

Perception Towards English as a Medium of Communication Among Indian and Foreign Students

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Abstract: The main aim of conducting this research is to study how communication is significant for building a connection between staff and students. With growing cultural diversity, it has created a growth in the rate of migration. The inter-cultural contact between countries has an impact on the educational sector. Communication is an effective tool for efficient management in an educational institution. It is considered unavoidable, irreplaceable with an educational framework for successful administration. The importance of language was never this important. This study focuses on language usage and practices. The research uses a questionnaire to obtain responses which determines language perceptions each one has adopted. The acquisition of cross-cultural communication skills is positively related to the motivation to succeed in the project and the sense of community developed within the online collaborative environment.

Keywords: Students, communication, perception, cultural diversity, success.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world the increase in cross-cultural activities signifies the need for the citizens to have effective cross-cultural communication skills. The need for this is required for the success in today's society. Each culture includes a set of values, trade morals, acknowledged behaviour and decorum that each individual has i.e. different expressions, motives and perception. Diversity in educational institutions is considered as an important factor. Students migrate to other countries to perceive their higher education, internship and also on work basis for which cross-cultural training is required. Educational sectors have emphasized on hiring professionals who have the ability to work across different cultures. There is an importance of language competence in educational sectors. Language is a fundamental tool to understand human behaviour. Effective communication is an essential tool for accomplishing a goal. The barriers to cross cultural communication can be due to style of the educational institution, lack of understanding and too much expectation from students and staff. It is not only the language but also non-verbal communication and space relationship (staff and student) also are the effective barriers to communication. Certain countries would prefer presentations to be formal while few others want it to be lively and interactive. People perceive

information as incomplete or false. Therefore, it is necessary to have a guide which gives a platform to increase their knowledge and put forth their ideas and thoughts.

2. Review of literature

1. Goodine John (2009) conducted a study on comparing computer software programs: determining the most efficient system for teaching English language learners. This evaluative study was designed to clearly investigate and compare computer software programs and determine which software program (tell me more kids and live action English interactive) was most effective in helping the English language learners to expeditiously learn English. The system of study put into consideration the ease of students' adaptability to the learning aid inculcated into the research. The qualitative methodology approach was employed. Data were gathered from pretests, posttests, classroom observations and student assessments. The observed improvements were marginal between the two groups studied but each group based on the findings showed academic increase.
2. Simo (2008) conducted a study on the cognitive concept of game in American English and Hungarian. This study explored the meaning of the concept of game for speakers of American English and Hungarian by investigating the exemplars of the category; their attitude etc. the aim of the study was to investigate the structure of the category in the two languages.
3. Andrade, 2006; Li et. al., 2009; Lin & Betz, 2009; Wright & Schartner, 2013: While some researchers conduct their inquiries from the perspective of the international student, highlighting the barriers and adjustment issues leading these students to shy away from intercultural contact with domestic students (Andrade, 2006; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Li et al., 2009; Lin & Betz, 2009; Wright & Schartner, 2013), others conduct their inquiries from the perspective of the domestic student (Campbell, 2011; Dunne, 2009; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002:). These researchers explore the perceptions of domestic students regarding international

students, and also highlight the ways in which the adjustment issues of international students work to the detriment of cross-cultural communication.

3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of conducting this research were as follows:

1. To study the differences in perception towards languages.
2. To study the problems associated on cross-cultural communication.

4. Research methodology

Descriptive method of the research methodology is considered one of the best approaches to work on such research. This method of survey consists of questions related to cross-cultural communication in higher education. The data are analyzed using percentage analysis and the findings are summarized from the same tabulated and analyzed.

Sample size: 131 respondents were chosen for raising responses.

5. Scope

This study considers students undergoing higher studies and who have English as a medium of instruction. The sample respondents would include Indian nationals who speak and communicate in English as well as foreign nationals. This research paper mainly focuses on respondents who have frequent dealings with people from other culture.

6. Analysis and interpretation

A. Research questions

Table 1
Showing of age groups of respondents

| AGE | RESPONSES | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| 16-20 | 33 | 25.19 |
| 21-25 | 67 | 51.14 |
| 26-30 | 23 | 17.57 |
| 31 and above | 8 | 6.10 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

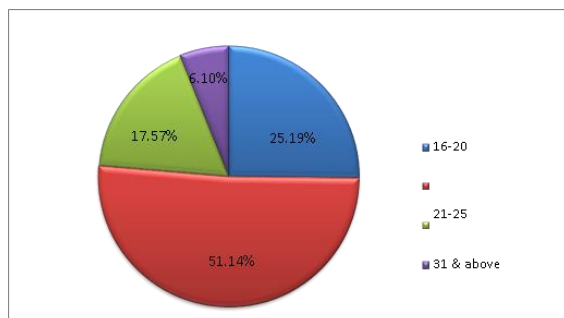


Chart 1: Showing the age groups of respondents

From the above table it is seen that 51.14% of respondents are in age group of 21-25, 25.19% are in age group of 16-20

and 17.57% in age group of 26-30. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the responses are from students undergoing higher education. The pie chart below shows the percentage of responses under each age group. Accordingly, majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-25.

Table 2
Showing the percentage of male and female respondents

| GENDER | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|--------|-------------|----------------|
| MALE | 57 | 43.51 |
| FEMALE | 74 | 56.49 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

From the above table, 57 respondents are from the male gender while the rest belong to female gender. The pie chart below shows the percentage of responses under gender. It's seen that 43.51% of respondents are men and 56.49% are women. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of them are women.

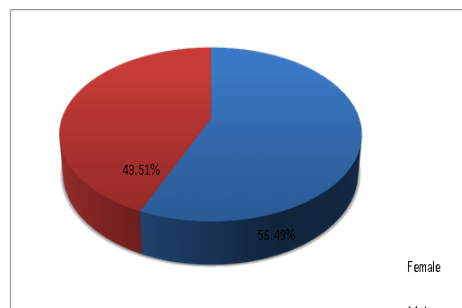


Chart 2: Showing the gender of the respondents

Table 3
Showing the Nationality of the respondents

| NATIONALITY | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|----------------|--------|----------------|
| Indian | 117 | 89.31 |
| Afghanistan | 2 | 1.52 |
| Australian | 3 | 2.29 |
| United Kingdom | 3 | 2.29 |
| Nepali | 4 | 3.05 |
| The Emiratis | 2 | 1.52 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

From the above table it's seen that 117 respondents are Indians and others are from 5 other nationalities (2 are Afghans, 3 Australian, 3 United Kingdom Citizen, 4 Nepalis and 2 The Emiratis.) It shows that 89.31% of the respondents are Indians and 10.67% of the respondents are from other nationalities.

Table 4
Showing the languages known to speak read and write

| LANGUAGES | SPEAK | READ | WRITE |
|-----------|-------|------|-------|
| English | 131 | 131 | 131 |
| Kannada | 82 | 65 | 65 |
| Hindi | 103 | 89 | 89 |
| French | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| German | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Arabic | 11 | 6 | 6 |
| Creole | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

The above table implicates that all the 131 respondents can speak, read and write English, 82 of the respondents speak Kannada and 65 respondents read and write Kannada, 103 respondents speak Hindi and 89 of the respondents read and write, 3 respondents speak French and 4 respondents know to read and write. 2 respondents speak German and 3 of them read and write German, 11 of the respondents can speak Arabic and out of the eleven 6 respondents read and write Arabic, 3 of the respondents speak, read and write Creole.

Table 5
Showing the Education Level of the respondents

| EDUCATION LEVEL | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|------------------|--------|----------------|
| 10 th | 0 | 0 |
| PUC | 1 | 0.76 |
| UG | 72 | 54.96 |
| PG | 57 | 43.51 |
| Ph.D. | 1 | 0.76 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

The above data shows that 72 respondents have completed their Under Graduation, 57 completed their Post-Graduation, 1 completed PhD and 1 has completed PUC. The bar diagram below shows that 0.76% completed PUC, 54.96% of the respondents have completed Under Graduation, 43.51% have completed Post-Graduation, 0.76% completed their PhD and. Therefore, most of the respondents are well educated.

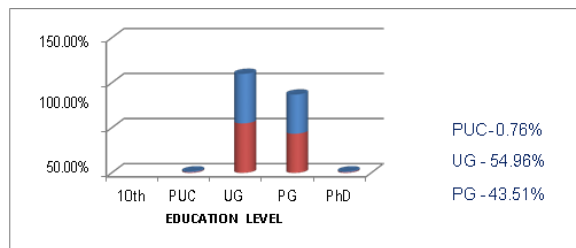


Chart 5: Showing the Educational Level of the respondents

Table 6

Shows the Medium of Institution and Learning of the respondents

| Medium Of Institution and Learning | Number | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| English | 131 | 100 |
| Kannada | 0 | 0 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

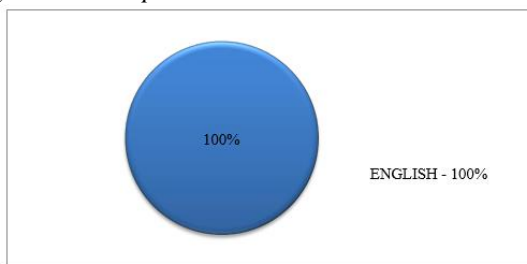


Chart 6: Showing the Medium of Institution and Learning of the respondents

From the above table it is inferred that 131 respondents have English as their medium of Institution and Learning. The pie chart below shows English as a 100% medium of Institution and learning. Therefore, all the respondents are comfortable with English.

Table 7

Shows the Comfort Level while talking/communicating with an Indian or any one of the other nationals

| COMFORT LEVEL | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|-----------------|--------|----------------|
| Comfortable | 128 | 97.70 |
| Not Comfortable | 03 | 2.29 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

The above table indicates that out of the 131 respondents, 128 respondents are comfortable talking with an Indian or other nationals, 3 respondents find it uncomfortable communicating. This question helps to know the comfort level of the respondents with a fellow Indian and the other nationals. From the pie chart given below it is inferred that 98% of the respondents are comfortable. Accent and pronunciation is the main reason for their uncomfortable behaviour.

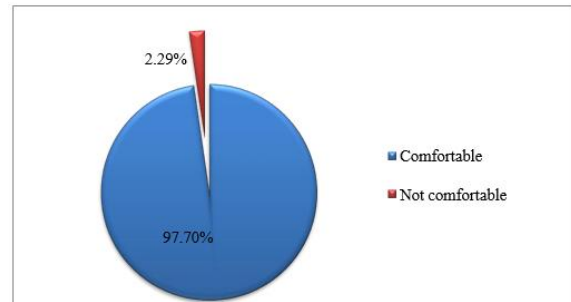


Chart 7: Showing the Comfort Level in Communication

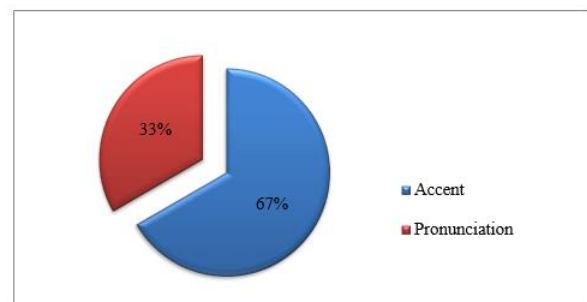


Chart 7 [A]: Showing the reasons for uncomfortable behaviour while communicating with other nationals

Table 8

Showing how many interacted with other Nationals in English

| INTERACTED | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|------------|--------|----------------|
| YES | 124 | 94.66 |
| NO | 7 | 5.34 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

The above table shows that 124 respondents have interacted with the other nationals. The above question helps to know the

interaction level of the respondents with a fellow Indian and the other nationals. The analysis reveals that 94.66% of them have interacted and the rest 5.34% have not interacted. It is inferred that most of the respondents have interacted with the other nationals.

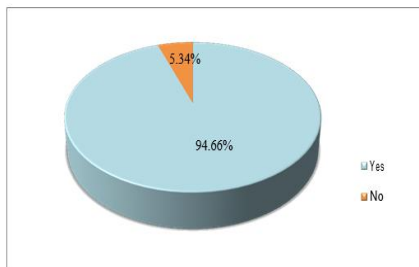


Chart 8: Showing the interactions with the other nationals

Table 9

Showing the understanding level

| UNDERSTANDING LEVEL | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---------------------|--------|----------------|
| YES | 117 | 89.31 |
| NO | 14 | 10.69 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above table it is seen that out of the 131 respondents, 117 respondents could understand the level of communication with the other, whereas the rest of the 14 respondents could not. It infers the level of understanding when interacted with other nationals.

The pie-chart below indicates that 89.31% of the respondents could understand while the other 10.69% were not able to communicate effectively.

The pie-chart [A] signifies the reason for not understanding the level of communication. The data shows that 50% of the respondents could not understand due to the accent, 30% due to pronunciation, 15% due to clarity and 5% because of action.

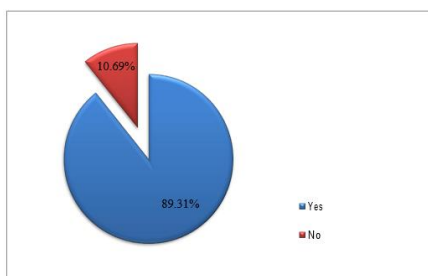


Chart 9: Showing the understanding level of the respondents

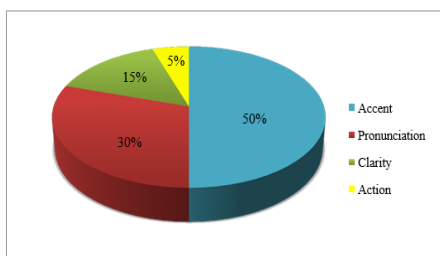


Chart [A]: Reason for not understanding the level of communication

Table 10

Showing the number of respondents who faced misunderstandings or confusions while communicating

| Faced Misunderstanding/Confusions | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Yes | 52 | 39.70 |
| No | 79 | 60.30 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

From the above table it is seen that out of the 131 respondents, 79 respondents have no problems while the rest of the 52 respondents faced misunderstanding while communicating.

It is analyzed that 39.70% of the respondents have faced misunderstanding/confusion during communication, 60.30% have not experienced any. As shown below 39.70% is not small number hence the educational sectors are required to take measures to overcome this barrier. Chart [A] signifies the reason for misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Chart [B] shows that 49% of the respondents have resolved their misunderstandings / confusion through negotiation, 33% through mediation and 18% by third party interpretation.

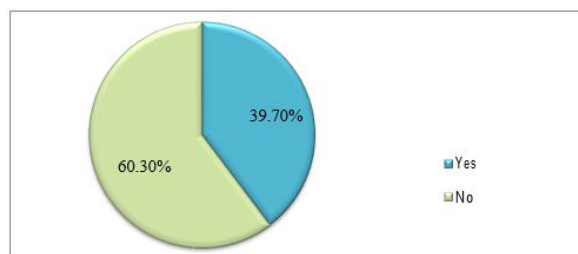


Chart 10: Showing the misunderstandings faced by the respondents

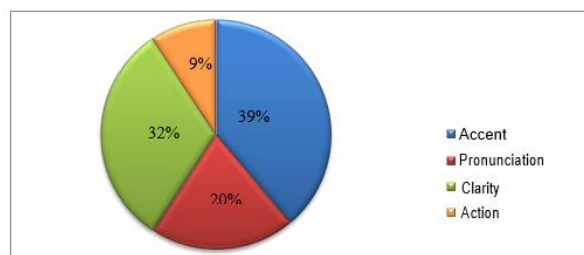


Chart 10 [A]: Reason for misunderstanding faced by the respondents while communicating

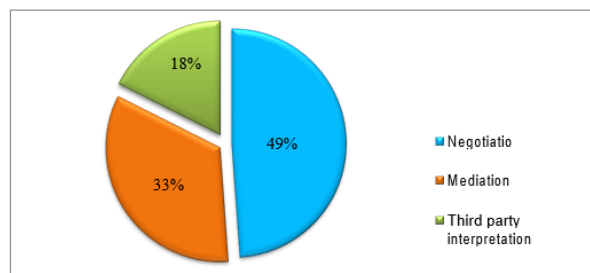


Chart [B]: Showing how misunderstandings were resolved

Table 11
Shows whether the body language and tone match the way of communication

| Communication Being Affected | Number | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Strongly agree | 41 | 31.30 |
| Agree | 34 | 25.96 |
| Neutral | 25 | 19.08 |
| Disagree | 17 | 12.98 |
| Strongly disagree | 14 | 10.68 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above table it is seen that out of the 131 respondents, 41 have strongly agreed that their body language and tone matches the way they communicate, 34 also agreed on this, 25 are neutral to above. 17 disagreed and 14 strongly disagreed to this question.

From the pie chart below, it is analyzed that 57.26% of the respondents agreed on the effect of communication due to body language and tone, 19.08% are neutral towards this question where as 23.66% disagreed

It can be inferred that most of them agree and strongly agree that body language and tone matches the level of communication.

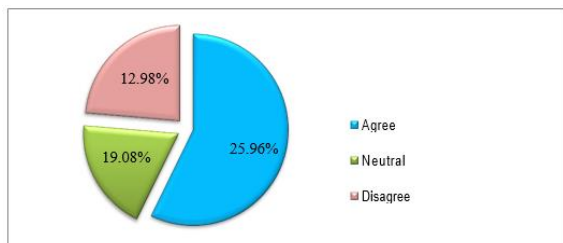


Chart 11: Showing whether the body language and tone match the way of communication

Table 12
Showing the Importance of other languages

| LANGUAGES | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|-----------|--------|----------------|
| Sanskrit | 7 | 5.34 |
| French | 23 | 17.56 |
| German | 16 | 12.21 |
| Spanish | 13 | 9.92 |
| Hindi | 61 | 46.56 |
| Others | 11 | 8.40 |
| TOTAL | 131 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretations:

The above table shows that 61 respondents have given importance to Hindi while 23 and 16 of them have given importance to French and German. 13 respondents feel the importance of Spanish while the rest have adopted for Sanskrit and other languages.

From the below pie chart it indicates that Hindi is 46.56%, French is 17.56%, German is 12.21%, Spanish is 9.92%, Sanskrit 5.34% whereas 8.40% are other languages. The following data shows that respondents have given maximum level of importance to Hindi and French.

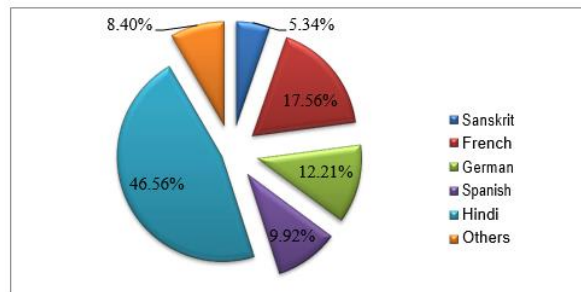


Chart 12: Showing the importance of other languages

7. Findings

During the study, the following observations are made:

1. It is found that majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-25 and belong to the female gender.
2. It is observed that all the respondents have a good educational background and are fluent in English.
3. It is perceived that the respondents were comfortable communicating with other nationals as they understood what was conveyed to them.
4. It is known that differentiation in accent, pronunciation, the way one perceives the information leads to misunderstandings and confusions.
5. It is also observed that majority of the respondents believe that there is a similarity between the way of communication and body language.

8. Recommendations

1. To conduct language sessions with foreign nationals for improving language skills and reduce cross cultural communication barriers.
2. To understand the culture, mode of language for efficient communication to reduce misunderstandings and misinterpretations.
3. To implement efficient English language training programmes in Government educational institutions.
4. To facilitate classroom interactions, discussions and group oriented activities to increase the motivational level of students and staffs.

9. Recent trends

1. Demand for online cultural training is given according to specific time and their own device.
2. Increase in request for cultural training with India taking the lead.
3. A highlight towards bitesize and lunchtime training.
4. Training material on language translations and culture adaptations are available online as well as offline.

10. Conclusion

From the above analysis done it is clear that many of the respondents who do interact with foreign nationals feel that there is bound to be lot of miscommunications mainly because

of accent followed by pronunciation, clarity and actions. So, there is a need to improvise on that skill thereby providing them with training, by conducting language sessions with foreign nationals, monitoring and also by hiring professionals who have the ability to interact across other cultures. It is a need for the teachers to adopt different approaches for professional skills. Adapting to new cultural situations has become a requirement. According to the analysis of this study there is a possibility to adopt new methods to improve language personality for the effectiveness of cross cultural communication.

Educational institutions play an active part for the development of multicultural language personality.

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