

Imparting Communication Skills through (JKCs) in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

As communication skills have become the need of the hour, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has established Jawahar Knowledge Centres (JKCs) in all Degree colleges. Its main aim is to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to learn employable skills and to stand in the hyper competitive world. In this process, special preference is given to hone language skills of the aspirants to accomplish their set goals. In addition to this, soft skills as well are given paramount importance to inculcate positive attitude in them. As most of them are from rural and semi-urban background, they have been utilizing the facility to the optimum extent. It is really, a unique endeavour of the Department of Higher Education, Andhra Pradesh. Hence, the syllabus has been designed in such a way that seekers can equip themselves with the four language skills with much agility and aplomb. The present paper makes a humble attempt to write about the journey of JKCs in achieving considerable success in Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: JKCs, employable skills, language skills, soft skills, rural and semi-urban.

Introduction

The concept of globalization has brought about umpteen changes in every field. Especially, in education and employment domain, a noticeable paradigm shift is registered in getting jobs in various multi-national companies. Besides, a big boom in IT sector has opened the door of opportunities in global job market, exclusively to those who possess good communication and soft skills. As it is said, "Communication Skill makes and mars difference in success and failure. Many people despite their inspiring vision and devoted efforts fail to achieve their potentials in life simply because of the inability to communicate

effectively.” Another reason being, that conventional curriculum of degree courses does not impart requisite skills relevant to the job market. The Department felt the indispensability of providing skill-oriented training to stakeholders so as to enable them to ensure employment with much ease and exuberance. Communication Skills and Soft Skills have become conspicuous words these days. They really constitute the major components in molding one’s personality which has become sinequanon credential for all job appliers. Speaking about importance of communication, Woody Allen points out, “If all my possessions were taken from me with one exception, I would hope to keep my power of communication – for by it I would regain all the rest.” Though there are many books as guides to learn communication skills, they are unable to cater to the needs of rural learners. Therefore, the material that has been improvised for the students of JKC’s to make learners equipped themselves with good spoken and written skills.

Soft skills are basically interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that would help out a person to have better rapport and interaction with any person. The outcome will be positive and would encourage the learner to chisel himself or herself a better rounded individual. The paper outshines some of the aspects such as Grammar, Speaking Skills, Voice-Based Efficiency, Reading Skills, Writing Skills and Soft Skills which would extend a helping hand to the mentors as well as mentees to sharpen their communicative competence.

Grammar

Merriam – Webster.com defines grammar as “A System of rules that defines the grammatical structure of a language.” The modern linguists feel that grammar is not essential to develop communication skills. But in practical parlance, it is believed that for clarity of communication, grammar is quintessence to express one’s ideas without any confusion. As a result, it has become imperative to learn grammar to enrich one’s power of expression. That is why, for the students of JKC’s grammar items have been prescribed to have hands on experience. In this context, the first step is to explain Modal Verbs, which are part of Auxiliary Verbs. In English there are several Modal Verbs. Modals are special verbs which behave very irregularly in English. Helping verbs such as will, shall, may, might, can, could, must, ought to, should, would, used to and need are used with main verbs to express shades of time and mood. Usually, all Modal Verbs are followed by a main verb in the base form except for ‘ought’ which is followed by an infinitive.

(a) Modal Auxiliaries

Together with the main verbs that follow, the Modal Auxiliaries express the mode or manner of actions denoted by the verbs. On the other hand, they express such ideas as ability, probability, possibility, permission, obligation, duty or advisability etc. However, they do not change according to the number or person of the subject. They are always followed by the main verb. After these verbs, the base form of the verb (V1) should be used.

(b) Question Tags

After discussing Modal Verbs and their usage, a brief account of Question Tags and their essentiality is focused to show its importance in spoken English. Question Tags help the speakers to seek affirmation. The tag is always in the reverse form of the given statement. If the given statement is positive 'not' is added to the Auxiliary Verb, in case it is negative 'not' is avoided in the Question Tag.

E.g.: She can walk fast. (Assumption)

She can walk fast, can't she? (Confirmation)

The students can't solve all the problems, can they?

Ravi stood first in the class, didn't he?

Note: There is a possibility of tagging a question form to a request and a suggestion as well.

E.g.: Fetch me a glass of water, can you? (Formal)

Don't be idle, will you? (Formal)

Don't waste your time, would you? (Polite)

Let's sing a song, shall we? (Suggestion)

(c) Tenses

In functional English, the role of Tenses is much significant. It is essential in spoken and written English to form sentences according to time and action. So, while teaching communication skills, the stakeholders are given sufficient practice in using the twelve forms. It provides an opportunity for them to express their ideas semantically on par with their mother tongue. Besides, if the learners are ignorant of proper situational formations, they may feel difficult to put forth their feelings without any ambiguity. Hence, the producers of the material formulated the chapter with much deftness by elucidating each tense form conveniently and scientifically to enlighten the learners equipping themselves to get command over structure of the sentence in meaningful way. So to say, this chapter enables the trainees to develop their ability to comprehend and present their thoughts with much coherence and confidence.

(d) Voice

Voice means the way of expressing the same statement in two different points of view – the subject point of view (SVO) and the object point of view (OVS). Active Voice starts with subject, whereas Passive Voice begins with object. Sometimes, subject is avoided in Passive Voice, if it is either understood or unimportant according to the context.

E.g.: Mohan paints a picture (A.V.)

A Picture is painted by Mohan (P.V.)

People speak English all over the world (A.V.)

English is spoken all over the world (P.V.)

Above all, voices are used depending on the situation. Practically speaking, Active Voice is used to communicate directly and compressively to make the listener understand the import of the statement, when the doer of action is important. In case of Passive Voice, it is not the doer that is important rather the action done.

(e) Reported Speech

This chapter mainly highlights the two ways of speech, namely Direct Speech and Indirect Speech. In Direct Speech, the actual words are quoted and in Indirect or Reported Speech, the same words are reported by one, other than the speaker. The verb that is used to report is called reporting verb. These reporting verbs change in accordance with the four kinds of sentences. In addition to this, changes take place in the tense of the Reported verb in Indirect Speech only when the reporting verb is in past tense. Here are some of the examples to illustrate the above statement:

Gopal said to her, "I have done the home work." (Assertive Sentence)

Gopal told her that he had done the home work.

Sita said to him, "Why are you sad?" (Interrogative)

Sita asked him why he was sad.

The officer said to the attendant, "Get the files quickly." (Imperative)

The officer ordered the attendant to get the files quickly.

The man said, "How beautiful the garden is!" (Exclamatory)

The man exclaimed with joy that the garden was very beautiful.

On the whole, the grammar items prescribed and explained are useful and the material provided is learner friendly to the students as they are self-explanatory and efficacious in catching the spirit of the language.

Speaking skills

The onset of globalization has brought about a great change in speaking English. It has necessitated the use of English in consonance with native speakers, exclusively in pronunciation and accent. Hence, this chapter is devoted to dispense with Vowel Sounds, Consonant Sounds, Neutralization of Accent and change of Speech Patterns. These would facilitate the learners to acquire knowledge of speaking English aptly and accurately avoiding mother tongue influence (MTI).

Voice – Based Efficiency

Speech becomes silver when one's voice is soft and polite. Hence, this chapter discusses the skills of making polite requests, asking for and giving permission, offering, accepting and denying help, asking for and giving directions, extending invitations, expressing sympathy, agreeing and disagreeing and making complaints. In fact, these would

help out the speakers and writers in their respective fields in getting desired results. Of course, they reform the tonality and accent to get all things done without any hurdle.

Soft Skills

Lynn Clark is of the opinion that one can manage oneself if one can manage one's own emotions. Primarily skills are of two types – Hard Skills and Soft Skills. Hard Skills can be accomplished through academic endeavour. But Soft Skills are hard, as they have to be cultivated by the innate quality of wisdom and virtuosity. It is apt to say, "Developing Soft Skills involves not only developing finer attitudes and attributes, but also fine-tuning the communication skills to express attitudes, ideas and thoughts in the best possible manner." However, communication skills make the stakeholders to sharpen their communicative caliber and to express their ideas in a cogent manner. Whereas, soft skills reflect attitudes and manners to reshape one's personality. The booming of corporate sector triggered the concept of Soft Skills in work places to have any work carried out with much ability to create friendly ambience for the growth of business. Of course, any individual can learn these skills from family and societal background. However, these skills have received much impetus to develop accessibility and accountability in any field of activity. Furthermore, we need Soft Skills in today's world more than our technical skills and academic qualifications, to make our lives peaceful, successful and productive either in the private or public domain. Hence, in one way they are considered life skills since they cannot be learnt but can be practised.

It is said soft skills must be demonstrated from all spheres of life. They are mainly interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, know yourself, SWOT analysis, goal setting, positive attitude, body language, time management, presentation skills, team dynamics, problem solving etc. Holistically speaking, these skills would enhance the professional quality of an employee. More than that, it will have a greater impact positively on a person's family and personal life as well. "In nutshell, soft skills in broad sense include all those skills which are related with interaction with other human beings in positive manner."

Conclusion

It is an obvious fact from the above brief review of some of the aspects that are imparted to the learners through JKC's in Andhra Pradesh, that they are functioning productively providing bright opportunities for the students to secure employment in private and public sectors. A recent survey on the rate of success regarding learners' attitude towards mastery of Communication and Soft Skills says that most of the students are getting benefitted by acquiring themselves with considerable command over language and deportment. Above all, it is happy to acknowledge that the yeomen service of JKC's for the cause of education and employment in Andhra Pradesh is really praiseworthy. In years to come, it would be a pioneer even to other states to establish this kind of knowledge centers

for their students of higher learning. As well, these finishing schools would make a benchmark in alluring the learners of rural backdrop to annex jobs in their career path.

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