GFL
German as a foreign language

The Role of Foreign Languages at Tertiary Level – Towards Developing a Contextual Curriculum for a German Course in Indian Technical Universities

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The post globalization era has introduced a compression of time and space, and accompanying aftermaths like the mobility of the workforce, internationalization of education and cross-cultural interactions. Technically adept engineers, with linguistic and inter/cross-cultural competence, are the need of the hour. But in Indian technical universities, the role of foreign languages is yet to be clearly defined and a study of why a particular foreign language is chosen by learners has to be analysed to understand the needs of those learners. This study, conducted in a private technical university in south India, tries to determine the needs of the learners who study German as a Foreign Language (GFL) as part of their undergraduate engineering course. The study finds that the learners are aware of their needs and that there is a gap in the content delivered through the courses. This calls for a revision in the content delivered, the way the courses are offered and in the overall approach towards language learning. Redesigning German language instruction in technical universities in tune with the learners' needs helps in the development of a contextual curriculum, thereby fortifying the skills of the engineers to become globally competent employees and citizens.

1. Introduction

Globalization has influenced all domains of life such as the economy, education, culture and society. The 'global village' that the world has shrunk to has seen accelerated growth and development which in India takes the form of increased mobility of goods, resources, students, international benchmarking, standardization and the establishment of foreign companies. The global society thus created by developments in technology and communication calls for 'global citizens' with a broad range of skills and the ability to apply knowledge to meet the 'challenges of accelerated change and uncertainty' (Chinnammai 2006: 68).

Languages play a pivotal role in strengthening communication among all stakeholders in a globalized context and foreign languages give individuals an edge over others in this diverse, competitive world. In India, academia is gearing up to meet the demands of its stakeholders

and profound changes are visible in the teaching and learning process as many courses and programmes are now developed in association with partners in industry and in collaboration with universities abroad.

India is a multilingual country and every citizen can speak on average two or three languages and in urban areas English as a medium of instruction in schools is also prevalent. 'Code-switching' between languages while communicating with different people in different situations is very common and in this context learning a foreign language like German or French happens after learning English and two or three Indian languages.

If English came to India through the British then German came through the influence of missionaries and Jesuit priests from Germany and bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The role of the Goethe Institute, or 'Max Mueller Bhavan' (MMB), as it is called in India, and the DAAD in promoting German language and culture in India is remarkable. While Goethe Institutes teach German as a Foreign Language (GFL) based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels, universities offer undergraduate (BA – Bachelor of Arts), postgraduate (MA – Master of Arts) and doctoral programmes in German with a focus on German literature and language modules, along with short term certification / diploma courses in translation and the German language. In 2008, the Federal Foreign Office launched the 'Schools: Partners of the Future' (PASCH) initiative with the aim to 'create and strengthen a global network of some 1500 partner schools with special links to Germany' (http://www.pasch-net.de/en/udi/zie.html). The Goethe Institutes implement this programme along with the DAAD and the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA) with the intention of anchoring 'German as a foreign language more firmly within national education systems. In addition, scholarships for pursuing courses in Germany and opportunities for school exchanges are also made available' (https://www.goethe.de/ins/in/en/spr/eng/pas.html).

Many technical universities have also started to offer foreign languages at tertiary level to meet the demands of their Generation Y learners. While CEFR governs the process of teaching and learning GFL in India within the MMBs and at school level, it is to be noted that there is no such common framework for the study of German in the tertiary sector.

In a scenario as varied as this, what is the reason for an aspiring engineer to learn a foreign language? What are his/her motivations for and expectations from a German course? And how can these be met? An analysis of motivations and needs among GFL learners in Indian technical universities, undertaken with a view to improving their experience of German language learning, is an important exercise in the current globalized climate. One such study which aimed to seek answers to these questions and draw conclusions from them for the improvement of German-language teaching in southern Indian technical universities is detailed in the following sections.

2. Motivation to learn foreign languages

Gardner and Lambert, Canadian social psychologists, were the first to introduce the concepts of 'integrative' and 'instrumental' orientations to language learning. In 1959, they proposed a socio-psychological model that demonstrated that 'not only linguistic aptitude, but also a "motivational factor" influences second-language achievement' (Gardner; Lambert 1959: 271). According to them, motivation is the 'driving force in any situation' (Gardner 2001: 6). Orientations are 'clusters of reasons for studying a language' (Busse 2013: 380). Genuine interest in the speakers and the culture of a target language with an aim to integrate into the target situation is known as the integrative orientation. Learning language for a practical purpose and other advantages that it might offer like getting a job or meeting an educational requirement is the instrumental orientation. The socio-educational model that Gardner further developed in 1985 looked at 'integrativeness', with its integrating orientation to the target language community, as one of the influencing factors for L2 learning along with the attitudes toward the learning situation. In the 90s this model was challenged by many as the study was predominantly done in a Canadian bilingual context. Dörnyei enquired about the motivation of those learners who had no contact with the speakers from the target language group (Dörnyei 1990: 69). He then proposed the concept of an 'L2 Motivational Self System' (Dörnyei 2009: 9), a new approach based on the 'self' framework, which hypothesizes that motivation is derived when learners attempt to bridge the gap between their actual selves and the future selves they wish to become.

This concept of the 'Ideal L2 Self' has been studied by Vera Busse (2013) and Gabriele Schmidt (2014) in UK and Australian university contexts respectively. Busse studied foreign

language learning motivation in higher education and, through a longitudinal study, analysed the motivational changes and their causes in L2 learning among first year students studying German degree courses at two major UK universities. Her study analysed the 'interplay between motivation and contextual factors' over the course of one academic year to emphasize the relation between motivation and time. The results suggested that 'integrative orientation in its traditional sense plays a minor role for these students'. The concepts of the ideal L2 self, intrinsic motivation, together with a sense of self-efficacy provided a good understanding of students' motivation to learn languages throughout the year (Busse 2013: 385).

Gabriele Schmidt in her study of Australian university students' motivation to learn German updated and expanded her previous study on the subject by conducting detailed interviews to determine what 'more there is to it' for students when choosing German at university level. Along with the motivational factors identified in the earlier quantitative study like (1) 'general interest in the German language and culture paired with a joy and an appreciation of learning languages', (2) 'the wish to communicate in a German-speaking country while working, studying or travelling' and (3) 'German being considered as an important (business) language that could bring professional advantages' (Schmidt 2014: 23), through this qualitative analysis she discovered that 'students considered learning German for their personal growth' and 'for adding value to their primary degree' and that the 'ideal L2 self' was a strong determinant in their motivation (Schmidt 2014: 21).

These three motivations identified by Schmidt were also confirmed by Riemer in her *Länderstudien* conducted in 2011 in nineteen countries. She established that learners from a geographically remote country like Australia had a 'strong positive attitude towards German-speaking people and their culture' and this corresponds to Schmidt's first motivational factor. Riemer refers to instrumental reasons as an 'Exotenmotiv', i.e. 'learners regard a knowledge of German as a skill that makes them special in their field of expertise' and this corresponds with Schmidt's findings too (Riemer 2006: 54-55).

A study conducted in a Polish context (Okuniewski 2014: 251) and another in a Sudanese context (Ishag 2016) to determine the motivation and attitudes towards learning German also established that integrative motivation was common among the learners of German.

What these studies show is that a combination of integrative and instrumental factors is at play in students' motivation to learn German, although integrative motivation appears to be most common. One aim of the study analysed in this paper is to consider whether the same holds true in the Indian context, as there are no previous studies that have quantitatively analysed the motivations of German learners in India. Once we establish the driving force for learning a language, it will aid us in developing the kind of course learners require. A needs analysis is thus required and the following section focuses on this.

3. Needs Analysis

In a language-centred approach, needs are considered to be the 'ability to comprehend and/or produce the linguistic features of the target situation' (Hutchinson; Waters 1987: 55). Needs analysis is the starting point or the cornerstone of any Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) course and can lead to such a course being much more focused on those things that students require from their language learning.

Hutchinson and Waters also make a distinction between 'target needs' and 'learning needs'. Target needs are what learners need to be able to do in the target situation. Learning needs are what the learner needs to do in order to learn. 'Target needs' is an overarching term that also incorporates necessities, lacks and wants. 'Necessities' are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. 'Lacks' are defined as the gap between what the learners already know and what they need to know to perform in the target situation. The learner's view of what their needs are can be defined as their 'wants'. Wants perceived by the learners cannot be ignored as they play a key role in learner motivation (Hutchinson; Waters 1987: 55-57).

As detailed by Holliday and Cooke, analysing the target needs, the learning needs and the present situation of those engaged in a language learning process will allow for the establishment of a 'workable course design' to meet those needs. As a needs analysis is clearly a prerogative for developing Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) courses, it has been widely used in the context of English language teaching and many studies have been conducted to design and implement ESP courses both in India and abroad on this basis.

Within the context of German language teaching, however, only a few studies are available that have focused on the needs of learners with a view to bringing in curricular reforms.

Rarick in his study undertaken at the University of Rhode Island in 2010 looked to a needs analysis to transform students' presentations in an advanced course on technical German. This university has also successfully implemented a five year dual degree programme in Engineering and German (Rarick 2010: 61-69). Kärchner-Ober in her study conducted at the University of Duisburg-Essen developed the concept of 'German for Engineers right from the Start' which places particular emphasis on providing early support for acquiring subject-specific language skills' (Kärchner-Ober et al 2015: 2). Amanda Sheffer undertook a case study of Business German and proposed to implement German for Specific Purposes 'earlier in the basic language sequence […] to realize the usefulness of communication and cross-cultural connections' (Sheffer 2017: 91). She had argued for implementing Language for Specific Purposes courses earlier in the language programme as it helps in retaining the students in minor and major programmes.

3. The Study

3.1 Rationale for the study

Research within German Studies in India has tended to centre on comparative studies of literary works and grammar. Symposiums, conferences, workshops and seminars are conducted at various universities, colleges and MMBs and many issues pertaining to German language teaching and learning are discussed. Workshops and seminars organized by MMBs aim at the dissemination of best practice in German language teaching and at the development of teachers' teaching skills as there is a shortage of trained teachers and training courses specifically for teaching GFL in India. Conferences and seminars on German language teaching and learning organized by the different universities tend to discuss specific themes in this area and any initiatives developing out of such discussions tend to be locally implemented.

An empirical study aiming to analyse the motivation of learners choosing German and their needs and expectations from a German course at undergraduate level in a technical university

had yet to be undertaken in an Indian context. Hence this study proposed to determine the extent to which there might be a need for German in Indian technical universities to evolve a dynamic curriculum for German language teaching.

3.2 Objectives of the study

Set against this backdrop, the objectives of this study were to explore and answer the following questions:

1. What is the motivational drive for Indian students to learn GFL at tertiary level?

2. Which language skills are deemed important by them to learn in German?

3. What are the topics/areas that they want to learn about in German?

4. What are the skills required by the students aspiring to pursue higher education in Germany?

In drawing conclusions from the study the authors then aim to attempt to bridge the gap between students' expectations and the reality of their experience of language learning identified in the needs analysis by proposing a context-based, indigenous curriculum for teaching GFL courses at tertiary level in Indian technical universities.

3.3 Methodology

To determine the needs of the learners of German in technical universities, a Learner Needs Analysis (LNA) was conducted at a private technical university in south India. In the university where the study was conducted, it is mandatory for all undergraduate students to choose one foreign language out of the four foreign languages (German, French, Spanish and Chinese) offered as a university core subject. All the students enrolled in this course during the winter semester of the academic year 2015-16 were first-year engineering students who come from different states of India. The basic German course offered is a two credit course with two instructional hours per week and thirty instructional hours in a semester.

The data was collected from the students through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated by mail to two groups of students on the Basic German Course. Out of 120 students in these two groups 104 students responded to the questionnaire.

Additionally, in order to understand the German language needs of the students pursuing higher education in Germany a Target Situation Analysis (TSA) was undertaken. Indian students pursuing their Masters at German universities were contacted through social media like Face Book, LinkedIn etc. and a questionnaire was circulated to them as a Google doc link. Thirty-three responses were received from this target group.

3.4 Data Collection

A questionnaire was the tool used to collect data for both the LNA and TSA. The questionnaire contained closed questions and was divided into four sections.

1. Background information

This section asked the learners to fill in their personal details like name, university registration number, age and email address.

2. Reasons for choosing to learn German at the university

This section provided seven reasons for choosing German from the range of four foreign languages offered. The statements reflected various possible intrinsic, extrinsic and utilitarian motivations. These statements were derived from earlier studies conducted in this area (Hutchinson; Waters, 1987, Ishag, 2016, Schmidt, 2014), from the author's interaction with the students in the classroom and in consultation with senior professors of German. The learners were asked to choose one reason to explain their choice to learn German at tertiary level.

3. Language skills deemed important by learners

Learners were asked to rate the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, in order of importance.

4. Topics/areas of interest to be learned in German

This section had 20 topics/areas that learners would like to learn about in German. They were asked to rate these topics in order of importance. These topics were taken

from three A1 level books: *Netzwerk*, *Studio D* and *Lagune*. These books are the prescribed text books followed in the technical universities in Chennai. Because the students are technologically savvy and tend to rely on the internet to enhance their learning, and also based on the author's work experience in industries in India as a German specialist, a few topic areas like the translation of technical texts, technical jargon, and strategy skills, like the ability to use dictionaries/thesaurus etc., were also included in the list.

The questionnaire used for TSA had only two sections.

1. Background Information

2. Use of German in the given topics/areas

The 20 topics/areas identified and used in the learners' questionnaire were used here too but the rating scale was changed to measure the frequency of usage in the target country. The students rated these topics as 'always/sometimes/never' used.

4. Findings: Learner Needs Analysis

4.1 Reasons for choosing German

Reasons for choosing to learn German	Frequency	Percentage
1. It is mandatory in the curriculum to learn a foreign language	6	5.8%
2. It is easy to score marks / get credits	2	1.9%
3. A friend / family member suggested / recommended the course	3	2.9%
4. I like learning new languages and cultures	20	19.2%
5. I would like to read / understand German literature / music / sports in its original form	3	2.9%
6. It would enhance my job opportunities in the future	37	35.6%

7. It would help me to pursue my higher education in Germany / German speaking countries	33	31.7%
Grand Total	104	

Table 1: Why did you choose to learn German?

Table 1 shows that 35.6% of learners have chosen German because it would enhance their job opportunities in the future and 31.7% of them have chosen German because it would help them pursue their higher education in Germany. The learners with a general interest in learning languages and about culture are only 19.2%.
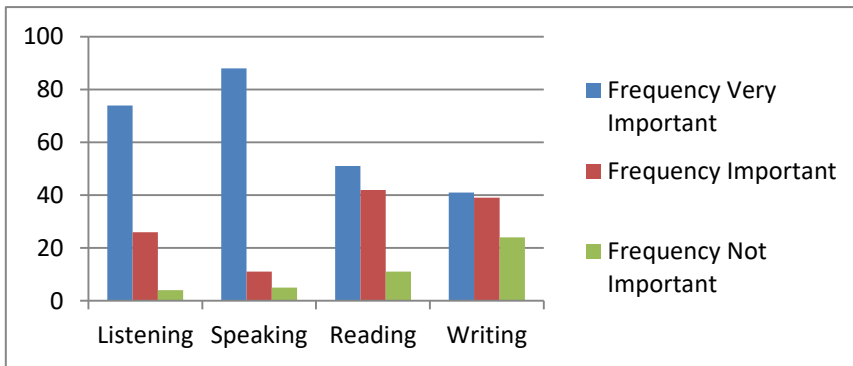
4.2 Language skills

Figure 1: Importance of the 4 language skill sets

It is evident from Figure 1 that 'speaking' is regarded as the primary skill to be learned by 84.62% of the learners, followed by 'listening' with 70.2% learners. 'Reading' with 48.1% learners and 'writing' with 38.5% learners come only after speaking and listening.

4.3 Topics/areas of interest

Table 3 below brings out the topics/areas that the learners would like to learn in German rated by them in the order of importance.

Topics	Very important	Important	Not important

1. Basic day to day communications (greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc.)	78.8%	20.2%	1%
2. Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions	26.9%	52.9%	20.2%
3. Festivals, customs and beliefs	26.9%	59.6%	13.4%
4. Travel, directions, places and buildings	55.7%	38.4%	5.7%
5. Different professions and their responsibilities	42.3%	48.1%	9.6%
6. Communication in public places (airport / railway station etc.)	74.0%	25%	1%
7. Communication in banks, post offices, hospital etc.	67.3%	26.9%	5.7%
8. Communication in a supermarket / restaurant / hotel	56.7%	35.5%	7.6%
9. Dress and fashion	10.5%	40.3%	49.03%
10. Body parts and health	26.9%	46.1%	26.9%
11. Communication in a classroom	62.5%	28.8%	8.6%
12. German for academic purposes (writing / understanding resumes, memos, notices, reports, note taking etc.)	65.3%	27.8%	6.7%
13. Translation of simple texts	57.6%	34.6%	7.6%
14. Translation of technical texts related to engineering	52.8%	42.3%	4.8%
15. Technical jargon and vocabulary	46.1%	44.2%	9.6%

16. German for business purposes (interacting with clients/customers, scheduling meetings, official correspondence and presentations etc.)	61.5%	36.5%	1.9%
17. About Germany and German speaking countries	37.5%	43.2%	19.2%
18. German culture and cross cultural communication	47.1%	43.2%	9.6%
19. German literature, poems, stories, films, etc.	22.1%	40.3%	37.5%
20. Ability to use dictionaries, thesaurus and online software	38.4%	50.9%	10.5%

Table 3: Percentage analyses of topics/areas learners like to learn about in German

From Table 3 above, it is clearly evident that the topics/areas deemed *very important* by the learners to cover in a German course, based on the highest percentage of learners choosing it to be very important, are as follows:

- Basic day to day communications (greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc.) (78.8%)
- Communication in public places (airport / railway station etc.) (74.0%)
- Communication in banks, post offices, hospital etc. (67.3%)
- German for academic purposes (writing / understanding resumes, memos, notices, reports, note taking, etc.) (65.3%)
- Communication in the classroom (62.5%)
- German for business purposes (interacting with clients/customers, scheduling meetings, official correspondence and presentations etc.) (61.5%)
- Translation of simple texts (57.6%)
- Communication in a supermarket / restaurant / hotel (56.7%)
- Travel, directions, places and buildings (55.7%)
- Translation of technical texts related to engineering (52.8%)
- German culture and cross cultural communication (47.1%)
- Technical jargon and vocabulary (46.1%)

It can also be seen from Table 3 that the topics/areas deemed *important* by the learners to cover in a German course are as follows:

- Festivals, customs and beliefs (59.6%)
- Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions (52.9%)
- Ability to use dictionaries, thesaurus and online software (50.9%)
- Different professions and their responsibilities (48.1%)
- Body parts and health (46.1%)

- About Germany and German speaking countries (43.2%)
- German literature, poems, stories, films, etc. (40.3%)

Based on Table 3 above, it can also be further deduced that the following topics have a significant percentage of learners considering them *not important* to cover in a German course.

- Dress and fashion (49.03%)
- German literature, poems, stories, films, etc. (37.5%)
- Body parts and health (26.9%)

5. Findings: Target Situation Analysis

The following table records the answers given by Indian students undertaking postgraduate study in Germany to the question of how often they used German to communicate on a number of topics.

Description	1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Never
1. Basic day to day communications (greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc.)	69.7%	27.27%	3.03%
2. Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions	21.21%	54.55%	24.24%
3. Festivals, customs and beliefs	15.15%	63.64%	21.21%
4. Travel, directions, places and buildings	66.67%	27.27%	6.06%
5. Different professions and their responsibilities	27.27%	51.52%	21.21%
6. Communication in public places (airport / railway station etc.)	63.64%	27.27%	9.09%
7. Communication in a bank / post office / hospital	63.64%	30.3%	6.06%
8. Communication in a supermarket / restaurant / hotel	72.73%	24.24%	3.03%
9. Dress and fashion	18.18%	27.27%	54.55%
10. Body parts and health	18.18%	21.21%	60.61%
11. Communication in a classroom	15.15%	45.45%	39.39%

12. German for academic purposes (writing / understanding resumes, memos, notices, reports, note taking etc.)	30.3%	18.18%	51.52%
13. Translation of simple texts	27.27%	69.7%	3.03%
14. Translation of technical texts related to engineering	24.24%	45.45%	30.3%
15. Technical jargon and vocabulary	15.15%	51.52%	33.33%
16. German for business purposes (interacting with clients/customers, scheduling meetings, official correspondence and presentations etc.)	30.3%	42.42%	27.27%
17. About Germany and German speaking countries	33.33%	54.55%	12.12%
18. German culture and cross cultural communication	27.27%	54.55%	18.18%
19. German literature, poems, stories, films etc.)	12.12%	36.36%	51.52%
20. Ability to use dictionaries, thesaurus and online software	42.42%	39.39%	18.18%

Table 4: Percentage analyses of topics/areas in which German is frequently used by the target group

From Table 4 above, it is very clear that German is *always* used by a large number of the students to converse on /perform activities in the following topics/areas:

- Communication in a supermarket / restaurant / hotel (72.73%)
- Basic day to day communications (greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc. (69.7%)
- Travel, directions, places and buildings (66.67%)
- Communication in public places (airport / railway station etc.) (63.64%)
- Communication in a bank / post office / hospital (63.64%)
- Ability to use dictionaries, thesaurus and online software (42.42%)

German is *sometimes* used by the target group students to converse on/perform activities in the following topics/areas:

- Translation of simple texts (69.7%)
- Festivals, customs and beliefs (63.64%)
- Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions (54.55%)
- About Germany and German speaking countries (54.55%)
- German culture and cross cultural communication (54.55%)

- Technical jargons and vocabulary (51.52%)
- Different professions and their responsibilities (51.52%)
- Communication in a classroom (45.45%)
- Translation of technical texts related to engineering (45.45%)
- German for business purposes (interacting with clients/customers, scheduling meetings, official correspondence and presentations etc.) (42.42%)

The target group has also highlighted that German is *never* used by a number of the students to converse on/perform activities in the following topics/areas:

- German literature, poems, stories, films etc. (51.52%)
- German for academic purposes (writing/understanding resumes, memos, notices, reports, note taking etc.) (51.52%)
- Body parts and health (60.61%)
- Dress and fashion (54.55%)

6. Discussion

Table 1 above clearly indicates that a majority of learners have an instrumental motivation for learning German at tertiary level and that they turn to language learning for practical and utilitarian purposes. The fact that Germany has a leading role in the automobile industry, along with the establishment of German industry and the expansion of multinational companies in India (Volkswagen, Daimler, Robert Bosch, Siemens, amongst others), is likely to have had a positive influence on the learners' choice of language and this is underlined by the fact that 35.6% of the learners choose German in order to enhance their job opportunities in the future.

The learners in Indian technical universities attribute more value to speaking and listening than reading and writing skills as illustrated in Figure 1 above. This clearly indicates that they expect their course to give them the edge when it comes to being able to communicate orally in German in professional and academic scenarios. The responses from the target-situation group pursuing Masters programmes in German universities, as illustrated in Table 4, indicate that, while they 'always' use German predominantly to interact in a variety of situations, including in an academic scenario, reading and writing in German is only 'sometimes' done or 'rarely' done. Furthermore, as indicated in Table 5 below, while 65.3% of the learners perceive 'German for academic purposes' as 'very important', 51.52% of those already in the target situation in Germany state that they 'never' use German for academic purposes. This could be because many courses are now being offered in English at

German universities and, with more students opting to enrol in programmes conducted in English, the need for the skills associated with 'German for academic purposes' like 'writing/understanding resumes, memos, notices, reports, note taking etc.', is no longer acute.

German might not be required to perform core academic activities like report writing, listening to lectures or note taking. Moreover, as the university is also likely to be home to a heterogeneous mix of international learners German is probably also no longer essential for communication on campus. It does, however, undoubtedly become indispensable when one ventures out on the streets of Germany. From asking for directions to go to places, to finding/buying products in supermarkets, to understanding the information boards/announcements made in public places like airports and railway stations and even to interact with people in banks or post offices, the ability to communicate in German becomes vital. This is reflected in the fact that those students in the target situation who participated in the survey rated all of these as topics/areas in which they frequently communicated in German.

With respect to those students surveyed who are currently studying German in India, it is important to take into account that their learning happens in the technical domain. Therefore fortifying their knowledge of engineering related texts, vocabulary and jargon through the use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies while also promoting their ability to use dictionaries/thesaurus/online translation software would enable them to become independent and lifelong learners. The need for such strategies is suggested by the responses of both current language learners and those already in the target situation, as recorded in Table 5.

Description	Learners in Indian TU N=104			Target group learners in Germany N=33		
	Very important	Important	Not important	1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Never
1. Basic day to day communications(Greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc.)	78.80%	20.20%	1%	69.70%	27.27%	3.03%
2. Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions	26.90%	52.90%	20.20%	21.21%	54.55%	24.24%
3. Festivals, customs and beliefs	26.90%	59.60%	13.40%	15.15%	63.64%	21.21%
4. Travel, directions, places and buildings	55.70%	38.40%	5.70%	66.67%	27.27%	6.06%
5. Different professions and their responsibilities	42.30%	48.10%	9.60%	27.27%	51.52%	21.21%
6. Communication in public places (Airport / railway station etc.)	74.00%	25%	1%	63.64%	27.27%	9.09%
7. Communication in a bank / post office / hospital	67.30%	26.90%	5.70%	63.64%	30.30%	6.06%
8. Communication in a supermarket / Restaurant / Hotel	56.70%	35.50%	7.60%	72.73%	24.24%	3.03%
9. Dresses and Fashion	10.50%	40.30%	49.03%	18.18%	27.27%	54.55%
10. Body parts and health	26.90%	46.10%	26.90%	18.18%	21.21%	60.61%
11. Communication in a classroom	62.50%	28.80%	8.60%	15.15%	45.45%	39.39%
12. German for academic purposes (Writing / understanding Resumes, Memos, Notices, Reports, Note taking etc.)	65.30%	27.80%	6.70%	30.30%	18.18%	51.52%
13. Translation of simple texts	57.60%	34.60%	7.60%	27.27%	69.70%	3.03%
14. Translation of technical texts related to engineering	52.80%	42.30%	4.80%	24.24%	45.45%	30.30%
15. Technical jargons and vocabulary	46.10%	44.20%	9.60%	15.15%	51.52%	33.33%
16. German for business purposes (interacting with clients/customers, scheduling meetings, official correspondences and presentations etc.)	61.50%	36.50%	1.90%	30.30%	42.42%	27.27%
17. About Germany and German speaking countries	37.50%	43.20%	19.20%	33.33%	54.55%	12.12%
18. German Culture and cross cultural communication	47.10%	43.20%	9.60%	27.27%	54.55%	18.18%
19. German literature, poems, stories, films etc.)	22.10%	40.30%	37.50%	12.12%	36.36%	51.52%
20. Ability to use dictionaries, thesaurus and online software	38.40%	50.90%	10.50%	42.42%	39.39%	18.18%

Table 5: Cross tabulation of responses from learners in Indian Technical University & German Universities

This study did not analyse the specific need for German in industries in India but based on earlier studies conducted among Danish and Finnish companies, it can be deduced that industries value cultural competency among their employees. The importance of 'cultural competence' and 'cultural sensitivity' is highlighted as one of the workplace language needs by Lehtonen and Karjalainen in their study conducted in 2008 among 15 Finnish employers (Lehtonen; Karjalainen 2008: 492). It is also emphasized by Vandermeeren in her study conducted amongst Danish companies in which, she comes to the conclusion that 'knowledge of German culture is regarded as more useful than German language knowledge' (Vandermeeren 2003: 13). Less than half the respondents from Indian technical universities regarded 'German culture and cross cultural communication' as *very important*, while

54.55% of the respondents from the target group noted that it is *'sometimes'* used. There is also a difference in the understanding of the need amongst the two groups with regard to 'German for business purposes', as illustrated in Table 5. From this it can be deduced that learners in technical universities in India are not completely aware of the exact needs in the target / business situations and it therefore becomes imperative for the course / curriculum design to take into account the needs identified by other stakeholders.

7. Present situation analysis

There are around thirty technical universities in Tamil Nadu, one of the states in southern India. Of the thirty universities, only seven offer A1 level German courses for their undergraduate engineering students. In the institution, where the current study was conducted, 30 hours of Basic German is a part of the curriculum and a value-added program of 80 hours is also offered additionally to meet the A1 level requirements according to the CEFR.

Table 6 below gives an overview of the German course offered at the university where this study was undertaken.

Name of the Course	Grundstufe Deutsch	Deutsch für Anfänger
Duration	30 hours	80 hours
No. of Classes	Approx. 30 classes in a semester - 2 classes / week - 50 minutes / class	- 3 classes / week - 2 hours / class - 6 months
Course details	Mandatory – University Core One foreign language has to be compulsorily chosen in the first year by the students of all the branches of B.Tech. Students can choose either German/French/Spanish	Optional Classes are conducted in the evenings after college hours or during weekends. Interested students who have completed 'Grundstufe Deutsch' can join. Additional fees have to be paid.

Class strength	70-80 students	30-40 students
Class type	Heterogeneous class with mostly first year students from different states in India	Students of all years are a part of this course
Infrastructural facilities	Projector, writing board and fixed tables and chairs. Not much space to move around	
Challenges	Inadequate audio/video facilities Exam centric evaluation Administrative work loads	

Table 6: An overview of the German course

Where German is taught the duration and levels offered might vary but it is characteristic of the Indian classroom that it has a huge number of students in a class with fixed furniture and inadequate infrastructural facilities. Most of the teaching can be described as 'frontal Unterricht', lecture-based and teacher-centric with text books being meticulously followed for teaching in the classroom. Table 7 presents an analysis of the topics dealt with in three different textbooks, *Lagune*, *Studio D* and *Netzwerk*, that are regularly used in German classrooms in southern India.

Lagune	Studio D	Netzwerk
Greetings, introductions	In the café – greetings, introductions	Greetings and introductions
In the railway station	Communication in classroom	Hobbies, work and work timing
Introducing family	Cities, countries and languages	Places and buildings, directions and movements
In the supermarket	People and houses – family, different types of houses, rooms and furniture	Eating and drinking
In the restaurant	Meetings and appointments	Shopping
Hobbies and professions	Going around the workplace – directions and movements	My family
Day to day things	Professions and responsibilities – daily routines	Meetings and appointments

My house – different types of houses, rooms and furniture	Holidays and vacations	Party and birthday celebrations
Permissions and requests	Eating and drinking	A day in office, professions and business communication
Directions and movements	Dress and weather	My house – rooms, furniture, appliances and types of houses
Daily routines and dreams	Health and body parts	Daily routines, jobs and telephonic conversations
Talking about weather		Dress and fashion
Meetings and appointments		Health and body parts
		Holidays and vacation
		Weather, cities and travel

Table 7: Textbook analysis of topics dealt with at A1 level

From Table 7 it can be seen that topics like greetings, introductions, directions, families, hobbies, communication in supermarkets, restaurants and public places are common to all the three books. These are also the topics that are considered very important by the learners and the group of students in the target situation (Table 5). Topics like 'Dress and fashion', 'Health and body parts', 'Holidays and vacations', 'Daily routines' etc. included in all the books are regarded as topics of only secondary interest. The design of the books is based on a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and there is hence no scope for translation exercises. Technical jargon and vocabulary are also included only in the intermediary – B1 / B2 level of CEFR – versions of these textbooks. It is also evident that the topics included in one book are not always included in another, a few topics covered by the books are of secondary interest to the learners and a few topics deemed to be of prime importance are not included in the text books. This suggests that none will ultimately meet the needs of learners as these can be determined from the results of the survey.

From the findings illustrated above through the tables, it can be deduced that most learners have a practical, functional reason for learning German at tertiary level and that they are aware of their 'wants' too. As the responses of the group in the target situation highlight, German might not be used for academic purposes like taking notes or writing reports, but German is vital for survival in Germany. Cultural competency is also highly desirable for effective communication and performance as echoed by research cited above into its significance in a work context. Given the importance students place on learning German for use in the workplace, understanding technical jargon and the ability to translate simple texts would also appear to be skills that need to be incorporated into the Basic German course.

8. Suggestions and Recommendations

It is far from the intention of this study to advocate a one-size-fits-all-approach as appropriate for a German course at tertiary level in Indian universities. However, if the responses of those students surveyed as part of this study can be considered broadly representative of those learning German at Indian universities more generally, then a number of suggestions and recommendations can be drawn from it. These also reflect the experiences of the authors as teachers of German in a higher education context in southern India.

It is clear that A1 level only is inadequate to meet the demands of learners but just increasing the levels offered will not meet the needs identified in the study either. What is called for is a greater range of topics in a Basic German course, with more focus on technical vocabulary, translation skills and intercultural competency. While being sensitive to the target culture, the course should also attempt to give the learners the impetus to express their own culture in the target language. Since any course could only cover a small range of appropriate technical vocabulary, what is also essential is to teach learning strategies like judiciously using online dictionaries and software for learning technical words and translating texts. All of this calls for a paradigm shift from a teacher-centric approach to a learner-centric one and from traditional lecture-based instruction to one which makes more use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Courses offered need to be more attuned to learners' needs and, as is apparent from the study, a general course on German should cover topics like:

- Basic day to day communications (greetings, introductions, hobbies, family, etc.)
- Communication in public places (airport / railway station etc.)
- Communication in banks, post offices, hospital etc.
- Communication in a supermarket / restaurant / hotel
- Travel, directions, places and buildings

Emphasis also needs to be placed on teaching aspects of German for Special Purposes as these are relevant to the students and also on learning about cross-cultural communication. These might form part of the basic German course or be an additional offering.

A more technically-oriented course could cover topics like:

- Translation of technical texts related to engineering
- Technical jargon and vocabulary
- Translation of simple texts

A course on cross-cultural communication could cover topics like:

- Festivals, customs and beliefs
- Holidays, vacations, weather and climatic conditions
- About Germany and German speaking countries
- German literature, poems, stories, films, etc.

These topics sensitize the learners to the German way of doing things and also to nonverbal communication. Understanding body language, simple greetings and expressions used in these situations can be a part of this course.

A few of the challenges that an Indian classroom poses to its teachers are the large number of students in class, fixed furniture, inadequate audio/visual facilities, a low number of contact hours and an exam-based assessment system. Hence teachers have few opportunities to innovate in class and cannot concentrate on listening and speaking skills, despite the fact that our study shows that this is what students would value. Only reading and writing skills are handled in class and teachers and students rely heavily on the text book, its completion and coverage of the syllabus for passing the examinations.

The reality of the Indian classroom, where an exam-based assessment system is still followed, means that the implementation of any other alternative pedagogical strategies in class relies heavily on the creativity or autonomy of the teacher handling the course. Although books like *Deutsch für Ingenieure* by Steinmetz and Dintera (2014) or *Kommunikation im Beruf* (Fearns; Lévy-Hillerich: 2009) or *Im Beruf Neu* (Müller; Schlüter: 2017) have a lot of

activities for teaching STEM subjects or business communication through German and seem to be a possible alternative that could be used to teach *Fachsprache* to the learners, these are designed for those who already have a A2 / B1 level of German. Nevertheless, a few activities can be implemented at the A1 level and the rest can be planned for other levels. However, this would call for a re-orientation on the part of German teachers towards using such books in their classroom, additional training to be provided for the teachers themselves to enable them to integrate German in the teaching of STEM subjects (*Fachsprache*) and to manage the classroom in a way that allows for more partner/group activities that involve listening to and speaking with the peer group.

An additional, context-specific problem derives from the fact that learners come from different states and linguistic backgrounds, something which increases their apprehension about pronunciation in German. This is not helped by the fact that there is little or no opportunity for the class to practise speaking and listening to new sounds. This augments the students' fear of making mistakes and being embarrassed in front of their peers. To overcome these challenges, more emphasis should be given to phonetics and to building the pronunciation skills of the learners. A lab based course that taps into the available E-resources to teach pronunciation and to listen to sounds could be tried. Teaching materials could incorporate more group activities and speaking exercises. Role plays, skits and other communicative exercises with the use of 'Redewendungen' will give learners the opportunity to learn the structures and also speak without the fear of making mistakes.

Further suggestions for course improvement deriving from the observations and experiences of the study's authors as teachers of German include comparing and contrasting German language structures with those of English or another known language. This not only taps into students' existing language repertoires but also inculcates linguistic awareness in the learners. The teacher need not know all the languages but can facilitate interaction among the students and help them identify similarities and contrasts thereby aiding their understanding of the target concept being handled.

Translation techniques, learning how to make judicious use of online translation software and dictionaries and practising how to correct machine translations should become part of classroom activities, thus enabling the learners to become autonomous and take self-

responsibility for their learning. This will also help them to use the plethora of information available online, to synthesize it as per their requirements and to engage with it in ways that are helpful to their learning.

As textbooks and workbooks do not have adequate practice material, ICT-based activities can be utilized. Any virtual learning environment or learning management system like Moodle can offer a good platform for teachers to develop differentiated learning materials for their learners and more practise exercises can be generated in the form of quizzes along with audio- and video-based exercises. This also helps develop 'anytime, anywhere' learning, extending the focus of learning from the confines of the classroom and from the teachers to the learners. Students can also be encouraged to try and use recommended mobile apps, web apps and Chatbots for augmenting self-learning.

To teach intercultural competency, project based learning can be tried. Students in small groups can be encouraged to do internet research on various cultural themes and they can present it by comparing and contrasting it with their own culture.

This study pertains to only one technical university situation and the motivation and needs of students in this context have only been quantitatively analysed. A qualitative analysis with the learners at all the technical universities where German is being taught in southern India, if undertaken, will help to give a broader and more holistic understanding of the learners' needs. The target group contacted in this study does not provide a conclusive sample of learners and the requirements for German in Indian industries is not investigated here. This provides the scope for furthering the study on a large scale and extending it to encompass all the stakeholders of tertiary education – learners, teachers, students in the target situation and stakeholders in business and industry in India who have a need for German speakers.

9. Conclusion

The post-globalization era has created a new generation of learners who know specifically why they are learning a foreign language. Hence it is time to rethink the teaching and learning process as it relates to foreign languages in a fast developing country like India. As reflected by the study analysed here, if language varies from one situation of use to another, then the linguistic features of a specific situation need to be determined and these requirements

incorporated in the design of a course and its syllabus. Within the context of a southern Indian technical university, the provision to A1 learners of a general course and more specific courses on translation and intercultural studies are suggested by the findings of the study. The technical universities do face the challenge of educating engineers to be strong in the technical aspects of their field but also to have adequate competencies in foreign languages and their related intercultural fields. It is high time to rethink the place and value of foreign language instruction in the Indian higher education context and redesign the courses accordingly, thereby producing responsible citizens who can think globally and act locally. Specifically-designed courses that bring in a range of topics and activities to learn German which are in line with learners' needs will make learning more effective and also increase the students' motivation to learn languages.

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Keywords

German as a foreign language, needs analysis, eclectic approach, contextual curriculum development, post globalization, teaching and learning of foreign languages