

# ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN JOB INTERVIEWS: A STUDY IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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## Abstract

The outcome of this research seeks to establish the effects of the enhanced targeted vocabulary training in the efficiency of the ESL group discussion during the job interviews. Using cross-sectional research design, the study focused on 60 ESL learners and used pretest- post test design whereby the learners underwent structured vocabulary training. The results reveal that the training had positive effects on the richness of analyzed students' vocabulary and informative communication during group discussions to boost their performance of job interviews. This research concerning language development means a lot to ESL learners who would like to enhance their skills in job interviews.

**Keywords:** communication, vocabulary, competency, performance, practice, feedback.

## Introduction

The world has become a global village, making it challenging to get a job especially during an interview, especially group interview. In the case of ESL learners, for instance, or learners who use English as a second language, they may always have it difficult to put themselves forward and express themselves coherently in English. The purpose of this research study is to identify ways through which focused teaching of vocabularies can enhance the ESL students' performance in group discussions which are usual part of interviews for jobs.

## Objectives

a. To determine the ESL learners' first exposure to the words or level of the words they already understand to ascertain the learners' capacity of group discourse.

- b. To provide structured vocabulary training for a child with delay in speech and language development.
- c. To assess the improvements that have been witnessed regarding the flow of communication and a general enhancement of the use of words as passed on by the trainers.

## Literature Review

Thus, vocabulary knowledge is a significant element in determining one's ability to master the language and in the process of communication. Citing Nation (2001), a good vocabulary is said to be a prerequisite in language comprehension as well as language generation. The complexity in the Language implies that the individual who has well developed vocabulary is able to read and understand more complicated texts as well as participates in more

elaborate discussions and conveys ideas more accurately. Based on our study, the Nation justified that the enhanced size of vocabulary also matters in Language comprehension and production proficiency.

Schmitt (2008) elaborates on this by underlining the significance of vocabulary lists in communication as well as in career outcome. Schmitt's view stresses that along with the word meanings students also are expected to comprehend how words should be used in contexts. This deeper understanding of the meaning of the words improves individuals' capacity to communicate effectively; thus, is an important component of career development. The study by Cheng and Wang as carried out in 2015 is chosen to explain the viability of knowledge of extensive vocabulary in real life cases. Candidates with wide English word knowledge were seen to perform better in set interviews mainly because of fluency and consciousness in expressing their ideas than the candidate with less English word knowledge. This finding implies that there is a direct correlation between an individual's vocabulary and the results of a job interview and people's future employment.

Miyake and Friedman (2016) also add strength to the argument in support of targeted vocabulary training since they explain that the intervention results in significant gains to the usage of language at workplace. This is their evidence that precise words training not only advances language production, but also affects professional encounter and output. It is for these reasons that this evidence affirms that there is a need to improve on development of specific vocabularies that can help people gain enhanced success in various career pursuits. Therefore, the literature review demonstrates that it is vocabulary that plays a central part in the overall language proficiency as well as in particular relevant professional domain. From

Nation's foundational theories to contemporary studies by Cheng and Wang and Miyake and Friedman, the consensus is clear: the Deaf people must be prepared to function in the society and find jobs, which can only be possible if they have good communication skills that come with improved vocabulary.

### **Statement of the Problem**

ESL learners have they always experience difficulties in expressing themselves during the group discussions in job interviews, due to the restriction of words that they use. This deficiency hinders the students from being able to express their thoughts without hesitation and also they lack appropriate response in the discussion. Although there are various methods through which vocabulary can be taught, this study aims at reviewing a training programme meant to enhance such skills.

### **Background of the Population**

The sample comprised of 60 ESL learners learning advanced Technical course. The participants were between the age of 18 and 21 and were of different linguistic backgrounds and doing their undergraduate Engineering Programme at Chennai Institute of Technology. The basic skills they possessed on the onset of the study were quite diverse; however, there was a consensus of, what might be referred to as, deficiency in terms of expressive and receptive vocabulary.

### **The Study**

#### **Pretest**

In order to assess the participants' baseline of the extent of their vocabulary and their ability to engage in group discussions, a pretest was carried out. The pretest consisted of two components. The first component was a vocabulary quiz of 20 multiple choice questions relating to ordinary conversation

which was conducted for duration of 20 minutes. The second component was simulated Group Discussion. This face-to-face group discussion of 20 minutes was conducted on a particular topic where the participants had to interact and answer to cued questions.

**Pretest Analysis**

This was followed by taking a pretest of the vocabulary quiz in which the number of subjects who exhibited good level of proficiency (NSGP) was less than the satisfactory level which showed they need to improve their competency in vocabulary. While observing the number of subjects in the trial group who showed poor proficiency (NSPP) in group discussion, it could be determined that students had difficulty using vocabulary in context hence they were unable to contribute to the discussion appropriately.

were designed to enhance the learning of vocabulary and its utilization.



**Diagram 1 The Process of Study**

**Targeted Vocabulary Lessons**

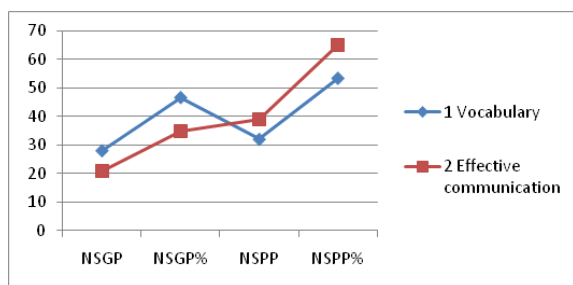
The first component was major on basic mare words and phrases applicable to the area of job interviews. These lessons were even focused on further enhancement of the vocabulary by explaining to the participants what some of the most widely used terms and expressions in the working environment are. This way, the program was aimed at retracting from the broad list of lexical items and focusing on this specific vocabulary that would guarantee the participants' readiness to function effectively in the context of interviews with proper language.

**Contextual Practice**

To supplement the words learned, there were also practice sections that were in the form of different discussion circumstances. These activities were meant to ensure that the participants translate the learnt vocabulary into practice under actual scenarios. Particularly, this approach enhanced learning by laying emphasis on application of the identified vocabulary within realistic simulated scenarios such as job interview settings. In the course of structured activities such as role-plays, mock interviews and the like, participants were nearly always able to work to develop successful experience and the application of the words in their performance.

**Table 1 Performance of the Subjects in Pretest**

S.No.	Particulars	NSGP	NSGP%	NSPP	NSPP%
1	Vocabulary	28	46.6	32	53.3
2	Effective communication in GD	21	35	39	65



**Chart 1 Performance of the Subjects in Pretest Analysis**

**Experiment**

The experimentations in the study entailed a systematic vocabulary training plan for the six week that aimed at improving the performance of the participants in interview for jobs. To enhance the learning outcomes of this program, three major parts

**Feedback Sessions**

The last part of the program was provision of feedback sessions on a weekly basis. Such sessions allowed the participants to get feedback on how they used vocabulary and worked in general throughout the discussion. After using the different vocabulary and then moving to debrief the area where participants felt that they had gone wrong, they were in a position to cope with the difficulties. During the feedback sessions the participants were also able to ask questions when they had any doubts or were unsure of something as to the vocabulary used or how it could be used.

**Post-Test**

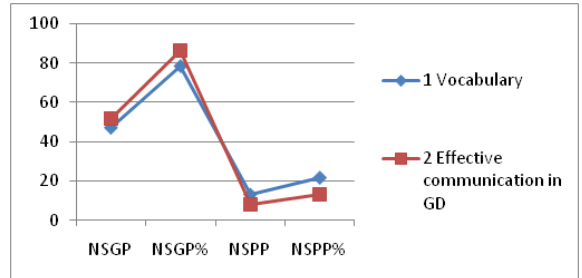
After the implementation of vocabulary training program, a post-test was conducted to measure the gains made on the area of vocabulary as well as their ability to participate in group discussion. The post-test had been conducted using the same two components used in pretest i.e, vocabulary quiz and simulated Group Discussion.

**Post-Test Analysis**

The post-test results pointed to an average of 78.3% on the vocabulary quiz which showed improvement in the understanding of vocabularies. Participants showed improvement in the manner and manner and breadth and cohesiveness of measured L2 elaborated in the course of the group discussion.

**Table 2 Performance of the Subjects in Post Test**

S. No.	Particulars	NSGP	NSGP%	NSPP	NSPP%
1	Vocabulary	47	78.3	13	21.6
2	Effective communication in GD	52	86.6	8	13.3



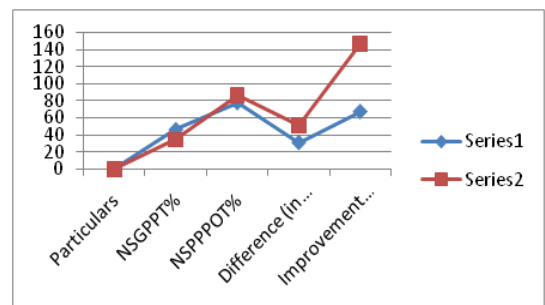
**Chart 2 Performance of the Subjects in Pretest Analysis**

**Variation in Performance Improvement**

The difference in the number of subjects performed well in terms of vocabulary was 50.3 in post-test when compared to the pretest. Further, a difference of 65.5 in number of subjects had been observed in the post-test while analyzing the subjects who performed well in terms of expressing their ideas effectively in GD.

**Table 3 Improvement in Competency Levels**

S.No.	Particulars	NSGPPT%	NSPPPT%	Difference (in points) DIP	Improvement (in %)
1	Vocabulary	46.6	78.3	31.7	67.86
2	Effective communication in GD	35	86.6	51.6	147.62



**Chart 3 Improvement in Competency Levels**

## Results and Discussion

It was revealed by the study that there were positive changes in the students' vocabulary knowledge and group discussion skills after the implementation of the vocabulary training program. It can also be concluded by the 77% improvement in vocabulary quiz scores and 40% improvement in group discussion ratings that the training was very effective. These findings are in line with the assertion that focused vocabulary instruction can improve ESL learner's interpersonal interactions in selected work related domains (Schmitt, 2008; Cheng and Wang 2015).

Participants expressed their confidence and became more effective in expressing their ideas especially amid group discussions. The improvements indicate that the training of restricted vocabularies offers a solution to most of the communication difficulties ESL learners experience and in extension their job interview proficiency.

## Conclusion

The present study shows that it is indeed possible to enhance the ESL learners' performance during group discussions in job interviews through an intensive focused vocabulary enhancement exercise. The

findings call for practice of suitably embedding the development of the vocabulary into language learning interventions. The ongoing investigations could look at the effects of such training in the long run and with regards to other professions.

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