Developing Communicative Competence: Online Teaching Tools for the Studetns of Technology

A Synopsis submitted to Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad

for the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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1. Title of the Thesis and Abstract

(a) **Title of the Thesis** :

"Developing Communicative Competence: Online Teaching Tools for Technology Students"

(b) **Abstract:**

Computer technology today offers myriad of ways to enrich educational teaching and learning both in the classroom and in many situations. The never endless possibilities that new technology adopt have all contributed to a paradigm shift in the field of Second Language Teaching and Learning. It seems to be shift toward the perception that students must be an owner of their own learning.

So, technology plays a vital role in proceeding the students towards the sources of information and getting them to experiment and discover things for themselves.

In the wake of rapid globalization, students are likely to be unwilling to involve in the traditional approaches of learning (traditional classroom, lectures).

With an effective integration of technology into our pedagogical practice, teachers of Second Language will be able to meet an inevitable opportunities for authentic and purposeful interaction both within and outside the classroom. In addition, provide the student-learners of the language the tool for their own linguistic exploration.

This would be indeed meaningful learning and education. As the younger generation willingly interacts with technology, using it in the classroom can be relevant, fruitful and enjoyable experience.

As an engineer, it's vital for students to be able to communicate effectively with the people they work with. A miscommunication could mean a disaster! There are plenty of simple ways to improve their communication, and they might also be able to take a communication skills course in any engineering college. However, the most important thing is to practice. Getting involved with any kind of group activity will help them to develop their communicative competence.

The Researcher intends to develop computer-based tools for teaching and testing communicative competence for Students of Technology. The feedback received from the developers, teachers, experts, students and other stakeholders will aid to frame valuable teaching materials and online test and will assess the communicative competence in an appropriate way.

2. Brief Description on the State of the Art of the Research Topic

Teachers of English language due to lack of technical and theoretical knowledge regarding utility of computers and this may pose as a barrier in the use of technology. Overall development of the students in terms of 21st century skills and internet investigative skills cannot be seen in today's learners. This method to imply for the development in students to make the difference for effective need to have today's learning with active use of computer and ICT skills with the achieving goal of real learning even outside of the classroom. The prior reason to tryout this method to find out real learning atmosphere for the students providing ease.

As far as the new learning ways are concerned, such type of methodologies can create the atmosphere of ease and can achieve desirable goal to make them learn the English language. Even shy students can be motivated enough to take active participation which lead towards autonomous learning.

The purpose of this study is to look at a way of overcoming the problems of English proficiency, learning skills and self-confidence by changing the method of teaching and learning in line with the requirements. Therefore, this study focuses on the implementation of Technology supported Web-tools learning as a teaching method for Engineering Students' of Gujarat and investigates how Web-tools for learning can enhance the students' communicative competence in English language proficiency and learning skills.

The results of this study can be provided for valuable support for the Gujarat educational reform movement. They also provide an insight into the nature of Web-tools for teaching and the factors that enhance English learning for teachers teaching English in Gujarat or in similar educational contexts. Furthermore, the information may also give educators in the Ministry of Education the impetus to introduce new ideas and Web-tools into English learning at all levels of education from primary school to university. The students of Gujarat has been taught by Traditional Method of teaching English rather if in support of technology one will implement Technology Supported Web-tools Learning in the classroom that it can create interest in the students and in the world of 21st century they can learn the main aspect that is Communicative Competence. It is also noticed that the level of English and the use of technology in the classroom are more or less in the students of Engineering.

Recently Gujarat government has introduced computers in the classroom or they made also available in the lab where students can learn by themselves. But there is no such

method available now that can be implemented while teaching in the classroom using technology. Using traditional method of teaching and rather implementing technology supported Web-tools learning can create the learning impact on the one of another way on the students but it would be suggesting in this world of 21st century students are required to have capabilities to dealing technology effectively. For developing 21st century skills, they need to be taught by such method like Web Based Learning.

If the primary stage of learning of the students received under implementation of such method of learning than it is obvious that the student would not only learn the language but they will also imbibe the values and skills that is really required during 21st century.

The investigator has been working in the field of ELT since long. His classroom teaching conceived a number of quarries in his mind. They have raised number of questions like:

(1) What can be an ideal method of teaching ELT Online?

(2) How should a teacher teach in a large class through online course?

(3) What are drawbacks of present approach to ELT with Online Teaching?

(4) Is the Web Based Learning suitable in Engineering Classroom?

(5) What are the hurdles in teaching English through Web Supported Learning?

(6) Would be this approach is better for developing communicative competence?

3. Definition of the Problem:

"Developing Communicative Competence: Online Teaching Tools for Technology Students"

The definintion has included the following terms of the problem statement.

a) Communicative competence

Communicative Competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately.

b) Online Teaching Tools

Computer- Aided Language Learning (CALL) is succinctly defined in a seminal work as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". This is to learn a language, we need to listen to the language in natural context and have opportunities for interacting with somebody who has used that

language. This interaction should be genuine and real. So various online teaching tools will help student to work in that context.

c) Technology students

This term has meaning of considering the mass of students studying under Gujarat Technological University in the field of Engineering department.

4. Objective of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the status of computer-based teaching and testing at undergraduate level across the state and in India both as a subject and means of Instruction.
2. To find out whether any significant difference and association exists between language interest and achievement in English.
3. To focus a tool for need analysis of undergraduate students in terms of language proficiency.
4. To study the Computer-aided Language teaching and testing in online classroom situation.
5. Efficient online teaching and testing improve or affect properly.
6. To raise awareness among ELT people about the possibilities of being well proficient through the usage of computer technology.
7. To make suggestions for improvement in developing valuable online teaching and testing of English on the basis of the finding of the study.
8. To review the literature related to Computer Aided Language Testing (CALT) material in general.

5. Methodology of Research

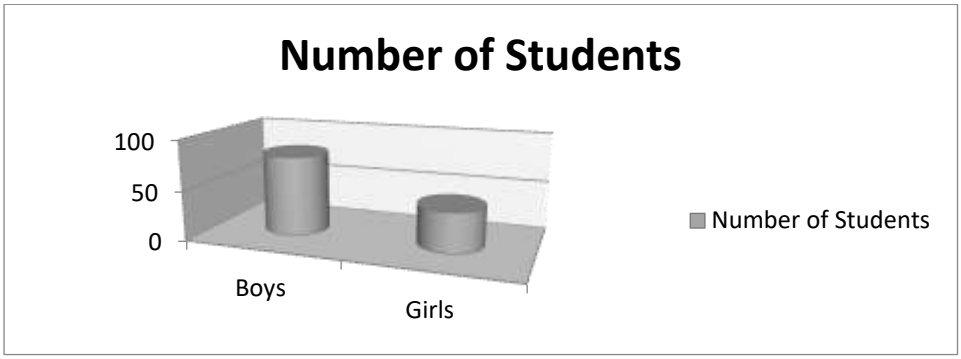
Looking to the limitation of time and circumstances the students of whole Gujarat state studying in engineering colleges could not be included in the experiment. Therefore the investigator delimited the population of the study which comprised of the students of Enginnering from Babaria Institute of Technology, Vadodara and Smt. S R Patel Engineering college, Dabhi.

Sample of the present study

College	Boys	Girls	Total
BITS	33	18	52
S R Dabhi	36	17	52
Total	69	35	104

It is observed from the table that the investigator selected a group of forty one boys and twenty tree girls from Babaria Engineering College where the investigator selected a group of thirty nine boys and seventeen girls from Smt. S R Dabhi Engineering College. This study was conducted online on www.phdgturesearch.com. This course has duration of 2 weeks and is compulsory for all students of the selected group of the students. The sample of the study is also presented through the following graph 5.1.

Graph 5.1 sample of the present study



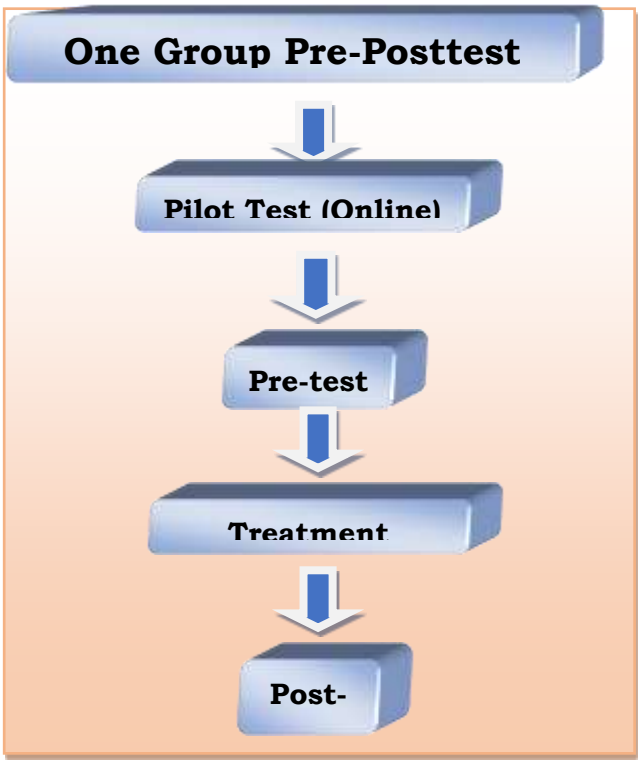
Selection of research design

The selection of the research design is an important step in the entire research process. In these regards the researcher has to be very careful in selecting the research design. Research methodology provides three main methods. If the research is connected with the facts happened in the past, historical method is used. Survey method is applied in case of finding out the present position of a problem. When the researcher wants to observe the effects of an independent variable on depended variables within certain controlled situation experimental method is preferred. The investigator selected the experimental design for the present study.

Experimental design of the present study

It is clear from the diagram that a pretest for both the groups were organized after the proper instrucitons and understading about the project. As the successful implementation of instrucions, the investigator started with pilot test. After piloting the project, the groups were allowed to study the webstie of the project where they have appeared for the

pre-test. Both the groups were taught with using online teaching approach where the teacher is just the instructor with the different approaches. This procedure continued till the completion of project. After completion of the whole procedure a common posttest was organized.



The project was introduced on the websied named www.phdgturesearch.com where all the above mentioned tools were incorporated. The website was build by the researcher keeping in mind of the level of the students. Loot the the website below:

The online materials were tried out on the groups of learners selected by the researcher herself. The groups were taught and practiced English through creative online exercises for one month. All the activities carried out were divided into four stages as mentioned below. a) Introductory stage, b) Teaching stage, c) Practice stage d) Testing stage

a) Introductory Stage

This stage was of instructions and tutorials as below. The students were given video tutorial on hand to watch and understand the procedure.

There are four different skills test they were supposed to appear. These four skills are: 1. Listening, 2. Speaking, 3. Reading, 4. Writing

On the given home page they have to go one by one to each skill for online practice and test to complete the course. Example: Click here to go for Listening Page:-

After clicking on that menu tab the following webpage will appear:-

This page will include three stages:

Step 1:- Pre-Test (Click on Red Click Here Button for Test)

Step 2:- While-Test Practice Test 1 and 2 (Click on Blue Click Here Button for Test)

Step 3:- Post- Test (Click on Red Click Here Button for Test)

They were supposed to complete all the test given in the Skill Tab. If they would find any difficulty they can click on right side below to the check box of Let's Talk. The researcher will instantly answer all their difficulties.

b) Teaching Stage

The learners were asked to perform tasks based on the on the given online content. In some of the activities the learners listened to the teacher's instructions provided through whatsapps and email and did accordingly whereas in some activities where they worked in online with their friends, in pairs, they listened to each other's instructions and followed them. Most of the activities they required their own autonomy to share, open up and thereby be communicative. Important language functions such as listening, speaking, reading and writing etc. were very much involved in the tasks were highlighted and focused.

c) Practice Stage

In this stage, activities were done on the website itself which used for performing various practice based tasks. Learners were given practice through- while tasks where she can

focus and prepare for the practice to complete the course. The researcher also actively got involved in facilitating the learners' efforts by probing questions. Use of language was observed and directly corrected only in cases of extreme errors. Learners' mistakes were treated in a positive manner and they always got inspiration to perform better rather than feeling humiliated and discouraged. All these practices were made through Email as the score for the test practices were provided through mail only.

d) Testing Stage

Each activity though mainly concentrated on the processes of use of internet and computer or mobile, carried a purpose of practicing certain language communicatvie functions, as well. In a few of the activities the learners received full score after a needful practice of the same and they were able to solve an exercises wherein they were asked to write a story whereas in a few of the activities the learner were failed to respond as it was not possible to acquire the tasks which were highly competative in nature.

6. Results / Comparisons

The performance of the learners who took the pre-test and the post-test has been represented and processed further for analyse of the numerical data.

The table of scores made by the learners at the pre-test (entry behaviour) and post-test (end-of the programme behaviour) indicates a clear difference with a tendency in favour of the posttest. The score of the learners in the pre-test is higher against the score in the post-test. Thus, there is a clear difference in terms of achievement in the post-test.

The pre-test was designed to measure and assess the skill level of the learners. It comprised verious online tests. Online tests were to evaluate the learners' abilibty towards a text that is based on LSRW by comprehending it. These were online exercises based on Multiple Choice, Fill in the blanks etc. These online exercises demanded use of language skills through expressions.

The post-test included some portions of language to measure the difference in the level of the learners as compared to the pre-test. Online test recorded learners' proficiency of the language and helped to evaluate their efficiency in learning online. Marks of both the tests were compared which helped the researcher to spot the difference in the performance of the learners at the two tests.

Performance of these three students had remained good from the beginning and they proved to be very helpful to other learners in solving the tasks as they grasped things easily.

As shown, the learners performed well and were able to attain higher scores in the posttest. On the whole the programme on Online Test has helped the learners to enhance their communicative competence thereby proving the major hypothesis of this study: If the undergraduate learners undergo such online course, they will develop the communicative competence of a language.

Learners were able to notice the difference that this course had made in improving their communication skills, increasing their self-confidence, giving them insights into different cultures and eventually providing them with a better way of utilising the language to express their ideas. In conclusion, the learners performed well and gained in terms of not only the marks that were seen in the tables but also in many other aspects of language

learning. The try out threw light on the basic nuances of the language and supplemented the learners' understanding of the socio-linguistic aspects of English, a broader perspective towards the process of communication through a language. The course did prove to be a new experience for the learners and altogether a new medium that is for developing and enhancing their communicative skills and giving them an understanding that can go a long way if it is relevant to the sensitivity and needs of the learners.

The scores of the students indicate a clear improvement in the post-test. Nevertheless, the researcher rationalises that this was likely to happen as the material designed by the researcher was tried out for a considerable length of time between the pre-test and the post-test.

Hypothetical analysis of the DATA

H_0: The use of online resources for teaching has no impact teaching – learning process.

H_0: The use of online resources for teaching materials does not make learning interactive.

H_1: The use of online resources for teaching has a positive impact on teaching – learning process.

H_1: The use of online resources for teaching materials make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW All Data Analysis of Dabhi College

The above data of the 53 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 81.51 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 105.57, i.e., the Mean value of Pre Test is less than the Mean value of the Post test. The 0.59 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively moderately correlated. The paired t value is -9.94 with 52 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW All Data Analysis of BITS College

The above data of the 51 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 83.82 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 107.45, i.e., the

Mean value of Pre Test is less than the Mean value of the Post test. The 0.68 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively strongly correlated. The paired t value is -13.51 with 50 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW Data Analysis of Dabhi Female

The above data of the 17 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 83.53 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 107.35, i.e., the Mean value of Post Test is more than the Mean value of the Pre test. The 0.54 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively moderately correlated. The paired t value is -6.35 with 16 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW Data Analysis of Dabhi Male

The above data of the 36 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 80.56 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 107.72, i.e., the

Mean value of Pre Test is less than the Mean value of the Post test. The 0.60 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively strongly correlated. The paired t value is -7.73 with 35 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW Data Analysis of BITS Male

The above data of the 33 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 83.30 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 111.21, i.e., the Mean value of Pre Test is less than the Mean value of the Post test. The 0.66 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively strongly correlated. The paired t value is -12.12 with 32 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

LSRW Data Analysis of BITS Female

The above data of the 18 observations of the Pre Test and Post Test data indicates the mean of 81.11 for the Pre Test and mean value of the Post Test results 100.56, i.e., the

Mean value of Pre Test is less than the Mean value of the Post test. The 0.72 Pearson Correlation suggest Pre and Post Test results are positively strongly correlated. The paired t value is -6.81 with 17 degrees of freedom and p-value of < 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there exist significant relationship between the use of online resources for teaching materials to make learning interactive and helps individual in learning better.

Chi square Test of Post Test:

In particular case of Dabhi College, total of 53 students participated in the pre and post tests. The total of all four parameters (L,S,R,W) of the post test are analyzed male and female student wise. The Median Value of the Female Students is 110 and similarly, the Median value of Male Students is also 110.

Table 1 shows the observed number of students having scored less than or equal to Median value gender wise and number of students having scored greater than Median value in post test.

Sex	≤Median (Observed)	>Median (Observed)	Total
Male	21	15	36
Female	10	7	17
Total	31	22	53

Table 1 Gender wise Cross tabulation of Observed Students of Dabhi College

Sex	≤Median (Expected)	>Median (Expected)	Total	df	χ^2 Value
Male	21.0566	14.9434	36	1	0.973032
Female	9.943396	7.056604	17		
Total	31	22	53		

Table 2 Gender wise Cross tabulation of Expected Students of Dabhi College and Chi square value

Table 2 shows the expected number of students gender wise having scored less than or equal to Median value and number of students gender wise scored more than Median value in post test. The Cross tabulation χ^2 Value with 1 degree of freedom (df) is 0.973032. The critical value of χ^2 with 0.05 significance level and 1 degree of freedom (df) is 3.841. The

test statistic is less than the critical value and hence we have no convincing evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Similarly, in case of BITS College, total of 51 students participated in the pre and post tests. The total of all four parameters (L,S,R,W) of the post test are analyzed male and female student wise. The Median Value of the Female Students is 100 and similarly, the Median value of Male Students is also 110.

Table 3 shows the observed number of students having scored less than or equal to Median value gender wise and number of students having scored greater than Median value in post test.

Sex	≤Median (Observed)	>Median (Observed)	Total
Male	19	14	33
Female	11	7	18
Total	30	21	51

Table 3 Gender wise Cross tabulation of Observed Students of BITS College

Sex	≤Median (Expected)	>Median (Expected)	Total	df	χ^2 Value
Male	19.41176	13.58824	33	1	0.806336
Female	10.58824	7.411765	18		
Total	30	21	51		

Table 4 Gender wise Cross tabulation of Expected Students of BITS College and Chi square value

Table 4 shows the expected number of students gender wise having scored less than or equal to Median value and number of students gender wise scored more than Median value in post test. The Cross tabulation χ^2 Value with 1 degree of freedom (df) is 0.806336. The critical value of χ^2 with 0.05 significance level and 1 degree of freedom (df) is 3.841. The test statistic is less than the critical value and hence we have no convincing evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

The students of the BITS college comes from Urban area while the students of the Dabhi College hails from the Rural area. Checking the data of both colleges combined but geographical location wise, total of 104 students participated in the pre and post tests. The total of all four parameters (L,S,R,W) of the post test are analyzed Urban and Rural student

wise. The Median Value of the Urban Students is 105 and similarly, the Median value of Rural Students is also 110.

Table 5 shows the observed number of students having scored less than or equal to Median value geographical location wise and number of students having scored greater than Median value in post test.

Geographical Location	≤Median (Observed)	>Median (Observed)	Total
Urban	26	25	51
Rural	31	22	53
Total	57	47	104

Table 5 Geographical location wise Cross tabulation of Observed Students

Geographical Location	≤Median (Expected)	>Median (Expected)	Total	df	χ^2 Value
Urban	27.95192308	23.04807692	51	1	0.441707
Rural	29.04807692	23.95192308	53		
Total	57	47	104		

Table 6 Geographical location wise Cross tabulation of Expected Students and Chi square value

Table 5 shows the expected number of students geographical location wise having scored less than or equal to Median value and number of students geographical location wise scored more than Median value in post test. The Cross tabulation χ^2 Value with 1 degree of freedom (df) is 0.441707. The critical value of χ^2 with 0.05 significance level and 1 degree of freedom (df) is 3.841. The test statistic is less than the critical value and hence we have no convincing evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Analysis of Speaking test:-

The participants of the test were not able to meet the requirement as per the speaking skill is concerned. The problem was crucial from the perpective of the students as the test were designed in the context to the level of eningering students keeping in mind that they were capable of accessing online tools and website easily. But when it came to appear for speaking test online they failed to answer it. That happened due to the lack of experince in terms of answering the voice data online by creating a proper response using online tools. So analysis of the speaking test has not been done here.

7. Achievement with respect to the Objectives of the study

In the light of the objectives of the study are concluded with the discovery of the following factors that affects the teaching and learning of skills of degree Engineering Students of Gujarat.

1. After studying the status of computer-based teaching and testing at undergraduate level across the state as a subject and means of instruction using online teaching tools, it can create the impact in learning and teahing the skills.
2. There is a significant difference and association exists between language interest and achievement in English. The test scores proved the posibility of bringing the outcome of the result in positive way.
3. The tools were very useful for bringing the need analysis for undergraduate students in terms of language proficiency.
4. This study has proved helpful in the Computer-aided Language teaching and testing in online classroom situation where it has clearly benefited for the students.
5. The use of efficient online teaching and testing resources have helped to improve or affect the resuls properly.
6. This study will raise the awareness among ELT people about the possibilities of being well proficient through the usage of computer technology.
7. Research has provided suggestions for improvement in developing valuable online teaching and testing of English on the basis of the finding of the study.
8. This will enable the researchers to review the literature related to Computer Aided Language Testing (CALT) material in general.

The psychological factors are more dominant among all the other factors that affect the degree engineering students of Gujarat. To be particular, the following factors that affected the process of developing speaking skill are discovered.

- The students feel that it is difficult to develop their speaking skill using online teaching tools.
- The students feel fear of committing mistakes while trying to speak online using provided tools for developing communicative skills in English.
- The students are fearful to produce data about being laughed at or being commented on their mistakes by others when they attempt to speak in English.
- The online sessions assigned to develop English Language skills are not enough to develop the speaking skill of degree engineering students.

- Speaking is the skill that is minimum practiced online by the students.
- The students do not get the enough opportunities to speak in general and no language lab and software in the colleges to help them in the same context.
- Students don't manage to read anything except Text Books to develop their skills consciously.
- The students hardly speak English Language at home.

8. Original Contribution by the Thesis and Further Scope for Research

Till date, no one has attempted such kind of study on Engineering Students of Gujarat region to find out the factors that really affect teaching and learning of English Language Skills uing online tools. With these factors it was discovered that Language Skills of engineering students can be enhanced by different approach in the classroom and even outside of the classroom aswell using proper tools. The further research can be carried out on,

1. The online course can be attempted for developing the language skills of the students based on the findings discovered in this research.

2. Further detailed researches can be carried out on a particular factor which hinders the development of language skills the most.

3. Further research on designing Online Activities for developing the language skills can be done with respect to the most dominant factor / factors discovered.

4. Language Teachers can be imparted training keeping in view the findings of this study to make them more effective and innovative in their teaching of language skills.

9. List of Publications

1. Application Development and Implementation for Teaching , Literary Insight: A Refereed International Journal, VOLUME 10 ISSUE JAN 2019, ISSN 0975-6248, Print, pp. 25-33, <http://literaryinsight.com/>

2. A Study Of PBL Using Technology For The Students Of Gujarat, Towards Excellence: An Indexed Refereed Journal of Higher Education, July, 2017. VOL.9. ISSUE NO. 2 ISSN No. 0974-035X, pp. 65-74 <www.ascgujarat.org>

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