

## **Teaching General English at Undergraduate Level Students in Satavahana University: A Critical Evaluation**

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### **Abstract:**

English is one of the important languages of world languages. Since it is an international language, there has been an explosion of the demand for English in academic and nonacademic sectors, so all the board of studies of the Universities, incorporates English syllabi for Undergraduate level also. In this paper an effort has been made to focus on the teaching of General English to the Undergraduate level students at Satavahana University, Karimnagar.

**Keywords:** English, UG level, syllabus, Degree Colleges

English has occupied as a global language. In pre-independent India, there was not this much demand for learning English, but later on it has been poised for its new role of empowering learners with a great deal desirable communicative and communal functions in a globalised world. English was introduced in the curriculum and other sectors also. Since there were many students who had come from rural and regional medium background, English teachers had started to use the Grammar Translation Method. This method is very successful when we teach high school students, whereas teaching General English at Undergraduate level students with the same method is not successful because the degree students need communication skills so communicative language teaching contributes a good deal in making the learners competent for their adjustment and survival in the rapidly changing world. In this paper an attempt has been made as a focal point on the teaching of General English to the Undergraduate level students at Satavahana University, Karimnagar.

**Scope of the Present Research:**

The paper takes the coverage of a few Undergraduate colleges located in the rural and semi-urban areas of Satavahana University, Karimnagar and Telangana State. A genuine effort has been made on the selection of the colleges geographically to have a clear idea about the existing teaching-learning situation of General English language in those colleges. General English course is the common course for all the groups such as BA, BCom, BBM, BSc and B.Zc.

**Area of Data Collection:**

Satavahana University is located in Karimnagar district, Telangana State. The University has sixteen government degree colleges and 86 private colleges throughout Karimnagar district. There are no unaided colleges under the University. The colleges fall under two types on the basis of physical facilities available and on the basis of geographical location.

1. Semi-Urban College
2. Rural College

The Semi-Urban colleges of the district under this study comprise of five colleges:

1. SRR Government Degree College, Tilak Road, Karimnagar

2. Government Degree College for Women, Karimnagar
3. Nalanda Degree College, Jagtial
4. Government Degree College, Peddapally
5. Sri Vaagdevi Degree College, Huzurabad

All the above colleges provide Arts, Science and Commerce courses.

The Rural colleges of the district under this study comprise of five colleges:

1. Sri Chaitanya Degree College, Darmipuri
2. Government Degree College, Jammikunta
3. Gnanodaya Degree College, Metpally
4. Gandhi Memorial Degree College, Godavarikhani
5. Vikas Degree College, Sircilla

All the above colleges provide Arts, Science and Commerce courses.

### **Methodology:**

There are ten colleges that are selected for this study. The principals of these colleges provided some valuable information with regards to the student strength, location and management, physical facilities, instructional facilities, procedure of evaluation, library facility and English language labs.

### **Background of the Students:**

Most of the students from Satavahana University, Karimnagar district are from Telugu and Hindu communities so they always use two languages in their communication. Students usually use Telugu from their childhood days. Telugu is the native tongue. As the students come from Telugu background, they like to employ it in their spoken language. There is no exemption even in the case of Undergraduate level students. Some of the English lecturers too, use Telugu in their classrooms so that it motivates to grow love and affection on the local language. More than seventy percentages of the families depend on agriculture and most of them are illiterates. They speak in Telugu with their children in their houses. They won't use English much. They hardly

use English in a day, although they know many meanings and words in English. Patnaik says that “Indians would tend to use English only in a very few situations in day-to-day life. This must be reflected in the programme of English language teaching in this country” (29) Different factors such as illiteracy, lack of awareness and poor economic condition play an important role in the possession of new language. Since most of the students who are studying in government degree colleges such as SRR Government Degree College, Tilak Road, Karimnagar, Government Degree College for Women, Karimnagar, Government Degree College, Peddapally, and Government Degree College, Jammikunta are working in fields as day wise labour besides getting an education. Their concentration is always on the survival rather than Undergraduate course. Some of the private Degree colleges are being established these days. The students who are studying in these colleges, also does not communicate in English because more than eighty percentages of the students are from Telugu background. Rural students have a good command of subjects, but they are very weak in English communication skills, whereas the background of the students in the semi-urban parts is somewhat better because their parents are literate and know the needs of English language learning.

### **Teaching General English at the Selected UG Colleges under Satavahana University:**

Undergraduate level students are from an economically poor family background. They generally use a single notebook for all the subjects. They do not buy the prescribed text books *English for Fluency* for the first year and *English for Employability* for the second year of Undergraduate course under the Satavahana University, Karimnagar, Telangana State. Some of the students buy optional textbooks such as Physics, Chemistry and Commerce. Nobody buys English textbooks because the marks they secure in General English are not counted at the end of the examinations. Though English lecturers insist them to buy the books, they don't buy and bring it. The lecturers take the responsibility to read the text and teach it. English lecturer is meant to translate the stories in Telugu. He is treated as a guide to give the meanings and stories from the examination point of view. He is ordered to finish the syllabus within the stipulated time, so that he always rushes to complete it. He is unable to give necessary communicative activities to the students. He is commanded to teach English like a theory subject, not a practical subject. It is not good to criticize the English lecturers of Degree colleges because they are ordered to teach text book

only, not the language skills and so the students are not made to communicate in English. Speaking skills and pronunciation are completely neglected by the course writers. As most of the students attend the class for passing their time, they don't improve the skills and even in those few classes they are irregular.

**Survey of the Selected UG Colleges:**

The selected ten college classrooms are observed while English is being taught. Teaching learning process of General English in all the ten UG Colleges is observed. English lecturers focus on functional English. Grammar Translation Method is generally used in all the colleges. Communicative English Approach is never used by any English lecturer in the classrooms because the syllabus does not support and the examination pattern does not insist them to use it. For collecting the required data for the study, there are two types of questionnaires are prepared for students and English lecturers. The selected ten colleges were located in the northern, eastern, western and southern part of the district. The details of the colleges visited as their institutional names, strength of the students in the General English classrooms and their geographical locations are all tabulated below.

Sl. No	Name of the College	Streams	Total Number of the Students Selected for Study	Location
1	SRR Government Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	50	Karimnagar
2	Government Degree College for Women	Arts, Science & Commerce	60	Karimnagar
3	Nalanda Degree College	Arts, Science	35	Jagtial

		& Commerce		
4	Government Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	45	Peddapally
5	Sri Vaagdevi Degree College	Arts, Science, Commerce & BBM	30	Huzurabad
6	Sri Chaitanya Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	40	Darmpuri
7	Government Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	50	Jammikunta
8	Gnanodaya Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	40	Metpally
9	Gandhi Memorial Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	30	Godavarikhani
10	Vikas Degree College	Arts, Science & Commerce	30	Sircilla

**General English Syllabi:** It is a fake drama to introduce all the unnecessary and very simple topics to the Undergraduate level students. Most of the students got more than ninety percentages marks in English in their intermediate level. The Telugu speakers are good at English grammar but they do not have good communication skills in English. Students are identified those are unable to write their names in English with correct spellings. They might have a grand phobia in their minds that English is one of the toughest languages. Although they are motivated and inspired to communicate in English, they won't come out because of nervous and shy in front of their classmates. In this scenario, General English should help them to improve their speaking skills at Undergraduate level because they do nothing if they know English grammar only. Unfortunately the syllabus of General English is time passing activity. All the four hundred students from the above colleges strongly support that the present General English syllabus for

the first and second year of Satavahana University students at Undergraduate level is a failure show as it gives small and simple narrative news papers columns.

**Students' Questionnaire Survey:** The quantitative data was collected from the students' questionnaire. The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the gaps in the present General English syllabus and knowledge of the Undergraduate level students.
- To understand the learners communicative needs.
- It tests whether the English classes at UG level are fulfilling the target needs of the learners.

The questionnaire contained ten questions on the multiple learning experiences of the students in class. The students were of both sexes except Government Degree College for Women, Jagtial. All the students belonged to the age group between seventeen and twenty or twenty one year. The responses are given below in numbers that are in accordance with the number of questions in the questionnaire provided.

1. Out of 400 students, 310 students never speak in English. 54 students' use English sometimes but they say that they too do not know when they speak in English. The rest of the students are good at communicating in English.
2. More than ninety two percentage of the students reported that they do not attend English classes regularly for some factors: marks in General English they get are not calculated at the end, poor economic conditions and lack of motivation.
3. Students like to prepare for the examination rather than attending the classes. 258 students told that they did not enjoy the class and bought readymade notes and guides. 361 students follow the notes entitled 'Voice.'
4. Out of 400 respondents, 353 students informed that they have been learning English in classroom in high school. The rest of the students told that they learn English neither in their high school education nor in the Undergraduate level.
5. Majority are not interested to use English outside of class room. Ten percentages of the students try to speak English outside of the classroom.

6. All the students blame that they are unable to communicate in English although English lecturers teach well.
7. Out of total students, 384 students did not buy the General English prescribed text books— *English for Fluency* and *English for Employability*. Only sixteen students bought the text books, from these, there are four students completely read the book.
8. The hundred percentages of the students strongly argue that it is enough to get pass marks in English.
9. All consider that English is their second language.
10. Some argue that marks should be allotted for oral communication.

**Survey on Questionnaire for Teachers:** Questionnaire for teachers has eight questions. The data collected are as follows:

1. More than 78 percentages of the English lecturers told that syllabus does not provide the opportunity to the learners and teaching faculty to use English language.
2. The entire teaching faculty replied that there is no co-relation between the General English syllabus and the examination pattern of Undergraduate level courses.
3. Large classes in Indian context are one of the powerful problems for English faculty.
4. All accepted that English must be treated as a skill, not a subject.
5. Most of the students at Satavahana University are from Telugu medium background. They write all the examinations in Telugu except English so the medium has been also pointed as a problem.
6. In spite of encouraging the students to read the text books, the students memorize the notes and copy them down in the examinations.
7. Eighty one percentages of the teaching faculty wants to use mother tongue in English classrooms but the rest of the faculty does not accept.
8. English lecturers who are teaching in rural areas neglect pronunciation.

### **Discussion of Results:**

Undergraduate level students should have good communication skills in English. They hardly feel the need to acquire proficiency. Most of them do not focus on learning English along with the socio-cultural problems in neighboring Indian political pretending environment. Though they

are motivated, they do not put effort to learn English. Conventional and old teaching methods create boredom in the English classrooms. Teaching faculty as well as students, who is the responsible for the present mute show in English, generally blame the syllabus designers and examination system. In spite of true somewhat, it is true that both neglect communicative English with the help of General English as it does not fulfill the given objective in the text book.

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