

ENHANCING VOCABULARY THROUGH ENGAGING METHODS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT-Imagine a scenario in which a new marketing executive is welcomed with these words, “An enhanced marketing capability would obviate the need to hire a PR consultant.” What would be his reaction? Will he look for a corner to look into the Dictionary App in his mobile? Will he recheck the credentials of the boss who has been known for, “You are fired”? Or will he confidently answer, “In reply I wish to state that a PR consultancy will be much more effectual, in the light of the preponderance of the obvious evidences”. So, isn't it obvious that in the game of words, words beat the words and make us a winner. In this *glocalised* and competitive world, words are of the utmost importance. And they should not be the cause of you getting sidelined or ignored.

As is obvious, words not only beautify communication but also embellish our interpersonal relations. The better word-equipped we are, the better will be the impact we will have in the society and at the workplace. In today's age when the words are getting truncated, *emojis* are becoming preferences, abbreviations are entering the dictionaries and acronyms are becoming popular, isn't it challenging for a teacher to teach more and more new words to the students. To top it all professional vocabulary becomes more arduous to be taught and learnt. As big as the challenge is, bigger should be the ways of overcoming it. Some of the creative ways to impart the love for business vocabulary can be

- Market Trips
- Business awards: Asking the students to initiate business awards at micro level
- Story telling with Occupational Vocabulary
- Dictionary compiling of technical words
- Flea Market

KEYWORDS- business vocabulary, interpersonal communication, word-equipped, truncated, acronyms, simulation, games, compiling

INTRODUCTION

What makes Shashi Tharoor, the Shashi Tharoor, are the words. And what could not make a certain Gandhi, a Gandhi, are the words. Such is the paramount importance of the usage of the words. On a philosophical note, our life often meanders in the unwanted directions, takes whimsical turns, and by the time you realise what has happened, the only reason you can find are the words; words that we spoke, words that we did not utter and words that we could have communicated. Who knows it may be the careless use of the words, a reckless ignorance of the warning or an unspoken sorry, that could have brought about broken marriage, a highway accident or conflicts.

IMPACT OF WORD

Leave apart the huge repository of the brilliant words, a single word like, yes can make or mar so many relations. It is said that non-verbal communication is more important than verbal communication. But non-vocal communication more than often leads to doubts, whereas the correct usage of verbal prowess lulls those qualms. An oral congratulation from a senior official will always be more meaningful for an achiever instead of just a handshake. So, words are the meat and the potatoes of this world. They are the best ingredients for a meaningful sustenance. In Bible, Jesus had instructed, “For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36).

The humble thing, as word can actually make us happy or sad. A ‘yes’ from the prospective employer in the interview or a ‘no’ from the loan approving authority can be the crucial decision makers of not one life but so many lives associated to it. Interestingly if a commoner can be so much affected by words then what about a business person or a professional? In the world, fraught of careful maneuvering, legal tangles and rhetorical affirmations and negations, words are of exhaustive importance

NO WEALTH WITHOUT WORDS

Without capital or place, a business can be started, for example dealing in property or recruitment consultancy. But without appropriate words can it be taken ahead? A newfound broker can do without money or rented shop, but can he do without words and that too some words related to his profession? His business will not take off unless people will hear from his mouth, the words like – deal, rental, first sale, brokerage, etc.

A business necessitates a number of activities from explaining to complaining, from persuading to reassuring, from describing to summarizing and from requesting information to giving instructions. And each step will only go to the next level if there has been proper communication, that itself comes from the correct use of vocabulary. Without fitting words an entrepreneur won't be able to sell his idea to the financier. In turn the financier won't be able to convince his firm and partners, if he will just beat around

the bush. Let us look at some interesting examples from the business world about how the words can construct and deconstruct the business relationships.

If a coffee- machine vendor writes this in his sales letter, “Bubbling on the countertop, the customers really impressed the machine.”, imagine the chagrin of the reader. All the required words are there, but then there is no logical sequence of the words. The prospective customer would think about the coffee machine to be a giant installation in which, if need arises, he himself will have to jump to brew frothy coffee. One more interesting common mistake that could affect a business module is, “We except all credit cards.” It may perplex the customers and they would prefer to leave such a confusing outlet. So, it would not be an exaggeration to say that even a single word is enough to tumble a business.

If profession is soul then words are clothes. It is impossible to conduct any occupational activity without spoken words. Even to sell a mechanical aid for deaf and mute people, there will be use of words, but in the sign language. But does that mean, that a debate

winner student, lavish with his words, can easily step out of the school and start doing the business? I guess no. Can a lady who skillfully wiggles a golden necklace after having planned to ask for a diamond ring from her husband, will be able to run a jewelry shop? A big no again, I suppose. If words are the tools for business then why can't a linguist compete with Adani? No, he cannot as he might know 1000s of words more than an industrialist. But he would not know the exact words to crack a deal. Consequently, the need of the hour would be to learn, retain and use maximum but aptwords correctly.

THE PROMINENCE OF VOCABULARY IN SUCCESS

Scientific and data analysis over the years has shown the importance of professional lexicon. These results have proved that strength of a person's business vocabulary is the lone measure that is found to predict income. In one landmark study, the renowned scientist Johnson O'Connor, who dedicated his life to the study of human learning and achievement, found that vocabulary scores were in direct relationship to an employee's rank on the career ladder, as illustrated by the results below:

Table 1. The employee's rank directly proportional to the average vocabulary

Position	Average Vocabulary Score (out of a maximum of 272)
President / Vice President	236
Manager	168
Superintendent	140
Foreman	114
Floor Supervisor	86

A rich repository of words gives an almost over the edge advantage in the workplace. To be in the know-how of business lexicon is not enough, true skill comes in using the suitable word according to the need and situation. There will always be a copious supply of words and to use the best one from among it is always challenging. Even a synonym needs to be used wisely. As is quoted from a book, “Right words always generate that right impact.”²

WHEN WORDS GENERATE LOSSES

There are numerous examples of huge business losses owing to the use of wrong word/words for promoting and conducting trade. When Vicks first introduced its cough drops in the German market, they were chagrined to learn that the German pronunciation of “v” is “f” which in Germany is the guttural equivalent of “sexual penetration”. When Pepsi expanded their market to China, they launched with the slogan, “Pepsi brings you back to life.” What they didn't realize is that the phrase translated to “Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave.” This may seem like a pretty funny mistake. But to Pepsi this was a huge mistake, especially when you're trying to build a brand on a global level. In Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken, a US airline advertised that its Boeing 747s had “rendezvous lounges”, without realizing that rendezvous in Portuguese implies prostitute. In Puerto Rico, General Motors had difficulties advertising Chevrolet's Nova model because the name sounds like the Spanish phrase *no vawhich* means, “It does not go”.³ As is obvious a misplaced word can cost thousands and in some cases millions to an organization. Business vocabulary is all about the accurate word in the right place. A shopkeeper cannot call the money collected at the end of the day as his profit. He will have to work out the calculations according to the money spent in buying the inventory, labor, rentals, etc.

WORDS MAKETH A MAN AND BUSINESSMAN

Knowledge of correct business lexicon is not only essential for the working but also for the personality of a communicator. Donald trump so often gets trumped because of his inappropriate words. His recent quote, “I watched in Jersey City, N.J., where thousands and thousands of people were cheering, at the World Trade Center collapsed”, made him a target of public fury. His sanity was questioned and integrity was doubted. Politicians in India have to so often bite their words in public and hide their faces by saying that their words have been misinterpreted. Words actually go to build up an empire as rightly put by L J Rittenhouse, “Think about CEOs who rely on jargon, clichés, and confusing statements to tell their stories and fail to provide relevant context. They are likely to create cultures of fear. Their communications are likely to cause employees to hide out. Conversely, a CEO who chooses clear, candid, authentic, and relevant words is more likely to create a culture where employees focus on the needs of the company's stakeholders.”¹

APPOSITE WORDS CAN CALM DOWN OPPOSITE FORCES

Business is synonymous with smooth talking. An envious employee or brilliant businessperson is always tested on his ability to sustain professional conversations. He not only needs to be accurate but also apposite as and when the suitability demands. A person with bountiful supply of words will be able to rise from a local vendor to a global seller. Whether in speaking or writing, the proper expression will make or mar hundreds of activities entailed in a business. Dhirubhai Ambani is the legendary example of accurate and apropos words used in creating a business empire. A businessman's remark should always be coherent and sensible. Cracking a joke about Kamaal R Khan in regard to a testy boss might win chuckles for an executive but not sincere understanding. He will never be looked upon as a sincere bet for a future project.

LANGUID APPROACH IN LEARNING PROFESSIONAL WORDS

Though no one can deny the importance of business lexicon yet we can easily notice its lack in the professional courses taught in India. Inability to communicate in English remains one of the biggest problems for most of our countrymen. To expect them to know and use professional jargon is like scaling the slippery walls. In colleges there are more takers for Commerce and Management streams, yet the professional terminology is not that common. A student generally prefers to enhance his word power that will help him in the competitive or social field. But it is so uncommon for a student to brush up his corporate glossary before venturing in the big corporate world. The social media savvy students would rather finish their syllabus just before exam night, than sit with a professional book for enriching the vocabulary.

SWITCHING ROLES OF THE FACILITATOR

But the journey to becoming the word wizard is neither quick nor easy. It becomes longer and more arduous if the traveler is impassive. Imagine a new entrant in the field of law, sitting with a dictionary of the legal terms and mugging up the words. The procedure will soon end in no time. Practically it will be so strenuous to learn the professional words, retain and use. But with some exciting tricks involved it would be difficult to become a word magician. Here comes the role of the facilitator. It is his duty to make the learner not only learn more and more words but also to teach their appropriate use with full interest.

TEACHERS' TRIALS

Teaching has become an exercise of fetching water from well in the times when *Bisleri* water bottles are readily available almost everywhere. Challenges abound in tea with everything at a click away and a call away, people don't want to take up the harder measures like, looking for books or sifting through them. They have google, safari and the chrome for all these pains.

The biggest challenge is to inculcate the habit of reading and writing among the children and youth who believe in the power of mobiles more than the words. Till date the best source of accruing the words are reading. Even the Indian "thausuaras" of English words, Mr. Shashi Tharoor has admitted that his varied and wide vocabulary comes from the extensive reading. But in today's times the Wikipedia is the most used source as reference. Instead of thronging the library aisle, the kids surf through the google sites.

Learning colloquial words is just a tip of the iceberg. The specialized words prove to be the harder nut to crack. Conversational English can be spoken with anyone at any time. But the customized words are used very less in public spaces. With less usage and lesser people to converse with, they seem more dreadful for the tech savvy students, who prefer to communicate through *sms* lingo rather than beautiful words.

Teachers' role in most cases has been limited to an interpreter of the prescribed syllabus who invariably has to teach within the radius of the expected questions. Until and unless there is something thought provoking and distinctive in the teaching, students won't venture to learn more. The zing of the matter is that methods should not only be innovative but also stimulating and simple. Commercial lexicon can run into hundreds of pages. To even learn 50% of it will prove to be a mammoth task. The methods of teaching professional vocabulary need to go beyond everyday classroom teaching. Some of the enthralling methods that I have ruminated are:

DICTIONARY COMPILING

This is one of the easiest ways of getting the students to jump into the tortoise race of learning professional vocabulary. Ask them to write the words related to their field and activities. This impromptu dictionary will make them smarter. With their own set of words, they will be independent. And if they do find that their vocabulary is somewhat lacking, they will try to compensate and add to it.

MARKET TIPS

In colleges the students are taken for the industrial or field trips. But let them venture out in the market figuratively. Why not club three or four lectures of a week and send the students for exploring? Let the girls go to boutiques, the boys to mobile handsets shops, and ask them to do an imaginary shopping on a shoestring budget. Let them learn the catch phrases of the vendors. Negotiating for the product or service will be the best and open platform for learning tricky words of the trades. This free of cost outing will boost their energy levels too. Let them cross refer their notes. There will be so much new to share and use.

STORY TELLING

A story is a fundamental way with which humans organize and store information. Stories encase a whole world in itself. Whether writing, listening or narrating a story one relates to the words as if they were meant for us. So story telling is an interesting way of evolving with the words. How interesting would be a story if the following leads were to be used –

entrepreneur, joint venture, memorandum, loss, etc. if they don't know the word, encourage them to learn its meaning as well as usage.

DESIGNING AWARDS

Awards are gaining recognition as much as the film awards. CNBC, Economic Times Honors are much more coveted in the industry than the incentives. The students can be asked to nominate the recipients from the professional fraternity for some of the below enlisted awards:

- Business Leader of the Year
- Businesswoman of the Year
- Company of the Year
- Engineering Ideation
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Emerging Company of the Year
- Green Innovator
- Lifetime Achievement in Business
- Corporate Citizen of the Year

They can also be asked to ideate upon new awards, for instance

- Best Chocolate Brand
- Best Online Portal
- Best Clothes Brand

While thinking about creating new awards, they will also calculate who or which will be the most deserving recipient. This exercise will stimulate their occupational glossary.

FLEA MARKET

Most of the management institutes, clubs, and malls organize flea market. Our students generally do not have enough budgets to have a shop in a flea market. What can be done is organize a flea market either in the class, college or at university level. They can bring out their old stuff for the sale. And the motivation for the highest seller can be recognition for donating the earned amount. They will have to deliberate upon the products for selling, improvising the sale strategy, and dealing with the customers. This exercise will furnish them with a strong vocabulary.

The methods can never be complete without followers. In addition to bringing in new and exciting ways of teaching business vocabulary we teachers need to motivate our students to keep on learning and adding to their depository of knowledge. It is always important for the learners to get inspired and themselves become facilitators.

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