

Review research paper

## CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE CHALLENGES IN EAST INDIAN CLASSROOM

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**Abstract.** *Business Communication Teaching in India has its roots in English for Specific/Special Purposes or English for Technical Purposes (ESP/ETP) and its end products feed the recruitment markets worldwide. One assumes a certain degree of homogeneity in terms of industry-ask. A communication classroom is also perceived as having a minimum commonality of goals, competence and curriculum, the world over. What is intangibly heterogeneous, however, is the personal schema of individuals involved, and the complexity therein. Teachers and students of an Indian classroom bring with them their varied cultural contexts. While this definitely contributes to a great amount of healthy diversity of content, both the explicit as well as the implicit, this also creates challenges. Identifying patterns of communicative dissonance in cultural contexts in India and managing those communicative conflicts that arise therefrom, is the purpose of this discourse.*

**Key words:** *cross-cultural, communicative, challenges, patriarchy, deference, tradition, subservience, gender disparity*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

We all have an internal list of those we still don't understand, let alone appreciate. We all have biases, even prejudices, toward specific groups. In our workshops we ask people to gather in pairs and think about their hopes and fears in relating to people of a group different from their own. Fears usually include being judged, miscommunication, and patronizing or hurting others unintentionally; hopes are usually the possibility of dialogue, learning something new, developing friendships, and understanding different points of view. After doing this activity hundreds of times, I'm always amazed how similar the lists are. At any moment that we're dealing with people different from ourselves, the likelihood is that they carry a similar list of hopes and fears in their back pocket.

-- *Waging Peace in Our Schools,*  
*Linda Lantieri and Janet Patti (Beacon Press, 1996)*

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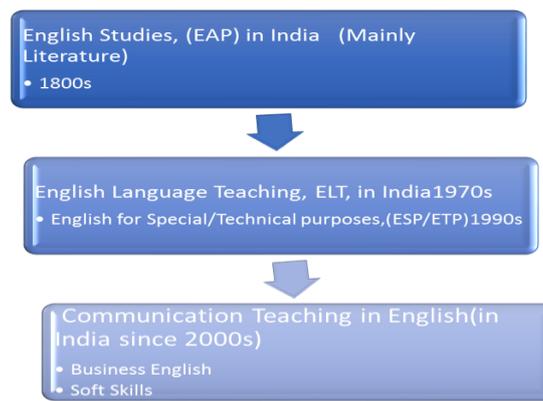
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Before one attempts to assess the cross cultural communicative challenges in East Indian classrooms, one must focus very briefly on the context, i.e. teaching Communication in India and its pedagogical requirements. English Language Teaching came to India when the country felt the need to augment the communicative competence of users through a focus on linguistic skills development. With the end goal being that of employability and deployability, professional programs offered by institutions adopted this element of competence augmentation fairly rapidly. This led to the genesis of a new chapter in English Teaching in India and a new avatar of English (ESP/ETP) was born.

Diagrammatically, the genealogical process of Communication Teaching may be represented thus:



### 1.1. Methodology

The methodology of this research content is both primary as well as secondary. The backstory of Communicative English/Business Communication Teaching has been gathered from written resources like books and internet sources, cited in the References.

The cross-cultural communicative challenges faced are from lived and shared experiences of teacher- researchers like oneself. Credit is given wherever due.

### 1.2. Literature Survey

Heather Bowe and Kylie Martin (Communication Across Cultures, 2007) define 'culture' to connote multifarious ideas. Preferred most for use here is that which refers to knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. When Bowe and Martin co-authored their book, linguistics was foremost in their minds. People invariably bring the socio-cultural expectations of language into their communication. While certain countries (North America and Germany) are low context cultures, many Eastern and South Eastern countries are high context cultures, where face, context, frames of reference take precedence over the communication content. Aggression and assertiveness in language of communication is also seen to be associated with fatherlands, like in the West whereas Eastern communication is more biased towards negotiation, persuasion, etc. Motherlands across the world are prone to more politeness markers and bottom-up communication styles. Dr Geert Hofstede proposes

5 independent dimensions of national cultural differences that can be highlighted as markers of cross cultural communicative dissonances. They are:

- Power Distance Indicators
- Uncertainty/Ambiguity Avoidance
- Individualism Vs Collectivism
- Masculinity Vs Femininity
- Short Term Vs Long Term orientation

Brown and Levinson (1987:77) define 'power' as follows

P (Power) is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power roughly, in Weber's sense. That is, P is the degree to which H (Hearer) can impose his/her own plans and self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the S (Speaker's) plans and self-evaluation.' Another concern in cross cultural communication is the problem of stereotyping (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). This is often born out of the belief that two cultures are usually polar opposites, while in truth, there are enough areas of homogeneity which co-exists therein.

It will be pertinent to mention here once again, that since Communication Teaching has been in effect in India, only since the late 1990s and early 2000s, it has very little recorded literature to learn or derive from. Hence, the bibliography reflects that.

Pedagogic traces of Business Communication/Communication/Communicative English teaching in India have been accessed from the stories of India's colonial past, and the progression from EAP to ETP.

Pedagogic traces of Communicative English Teaching have been based on the seminal works of researchers like Ellis and -Johnson, Tony Wright, Penny Ur, Richards and Rodgers.

It is important to understand the common ground Communication Teaching in India has, with that of Communication Teaching practiced in the world.

However, the crucial resource for this discourse is one's teaching experiences in real time. Teaching Communication in class, woke one to the fact that, the same word, endearment, or 'ask' in class, connotes differently to different students based on their cultural schema. While one would typically slot an 'Indian' class as 'Indian', there is little commonality therein. Different states, different geographies contributed to their own mini-Indian ness of which one rarely took notice. Therefore, this discourse is based as much on one's own experiences as it is on others' writing of their studies on this issue.

### 3. DISCUSSION

In Working on Cross Cultural Communication, Marcelle du Praw and Marya Axner (AMPU Guide: Common Cross Cultural....) suggests that there are 6 different communication aspects that contribute to cross cultural communicative challenges.

- *Different connotations of the same phrase*

A 'yes' is a 'I will consider it' or a 'definitely'

A 'let me see' is a 'I don't think so' or a 'not at all', never a really 'let me see' open ended situation.

Non-verbal cues arise also out of seating. There is a definite power play in the seating of persons who interact with each other. Seated opposite each other are those that are clearly in a powerful/powerless situation relative to each other. Seated laterally, on the other hand denotes nearly equal power between persons.

- *Cross cultural communicative differences also arise from different connotations of 'time' among people.*

To be 'on time', a general hallmark of punctual persons connotes as 'eager to negotiate and willing to accommodate'. To be considerably 'late' is seen as a mark of 'power and importance'. If people are waiting for a person, usually that person is very important.

- 'Raised voices' have different connotations for different people. In some countries outside India, raised voices are markers of anger and conflict. In India, Italy, Latin Americas, raised voices connote a sense of familiarity, familiarity, and freedom of expression.

- *Conflict* is also perceived differently among cultures. Indians accept conflict as par for course. However, there is a catch in the context wherein the elder is also often unequivocally obeyed. This is particularly true of an intergenerational family, a society etc. Corporate India is striving to be a meritocracy. This is often against the values that are traditionally ingrained. Age, experience lends itself to a 'merit' that cannot be earned via education or material successes. Also, in India there is no distance between the person and her/his thought/views. One having an unacceptable view becomes unacceptable. There is no 'I do not agree with your views'. It is 'I do not agree with you'.

The Western way of dealing with conflict is by confronting it directly. Sitting across each other and working out the issues. In India one tries to shelve issues for as long as they can be shelved. This is in the hope that it will go away on its own. Some do. When conflicts do not resolve themselves with time in India, there is formed a panel of resolvers that congregate and democratically address issues. An important area of difference that needs to be highlighted in this regard is that the written word, emails, etc are not considered the first line of conflict resolution in India, unless persons are geographies apart. The first line of conflict resolution in India is to meet and talk about it face to face. The alternative is to talk over telephone. The last favoured alternative in India is to email. In fact, an email is considered by many in India as an escalation. This is in sharp contrast to the Western approach to conflict resolution, which is an email. Even if one is sitting at the very next workstation.

- *Perception of task accomplishment varies from culture to culture:*

India, Pakistan etc countries view Task Accomplishment as an opportunity for Team Building. The task is actually an opportunity to perform teamwork, build relationships and move together with a shared purpose. The team functions like a family, with elders often protecting younger persons, regardless of team roles. Not offending anyone or hurting sentiments, understanding each-others' constraints in life often are equally, if not more, crucial. It is safe to say that the focus on the 'task' is diluted. Contrasted is a Japanese, Western approach to Task Accomplishment. The task is broken down to discrete components. Roles are assigned depending on competence, Timelines are assigned as well. There is monitoring to see that the job gets done within deadline with effectiveness and precision. In task accomplishment, the task should be and is, the focus the world over. In India, sometimes, it is not. The 'people' are more important than the 'purpose'.

- *Decision making styles differ from one culture to the next.*

Delegation of Roles is important in western cultures. In India it is not always the norm. Power and information is rarely democratically available. It is considered the privilege of a few. Even when there is an attempt to garner consensus, it often remains a token action

in the long term. Though there is a sense of democracy in government, the Indian people are often not privy to the whole truth to base their decisions upon. This is often a serious breach of transparency which is the very plinth of democratic processes. The Indian organizational, educational institutions included, are almost feudal in their percolation of power and delegation of it leading to decision making. Even Indian families see fit to remain 'guardians' of their much-married children and their children.

- *Differing perspectives to disclosure:*

Sharing information about oneself, specifically, sharing feelings, is considered very common place in India. This, however, is not the case in the western world. Reticence about being emotionally vulnerable is a common trait among many westerners, some East Asians, definitely the Germanics. The gender roles come into play here forcefully. Privacy concerns are misplaced in India where one can use a roadside patch of green to relieve themselves in the broad daylight, but will not speak about sex or problems associated with it, even behind closed doors and to a doctor. Sharing mental agony is largely unheard of until one attempts to hurt oneself from unbearable pain. Depression, Psychosis, and other such illnesses are often termed 'madness' by Indian conservatives and a stigma that is best avoided. Indians are big on judgements, not on feedback regarding them. There is very little one does by way of an 'exit' interview, in any situation.

- *Attitude to materialism, spiritualism and other such core values:*

While ancient India and Japan, along with other East Asian countries were once the 'gurus' of monasticism, spiritualism and collectivism, modern times are democratically promoting the lure of the lucre. Nirvana and transcendence is not the goal of life for most modern netizens, temporal goals of success are.

A TED X Talk at Bergen by Pellegrino Riccardi, translated by Ilze Garda, (<https://youtu.be/YMyofREc5Jk> , accessed on 11th Sep2022) focusses on 'perception' as the key to cross cultural communication. He makes it clear that one's accent plays an integral role in how one is perceived in terms of value. Hence, a vernacular or L1 influence, or residue in one's spoken English, or any other global language, leads the audience to deduce a lack of erudition or sophistication.

Riccardi's experiences lead him to deduce, correctly, that 'distance or space' is also a culture marker. In many countries, ques have people standing chest to back in front of each other, like in India. Others find it decent to stand a foot or more apart. One is used to an entire family fitting into a one-bedroom tenement in rural or semi urban India. Hence, proximity is not a problem. Not so for the urban elite. In Western countries, even the impoverished require more space to themselves. It is a very traditional inherited sense of space that cultures imbibe. Riccardi also highlights the use of words in a message. There are cultures like the British, Indians, who are more loquacious. More words but little message is the outcome. The reverse is also true. There are cultures like the Germanic culture, (countries speaking German as a first or second language) that are sparse with their language- being often monosyllabic in their response that sufficiently convey their message however, comprehensively. Riccardi describes this as 'minimum words' -(eliciting)- 'maximum message'. A humorous take on 'rules' by Riccardi pronounces rules to mean infallible in some cultures, like in the Western world, and just a very broad set of ideas to work with, in some other cultures, for instance, in India and Latin Americas. In the latter countries, ingenuity is often admired as the 'rules' are legally flouted.

This background information is relevant in the context of analyzing a Communication class in India wherein most of these cultural challenges play out in course of one's classroom interactions. However, one must clarify at the outset that a transmission type knowledge sharing class on a curricular subject like theory classes on the social sciences are not similar to the format of a Communication/Business English Communication class. In the latter, the skills inculcated are more important than the theoretical knowledge of the skills. Communication/Communicative English Classes in India depend to a great extent on the planning and management of classes. This is because there are a whole range of variables that operate in these classes that need to be taken into consideration, almost simultaneously.

Based on this context, one could classify a Communication class in India as being a straightforward exercise in knowledge sharing and skill development. However, cultural heterogeneity in the classrooms contributes to challenges that feature, while getting the message across. Communication is intrinsically dependent on context.

The urban elite are almost always understanding of 'context' and is able to adapt. The rural or semi urban Indian learner is not. There is a robust mix of both kinds of learners in a typical East Indian classroom.

### **2.1. Some of the oft visualized scenarios in a communication class (comprising a larger number of non-city learners) are that**

- *Girls and boys occupy two sides of the class.*

The extrinsically motivated learner of a professional course, present in class to be taught communication skills, has been undoubtedly brought up to consider themselves as different from and wary of, the other gender. Even in the binary, another gender causes psychological problems. Traditional homes in semi urban to non-urban India rear their girls away from the male gaze. It is very difficult for these learners to embrace the concept of colleagues, teammates, and friends. Our films too, have played into the Indian psyche with the notion of 'friendship is love' and vice-versa. (Film - 'Kuch kuch hota hai'-Karan Johar) To get these learners to disregard their parental forbidding and sit with, work with, talk with the other gender is a cultural challenge. This acclimation takes up a sizeable portion of the semester and valuable curricular content has to rush through, to make up time.

- *Pair activities do not elicit responses if the pair is heterogeneous in gender.*

It is assumed by most Indians that if a girl and a boy sit together then there is something special happening between them. It is most certainly not par for course. Even as we end 2022. In a typical class in college, there are more boys than girls in India. This is because the rate of girls' education still has a high dropout rate as soon as puberty arrives. The girls that do make it to the college classes post puberty have already been attuned to the traditional concepts of marriage where the girl is subordinate in power and intellect to whom she is 'given in marriage' to. This is what she has seen in her own house and what she has been told as truth. Same for boys. It is therefore assumed that in a pair communicative game/task, the boy takes the lead, is the more powerful, makes more decisions, while 'using' the girl as an accompaniment. The girl is happy to get the task out of the way. The boy has proven his worth in class. It is unthinkable for a mixed gender pair in Indian classrooms to instinctively ask each other which of the Interviewer-Interviewee roles they each would choose in a mock Personal Interview simulation. It is automatically assumed that the boy is the Interviewer/Boss/Manager etc. One has to categorically assign the power role to the girl in the pair. This too elicits protest and quite a lot

of mirth. Very rare are girls from cities who assume the power role themselves and excel in it. However, this change is achieved to a certain extent, by end of semester. Another aspect of interest is the lack of spontaneous eye-contact among boy learners and female teachers. The same is not a pattern for girl learners and their male teachers. Could it be because girls are attuned to looking up at men but boys are not so attuned? (to have lady teachers?) Inter gender eye contact is definitely a pain point at the start of a semester also because perhaps, at their homes, many of these semi urban/rural learners do not 'see their mother's/womenfolk's faces, covered as they are by the long length of their saree, called a 'ghoonghat'. This is supposed to protect the 'shame/lajja' or 'respect/izzat' of the woman in (some parts of Indian) society. Certain Eastern and Southern Indian states do not discriminate between genders in terms of head coverings.

If these young boys have never looked at their family's womenfolk, it is audacious to expect them to do so in class. Hence inter gender eye contact is a definite cultural communicative roadblock.

- *Role Plays become a tough ask as learners refuse to move beyond stereotypes*

In an activity called J.A.M. a learner is often required to enact a role for a minute. These roles, topics often take the learner out of their comfort zones. This is so that one is challenged to think and perform simultaneously without prior preparation. This open - ended activity is a one stop task that elicits and assesses communication, attitude, outside the box thinking, emotional quotient, intelligence et al. When boys get notes of paper with them being asked to enact Wonder Girl or a single mom, boys refuse to enact it saying, "I am not a girl, Madam. Please change the topic" It is unimaginable for them to even enact the role of the opposite gender for fear of being labelled/laughed at.

- *Leads are almost always taken by the male learner*

In most classes teaching Communication, activities and tasks take centre stage. In these, the lead roles are usually played by male learners. Female learners are usually happy to accompany and accommodate. It is only in the final year of the study program that learners learn to think of roles as merit/competence dependant and not gender.

- *The female learner is more often than not, reticent and too eager to accept/accommodate.*

Being accepting, absorbing and accommodating is celebrated as the virtue of ideal womanhood across the world. The stereotype of women, seen, not heard are no less true in India. However, this is a cultural and societal construct that working women are challenging the world over. The Indian classroom is not immune to this malaise. Girl learners are loathe to bargain, persuade, punish, push, decide, order and control. She is eager to accept and accommodate. Her pair activities with other learners commonly see her as buying/maintaining peace rather than strive to get her point across. However valid that might be. Second guessing choices, decisions and ideas are instinctive. Very rarely are these learners able to allow for their voice to be audible, let alone be heard. Their homes probably do not allow for it, in the name of 'sanskaar/ values' Deference to men and deference to the elder and compromising for the sake of the 'collective' is a virtue that is celebrated.

- *Knowledge of sport and politics is considered a male domain*

Girl students, mostly, refuse to speak on politics and sport, if given those as topics of Group Discussions, as these topics are considered male bastions by them. Even in the face

of a burgeoning population of Indian girls in sports, they are still considered ‘girls into sports’ to be differentiated from ‘normal’ girls who do not do these things. They dance, sing, paint and cook. And when it is time, look pretty, get married, keep home, rear family. This is still the subconscious Indian psychological construct. To coax them into gender neutral work roles, discussions or tasks, are a task in itself.

- *Challenging traditional concepts is avoided*

As a country driven by passions rather than intellectual purpose, there are too many areas that one is forbidden from discussing in the classroom, boardroom than realistic. Politics, religion, sex, freedoms, criticizing tradition, unedifying teachers, parents, acceptance of selfish goals, desires, fantasies, the list is endless. These are taboos that one does not discuss in any formal setting. These are non-existent. To teach topics encouraging inclusivity, empathy, as required by multinational corporates as part of their recruitment assessment tests, one requires to stimulate the learners metaphorically, to ‘boldly go where no one has ever gone before’.

- *Expressing oneself/information sharing is considered risky*

Trust issues are real and valid throughout India. In a country as hugely populated as it is, there is every reason to be fearful of lost opportunities, personal spaces and freedoms. Gender violence is real and is ingrained into one’s DNA from a very young age. Therefore a self-introduction in class may not elicit ‘truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.’ Another risk of sharing personal information is being stereotyped and judged by others for who or what one’s family is.

- *Individualism is shunned in favour of collectivism*

The relics of socialism still burn bright in India where joint families of intergenerational persons live together under one roof, feeding from the same kitchen. Hence, anyone who wishes to cut loose from this structure and think of one’s individual goals and desires, are castigated and labelled as selfish. It is almost a shame and a crime to look out for one’s own interests ahead of one’s family’s, organization’s, society’s. Any Role Play decision that is based on individual gains is something to hide, not flaunt. It is a pride to have failed together, rather than succeeded alone. (Haari jeeti naahi laaj, shobey mili kori kaaj)

- *Domains are clearly divided: inside the home-women, outside the home-men*

In an absence of role models at home, both boy as well as girl learners tend to attach more value to water-tight, uninterchangeable compartments of home and work. The former being the domain of the girls (even if working) and the latter, the boy’s (even if capable of housework). Responsibility sharing and equality is not something that has any real relevance. This is self-evident in course of communicative challenges, where even today, in 2022, recruiters ask a girl candidate to promise not to relocate upon marriage and quit the job. The boy student does not face this question. It is implied that it is the girl who will ‘accommodate’.

- *Dress*

There is increasing shrillness in India about appropriacy of attire. Both men, women, boys and girls are rethinking their choices of western formals in favour of what is being enforced as Indian. The saree, the shalwar etc are increasingly being depicted as favoured choices of Indian formals. Trousers, skirts and dresses are labelled as anti-national and anti-traditional. Girls and boys of an impressionable age are often fed stories on this kind of informal morality and appropriacy. Western wear is depicted as stereotypical of loose

morals and a leftover of colonization. The fact that working in western formal could be a choice is never suggested. Despite not having any one national dress, Indian learners almost always identify the saree as one. It is a different matter that this choice (the saree) is not at all conducive to all professions.

Conditioned thus, Indian communicative processes nearly stall in the presence of what is considered 'inappropriate attire'.

## 2.2. Management of the challenges

These challenges having been listed, the ways in which one could address them is the next part of the discussion.

Vocabulary Learning, an integral part of teaching Communication, may be achieved through Incidental Learning, where the task is different from the objective desired. That is, in role playing a conflict resolution, the obvious focus is on 'enacting the role' while the surrogate focus is learning chunks, or specific words, related to a similar real time situation. (Shakouri, Mahdavi, Mousavi & Pourteghali, 2014, p523) quoted in Deveci, Tanju. 'Internet Technology as an aid to Traditional Methods in the Development of Freshman Students' Use of Academic Words'. The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes. Vol 5:1.2017. pp55-76 (2017).

- The class content may be used to work around the issues.
- The content may be modified to address these issues directly.
- These cross-cultural perspectives may be celebrated for their diversity and preserved as a choice.

In an increasingly complex workplace where learners are occupationally expected to function cohesively with teams belonging to different socio-political contexts, it is difficult, in the least, to preserve or celebrate, one's cultural and social prejudices (girl not wanting to communicate with boy and vice-versa). These situations in a communicative class take away time and focus from the communicative content and result in miscommunication. Allowing for patriarchal beliefs to persist in a class not only strengthens these beliefs, but also fails to prepare the learners for a real corporate role that ideally, has no place for gender discrimination or stereotypes. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to intelligently and gently guide the communication to focus on skills rather than gender, as the primary assessment point for all communicative tasks. This can be done subliminally or consciously. Experience sharing by colleagues have concluded that one does need to push the envelope when it comes to Discussion, J.A.M. topics and Role Plays, so that the learners can practice in a simulation what they are expected to do, in real life.

Thus, electing the girl as the boss in a boss-team member role play, or coaxing the girl learner to negotiate a tough deal, goes a long way in the learner unlearning traditional concepts and relearning the globally acceptable ideas of communication.

Some ideas used in the management of the listed and other cross cultural communication challenges may be the following:

### Teaching learners

- not to assume
- not to stereotype
- to practice working with diversity
- to keep looking for the better way

- to listen
- to collaborate
- to know when to talk
- to what to say
- to pace and pause appropriately
- to have intonation mindfulness
- to be mindful of what is conventional
- to be mindful of the degree of directness to be practiced
- to practice cohesion and coherence
- to be mindful of greeting (touch/non-touch)
- to be mindful of language
- to give importance to values
- to be aware of education/elitist approach
- to be mindful of end goal (profit/value/relationship)
- to be aware of technology (enabler/disabler)
- to be mindful of use of emoji
- to be mindful with use of pronouns
- to be conscious of clarity Vs ambiguity of content

*(Tannen, Deborah. Cross-cultural Communication. ERIC number ED253061, 1983 and Grammarly Business Blog Post, The ultimate guide to cross-cultural communication at work. Oct18, 2021.)*

### **2.3. Unresolved Issues impacting Communicative Processes**

The list of actions that may be taken in an attempt to dampen cross cultural conflicts in classrooms of Communication Teaching is exhaustive and easier achieved on paper. It is correctly said that one can take a person to a different land from one's place of origin but one can never take that land-of-origin out of the person. Culture is ingrained and subconscious. It is almost impossible to unlearn it and relearn something else.

The challenging concepts of gender roles and expectations are universally conventional. Cross-cultural communication only serves to bring them to the fore. Learners therefore need to be constantly exposed to live situations of diversity and empathy, inclusion and acceptance, so as to normalise the scenario. The most pressing challenge that one confronts in a classroom as in life itself, is that of 'perception', either curating it or breaking it. This is a question that could be researched further via demographic and geo-social profiling of learners. What is the appetite for risking 'perception' among learners and professionals and what ways may be chosen to manipulate or create the image of oneself that one wishes for others to perceive?

The world has seen a paradigm shift in the way education is being experienced post the Covid 19 pandemic. Digital platforms have kept the teaching learning process alive. However, the effectiveness of any digital education tool is dependant on several factors. While one is undoubtedly content, the other equally crucial is 'appropriacy'. There is an increasing concern in the country over finding the right content as well as appropriate visualizations of it. The intent is to educate while not causing too many culture contradictions. (Riapina, Natalia and Tatiana Utkina. 'Teaching EAP to Digital Generation Learners: Developing a Generation-Specific Teaching Strategy'. The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes. Vol 10:2, 2022 pp 277-289.)

### 3. CONCLUSION

Before one concludes this paper on Cross Cultural Challenges in Communication Teaching in East India, it would be impertinent to not focus on certain very valuable insights about the growth path of professional English. It would also be amiss to not focus on cross cultural communicative challenges faced on the Internet, or, on the virtual platform.

Post Covid 19, the rules of communication have undergone a significant change. The universal templates are not country specific, but browser and application specific. Communication is entirely as per requirements of the users and the layout, tone and register are prompted by auto-correct. AI uses an American frame of reference for all documentation and content generation. The use of video materials as teaching aids in ESP courses has been advised and is widely already practised across countries. India is no exception. Deep Learning through digital platforms at once provides a visually enriching as well as holistic learning experience to the learners. (Milosevic, Danica. 'Video Tutorials as Potential Allies in the ESP Classroom'. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*. Vol10:2.2022, pp291-300)

What was once a nightmare for many teachers born on the wrong side of the digital divide (started their careers before 1999, when globalization and the internet revolution happened) has now become irreplaceable. Technology is a bridge that cannot be done without- what would one do without Microsoft Windows and its applications that create, calculate and present information at the press of a character? Here too, some superimposed cultural challenges arise - of the ideas and 'options' generated by the internet. The culture of the 'virtual' world of the netizen is falsely liberating and empowering, till the real world adapts and adopts the freedoms of choice. Until there is synergy between India's traditions and modernity achieved by using technology as a bridge, one will continue to categorise the communicative classroom as a heterogenous amalgamation of different philosophies that strain to find common ground.

The accessibility to internet may be the twin edged sword that may at once unite as well as divide minds, based on what information is consumed. Globally local, or 'glocal', seems a compromise of sorts where communication strives to address a common goal through a variety of negotiable parts/processes – striving to change the biases, one communicative task at a time!

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