety of reasons, the most important of which was the United States' economic strength in the postwar globe (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

According to Hutchinson and Waters, English has developed into a powerful language as it is the mother tongue of the United States. Thus, the progression of technology and commerce demanded an international language, English. As technology goes along with English, the job market demands English because almost all jobs are working together with technology.

Brazil's Carlos Carrion Torres stated, "English is without a doubt the true universal language." Although English is not an official language in most nations, it is the most taught second language. English is the most spoken language on the planet. The researchers realized that the two terminologies must always be combined as a result of the information they obtained regarding communication and English. While English is now necessary for every industry, strong communication provides a positive ambiance and interaction between everyone in any organization, especially if it is within a corporation (Sunday Times, 2011).

Accordingly English language skill has become a necessary soft skill in the job market. Today people see the necessity of learning English as job trainers. Language is not taught to master the language but is taught to use language in their field of work. This is called English for Special Purpose (ESP) and is different from traditional means of language teaching and highlighted the use of language in real-life situations.

To put it another way, it's a method of teaching/learning English for specialized subjects with specific vocational and educational goals in mind. The instructional content in the ESP curriculum is aimed toward the unique language repertoire concerning the specialized goals that are expected of the students (Tahir, n.d.).

Since technical trainers stand a prominent place in the job market, technical education is included English for communicational purposes. The English language is taught to job trainers for a special purpose, which is workplace communication. Communication is a life skill that progresses the personal life as well as the professional life. Most scholars have defined it as a very significant skill in the job-entry market.

Communication abilities are seen as crucial for both employability and career advancement. Employees want creative, flexible workers with a broad variety of interpersonal and managerial abilities due to the changing nature of today's working landscape (Lankard, 1990). As the above extract proclaims communication skill is important to craft the development of an employee. Most organizations encourage employees with good communication skills. All relationships require effective

communication. Poor communication is the most often stated source of employee dissatisfaction, thus it's reasonable to assume that most employers are looking for people with strong communication skills (Thanky, 2014).

Hence, aforementioned facts indicate the importance of the English language as a communication skill for job trainers in technical colleges. Many technical colleges have identified the importance of the English language together with technical and Vocational education.

A suitable method to fit for learning characteristics of Vocational Education School pupils is the Induction-Interaction Learning Community, whose kernel is to make happiness throughout the English classroom. Such a classroom is vibrant and alive, and it may fully excite students' enthusiasm for English study and enhance their creativity, resulting in considerably improved teaching and learning. For its flexibility, interactivity, openness, sharing, and authenticity, the Mode of Induction-Interaction Learning Community is predicted to be experimented with, expanded upon, and promoted (Zhang, 2008).

The extract above declares the use of practical English teaching mode, Induction-Interaction among technical and vocational trainers in China. The study is focused on vocational students, but it does not focus on English as a communicational skill. The extract below as well focuses on vocational students in Taiwan, and it states that the study is conducted to find out the differences between the students' self-perceived English proficiency level and the use of language learning strategies. Yet the study does not focus on the English language as a communication skill.

The findings demonstrated that there are significant discrepancies between students' self-perceived English proficiency levels and their usage of language learning strategies in general, as well as in each of the six categories of language learning strategies. Language-learning tactics are used more frequently by students with a greater self-perceived English proficiency level than by students with a lower self-perceived English proficiency level. The statistical research also demonstrates a favorable relationship between students' language learning strategy use and their self-perceived competence levels, not only overall but also in each of the six types of techniques (Su, 2005).

## METHODOLOGY

The data collection process was principally based on primary data sources and secondary data sources. The proposed study consists of 75 students from technical colleges in Sri Lanka. These students will be selected from the Western province and Southern provinces. Students who follow the National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice (NCECT) course of technical colleges in Sri Lanka are the population of my study. A total of 100 students will be selected as the sample from Western and Southern provinces. The curriculum for the English language in Technical Colleges is reviewed by

the researcher. Then the researcher can identify the lessons included to enhance communication skills.

Students' writing samples were analyzed through random sampling method. Further, then a questionnaire is given to the students including both open-ended and close-ended questions. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out students' attitudes towards learning English as a soft skill and to find out whether they use English in day-to-day communication. Unstructured interviews were conducted with 5 instructors. The purpose of this interview is to find out the views of lecturers regarding the curriculum. A further reason for conducting this interview is to find out whether students use the English language to communicate in the classroom with the teacher and friends. This interview will enable us to find out the effectiveness and drawbacks of the syllabus.

Primary data was gathered through the questionnaire method and interview methods. As a primary data collection source, the questionnaire was distributed among students at Technical Colleges in Technical College Matara, Galle, and Rathmalana. Interviews were done with the instructor of English in Technical College Matara. Secondary data was gathered through books, official reports, journals, newspaper articles, and pdf documents. The Statistical Abstract 2011 was used to grasp information about the ethnic population of Sri Lanka. Moreover, the interviews recorded in newspapers and online were used to gather information about technical education, the importance of English to job trainers, communication skills, and teaching English for Special Purpose.

The data collected through questionnaires were separately analyzed to have a beneficial examination of the effectiveness of the current curriculum. The comparative study was done to improve the validity of the study. The comparative analysis among three colleges would allow observing the impact of social behavior on language skills as well. Thus, a comparative study of language ability was analyzed to find out the effectiveness of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Presentation and analysis of questionnaires and interviews

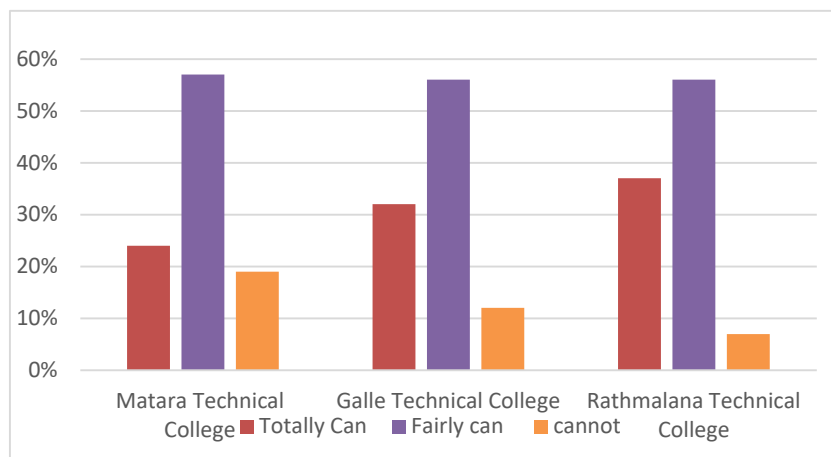
Primary data were collected from questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is given to Technical College students to find out the effectiveness of their current curriculum. The data collected from those questionnaires are summarized and presented using graphs, and charts to get a clear identification of data in analyzing process.

### Examining the writing ability of the students

Figure 4. 1: Percentage of ability to write a CV in NCEP course, compulsory English language students



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Writing skill is a very important factor that should be developed to achieve a better competency level of communication. Students in Technical Colleges are trained for a specific occupation and the English language stands as an additional skill that is highly demanded in the job market. The sample set of students taken from the course National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice required an average level of language competency to improve communication. Regarding communication competency, the ability to prepare Curriculum Vitae is crucial for job trainers as it is the basic communication level with the employer.

Figure 4.1 reveals the CV writing skill which is included in their current curriculum as well as which is important to employee trainees. Data were collected from about 75 students in three technical colleges and presented here as a percentage of several students separately from college to college. The writing ability is evaluated through three categories, total writing ability, fairly writing ability, and no writing ability. Figure 4.1 reveals considering Matara technical college 24% of students have the total ability in CV writing and 57% have the fair ability and 19% do not have a particular writing ability. Galle Technical College presents 32%, 56%, and 12% have the total ability, fair ability, and no ability respectively. Thus, Rathmalana Technical College presents 37% of students of total ability and 56% of students the fair ability, and 7% who cannot write CVs.

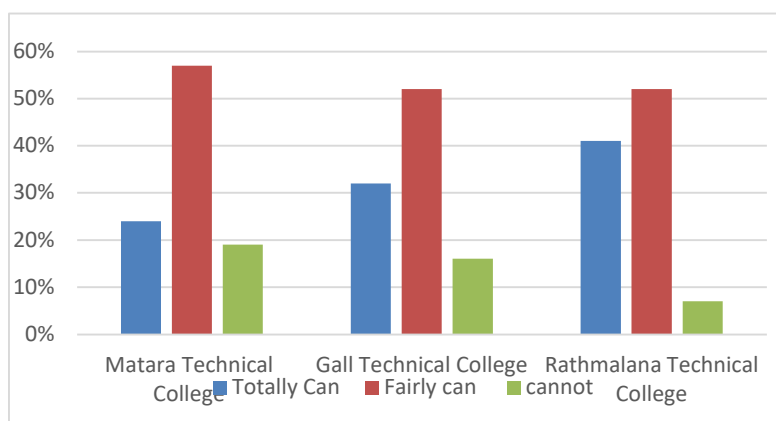
Yet the total ability and no ability in writing vary according to the districts. Galle represents an averagely high percentage, 8% of total ability than in students with total ability in Matara district. On the other hand, Students with no ability are lower than 7% when considering to Matara district. An additional 13% of students in the Colombo district display the total ability than in Matara district. Students who do not have the writing ability in the Colombo district hold a very low percentage, 7% when compared to the Matara district.

Consequently, variations among Technical Colleges situated in different districts may be caused according to the extra-linguistic determines. When comparing the total ability in the sample taken in the Matara district and Galle district, the sample taken from the Colombo district is high because of its exposure to English in other sources. Matara and Galle districts cover more rural areas when considering to Colombo district.

### *Examining the ability to read and understand in English*

The interviews conducted with instructors of English reveal that the evaluation paper consists of a reading passage. Yet have not mentioned the use of reading activities in the classroom. Hence, they have highlighted the importance of reading ability as the students have to work with user manuals written in English both while studying and working. The instructor of electronics states that having an average understanding of reading skills and writing skills is important in multilingual working environments. Consequently, the samples of students are examined to find out their reading ability in considering to letter reading.

Figure 4. 2 Percentage of ability to reading ability in regarding letters NCEP course, compulsory English language students



Above figure 4.2 presents the reading ability of technical students. In Matara Technical College, a total of 24% of the students can read and understand a letter and 57% fairly can understand a letter and 19% cannot understand a letter. 32%, 52%, and 16% in Galle Technical College and 41%, 52%, and 7% in Rathmalana Technical College have total ability, fair ability, and no ability respectively. The figure further reveals that the majority of students, 57%, 52%, and 52% respectively in Matara, Galle, and Rathmalana Technical Colleges can fairly read and understand a letter and a minority from 7% to 19% cannot read, and understand official letters. Thus, the respective number of students 24%, 32%, and 41% can read and understand letters. Yet the total ability and no ability in writing vary according to the districts. Galle represents an averagely high percentage, 8% of total ability than in students with total ability in Matara district. On the other hand, Students with no ability are lower than 7% when considering to Matara district. An additional 17% of students in the Colombo district display a total ability than in the Matara district.

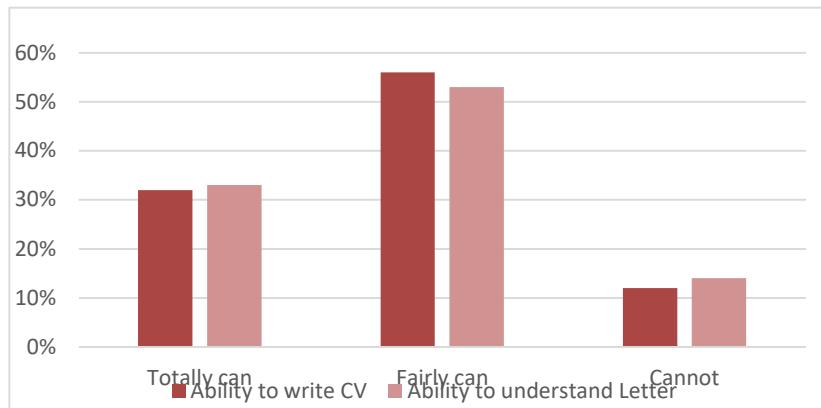
Students who do not have writing ability in the Colombo district hold a very low percentage of 7%.

Accordingly, reading skill is affected by the extra-linguistic determines as well. Colombo students show a high percentage of total ability and a very low percentage of students with low ability. All the students of island-wide study a common syllabus but show a different ability. It may be exactly based on the extra linguistic factors including their previous knowledge of English, exposure to English language societies, etc. However, it is vital that the curriculum ought to address the main competencies in the English language so that the student will definitely gain the benefit of being proficient as well as competent in the English Language. Hence, such a student will reach the outside world and work confidently in whatever task he/she is engaged in.

#### *A comparative examination of the writing ability and Reading ability of students*

This figure indicates the ability of writing and reading ability as a percentage of whole samples. The first two bars represent the total ability of writing and reading, and the middle bars represent the fair ability of reading and writing which is represented by most students. Then the final two bars represent the students who do not have writing and reading ability, which represents a minor percentage from the given sample of data.

Figure 4. 1 Percentage of ability to write a CV and reading ability regarding letters in NCEP course, compulsory English language students



Above figure 4.3 is used to demonstrate the writing and reading competency of the whole sample. According to the chart, both reading and writing abilities lay in an equal range percentage. Both total abilities to write CV and the ability to understand letters demonstrate 32%, 33%, and fair ability is around 56%, 53%. Consequently, this reveals that the writing and reading skills of students indicate a positive development.

#### *Examining the students' ability in managing English in the workplace or job interviews*

Having an average knowledge of English language practice in the workplace is said to be beneficial to the National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice course

followers in Technical Colleges as they work with new technology. A sample of students in their comments highlighted that the use of practical use of language can be valuable in communication if they had to work in multilingual environments. Thus, the interviews conducted with instructors revealed that the students are taught the necessary vocabulary including verbs, and the equipment they often meet in work settings. Kirubahar, Santhi, and Subashini (2010) stated in their research, the outcome of a curriculum is highly related to the job market.

Figure 4. 4: Percentage of ability to manage the English language in job interviews and workplace among NCEP course, compulsory English language students

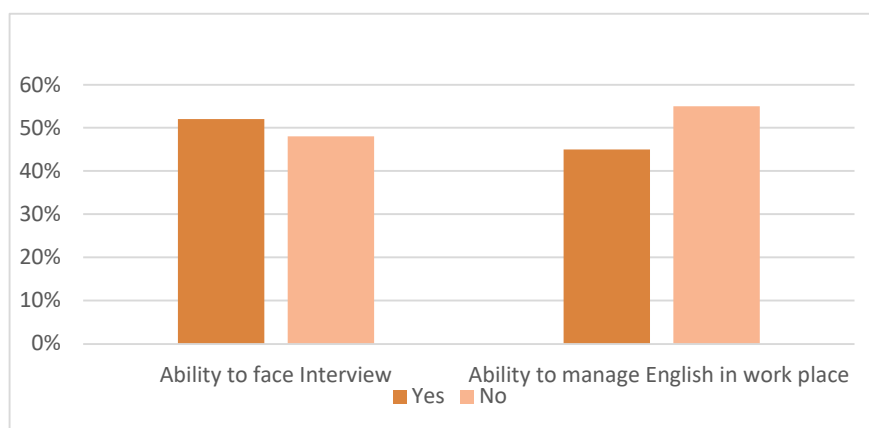


Figure 4.4 displays the students speaking ability to face an interview and communicate in English in the workplace. 52% of students from the sample of 75 can manage an interview conducted in English while 48% cannot. Thus 45% of students say that they will be able to manage communication in English in the workplace, yet 55% demand that they cannot. Hence this chart reveals that half of the students can manage the language while another half cannot. This reveals that speaking communication competency is comparatively low when compared to written and reading communication skills. Kirubahar, Santhi, and Subashini (2010) the English language plays a dominant role in the employment market since English is the language of communication and documentation.

### *Use of dialogues/ role plays in teaching English*

Figure 4. 5: Percentage of the use of dialogues and role-plays as a method of teaching

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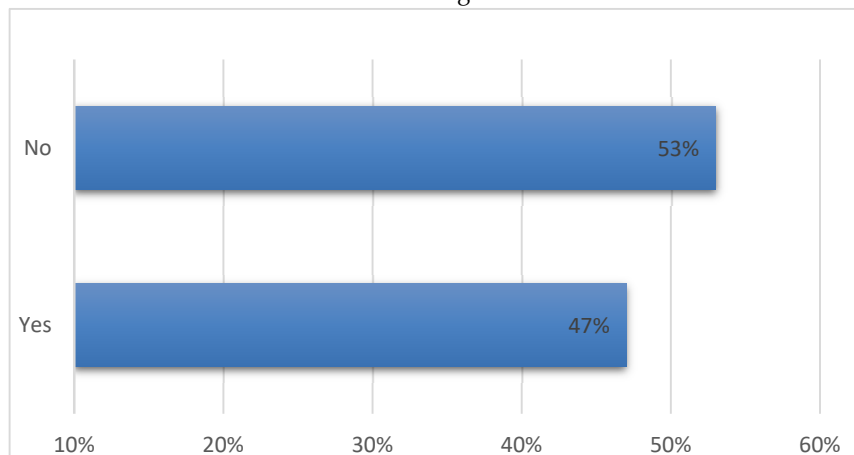


Figure 4.5 shows the use of dialogues and role-plays while teaching English in the classroom. It indicates 47% of students accept that they have dialogues and role-plays in classrooms while the rest of 53% think they do not have dialogues and role-plays as a teaching method. Yet a low percentage of using practical teaching methods implies a lack of practice in particular vocabulary.

### *Effectiveness of English subject content in student's perspectives*

Figure 4. 6: Percentage of the effectiveness of English subject content in student's view

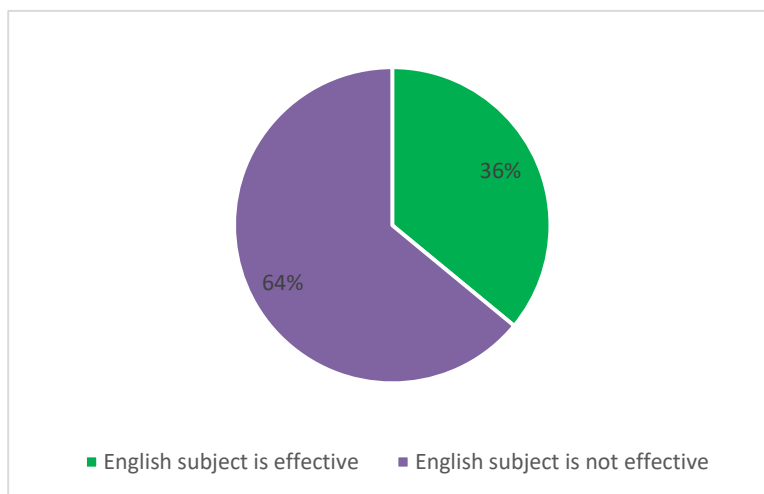


Figure 4.6 displays the student's opinion on the effectiveness of the knowledge gained by the compulsory English language subject. 64% of students from the sample state the English subject content taught to them is not effective in communication while 36% state it is effective in communication.

### *Students' opinion on the compulsory English subject*

The questionnaire was requested for any other comments of students other than the given set of questions. There, most students from the sample set indicate that the period, two hours per week is not enough and indicate the requirement of allocating more time for English language teaching and some students state they are unable to read, write or speak in the English language although they believe it as important. They further mentioned speaking and writing skills in English will be very useful if they must work in a multilingual environment. In addition, some students have stated that they have been taught English well while some students have stated that the teaching method should be altered more practically to use language in the workplace. Moreover, students were keener to study English for practical purposes rather than limiting themselves to merely accumulating theoretical knowledge in English. That was also practiced in school education. The students were more motivated to do group and pair activities that assist them to minimize their anxiety to speak in English. The participants are eager, and they pay more attention and emphasis since they are alert on their own turn to participate and communicate. Since they feel prepared and more confident to talk once they are prepared. Thus, being organized and planned on the information the students are going to discuss and share with the students in the class and the teacher will assist the students to relegate communication apprehension. Accordingly, English is a crucial language that dominates the employment market (Tahir, n.d.).

A public phobia is a sensitive phenomenon that many learners undergo when made mandatory to communicate in English class or in the public arena. This indicates that phobia of public speaking may be a source of the issue in students' learning exercises within the classroom, particularly within the course of talking. Hence, paying consideration to this perspective is additionally very critical to assist the students to do their best in their communication performance within the classroom. In line with this, Spielberg (2013), encourage clarifies that talking before individuals is one of the more common fears that learners experience and a feeling of modesty makes their intellect go clear or that they will disregard what to say. This hypothesis is additionally supported by the result of this inquiry about which most understudies fall flat to perform communication performance at their best. As they say, their failure to appear and their capacity in talking is additionally affected much by their feeling of bashfulness. In other words, it can be said that bashfulness plays a critical part in communication performance. Hence using a turn-taking conversational strategy majority of the students that is 66% agreed that turn-taking activities assisted to reduce the phobia of public speaking. As stated by Thanky in 2010, speaking competency is of crucial importance in the labor market.

### *Opinion of English instructors on the current curriculum in Technical Colleges*

To find out the effectiveness of the current curriculum two instructors of English from Technical College Matara and three instructors from Technical College Galle and three instructors from Technical College Rathmalana were interviewed. The grammar, parts of speech, question forms, technical vocabulary including tools and equipment, notes and notices writing, and preparation of CV are taught in the classroom during the two years of the course period. Hence the English skill is evaluated by a test paper at the end of two years and is included in grammar, preparation of CV and notes writing, and reading passages that are related to the technical subject area.

Thus, the interviewees declare that they mostly use the discussion method rather than lecturing in teaching English. Writing tasks are practiced through the form of writing small notes, notices, and personal profiles. Commonly instructors' ideas regarding the current curriculum seem to be average. According to their opinion, the subject content is enough for the expected level of communication. Suggests the samples of students of the National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice course are expected to have an average knowledge of reading, writing, and speaking skills. Moreover, the instructors' view indicates the period allocated for teaching English is not enough. Further instructors state that students have poor attendance in English classes as they are not interested in the subject.

The interview conducted with an IT instructor on electronics discloses that ESP teachers in Technical College are mostly visiting lectures from other institutes that do not have training on ESP teaching. He further states his encounter with students reveals the necessity of having specially trained teachers for ESP who have a perfect idea of English for vocational purposes.

### *Data analysis on secondary data sources*

Analyzing secondary data plays an important role while examining the effectiveness of the current curriculum for National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice course followers in Technical Colleges. When considering the content grammar and vocabulary stand in a crucial place. There are several misapprehensions about the role of grammar in ESP teaching and grammar is considered to have a lack of importance. Yet the grammatical difficulties interfere with the essentially productive skills of speaking and writing or the essentially receptive skills of listening and reading (Dudley, Evans & St John, 2011).

Consequently, the National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice, Communication skills (English) curriculum consists of grammar including tenses, parts of speech, and question forms to overcome comprehension difficulties in communication. In addition, as the importance of teaching vocabulary in ESP is widely accepted the curriculum has included the relevant vocabulary. In any ESP exercise which exploits a particular context, that context will use certain technical vocabulary. Therefore, the vocabulary contains in the syllabus is the technical vocabulary that could be used in the workplace.

Further reading, writing, and speaking skill stand a prominent place in ESP. In ESP reading skill differs from the reading skills recommended in language teaching. One of the most important contributions to the approach to reading in ESP was the shift from Text as a Linguistic Objective (TALO) to Text as a Vehicle of Information. So, the reading purpose highlights the importance of extracting information accurately. Thus, spoken interaction does not solely lie on speaking ability in real-time communicative events. In these circumstances, participants have dual roles – as listeners and speakers. (Dudley, Evans & St John, 2011) Since they have not included speaking activities students comment that they will face difficulties in multi-lingual environments. Practicing vocabulary and other language forms seem to be lacking in the current curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

Teaching English for Vocational purposes can be categorized under the topic English for Special Purpose. ESP teaching varies from language teaching for general-purpose according to their objective of language learning. The English language is taught in Technical Colleges as a compulsory subject for the practical use of language in real-life situations. This implies that language is used as a tool for communicational purposes. English language and workplace communication have a close relationship as globalization increase the demand for a workforce consisting of communication competency in the English language. Hence research has been done to find out the effectiveness of the curriculum for compulsory English subjects in Technical Colleges about the course National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice and comes to the following conclusion.

The primary data is collected in the form of questionnaires and interviews and the secondary data is collected through books and electronic sources. The data through questionnaires were selected to find out students writing ability, language comprehension ability, average language speaking ability, methods of teaching, and students' perspectives on the prevailing syllabus of English. The analysis of students' ability in CV writing represents an averagely progressive level. This illustrates that subject content taught in the English language is effective as the students will be able to communicate with employers in the future. This does not imply that the students are having better writing competency as many of them have mentioned they cannot write. But the curriculum is consisted of writing tasks like letter writing, notes, and notices writing. All these facts conclude that the curriculum is effective in enhancing written communication. Yet the students' comments on their lack of writing skills and having a large gap between total ability and fair ability suggest that the language teaching method should be altered.

Thus, the ability of understanding letters displays an average level of progression as well. This illustrates the subject content included in the syllabus provides a particular level of written competency. However, it does not suggest the existing curriculum is effective in enhancing written communication because the student's comments in the questionnaire reveal their inability in writing as well. Further interviews were done with instructors of English exposing that the evaluation paper consists of a reading passage but at the same time the interview reveals they do not use reading activities much in classrooms.



Therefore, this illustrates language teaching should be reformed to develop effective reading comprehension of students which helps greatly in communication.

In addition, speaking ability does not demonstrate a progressive level. Although half of the students demonstrate total ability in managing English in both interviews and the workplace the language content included cannot be suggested as effective as the other half remains with no ability. Thus, students' perspective on language teaching also reveals their lack of no ability in English language oral skills, and also the existing curriculum indicates a little reference to speaking activities. Further data presentation on the usage of dialogues and role-plays indicates less usage of spoken linguistics in the classroom which will be a useful practical communication skill in the future. Generally, the data analysis on the examination of spoken competency concludes that the content included in the syllabus, as well as the teaching method, is not effective.

Moreover, the secondary data analysis indicates the subject content should consist of grammar and technical vocabulary which is said to be very important in technical education. The current curriculum for compulsory English language in National Certificate in Engineering Craftsman Practice course consists of a fair amount of grammar and vocabulary including relevant set verbs in use as well as equipment. According to the ESP language teaching, including a fair amount of grammar and vocabulary in the content is a characteristic. Thus, grammar is taught to avoid misconceptions in communication and vocabulary is taught supposed to use the language in real-life situations. Therefore, content can be suggested as effective to a certain degree in enhancing communicational skills.

Considering the above facts, the research can be concluded as the current curriculum is effective to a certain degree, and it should be reformed in a more effective way to enhance communicative skills. To enhance the effectiveness of the content of the curriculum should be included more activities on reading, writing, and speaking. Reading ability should be developed by including reading passages and comprehension in the classroom as well. Hence to improve writing competency more writing practice should be done which will be used in a real-life context. Thus, encouraging students to engage in dialogues and role-plays which demonstrate true situations will be beneficial in developing spoken skills in the future.

In addition, there should be new and attractive methods of language teaching apart from traditional methods of teaching in ESP classrooms to increase the interest in learners. Then learning process of formatting, the game Pictionary or TV game shows allow for communicative practice with new vocabulary items and related concepts is an activity adapted from Briton and these types of activities will draw students' attention and interest in the learning process. Employee interviewing also can be practiced in a class by assessing frequently used questions and answers. The research revealed that English language teachers should have special training in ESP teaching methods. Moreover, allocating considerably additional time for ESP teaching seems to have vital importance in enhancing communication skills.

To reduce speaking anxiety teaching strategies such as turn-taking and group work can be adopted in lessons. Therefore, teachers must adopt new methods for improving

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students' speaking skills rather than sticking to traditional methods. Further activities such as picture descriptions, video descriptions, creation of stories and narration, and delivering speeches by giving time for preparation can be adopted when preparing lessons. This will assist to inculcate a friendly and supportive classroom environment, speak in English with companions and relatives, participate more in the lesson, reading English daily papers, tune in to English news, observe English motion pictures. Subsequently, it can be said that the teachers can help learners to play down their uneasiness and keep it at a direct pace which can persuade them to perform way better in their classroom.

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