

Integrating English Communication Training in Performing Arts Education

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Abstract: *Performing arts education has traditionally focused on developing artistic skills such as technique, expression, and stage performance. However, in an increasingly globalized cultural landscape, communication skills have become equally important for performing artists. English, broadly recognized and spoken as a global language, enables performing artists to interact effectively with diverse audiences, participate in international collaborations, and explore and grab huge career opportunities (Crystal, D, 2003)⁴. The research examines how structured English communication training, such as public speaking, presentation skills, and interview preparation, supports performing arts students in articulating the cultural, historical, and aesthetic aspects of their art forms. It also highlights the role of English in facilitating artist-audience interaction, academic discourse, and digital promotion (Byram, M., 1997)². The study may include perspectives from students and Dance educators, in performing arts institutions, analysing how language proficiency contributes to confidence, cultural exchange, and professional growth, and also suggestions will be gathered from English language teachers as well. Furthermore, the paper discusses the benefits of interdisciplinary learning by combining language education with artistic training. Integrating English communication skills within performing arts curricula can empower artists to represent their cultural heritage more effectively on global platforms. The study ultimately emphasizes that alongside artistic excellence, effective communication in English has become a crucial competency for contemporary performing artists.*

Keywords: *Performing Arts, Communication Skills, Language Training, Artists, Cultural.*

1.INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English communication is indispensable within performing arts education, given its status as a global lingua franca (Crystal, D, 2003)⁴. Although language acquisition is often perceived as a natural process, the necessity for systematic instruction cannot be overlooked (Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N., 2013)⁷. For performing artists, effective communication is fundamental. Their artistic intent ideas, emotions, and expressive nuances must be articulated not only through performance but also through coherent verbal communication (Schechner, R., 2002)⁹. Effective English communication is integral to an artist's professional routine, particularly for those actively engaged in frequent performances. Regular interaction with varied audiences necessitates clarity and fluency. Inadequate language proficiency can obscure meaning, dilute artistic intent, and disrupt audience engagement, thereby diminishing the overall impact of the performance. In the Indian context, many performing artists continue to use fragmented English due to insufficient exposure and training. Strong language proficiency fosters confidence, cognitive flexibility, and communicative precision, enhancing both academic and professional trajectories (Harmer, 2007). Conversely, strong command over English fosters confidence, cognitive flexibility, and communicative precision among learners, significantly enhancing their academic and professional trajectories. Standardized language training programs, such as IELTS, contribute to vocabulary enrichment, syntactic refinement, and cohesive discourse development. Ultimately, language serves as a powerful instrument for personal evolution, intellectual expansion, and artistic expression.

2.OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse how proficiency in English enhances the academic, professional, and artistic development of performing arts students.
2. To explore the role of structured language training, such as public speaking, presentation skills, and interview preparation in strengthening students' communicative competence.
3. To investigate the impact of English communication on artist–audience interaction, cultural exchange, and global collaboration.

3.LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on performing arts studies has concentrated on development of artistic skills, physical learning, creativity and cultural transfer. These studies lay the foundation of acquiring technical skills and aesthetic understanding, however devote comparatively low attention to communication competencies. English language has proved the most powerful channel for higher education and international professional conversation. Scholars use to debate that expertise on English language stimulates the access to educational resources, research process, career movement, and intercultural engagement (**Jennifer Jenkins, 2014**)⁶ Likewise, communicative efficiency supports confidence, collaboration, and critical thinking among learners (**Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013), n.d.**)⁷.

(**Byram, M., 1997**)² says that language learning stretches beyond grammar and vocabulary to include intercultural competence, enabling individuals to communicate meaningfully across cultures. This perspective is especially relevant and plays a pivotal role in the lives of performing artists who regularly interpret and present culturally rooted performances to varied audiences. Within performing arts, conversational skills contribute to lecture-demonstrations, audience education, workshop facilitation, and artistic advocacy. Furthermore, the increasing importance of digital media requires artists to communicate effectively through websites, interviews, grant proposals, and social networking platforms. However, empirical research specifically examining the systematic integration of English communication training into performing arts education remains limited.

Existing scholarship in performing arts education emphasizes technical mastery, creativity, and cultural transmission (**Bresler, L., 2004**)¹. However, globalization has led to increased recognition of communication skills as a complementary competency. Research in language education highlights English as a global medium for academic and professional mobility (**Jennifer Jenkins, 2014**)⁶. Structured language training enhances linguistic proficiency, critical thinking, and confidence (**Jennifer Jenkins, 2014**)⁵. In performing arts, limited studies have explored communication in lecture-demonstrations and audience engagement (**Schechner, R., 2002**)⁹. While interdisciplinary approaches have been encouraged, the integration of language training within arts education remains insufficiently explored (**Byram, M., 1997**)². Within the performing arts domain, a limited number of studies have explored the role of communication skills in areas such as audience engagement, lecture-demonstrations, and digital promotion. These works indicate that effective verbal articulation enables artists to contextualize their performances, convey cultural narratives, and build meaningful connections with audiences. Furthermore, standardized training programs like IELTS have been identified as beneficial in improving vocabulary, coherence, and formal communication skills. Despite growing awareness, there remains a significant gap in the systematic integration of English communication training within performing arts curricula. Most existing studies treat artistic training and language development as separate domains, with limited focus on their intersection. In the Indian context, this gap is more pronounced, as many performing arts institutions prioritize practical and theoretical aspects of art forms while overlooking structured language instruction. Consequently, students often exhibit fragmented or inadequate English communication skills, which can hinder their academic progression and professional opportunities. Additionally, existing literature does not sufficiently address the role of English in digital platforms, international collaborations, and interdisciplinary learning environments specific to performing artists. This indicates a clear need for comprehensive research that bridges the gap between artistic excellence and communicative competence.

4.GAP ANALYSIS

Although previous studies acknowledge the importance of English proficiency and communication skills, few have investigated their structured integration within performing arts education. Existing literature generally treats language

education and artistic training as separate domains. This gap is particularly evident in India, where performing arts institutions prioritize performance practice and theoretical instruction while often providing limited opportunities for formal communication training. Consequently, many students experience challenges when participating in international festivals, conducting lecture-demonstrations, presenting research, applying for scholarships, or engaging global audiences.

5.METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design gathering interviews from five dance educators and few English subject teachers using purposive sampling techniques. These sampling methods ensured the selection of participants with relevant expertise and experience in performing arts education. Purposive sampling technique has made it more authentic to research on this particular topic. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants with direct experience relevant to the research objectives. This approach ensured that respondents possessed specialized knowledge concerning both performing arts education and communication skills. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted using open-ended questions. The interviews explored perceptions regarding language proficiency, classroom practices, audience interaction, professional development, and curriculum integration. Participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis following systematic qualitative procedures. This analytical approach facilitated the identification of recurring perspectives while preserving the richness of participants' experiences.

6.RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Interviews were conducted with Dance educators and English subject teachers based on the topic. Their views were largely favourable toward the inclusion of communicative English in performing arts education. They emphasized that communicative English should be both taught and actively practiced throughout the course duration in performing arts programs. They further suggested that, as learners from non-English-speaking countries, students should be required to develop English communication skills, as these are highly demanded in the field of performing arts.

According to **Ms. Keerthy Raj**, an English teacher at “The SOBHA Academy” in Palakkad district of Kerala, India, English, being a global language, complements performing arts effectively. She stated that the English language plays a pivotal role in performing arts education, as it is widely spoken and understood across many countries. This enables artists to connect with people from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. She also emphasized that the art of one country should not be confined to that country alone; rather, it should be studied and analysed across different nations, transcending geographical boundaries. To facilitate this exchange, proficiency in English is essential, as it plays a significant role in global artistic communication.

English is widely recognized as a language that most people can understand. It helps in expressing and sharing the performing arts of one country with a wider audience, along with all their details. Without language, it would not be possible to convey such expressions, especially forms of art that belong to a specific culture. People from different cultural backgrounds may find it difficult to relate without proper communication. Therefore, language plays a vital role in delivering content effectively and ensuring it is understood in the best possible way.

According to **Ms. Anju Anand**, (Language Coach), states that students with strong English skills tend to perform better academically because they understand instructions, feedback, and theory more clearly. Professionally, they present themselves more confidently in networking situations. It also helps them write proposals and portfolios effectively. She states that strategized communication training transforms passive learners into expressive individuals. Presentation skills help them explain choreography or artistic intent. Mock interviews prepare them for real-world opportunities like scholarships and residencies. English is essential for cross-cultural collaboration. It allows artists to exchange ideas, co-create performances, and understand global artistic trends. Without it, opportunities become limited.

According to **Ms. Meghana Vijay**, an English teacher at “The SOBHA Academy” in Palakkad district of Kerala, India, states that fluency in English language enhances students' academic and professional growth. Nowadays books and study materials based or related to performing arts are available in English language. Hence the students who are brilliant in communicative English can easily access them. Professionally, it supports them to audition internationally, apply for national and international grants, and converse confidently with diverse audience. Artistically, it encourages them to

interpret scripts, lyrics, and concepts from varied cultures. To extract all this in one's life a structured training plays a crucial part. Public speaking and presentation skills build confidence, which directly contributes in brilliant stage performance. Interview preparation encourages and supports students articulate their artistic identity. These skills helps to reduce anxiety and improves clarity of expression, both on and off stage. English acts as a bridge language and extends support for international festivals and collaborations, enabling fruitful cultural exchange.

Based on the interview of Dance educators

According to professional Indian classical dancers **Ms. Reshmi Kurup, Ms. Sangeetha Kishore and Ms. Kareeshma Sandeep**, proficiency in English is essential and plays a crucial role for dance students in today's global landscape. It enables them to study theory, interpret historical texts, and communicate effectively about their art with international audience. This not only deepens their academic understanding but also expands their professional opportunities. Dancers are often required to explain their performances, and training in public speaking helps them confidently introduce dance pieces, narrate stories, and form an emotional connection with the audience. During workshops and teaching sessions, the ability to explain the meaning and context of a performance in English enhances audience appreciation and engagement. It also helps bridge cultural differences, making interactions more meaningful. English proficiency is vital for networking and collaboration, as many international residencies, festivals, and workshops require clear communication in the language. It also supports dancers in promoting themselves through social media and digital platforms, where strong presentation skills are essential. Additionally, dancers frequently present ideas, pitch concepts, or attend interviews, and language skills help them approach selection panels and funding bodies with confidence. Moreover, English facilitates collaboration with artists from different parts of the world, allowing the exchange of techniques, ideas, and cultural perspectives, which enriches artistic practice. It also helps students better understand theoretical aspects of dance, such as aesthetics and history, while boosting their confidence when engaging with diverse audience and professionals. Developing speaking skills contributes to stronger stage presence, making students more expressive and less anxious. It also equips them to teach, conduct workshops, and present their work clearly and effectively. Ultimately, English opens up global opportunities, encouraging students to participate in international festivals, collaborate with artists worldwide, and broaden their artistic horizons.

7.SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the interviews, instructors suggested that being from a non-English speaking country it should be made mandatory to practice English communicative skills as it is demanded a lot in their respective domain that is performing arts.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Curriculum Integration

Performing arts institutions should incorporate structured English communication modules into their curricula. These may include, public speaking and presentation skills, interview preparation, academic writing and research communication.

2. Interdisciplinary Teaching Approaches

Collaboration between performing arts faculty and English language instructors can enhance learning outcomes. Joint workshops and integrated coursework can provide contextualized language training.

3. Practice-Oriented Learning

Students should be encouraged to conduct lecture-demonstrations in English, participate in group discussions and seminars engage in mock interviews and stage presentations.

4. Digital Communication Training

Given the importance of online platforms, students should receive training in writing performance descriptions, creating digital content, managing social media communication.

5. Institutional Policy Support

Educational institutions should consider making English communication training a mandatory component of performing arts education, particularly in non-English-speaking contexts.

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study adhered to standard ethical research practices, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and their responses were used solely for academic purposes. The research was conducted with respect for the participants' professional integrity and cultural context.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study underscores the growing importance of integrating English communication training within performing arts education. While artistic excellence remains central to the discipline, the ability to communicate effectively in English has emerged as a critical competency in a globalized cultural environment. The findings demonstrate that structured language training enhances not only students' academic and professional prospects but also their confidence, self-expression, and ability to engage with diverse audience. For performers of classical dance forms such as Mohiniyattam and Kathak, effective communication plays a vital role in conveying cultural narratives and artistic intent. Despite increasing awareness, the lack of systematic integration of language training within performing arts curricula continues to be a significant gap, particularly in the Indian context. Addressing this gap requires a concerted effort from educators, institutions, and policymakers to adopt interdisciplinary approaches that combine artistic and linguistic development. In conclusion, the integration of English communication training should be regarded as an essential component of performing arts education, enabling artists to navigate global platforms, foster cultural exchange, and achieve holistic professional growth.

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