

**TEACHING OF GENERAL ENGLISH IN THE COLLEGES AFFILIATED
WITH SATAVAHANA UNIVERSITY, KARIMNAGAR, TELANGANA
STATE: A MINUTE APPRAISAL**

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Abstract

Teaching and learning English language is not an easy task. It requires policy, tact and competence from the side of teachers and positive attitude, deep desire to learn on the part of the students should be there otherwise the teaching and learning will be limited up to issuing and acquiring certificates. Since English is a foreign language, the students always feel that it is not their language. Learning English in India is necessary for the students to get good jobs and it keeps them on a high position.

Keywords: Teaching and learning English, degree students, problems, syllabi

English is an international and official language which is commonly used in seminars and conferences to exchange information. A number of books in various subjects such as law, medicine, and technology are available in English. Mackay (2002: 17) rightly says that “Over 80 percent international organizations in the field of international relations make official use of English” so it is highly essential for undergraduate students to learn English because the students need to attend interviews to get job where they are requested to communicate in English. It was a common experience of English lecturers that their students would have got fail marks in General English paper in the past years but now it is the time that most of the students get pass marks even though they won't learn English. Despite of studying English from their childhood days, students can't use English even for a few minutes because Indian education system prefers certificates rather than skills of the students. It brings so many hurdles for the English lecturers as students give importance to getting credentials and acquiring pass marks in English subject. The other problem is that students should have learnt some things in their school education and come to under-graduation level courses to improve their skills but unfortunately they don't even basic grammar of target language. In the undergraduate colleges of Karimnagar district, language

teaching is an explaining activity. There is no focus on language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The English lecturers argue that the prescribed textbooks do not provide learning objectives and the examination pattern is too on the wrong track which encourages 'the teachers not to teach and learners not to learn.' The objectives of teaching General English are kept aside and shown on the papers. In reality, no English lecturers bother about all these. Lack of clear cut objectives, excellent teaching and learning of target language remains a failure show.

Objectives of the Paper:

The paper tries to highlight momentarily some of the major issues related with the teaching of English in the colleges affiliated with Satavahana University, Karimangar, Telangana State. It aims to examine critically the following.

1. The syllabi of General English.
2. Methods used for teaching various skills in the classrooms
3. Testing and evaluation of the different skills of language.

Objectives of Teaching English:

1. Language skills are very important and these are must be focused with equal importance.
2. Speaking and writing are neglected so in teaching these also should be considered.
3. Make the students able to read and write.
4. Focused on language development and literary development.

Teaching the Language Skills:

- 1. Teaching of Listening Skill:** Undergraduate syllabus of Satavahana University has sixteen chapters in the first year book *English for Fluency* and fourteen chapters in the second year book *English for Employability*. English lecturers generally read the texts from these books and explain in their local language which is Telugu. There are hardly English medium courses in this university. The students too want to listen to their lecturers but they don't listen to English news or any other's voice in English.
- 2. Teaching of Speaking Skill:** The English lecturers must make the students communicate in English through the prescribed textbooks. As the students come from rural and Telugu medium background, they are unable to focus on language skills. Since some of the English lecturers are exhausted to teach spoken English for their students where they can't find any difference among them and also the textbooks don't provide language skills, the lecturers stop to improve the speaking skills of the students and start to explain from the textbooks whatever it is.
- 3. Teaching of Reading Skills:** The prescribed textbooks *English for Fluency* and *English for Employability* have wonderful lessons for the students. Most of the students who haven't practiced reading earlier neglect reading and attempt to listen more times. Only some of the students like to read as they have reading habit. There are scarcely students who habituated to read lessons from the textbooks. In this way teaching reading becomes read the content from the given materials for the English lecturers is found in the colleges.

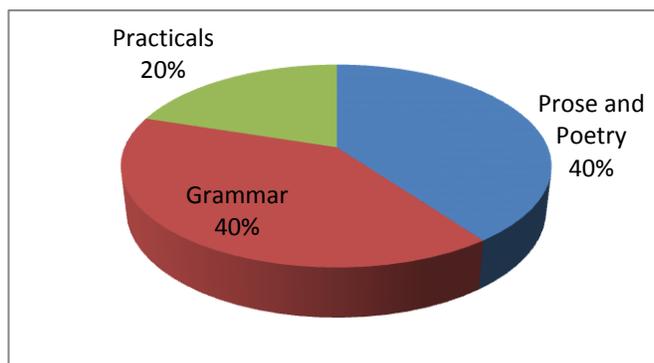
- 4. Teaching of Writing Skills:** Teaching and learning of writing is completely neglected as it is super fast generation but the students are asked to write answers in the examination. They are also expected to write an essay, a paragraph, a resume and a proverb. The English fraternity and students must look at improving writing skills. Indeed, the local students are good at grammar and making sentence structures but they won't focus on their speaking skills. Grace Winkler (2008: 16) rightly says that 'Native speakers of any language are capable of making grammatical judgments about their language even if they have never had a linguistic class.'

Teaching of English at Undergraduate Level of Satavahana University, Karimnagar:

Teaching of English in the colleges affiliated with Satavahana University, Karimnagar, Telangana State takes a lot of things into contemplation some needs of the students.

General English is taught to the students of BA, B.Com, BBM, B.Sc, and B.Zc classes for their first and second years as a compulsory subject. There is elective English and this General English is a common core paper for all. The objectives are not clear in the syllabi but it is assumed that it aims to get better proficiency of the students in English language. There is only one prescribed textbook. Prose, poetry and grammar are included in the book. 40 % are allotted to prose and poetry and the rest of the forty percentages marks allotted to grammar. 20 % marks are categorized for practical English. In that five marks are given for testing oral communication and fifteen marks are assigned for writing record and attendance of the students. (see graph 1)

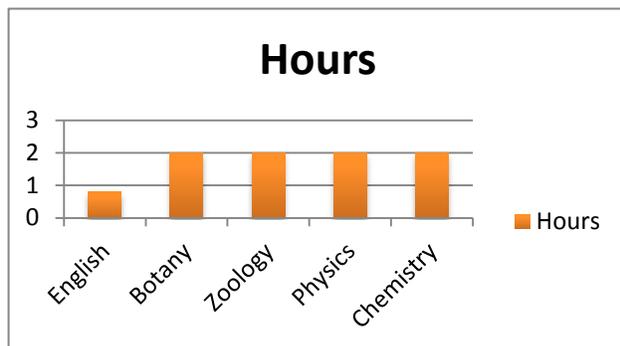
Graph 1: Classification of the syllabus of undergraduate level courses in Satavahana University, Karimnagar



When one looks at the graph, it shows that it has been given equal importance to all but practical language skills are not properly incorporated in the textbooks. Speaking skills are not focused in a realistic order but highlighted the objectives of the course book. The time allotted for English class is also politicized. One knows that learning English is a skill. For science subjects such as Botany, Chemistry and Physics, two hours and three hours are allotted in a practical classroom. English language classrooms where arts and science students together gather are taught foreign language skills. Fifty minutes are allotted for English practical. Why this inequality among science subjects and language subjects? (see graph 2) How can an English lecturer teach

language skills within stipulated time? Is an English practical not a practical class? The policy makers should think when they frame the time schedule.

Graph 2: Classification of the Time table of English practical of undergraduate level courses in Satavahana University, Karimnagar



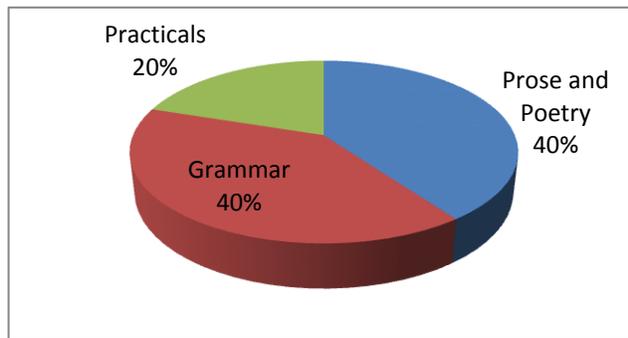
Problem Areas:

The non-literary syllabus, the existing examination pattern, old and conventional teaching methods by English lecturers and the students’ habit of rote learning resulted the poor standards of English in the colleges of Satavahana University. Some of the problem areas are found and given here:

1. English lecturers teach more and students’ participation is very less.
2. Non-literary items are more in number in the syllabi which does not create interest among the students.
3. Readymade material is supplied to the students so that learning process is stopped in the classrooms.
4. Practical examinations are on papers only whereas practically it is not functioned well because there will be an external examiner and the internal examiner who teaches English has to conduct the exam. In most of the cases, practical examinations are conducted as there is no amount for English lecturers for doing all these and there is no much scope to test students’ communication skills. (see graph 3)
5. English is treated as a content subject like Commerce and Chemistry but it is a skill based subject. As a result students try to understand the themes of prose and poetry chapters from their textbooks but they won’t focus on language skills.
6. Once upon a time, there were overcrowded English classrooms but it was reduced in the present days. Examination question papers are not testing the students’ skills. Writing skills are tested and rest of the skills is neglected.
7. The entrance behavior of the students at the graduation level is not always same because English medium background students’ regional medium background students sit together in the classroom. Therefore there is an extensive difference in the entrance behavior of the students from different backgrounds.

- English lecturers who have worked as junior college lecturers are promoted as undergraduate level college lecturers have the same methods which they used for junior students and they follow the old methods for undergraduate level students also. In this way the promotion channel of the English lecturers disturb the classroom.

Graph 3: Classification of the English practical syllabus of undergraduate level courses in Satavahana University



Suggestions and Recommendations:

- All the four skills of a language should be focused in the planning of curriculum, methodology of teaching and testing.
- Listening tests and speaking tests are allotted five marks each. These are not sufficient as most of the students are very weak in English. These two skills are very important and should be recommended practically and given more marks rather than allotting more marks for literature.
- Viva-voce must be incorporated with minimum 50 marks so that it makes the students practice even for viva. The evaluation should be done by external examiner.
- The syllabi must be revised with standard literature and interesting chapters.
- Communicative tasks such as role play, group discussions and debate should be incorporated in the syllabi. The students should be asked to present their views on different topics of ten minutes.
- It is further recommended that there should be two papers for General English subject. 100 marks will be allotted for literature and grammar and 50 marks must be given for English language lab which should be practical oriented.

To conclude, the problems of teaching and learning English can't be changed in a day but the board of studies and head of the department of English of Satavahana University have to rethink regarding the teaching process in General English subject. There is no doubt English lecturers are good but their knowledge is also poor in the target language. The English lecturers should know the teaching methods and techniques for a successful classroom. They must evaluate students learning. All know that learning a language is a skill; English should not be treated as an

optional subject. Seminars and conferences must be conducted in the department. No single private undergraduate college has been conducted seminars in English so far. Students should be encouraged to communicate even in student seminar. UGC rules and regulations are not followed by the private degree colleges in the case of ELF trainings and research oriented things. Thus teaching of English is always depending on many factors and it can't be controlled by teachers only.

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