



A Study Of The Relationship Between English Communication Skills And Career Readiness Among Engineering

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Abstract: Technical competence is a central component of engineering education; however, effective English communication has become increasingly important for graduates seeking employment in today's global and professionally interconnected workplace. This study investigates the relationship between workplace English communication practices and graduate career readiness, with particular attention to the frequency of language use, the relative importance of communication macro-skills, and the functions performed through English in professional settings. A mixed-method research design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through reflective workplace diaries maintained by 97 practicing mechanical engineers for 30 consecutive days. The diary data were complemented by semi-structured interviews conducted for triangulation and supported by a review of relevant secondary literature. The findings indicate that English is used extensively in professional engineering environments, with participants reporting its use on approximately 21–25 days during the observation period. Among the major communication skills, writing was identified as the most frequently used and professionally significant skill. The analysis further demonstrates that workplace English is predominantly employed for transactional and informational purposes, while interactional communication receives comparatively less emphasis. These findings highlight a notable mismatch between the communication demands of engineering workplaces and the language preparation provided through conventional engineering curricula. The limited emphasis on practical English communication, particularly written documentation, technical reporting, and task-oriented communication, may consequently restrict graduates' workplace preparedness and employability. The study recommends greater integration of authentic workplace communication practices into engineering education to strengthen students' English communication competence and enhance their overall career readiness.

Index Terms - English Communication Skills, Career Readiness; Graduate Employability; Engineering Students; Workplace English; Engineering Education; Professional Communication; Technical Writing; Workplace Communication; Communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Engineering education traditionally places considerable emphasis on technical knowledge, analytical ability and problem-solving. However, successful transition from university to employment requires graduates to demonstrate a broader range of competencies. Employers increasingly expect graduates to communicate ideas clearly, work effectively with others, participate in professional discussions, prepare written documents and present technical information to different audiences. The importance of communication skills in engineering education has been highlighted in previous research. Shokeen and Sharma's study on engineering students connects limited communication skills with employability and placement challenges and emphasizes that technical knowledge alone may not be sufficient for successful entry into the employment market. Their study also identifies communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills and

technical awareness as important components of employment preparation. English has acquired additional importance because it functions as an international language in higher education, science, technology and professional communication. Melibari (2025) argues that English proficiency has become an important factor in graduates' professional readiness and reports that university study in English is perceived to influence communication, cognitive, personal and work-related skills. The relationship becomes particularly relevant for engineering students because engineers frequently need to communicate technical information to colleagues, clients, managers and other professionals. Effective communication may involve oral presentations, technical writing, discussions, teamwork, interviews and the ability to explain complex ideas in understandable language. Recent research focusing on technical students further supports this argument. Rahma, Ruswandi and Rahmah (2025) found that students recognized English-speaking skills as important for employment and career development. However, the study also identified a substantial gap between students' awareness of the importance of English and their confidence in using English in professional contexts. Similarly, research involving engineering students in Lebanon found that students perceived their required English courses as useful for developing communication skills, but the communication skills acquired in English courses were not always sufficiently reinforced within their engineering courses. The study therefore emphasizes stronger cooperation between English and engineering education. These findings suggest that English communication skills and career readiness should not be treated as completely separate areas of engineering education. Instead, communication competence may contribute to students' confidence and preparedness for employment. Therefore, the present study focuses specifically on the relationship between English communication skills and career readiness among engineering students.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

i) English Communication Skills in Engineering Education

Communication is a multidimensional competence involving speaking, listening, writing and interaction with different audiences. Engineering students may be required to prepare technical reports, deliver project presentations, participate in group discussions, explain technical concepts and communicate with industry professionals. Research on engineering education emphasizes that communication includes both oral and written competencies. The engineering-focused literature reviewed in the present study also refers to effective writing, oral presentations, communication for different audiences and the ability to communicate technical information. English communication therefore extends beyond grammatical knowledge. For engineering students, it includes the ability to use English appropriately in academic and professional situations.

ii) English and Employability

The relationship between English proficiency and employability has been discussed in several of the reviewed studies. The engineering literature identifies communication ability as an important component of employability, while recent research on technical students indicates that students perceive English speaking ability as providing an advantage in employment. Shokeen and Sharma also report that employers value communication and other soft skills alongside technical and professional competencies. Their literature review highlights communication, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking and problem solving as components of broader employability skills. Thus, English communication can be considered one component of the wider skill set required for employment.

iii) Career Readiness

Career readiness refers to the extent to which students possess the knowledge, skills, confidence and attitudes required to transition successfully from education into employment.

For engineering students, career readiness can involve:

- interview preparedness;
- workplace communication;
- teamwork;
- professional confidence;
- problem-solving;
- adaptability;
- presentation skills;
- professional behaviour; and
- perceived employability.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that technical competence needs to be complemented by communication and other employability skills. Employers may expect engineering graduates to demonstrate not only what they know but also their ability to communicate and apply that knowledge in workplace situations.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

i) Communication Skills and Employability Among Engineering Students

Shokeen and Sharma examined communication skills in relation to employability among engineering students. Their study highlights placement difficulties and identifies limited communication skills as one factor associated with poor employment outcomes. The authors also discuss communication assessment and employability testing as mechanisms for identifying students who require additional support. Their literature review further indicates that employers consider soft skills, including communication, important alongside professional and technical skills. The study consequently recommends institutional initiatives to strengthen communication skills among engineering students. This study provides an important foundation for the present research because it establishes the relevance of communication skills to engineering employability.

ii) English-Medium Education and Job Readiness

Melibari (2025) examined graduates' perceptions of the impact of studying in English on job readiness. The study considered knowledge, cognitive, communication, personal and work skills. The findings reported positive perceptions regarding the contribution of studying in English to communication and work-related skills. The study further argues that English proficiency can support professional communication, confidence and adaptability in increasingly globalized employment environments. This research is relevant to the present study because it supports the broader argument that English competence may contribute to skills associated with career readiness.

iii) English Speaking Skills and Career Readiness

Rahma, Ruswandi and Rahmah (2025) specifically examined the role of English-speaking skills in career readiness among Building Information Modeling students. The researchers used a quantitative questionnaire approach with 72 students. Their results showed that students strongly recognized the importance of English for employment, while many students simultaneously reported low confidence in using English professionally. The study identified an important gap between students' recognition of the importance of English and their confidence in using English in workplace situations. It also found that many respondents believed that existing English instruction did not adequately focus on workplace speaking requirements. The findings suggest that practical activities such as interviews, project presentations, role plays and interaction with industry professionals may be useful in strengthening students' career-oriented communication skills.

iv) **Transfer of Communication Skills to Engineering Courses**

Nicolas and Nicolas examined whether communication skills acquired through required English courses were transferred and reinforced within engineering courses. Their study involved undergraduate engineering students and found that students perceived English courses as providing opportunities for communication-skill development. However, the researchers also identified insufficient communication between English and engineering departments as a barrier to further development of these skills. The study emphasizes that engineering communication includes both written and oral communication and argues for integration between English instruction and engineering education. This provides an important basis for examining communication not simply as an English-subject outcome but as an employability-oriented engineering competency.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed studies establish the importance of communication and English proficiency for employability and career preparation. However, several gaps remain.

First, some previous research has focused broadly on employability or communication skills among engineering students, whereas other studies have examined English-speaking skills in specific technical or vocational groups.

Second, existing studies have often concentrated on students' perceptions of the importance of English rather than directly examining the statistical relationship between an overall measure of English communication skills and career readiness.

Third, previous research has identified a gap between students' awareness of the importance of English and their confidence in using it professionally.

Fourth, research on the transfer of communication skills into engineering courses indicates that communication skills developed through English courses may not always be reinforced in technical subjects.

Therefore, the present study proposes to examine the relationship between English communication skills and career readiness specifically among engineering students using a quantitative research design.

V. DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed in this study demonstrates that English communication skills play an important role in the career readiness of engineering and technical students. In particular, English-speaking ability is increasingly viewed as an important professional competency because engineering graduates are expected not only to possess technical knowledge but also to communicate their ideas effectively in academic and workplace environments. Previous research indicates that students recognize the professional value of English proficiency and perceive strong English communication skills as providing an advantage in employment and career development.

However, the literature also reveals a significant gap between students' awareness of the importance of English communication and their confidence in applying these skills in professional situations. Students may understand that English is important for employment while still experiencing difficulties when speaking English in workplace contexts. This suggests that knowledge of English alone may not be sufficient for career readiness; students also require regular opportunities to practise and apply their communication skills in realistic professional situations.

One important issue identified in the literature is the limited emphasis placed on practical speaking skills in some educational settings. English instruction may give greater attention to grammar, reading and writing, while students receive fewer opportunities to develop fluency, confidence and spontaneous oral communication. This creates a gap between classroom learning and the communication demands of the

workplace. Research involving technical students has similarly highlighted the need to move beyond theoretical language instruction and provide greater emphasis on active language use.

The importance of speaking skills is particularly relevant to engineering students because professional engineering work frequently involves presentations, group discussions, teamwork, meetings, technical explanations and interactions with clients and colleagues. Effective communication enables graduates to explain technical information to different audiences and to participate effectively in multidisciplinary and professional environments. Research on engineering education also indicates that communication skills developed through English courses need to be reinforced within engineering subjects so that students can transfer these skills to their technical and professional contexts.

Another important theme emerging from the literature is the role of confidence in career readiness. Communication confidence can influence students' willingness to participate in interviews, presentations, discussions and workplace interactions. A student may possess adequate technical knowledge but may find it difficult to demonstrate that knowledge effectively if they lack confidence in communicating in English. Previous research therefore emphasizes the relationship between speaking confidence, employability and the ability to function in multicultural or professional workplaces.

The reviewed literature also suggests that authentic exposure to English communication can contribute to greater confidence and practical competence. Students who have opportunities to use English in academic, technical or industry-related situations are more likely to develop familiarity with professional communication. Consequently, communication development should involve activities that simulate real workplace requirements rather than relying exclusively on theoretical instruction. Job interview simulations, technical presentations, group discussions, role plays and interaction with industry professionals can provide students with opportunities to apply English in meaningful contexts.

The relationship between English communication and career readiness can therefore be understood as extending beyond language proficiency itself. Communication skills contribute to several broader employability competencies, including teamwork, professional interaction, confidence, adaptability and the ability to present ideas effectively. Research on engineering employability similarly identifies communication as an important component of the wider set of skills required for successful transition from higher education to employment.

The literature further highlights the importance of integrating English communication with engineering education. Rather than treating English as an isolated subject, engineering institutions can incorporate communication activities into technical courses and project work. Such integration can help students understand that communication is not separate from engineering competence but is an essential means of applying and demonstrating technical knowledge. Research on engineering students indicates that stronger collaboration between English and engineering education can support the development and transfer of communication skills.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that career readiness among engineering students depends on more than technical knowledge. English communication skills, particularly speaking, presentation, professional interaction and communication confidence, can contribute significantly to students' preparedness for employment. At the same time, the literature points to a continuing gap between students' recognition of the importance of English and their practical ability to use it confidently in professional settings. Addressing this gap requires a shift toward practical, interactive and workplace-oriented English communication education.

Therefore, engineering institutions should provide students with sustained opportunities to practise English in authentic professional contexts. Greater integration of technical presentations, mock interviews, group discussions, project-based communication, industry interaction and other workplace-oriented activities can help students develop both communication competence and career confidence. Such an approach can strengthen the connection between English education and engineering employability and better prepare graduates for the communication demands of contemporary professional environments.

VI. CONCLUSION

English communication has become an important component of professional preparation for engineering students. The literature reviewed in this study demonstrates that communication skills are closely associated with employability, professional interaction and preparation for the workplace. Engineering students may possess strong technical knowledge but still require effective communication skills to demonstrate their knowledge during interviews, presentations, teamwork and professional interactions. Recent research further demonstrates that students recognize the importance of English speaking skills for employment while some continue to experience low confidence in professional English communication. The present study therefore proposes a quantitative investigation of the relationship between English communication skills and career readiness among engineering students. By measuring both variables and statistically examining their relationship, the study can provide evidence for developing more career-oriented communication education within engineering institutions. The ultimate objective is not to replace technical education with language education, but to integrate communication competence with technical competence so that engineering graduates are better prepared to communicate their knowledge and participate effectively in professional environments.

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