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IMPACT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF ENGINEERS IN NEPAL AND ABROAD: A STUDY IN BRIEF

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims at presenting the details related to the impact of the English language proficiency on the employability of engineers. Based primarily on the secondary sources of data, especially the review of the literature available in the websites, this paper highlights how important the proficiency of the English language is for the engineers to acquire employment in Nepal and a few other countries including India, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand, Baharain, China and Vietnam. From the present study, it has been revealed that the English language proficiency is deemed to be one of the basic requirements for engineers to be employed in these countries. English is found to be one of the most important employability skills for engineers in the countries which were studied.

KEYWORDS: English language, Proficiency, engineers, engineering, employability, career.

INTRODUCTION

The English language has emerged as the most widespread means of international communication at present. Due to the globalization, the demand and importance of the English language has increased further at an unprecedented pace. The use of the English language has dramatically accelerated in every sector from education to workplace, trade and commerce, tourism and transportation. This language has been proved to be indispensable for educational institutions all over the world. It is being used as a medium of classroom instruction for teaching almost every subject except the national languages of those countries. It has earned worldwide popularity as a library language as the students must learn the English for making it possible for them to read the books written by foreign scholars especially those from the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia. In examinations whether they are conducted by the local universities or the ones conducted by the foreign universities, the medium is English. Even after they graduate and start seeking jobs, they need to apply and take part in the other selection procedures through English. One of the major causes of making English the medium of instruction, language of library and others is to equip the students with communication skills in English for ensuring their employability in the future. In the case of the engineers, who aspire to be hired by the international or multinational engineering companies immediately after the completion of their engineering degrees need the required level of proficiency in the English language to be employed. The proficiency in English to a desired level is a must for the employability of the engineers as they need it for performing their duties and day to day responsibilities using this language.

METHODOLOGY

The Present report is based on the secondary source of data especially obtained from the review of literature. During the study, the literature that was available in the websites was reviewed taking notes of the most relevant facts, data, details and quotations from the authors and the opinions expressed by them with relevant data in the form of papers and reports.

**LITERATURE REVIEW
LANGUAGE AND HUMAN BEINGS**

Language is an inherent human characteristic that has placed human beings in the status a step beyond what the other creatures in the world are. It is due to the ability of human beings to speak language for communicating with each other sharing the ideas, thoughts, feelings and experiences that the entire human races have been able to prove their superiority to other creatures in existence in the world and share the natural spaces available on the earth for all the living beings here. Thomas [29] remarks, "The gift of language is the single human trait that makes us all genetically, setting us apart from the rest of life". Biologically as well as genetically, human beings possess special qualities and abilities to use language for their day to day communication in order to sustain their life. Thomas [29] adds:...

Language is, like nest-building or hive-making, the universal and biologically specific activity of human beings. We engage in it communally, compulsively and automatically. We cannot be human without it; if we were to be separated from it, our minds would die, as surely as bees lost from hive. (lives of a cell, 89; 1).

We, the human beings, stand out very distinctly amidst the crowd of numerous creatures with their own unique characteristics because we have language and we possess unique mental ability and biological properties that enable us to use it. According to Trask [30], "Human language is arguably the single most remarkable characteristic that we have, the one that most truly sets our species apart" (p. 1).

Very proudly we call ourselves human beings and claim to be different from the other species in the world. Widdowson [31] states, "Language seems to be a feature of our essential humanity which enables us to rise above the condition of mere brutish beings, real or imagined" (p. 4).

In the absence of language, it could have been quite impossible for us to attain what we have attained till now as human beings and we could not have proved ourselves worthy for our present status in this universe. Trask [30], puts it, "without language, we could hardly have created the human world we know. Our development of everything from music to warfare could never have come about in the absence of language" (p. 1).

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language and communication are the most intimately conjoined components which can hardly be viewed in isolation. They are complementary to each other as one remains almost meaningless in the absence of the other. We use language for the sake of communicating our thoughts, feelings and experiences with each other as the members of the same community and share everything mutually. We communicate either through spoken or written forms of our languages. Algeo [11] highlights, "The purpose of language is to communicate, whether with others by talking and writing or with ourselves by thinking" (p. 15).

It is sometimes really hard to distinguish between language and communication. However, we can simplify this complex phenomenon and view the former one as a medium or tool and the latter one as message conveyed through this medium. Algeo [11] attempts to draw a sharp distinction between these two integral entities as:

... The key difference between language and communication is that language is a mode of communication. In other words, language is a medium used in transforming the message from one to other. The two words, language and communication have clear distinctions in their meanings and connotations. Language represents words whether it is writing or speaking. On the other hand, communication is all about message (p. 1).

Language can be taken as an instrument used by human beings in order to communicate. It is a tool that we use for conveying our meanings, thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings and for sharing with each other our joys and sorrows, pains and pleasures, wants and desires and get them fulfilled through the mutually interchanged co-operations.

As Widdowson [31] has remarked:

... Language certainly figures centrally in our lives. We discover our identity as individuals and social beings when we acquire it during childhood. It enables us to think for ourselves and to co-operate with other people in our community. It provides for present needs and future plans, and at the same time carries with it the impression of things past. (p. 3).

Language plays a really important role in human life. Being a tool for communicating our thoughts and experiences, it serves as a means for building social and cultural relation as well as friendship enabling us to live in our society successfully. The ideas expressed by Holmes [10] regarding the role of language in human life are perfectly relevant. According to him, "Language is a vital tool for communication. It is not only a means of communicating thoughts and ideas, but it builds friendships, economic relations and cultural ties" (p. 1).

LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

There are numerous languages spoken in different communities in the world. According to Ethnologue published by SIL International in 2009, there are 6,109 languages spoken all over the world (Anderson, 2017, p.1). Among them, the language which is spoken as native language by the largest number of speakers is Mandarin (14.1%). Spanish follows Mandarin and comes second in rank on the basis of the number of native speakers it has (5.85%). The English language is the third in rank. It is spoken by 5.52% world population as their native language (Wikipedia, 2017, p. 1).

Although English is in the third position on the basis of the number of native speakers, it is the language of wider circulation. Its history is also very interesting. Algeo [11] puts it:

... The English language has had a remarkable history. When we first catch sight of it in historical records, it is the speech of some none - too civilized tribes on the continent of Europe

along the North Sea. Of course, it had a still earlier history, going back perhaps to somewhere in Eastern Europe or Western Asia, and long before that to origins we can only speculate about. From those murky and undistinguished beginnings, English has become the most widespread language in the world, used by more peoples for more purposes than any other language on earth (p. 1).

ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE

It is obvious that we can hardly find any acceptable definition of the term 'Global language', as it is one of the recently coined words in the field of language and linguistics. However, we may strive to use this term in the sense of world language. Wikipedia [32] clearly states:

... There is no official definition of 'global' or 'world language', but it essentially refers to a language that is learned and spoken internationally, and is characterized not only by the number of its native or second language speakers, but also by its geographical distribution, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations (p. 1).

The English language is one of the UN languages used in international conferences, diplomatic fields, and is in common use as a lingua franca. To serve as a lingua franca or a language of common use enabling people of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to communicate is another characteristic of a global language. English being capable of fulfilling both of these criteria, it can be regarded as a global language.

ENGLISH IN NEPAL

The use of the English language in Nepal has a long history. It is believed that its use in Nepal began in the early seventeenth century. Giri [8] points out, "Historical records of the presence of English in Nepal reveal that it was in use in what we call Nepal today in as early as the seventeenth century" (p. 192-209).

During the Malla period, the Malla kings, who were said to have trading arrangements with Tibet and North East India, used some form of English as a lingua franca to carry out their business transactions (Hodgson 1974; Morris 1963; Giri 2014 : pp. 192-209).

But the formal entry of English into Nepal took place in the Rana oligarchy (Manandhar 2002; Vir 1998; Giri 2014). Day by day, the English language has its more and more access to majority of the youths in the contemporary society in Nepal. It is gaining popularity at a lightning pace. Due to its use as a medium of instruction in almost all the total educational sectors, there has been a rapid growth in the prevalence of this language in Nepal. Giri [8] mentions that the spread of English in Nepal across sectors and regions is rapid and systematic. In the recent times, English has reached the lower strata of the population in urban as well as rural regions (p. 198).

English occupies a respectable position in various fields including the Nepalese education. The use of English is proliferating by leaps a bounds (Giri, 2009; Karn, 2011 : p. 31). Its use is increasing at a faster rate day by day. From school to college or university, the English language has its position deeply-rooted and its popularity widespread. As Karn [13] remarks, "We are already aware that English is the selling point in virtually all private educational institutions" (p. 31). The parents of small school children who have joined pre-primary or kindergarten class are found to have a special fascination with this language. Karn [13] points out, "Many parents send their children to private schools and when their children are able to say, 'Good morning, Papa', 'Ta! Ta! Mommy', 'See you again!, Uncle', they become astonishingly happy" (p. 31).

Right from the inception, English has been taught as a compulsory subject up to Bachelor's level in our universities. English was incorporated in our school, college and university level courses up to Bachelor's level because it is deemed to be very essential not only for understanding the teacher's lectures delivered in English in their regular classes, but also for enabling them to cope with their major subjects, read and understand the reference books written in the English language and also to make them capable of expressing their views and ideas through their writings in English. At this moment, it is very relevant to quote the remarks of Malla [21] who states:

... English is compulsory because the undergraduates need it to cope with their major subjects. The immediate English language needs of the undergraduates are: first, a minimum comprehension of spoken English to understand lectures in English on their major subjects; secondly, an adequate comprehension of written English to understand and read the textbooks and reference materials in English, and finally enough English to express their ideas in writing, simply, clearly and effectively (p. 3).

In the present context of rapidly moving along the process of modernization, globalization, democratization and social as well as cultural transformation, English has a significant position in Nepal. In the absence of basic

proficiency of English in today's Nepalese youths, our nation can not move ahead. Khanal [17] asserted nearly three and a half decades ago in his remarks, "... I believe that as we open up to the ruthlessly competitive modern world politically and culturally, English should continue to serve our leading citizens as a necessary window of intellectual and cultural ventilation" (p. 43). Pointing out the situation of swiftly increasing demand of English in Nepal at the moment, Khanal [16] remarks, "The need of English language teaching (ELT) is very high in Nepal due to a number of reasons and the importance has been increasing day by day in Nepal" (p. 3).

Learning of English is also very often linked to the social status or prestige in Nepal. People who speak English are normally generalized as a person of higher social status. This is another reason for English to have its popularity and prestige soaring up day by day. Apart from its rapidly growing popularity and prestige in our society, it is important for us to learn English and become able to use it due to its practical utility as well. Malla [21] most appropriately writes, "We shall have to learn English, not because of its prestige value but because of its practical utility, particularly in the face of our own limitations - material as well as non-material" (p. 24).

ENGLISH IN ENGINEERING COMMUNICATION

Importance of English in Engineering communication can hardly be exaggerated. The relationship between Engineering communication and the English language is similar to that of nail and flesh. In the words of Riemer [26], "Engineering communication skills basically constitute several core elements such as the fluency in the English language and the fundamentals of visual communication" (p.91). Despite the fact that there is no dearth of languages that can be used for the engineering communication in the world, the English language has been widely accepted and has been prevalent in almost all the parts of the world. Reimer [26] points out, "English has been widely accepted as the most widespread language in the world" (p. 92).

Today's engineers need to work in collaboration with the engineers from different countries while being involved in the multinational engineering projects and communicate with them. For the effective communication between the engineers of the nations situated poles apart, there needs to be a common language that they can use with equal ease and comfort. For such a situation, the English language can be the only option for them. Riemer [27] states, "English is the prime means for communication and can often serve as the global language between two people from two different cultures where English is not the native tongue" (p. 89).

Due to globalization, the world has seemingly changed into a tiny global village. It has made collaborations and joint ventures between different international engineering organizations to run their projects possible. The trend of joint ventures in this field is on the rise in the current situation. The more the rate and number of such types of collaborative activities increase, the more the engineers of different linguistic, cultural and social background feel the necessity of a common language to share, interchange and interact their ideas, and experiences with each other. In order to make the communication between or among the engineers of diverse linguistic backgrounds possible, English can be the only appropriate common language that they can share. Riemer [27] rightly puts it, "In this age of globalization, international projects are increasing and cross-cultural communication and collaboration is rising; especially in the new international practice of engineering. English is accepted as the most widespread language in the world" (p. 89).

Long before they start working for international engineering projects, the engineering students have to acquire knowledge of their respective subjects through their textbooks, reference books, teacher's, lectures and the internet websites in which the medium used is mostly English, Besides these, they have to conduct laboratory works, prepare project reports, and present papers. For all these regular activities and assignments, they are required to use English. Latha [20] makes his remarks, "In academic life, engineering students have to deal with the countless lectures, tutorials, labs, project reports, and papers in English" (p. 123).

Immediately after the completion of their degree, the engineering students start seeking jobs as jobs are very essential for their survival. During the time they are seeking jobs appropriate to them according to their academic qualifications, they need to write their letter of job application and curriculum vitae, face interview, and take part in group discussions. The language they are supposed to use is generally English. Part of their judgement and selection criteria is their proficiency in English. Latha [20] rightly says, "During the job-seeking process in interviews, GD's, it is mandatory to achieve mastery in English proficiency" (p. 123).

ENGLISH FOR THE EMPLOYABILITY OF ENGINEERS IN NEPAL AND ABROAD

Employability of engineers across the world depends to a high extent on their proficiency in the English language. Those engineers who possess better proficiency in English may have better chances of getting employment faster and at more ease and comfort. English being the means of communication used by significantly larger number of world population, it is one of the pre-requisites to be fulfilled by the engineering candidates seeking jobs or

employment for them. The details on the importance of English for the employability of engineers in Nepal and abroad acquired through the research are presented underneath.

Nepal

The English language has a significant position in the area of engineering employment at present in the global context and Nepal cannot be an exception to this fact. Like most of the countries in the world, Nepal gives a high priority to the English language proficiency for the employment of Engineers. English being a very popular and commonly used means of international communication and the engineers being the people with technical knowledge useful for the entire world, the engineer of one country can be hired by any international engineering company all over the world. In order to be hired by an international or a multi-national company, he/she is required to possess the minimum academic qualification in the first place and the sufficient proficiency in the international language especially English in the second.

We have the Nepali language as a language of wider circulation, but it has no sufficient access to international communities and organizations as it is limited to the boundary and territory of Nepal alone. The reason why the Nepali language has such a limited scope is that it is not so popular and as sufficiently developed as the English language. According to Malla [21]:

... Nepal needs English because Nepali, her national language, is not developed enough for two of the ... communication needs: 1. It does not have access to the scientific and technical knowledge of the modern world. 2. It is not enough for establishing effective channels of communication with the rest of the world (p. 12).

Our national language Nepali has no adequate scientific vocabulary nor does it have sufficient literature so as to serve the needs of the engineers, doctors and scholars of the scientific and technological field. For the literature on scientific and technological area, the scholars who want to conduct a research on any field of science and technology are compelled to depend on the reference materials and resources available in English. Malla [21] appropriately remarks, "In Nepal, had Nepali been adequate for transmission of science and technology and for international communication, there would have been no functional need for learning English" (p. 12).

One is required to have sufficient proficiency in English for one's successful career. Those who possess the adequate English language proficiency can ensure their successful life and better future in their lives as they are sure to have better exposure. Giri [8] emphasizes, "People who know English are more exposed, more knowledgeable and therefore, more successful in life than those who don't. Without English, there is no academic and occupational future" (p. 197).

Every engineer requires an adequate knowledge and communicative proficiency in English in Nepal to be able to perform fairly well in his/her study as well as at the work in the future. Agrawal [1] states, "S/he requires being skillful in the use of the engineering communication skills of the language especially English during the study period in the beginning and at work in future" (p. 18). Without proper and adequate use of the engineering professional communicational skills of the English language in a country like ours, no engineer can smoothly move in his/her profession (Agrawal, 2016: p. 18).

In order to be able to handle the engineering profession successfully, and smoothly in Nepal, the engineers are required to possess sufficient proficiency in English. In the absence of communication skills in English, an engineer cannot move along the course of engineering career in Nepal. According to Agrawal [1], "The engineering profession cannot move without proper and adequate role of professional communication skills of the English language in the context of Nepal" (p. 18).

India

India is one of the leading economies in South Asia. It is making advancement at a rapid pace in the field of technology. Engineering is one of the technological areas for which it has been able to establish its distinct identity in the modern world. There are numerous engineering institutes and universities in India which have earned worldwide recognition and reputation for their quality products. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) is one of them. The products of IIT are believed to have employability sufficient enough to satisfy the world class requirements.

Communication skill is one of the most important requirements for the employability of Engineers in India. Pointing out how important communication skill is for engineers in India for being employed Rajwani [24] states, "If we are fluent enough in our communication skills, then the dream job is not far from us" (p. 40). On the contrary, those candidates who have basic degrees but lack the desired level of communication skills fail to acquire

job. Rajwani [24] adds further that most of the students who pass out their degrees of engineering ... but are not able to get the desired job. It is only due to lack of communication skills (p. 40).

English, which has emerged as a world language in today's context, is the language of engineering communication in India also. To be employed, the engineering students who are in search of appropriate jobs after the completion of their engineering degrees are required to prove their proficiency in English. Borah [4] points out, "The English language skills shall have to ensure the students that they were sufficiently fluent in English to functions in the workplace or in any professional context" (p. 92). Command over English communication skill is a fundamental pre-requisite for any candidate for getting a job in engineering companies. Clement and Murugavel [5] stress, "English communication skill is one of the most important employability requirements in modern India" (p. 116). According to them, candidates are expected to express their ideas in English without any ambiguity and fear (p. 116).

The researches carried out have revealed that very small section of Indian population (2%) is capable of speaking English (Batra, 2013: P.1). As mentioned in the survey results published in e-paper (2017), As many as 97% engineering graduates in the country (India) cannot speak English, which is required for jobs in corporate sales or business consulting (p. 2). The results of the survey carried out for investigating the facts about it suggest that engineers show larger gap in elements of spoken English, pronunciation, and fluency. According to the result of this survey, only 6.8% engineers show ability to speak or respond spontaneously (p. 2). The survey result also shows that 51% of the engineering graduates in India are not employable based on their spoken English scores and of the 6 lakh engineers that graduate annually, only 2.9% candidates are the fluent while speaking English (P. 2).

The scope of engineering is wider and the engineers have the great probabilities for being hired by the international as well as multi-national engineering companies. In this context, they are expected to possess enough interpersonal communication skills. This can be possible only when they are proficient enough in English. Mohapatra [22] remarks, "English is the medium of interpersonal communication in the corporate and therefore, having good command on English language has become even more crucial" (Pp. 22-23). In order to execute their responsibility as engineers involved in international or multi-national engineering companies, they are required to possess sufficient proficiency not only in written English but also in other basic language skills including listening, speaking and reading equally. Mohapatra [22] most appropriately states, "To be able to do so (interpersonal communication), engineers need to possess high level of listening comprehension, speaking and reading fluency and good writing skills in English" (p. 23).

In the job market, engineers who possess high level communication skills in English with the perfect knowledge of their respective engineering subjects have a greater possibility of being employed relatively faster than those who have sound knowledge of one of them only. Mohapatra [22] emphasizes, "Good communication skills in English and sound domain knowledge is also crucial to make the most out of the global job market" (p. 23).

Thailand

Thailand is one of the 'member states of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)' (Rajprasisit et al. [23]). Engineering being one of the eighth professions for which it is possible to work in any of the member countries, language skills play a key role in the communication (p. 27). Almost all the professionals are supposed to use English as a means of communication while working with other partners. English being the only language they can use as a common means of communication between the counterparts representing different nations with their different linguistic backgrounds, they are expected to have an ability to use this language. Rajprasisit et al. [23] point out, "Professionals, including engineers, are expected to communicate effectively in English, even though they often use their mother tongue in everyday life" (p. 27).

The use of the English language is very common in Thailand. In almost every sector the English language has a dominant position. English is used for communication in both national and international levels. Rajprasisit et al. [23] point out, "Commonly English language matters greatly in the global economy to professionals at both the national and international levels" (p. 27). Since the common means of communication in almost every professional area is English, those professionals who possess a good command over this language can perform their jobs more effectively and become more successful in their respective professions. Rajprasisit et al. [23] state, "English language proficiency matters greatly in the global economy, and can be considered to be a key factor for success of certain professionals, including engineers" (p. 27).

Korea

The English language has been given equal importance in the field of engineering in Korea as well. Much emphasis has been put on the oral or speaking skill of the English language in the classes. Kim [18] remarks, "English for engineering students with speaking skill much focus is needed" (p. 47). For those students who are expecting to work for an industry in the future, the importance of general business English is taught. Kim [18] recalls, "Also students need to understand the importance of general business English and need to be well motivated to learn if they plan to work for an industry" (p. 47).

On the contrary, if the students want to adopt engineering as their future career, they are expected to make themselves well-acquainted with the contents related to engineering. According to Kim [18], "If they (the students) want to pursue their career as competitive global engineers with long-term goals, they need to familiarize themselves with engineering contents as well" (p. 47).

Korean government has emphasised on the development of good command over English in the students who are studying in engineering fields with a view to help the engineering students develop sufficient communication skills in English so that they communicate with their counterparts in the English language and co-operate. It has been justified by the work of the Accreditation Board for Engineering Education in Korea (ABEEK) itself. Kim (2017) says, "That fact would explain why the Accreditation Board for Engineering Education in Korea (ABEEK) wants engineering students to acquire English communication ability good enough to co-operate globally in their professional field" (p. 45).

The result of the survey research also suggests that the industries in Korea want to hire the students as their future employees who have studied 'Practical English or language related subject in their studies. Kim [18] states, "In survey research, the industries answered 'Practical English or language related subject' is the most useful subject to get a job among the specialized general curriculum subjects in the accreditation system (P. 45).

Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the fast growing economies in the modern world. It is making rapid progress in the field of industry, international trade and technological expansion. Being a swiftly growing industrial state with ever-increasing international relation, the demand of English as a means of communication in the international as well as multi-national companies is also increasing faster these days. They use English as one of the common means of communication for both international and intra-institutional communication. As Kassim and Ali have cited, Briguglio [14] examined the use of English as 'a global language' in two multinational companies in Kuala Lumpur (p. 168). For the effectiveness of their work, they needed both spoken and written English. Kassim and Ali [14] have pointed out, "In the preliminary findings, it was found that in the case of Sea Cargo International in Kuala Lumpur, both spoken and written English were seen as important especially for surveyors, to perform their work effectively (p. 168). Since the use of the English language is widespread in the international and multinational companies and its use is increasing more and more but the English language proficiency in the college graduates was found to be very poor. There were thousands of graduates unemployed. Citing Phang (2006), Kassim and Ali [14] remark, "In 2006, the government of Malaysia revealed that 45,000 college graduates were unemployed and this was mainly caused by a poor command of the English language" (p. 168)

Despite the fact that the demand of the graduates from engineering and science is very high, quite large numbers of graduates with degrees in these areas are found to be unemployed. The only reason why they are unemployed is their poor English language proficiency. As mentioned by Kassim and Ali [14]:

... In addition, the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF, 2004) stated that engineering and science graduates were the most sought after graduates due to the proliferation of these industries both in Malaysia and globally. However, many employees were hesitant to hire these graduates due to their poor proficiency in language although they were highly qualified academically (p. 168).

In Malaysia, a large number of organizations use English for both internal and external communication in addition to using Portuguese. They use English in order to prepare different documents including proposals, prospectuses, reports and projects. According to Kassim and Ali [14], the researchers named Barbara, Antonieta, Celani, Collins and Scott (1996) explored this fact (p. 169).

Baharain

Like most of the countries, Baharain is also one of the emerging and fast developing nations in the present day world. The use of English is becoming widespread in the field of trade, commerce, science, technology, tourism, industries and education in the Arab Gulf Countries. Being a global language its use has gained so much

prevalence all over the world, even the Gulf Countries have been influenced immensely by the faster rate of growth in the expansion of the scope of English. For the employability of the graduates the proficiency in English has been a basic requirement there. Thomas et al. [29] have pointed out, "Whilst English remains the language of global commerce, the role and outcomes of the English language provision in English medium higher education institutions in the Arab Gulf Countries remain central to any discussion on graduates profile and the employability of graduates in the global market place" (p. 1)

Proficiency in the English language is considered to be one of the generic employability skills in Baharain. Those graduates who possess English language proficiency have a greater value. According to Thomas et al [29] "Findings show that generic employability skills, channeled through English as a second or additional language are highly valued by Baharain's employers" (p. 1).

Poor English proficiency was found to be a great drawback for the aspiring graduates who are expecting to be employed at the polytechnic which was established in 2008. As engineers they were required to get involved in critical thinking, problem solving and group work and the medium of communication was basically English. Therefore, proficiency in English is a must. Thomas et al. [29] remark:

... Initial research within Baharain, prior to establishment of the Polytechnic in 2008, found that industry had consistently identified poor English language capability as one of a number of deficiencies in new graduates entering the work force, alongside critical thinking, problem solving and group work (p. 2).

In the Gulf countries employers expect the graduates to possess multiple abilities and skills in addition to having the knowledge of subjects of their respective fields. Lowden et al, [29] indicate, "... employers expect graduates to not only have degree level technical and discipline competencies but also a range of broader skills and attributes that include team-working, communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and managerial abilities" (Thomas et al., 2017; p. 3).

During their job interview, the engineering graduates facing interview are expected to prove their ability to answer the questions about their related fields in the first place and also be able to use the appropriate expression to maintain the required social etiquette such as politeness and formality, etc. Thomas et al. [29] point out, "... as engineering graduate in an interview should sound like an engineer. Secondly, it is also beneficial for a graduate to be able to develop sociolinguistic competence of politeness, formality or cultural appropriacy within the multi-national business setting (p. 5)

The language of their choice for the employability in the Gulf countries is basically English. As cited by Thomas et al. [29] Tuzlukova & Al Mahrooqi (2010) state, "English language proficiency and the application of communication skills to the world of employment remain central to any discussion on employment in the Gulf" (p.3).

China

The history of English in China dates back to the early seventeenth century with pidgin Chinese English. Though the English language was introduced in China as early as the seventeenth century, its history is very complicated in the sense that the English language has its history full of various complications. It had a journey along the uneven paths. As cited by Bolton and Graddol [12], Bolton points out that:

... English language has had a lengthy, complicated and often forgotten history that began in the early seventeenth century with the first documented account of linguistic and central contact, through the era of Chinese pidgin English from the early eighteenth century to the recent past, to the Republican period between 1911 and 1949, when English was widely learnt in missionary schools and the thirteen Christian colleges, many of which have become leading universities in contemporary China (p. 2).

Formal introduction to teaching of the English language began in China in 1862 with the official opening of an interpreter's college. According to Bolton and Graddol [12], China's own initiative in teaching English began in 1862, with the founding of an interpreter's college, the Tengwea Guan in Peking (Adamson, 2002; Lam, 2002; Bolton and Graddol, 2017:2). The 'Open Door' policy adopted by China during Deng's time played a key role in the revival of the English language teaching in China along with many other foreign languages. Citing Adamson (2002) Bolton and Graddol [12] point out, "After Deng assumed power, China announced an 'Open Door' policy which was accompanied by the revival of the teaching of English and other foreign languages, including Russian, Japanese, and French" (p. 2).

From 2001, China has adopted an official policy to begin to teach children the English language from very early age of 8 or 9. Bolton and Graddol [12] have cited Want (2007) as stating, "Since 2001, it has been the official policy that English should be learnt from the age 8 or 9 onwards, in Grade 3 of the National education system" (p. 3).

Due to the urge to accelerate the nation's economy and attain the status of international standards, the Chinese government promoted the teaching of English in the early 1990s. With this view, China joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and hosted Olympic Games in 2008. Citing Lam (2002) Bolton and Graddol [12] remark:

... Since the early 1990s, the educational push to promote English has been partly motivated by the aspiration to gain 'international stature' as seen in China's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, and hosting the Olympic Games in 2008 (P. 2).

Popularity of the English language learning has increased dramatically in China in the recent days. There has been an unprecedented growth in the number of English language learners and China has emerged as one of the major English learning societies in the world today. Citing Bolton (2003), Bolton and Graddol [12] stress, "For some years now, China has been cited as a major English-learning society where the number of English learners have been estimated at more than 200 million people" (p. 2).

Vietnam

Vietnam is one of the fast transforming economies in the modern world. According to Gribble [9], "In the mid 1980s Vietnam shifted from a centrally-planned socialist economy to a socialist-oriented market economy resulting in greater international integration" (p. 11). There has been rapid growth in the demand of higher education as the number of youths especially those seeking opportunities to acquire tertiary education is increasing at a very fast rate (p.11). As mentioned by Gribble [9], altogether 1.8 million students had registered for higher education entrance test but only 560,000 could get admission due to the limited quota. Since education is given the highest priority by the families, a large number of middle class families are sending their children abroad for further studies (p. 12).

The quality of human resources in Vietnam is believed to be low. It has created a really serious problem in the development of the nation. Though there are human resources, they are not properly skilled. According to Gribble [9], "Reports in the local media indicate that local demand for qualified staff is increasing and that major companies in Vietnam are facing shortages of skilled workers" (p. 12).

For the graduates the employability skills they are required to satisfy the demands of the employees include communication skills, IT skills and English (p.12). The engineers in Vietnam do not possess good communication skill in English. This is one of the drawbacks that causes problem in their employability in the other ASEAN countries. Gribble [9] suggests employees are critical of Vietnamese trained engineers who fail to keep abreast of the least technology and developments and lack foreign language skills (p. 13).

CONCLUSION

From the review of the literature that could be availed of from the website related to the importance of the English language for the employability of engineers in the context of Nepal and other countries including India, Korea, Bahrain, Malaysia, Thailand, China and Vietnam, it has been revealed that the proficiency of the English language is a must for the employability of the engineers since the engineers employed in the various companies need to communicate with their counterparts, boss, co-workers and assistants from different socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds, attend various international seminars as well as conferences and prepare documents like proposals, reports, seminar papers and present them in the multi-national companies. It has been revealed that many engineers in these countries have remained unemployed due to lack of English or poor communicative competence in the English language.

It shows that the employers now give high priority to those engineering candidates whose English language proficiency is very good. It has also been revealed that the engineering graduate, who possess sufficient proficiency in English, have the highest degree of employability. In contrast, many of their contemporaries who have completed the graduation successfully with sound knowledge of their core subject have remained unemployed due to lack of desired level of English language proficiency and communication skills. Hence, it is imperative now that the engineering graduates are provided with adequate communication skills in English in order to enable them to get employed.

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