CHAPTER - III

Present Scenario in Kashmir: An Analysis of the Data Collected
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In spite of teaching English to our students for quite sometime now (since independence) we still find that they lack the ability both to communicate and to express their ideas in English. The reasons seem to be manifold. Firstly and primarily, it is the faulty syllabus and the faulty classroom procedures used; secondly, it is the wrong choice of the materials used, and, thirdly, the teachers have miserably failed to respond to the changing circumstances in our country and to the recent development in the field of language teaching. The Boards of Studies in most of our universities have totally refused to understand the needs of the second language learner\(^1\). We have not clearly formulated the realistic objectives of teaching English. Even if we have spelt the aims we have not clearly thought of evaluating the realization of these aims. Hence the appalling standards of English.

English language teaching involves devising teaching methods, designing of syllabuses, preparing teaching materials and other pedagogic factors that lie at the heart of a teaching programme. I shall discuss each of these components in detail with respect to our specific position in Kashmir.

Let us take the first factor i.e., the teaching method into consideration. At present we seem to be using an eclectic method taking some components from

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1. This is a very crucial point which has been altogether ignored by our educational policy.
the Grammar - Translation Method and a few from the Direct Method. Like the Grammar-Translation Method we focus on the reading and writing skills and pay little or no systematic attention to speaking and listening. Grammar is taught deductively, that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, and accuracy is emphasized and errors are corrected at once. Translation is used in the classroom as a technique to make the difficult words understood but is not used as a method. It is used as a skill and forms a component of grammar; but since translation is not used as a mode in teaching language skills or in teaching grammar so we cannot be said to be using the Grammar-Translation Method altogether but since translation is used as a technique we cannot be said to conform to the Direct Method either.

    Our present method has not helped our students to develop their language skills. Speaking and writing suffer most. Reading and listening though developed to a certain extent are not satisfactory. The reason for this is quite obvious. We are ignoring the speaking skill altogether. “To speak any language”, as Dr. Ballard observes, “whether native or foreign entirely by rule is quite impossible”.2 Unless we actually make our students speak in the class and provide them with rich language input nothing positive is going to take place. E.C. Kittson supports this view by saying that “learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning to read it and to write it .... By using the language as speech the pupil will cover something like twenty times as much ground in a given time as he would by doing written exercises .... The acquiring of a language is the acquiring of the art, the art of expressing oneself in that language; this art like every other art must be acquired by practice, that is by using the language.

from the practical point of view of economy of time and effort is as speech, and it is also theoretically the most natural; it follows therefore, that a language should be learnt by speaking it\textsuperscript{3}.

Our lecture method does not give the student any chance of speaking his mind. Although the teacher desperately wants the students to respond but he/she is limited by the constraints of lengthy syllabus, limited time and unmanageable classroll as a result teaching has become what Verma remarks

an unidirectional process of pumping bits and pieces of unrelated and undigested goblets of knowledge into empty sacks\textsuperscript{4}.

Verma adds:

It (teaching) is a bidirectional interactional process. Learners are not just passive recipients of socially accepted language patterns. They play an active part in the teaching-learning process. They actively strain, filter and reorganise what they are exposed to.... The main objective at every level of teaching should be to help learners learn how to draw out their latent creativity\textsuperscript{5}.

Our present method lays great stress on the deductive use of grammar. The fault, however, as Catford remarks is not that “it (the Grammar-Translation Method) uses grammar and translation but that it uses them badly\textsuperscript{6}. Menon\textsuperscript{7} is

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Quoted in Menon and Patel. *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language*. p. 75.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} Menon & Patel. *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language*. p 89.
\end{itemize}
of the view that grammar is an essential part of the whole English course but it should not be regarded as a separate subject implying that it should be taught inductively as it comes in the texts prescribed for general English.

Presently we have a separate book for teaching English grammar and though it is labelled “communicative skills”, speaking and listening skills are altogether ignored. The grammar exercises are contest-bound and do not help our students to move from the level of context-governed performance to that of context-free competence. As Verma rightly believes that “it is not enough to have our pupils perform well in doing simple context-bound exercises. They must be helped to use the language in non-classroom situations communicating with a variety of speakers in a variety of contexts”8. Sah feels that the inability of our students to communicate in real life situations “leads to a situation in which one of the important purposes of retaining English in India viz to serve as a lingua franca among educated people is not realized in full”9.

Another crucial aspect is the use of translation in teaching. Since the textbooks framed for our degree classes are much beyond their comprehension (as far as language and content are concerned) we (teachers) have to resort to the use of the mother tongue or the second language in order to get the meaning across. The whole classroom activity seems to be a mere paraphrasing of difficult words and getting the meaning (of the text) across to the students. The use of the mother tongue is useful but too much use of it defeats the very purpose of teaching English. Moreover, it minimizes the exposure to the language which is vital for providing the necessary comprehensible input to our students. Dr. Jean Forrester allows the use of the mother-tongue in two

situations – first “when there is no English equivalent known to the pupils since it is useless to explain a difficult word by giving a more difficult English equivalent. Second when the use will save time”\textsuperscript{10}. Menon and Patel are of the view that the teacher should avoid any possibility of giving his pupils a feeling of hopelessness, defeat and discouragement.

If translation helps he should use it; if it is likely to lead to mistakes, he should avoid it. If translation has to be used the teacher should use it and quickly get back into English\textsuperscript{11}.

Our present situation makes extensive use of translation in order to make the texts comprehensible. It however, has a negative impact as well. Too much translation deprives our students of a language rich environment which is so vital for language acquisition. It impoverishes them by reducing their language input. Mary Jane in her article “Linguistic science and its classroom reflections” talks of “uniqueness of each language (which) makes most word-for-word translation invalid and suggest that translation is not a good device ....\textsuperscript{12} I personally feel that in our present situation where the proficiency of our students is at variance with the degree of complexity of our prescribed texts, the teacher is hard pressed to use translation the avoidance of which would lead to a total lack of comprehension on the part of the learner. In our situation, therefore, translation is unavoidable. The best thing to do would be to use it and quickly get back into English. In order to avoid too much use of translation, I would suggest textbooks which are only slightly above their comprehension.

\textsuperscript{10} Quoted in Menon & Patel. \textit{The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language}. p 88.

\textsuperscript{11} Menon & Patel. p 91.

Taking the second major factor (in English language Teaching - i.e the syllabus into consideration, we find a wide gap between what should be and what actually is. Let us go into the details and see where we have gone wrong. Corder believes that an ideal syllabus should help the teacher to understand:

- What he is expected to teach and in what order.
- What educational purpose is his teaching to serve.
- What teaching methods are known to achieve these purposes.
- What standards of achievement is he expected to aim at.
- How will he receive the feedback?
- What can be usefully told about the competence interests and attitudes of the students he is to teach.

These questions imply that the teacher looks for a thorough guidance in the syllabus regarding (1) aims and objectives (2) content (3) methods (4) evaluation and (5) learner characteristics. In other words the syllabus should contain all the information that the teacher needs to implement and execute the teaching programme that has been handed down to him by the authorities. He may, however, modify or reformulate the aims in accordance with his classroom situation, students' abilities and the time allotted to him.

Every syllabus should specify the aims and objectives. Jain has rightly said that “it is the objectives that determine the method”14. Koul talks of the aims and objectives of teaching English at the primary, middle and higher level at school. He talks of developing the four basic language skills laying more emphasis on listening and speaking at the primary level. “The teacher must

supervise and correct pronunciation including stress and intonation." At level II the emphasis on spoken English should continue. There must be emphasis on the practical use of the language rather than a discussion of it. "The students should be encouraged to adapt text-conversations to real situations as far as possible and try to personalise them. At level III the main aim should be to develop oral competence in speaking English with fluency and accuracy in day to day actual situation.

The framing of aims and objectives "is influenced by two major considerations (1) needs (2) resources available. Needs will refer to the social and individual needs; the resources available will refer to the (a) teachers available and their linguistic competence (b) time available within the curriculum (c) and the equipment the teacher will need to teach the language." The syllabus as a guide will then justify those aims in terms of social and educational contexts. It will justify why it aims to develop the skills it specifies. The syllabus should contain information about what kind of teaching should go in the classroom. It should make provision for the teacher to plan the classroom teaching in such a way that the teaching items receive adequate attention in the class. The syllabus will also identify the skills that would be required. It will also mention the priorities that the teacher would give to these skills. Thus we see that the syllabus is a complete comprehensive guide both to the teacher and the students. For the teacher it contains

17. If Koul’s aims and objectives are followed many problems facing us at the college level will be solved.
everything that he needs to organise his classroom teaching, choose his methods and plan the course for the year. For the students it is the goal and the end-product. The syllabus should be an agreed framework of a programme between the teacher and his pupils. While framing the syllabus the teacher should be taken into consideration. He/she in turn will take the students' interests and needs into consideration since he/she is the best judge of what will suit his/her students. The teacher, the head of the institution, the university authorities, the board of education, the curriculum specialist, the curriculum advisor, all should jointly frame the syllabus in a comprehensive integrated and well co-ordinated way. Koul is of the opinion that "it would be ideal to entrust the test of the preparation of a language curriculum to a central professional agency whose function is mandatory and not just advisory".

Looking at our present syllabuses we find that they are inadequate as well as disoriented. Our present syllabuses make learners learn everything without knowing or feeling it from their life situations' point of view. The students find the life situations and the course content quite unrelated. Our unrealistic syllabuses are examination-oriented. They are finished and learned for the examinations. Both the students and the teachers feel that passing of the examination is the only aim of learning the language. An examination based syllabus is bound to produce students with low proficiency and the materials selected for the purpose also conform to this scheme. Hutchinson and Waters have labelled five kinds of syllabuses - evaluation syllabus, organisational syllabus, material syllabus, classroom syllabus and learner syllabus. Our

sylabuses at present are a mixture of several types of syllabuses. They are evaluation syllabuses i.e., a kind of syllabus handed down by ministries and states what the successful learner will know by the end of the course. In effect it puts on record the basis on which success or failure will be evaluated as well as listing what should be learnt. Our syllabuses also state the order in which it is to be learnt. They are also, therefore, organisational syllabuses. The organisational syllabus bases content on the nature of language and of learning e.g., easier things to be learnt first. These two syllabuses are regarded as pure syllabuses since they are not listed. They are external since the learner does not participate in their creation in any way.21 Our present syllabuses can also be labelled as grammatical since the syllabus content is selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity. Let me explain these points from the situation in the Kashmir region. The general English syllabus presented for B.A. Part I of Three Year Degree Course (in operation since 1999) has the following format:

**Paper A**

*Essays and stories*

**Text**

- Twentieth Century English Prose (OUP)
- Selected Modern Stories ed K.G. Seshadir (Macmillan)
- Earnest Hemingway: The Old Man and the Sea

**Examination pattern:**

The question paper will consist of five questions:

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21. Such syllabuses are concerned with the product rather than the process of learning. There is now a growing recognition that specification of the end products must also be accompanied by specifications of methodology.
Q.No. 1. Four passages for explanation with reference to the context from Twentieth Century English Prose. Out of these the students will be required to attempt two. However, no passages will be set from the following: “The Night the Ghost Got In”, “Bores”, “The First Five Minutes” and “Mohan the Man - Eater”.

Q.No. 2. One essay type question with an alternative from text 1. (15 marks)

Q.No. 3. One essay type question with an alternative from text 2. (15 marks)

Q.No. 4. One essay type question with an alternative from text 3. (15 marks)

Q.No. 5. One essay type question from text 2 with an alternative from text 3. (15 marks)

Paper B

Communication skills

1. Paragraph writing

2. Informal letter writing

3. Tenses

4. a) Direct and indirect speech
   
   (b) The articles

5. Translation of a Kashmiri/Urdu/Hindu/Punjabi passage into English.

The paper will consist of five questions:

Q.No.1. A paragraph to be developed from any one of the five given topic sentences. (20 marks)
Q.No.2. a) One question relating to the use of verbs.

b) One question relating to the tenses (5+5 marks)

Q.No.3. An informal letter with an alternative. (15 marks)

Q.No.4. a) A short passage relating to the change of narration.

b) A short passage with gaps to be filled in with the articles. (10+5 marks)

Q.No.5. Translation of a non-idiomatic Hindi/Urdu/Kashmiri/Punjabi passage into English. (15 marks)

Suggested Books:

1. Mohammad Aslam: *Communication Skills* - 1 Srinagar KBD


It is evident that the syllabus only states the marks allocated to prescribed texts and the texts that are prescribed for detailed and non-detailed study. The rest is left to the teacher to decide.

The syllabus is ambiguous and inadequate in every respect. It does not say what skills the teacher should develop in students; what activities should be adopted to teach the syllabus; how much time should be spent on each topic; how the teacher should go about teaching the four skills; which skills should be given more emphasis, etc. In fact the syllabus doesn’t even touch these aspects. Everything is left to the teacher to decide on his own whether it matches with the planners’ objectives or not.
The syllabus for B.A Part I of the Three Year Degree Course prescribes a textbook for paper A which contains essays of various kinds - sports, description, education etc. Textbooks of these sorts do not in any way improve the language skills of the learner. The students are like mute spectators watching the teacher lecture in front of them. Comprehensive questions when asked reveal that the majority of the students are not grasping the idea that is being taught. The condition seems at times hopeless. There is no mention in the syllabus as to which method of teaching has to be employed with the result that the textbook lends itself to varied interpretation and methods. Further, the syllabus fails to contain guidelines for the students (or the teacher) as to how to use the book. The information contained in the syllabus could help the paper setter but not the student or the teacher. An ideal situation would have been to provide an appropriate and suitable guide - in the form of a teachers' book for the teacher and the student.

The syllabus is content-oriented rather than skill-oriented. As Sah rightly believes that "in our schools and colleges we teach English as a content subject and not a language subject"²². Sah believes that it would be advisable to set out the language syllabus (for schools and colleges) in greater detail in terms of skills and abilities expected of the pupils at every level and to specify the ways teachers are expected to go about realizing this syllabus apart from the use of the textbooks, dependence on which should be minimized as much as possible. Examples of detailed specification for English are: ability to greet in English, ask questions about the addressee's health and welfare, ask questions about the time and places of actions and events seek and give directions for places, make inquiries about persons, arrangements etc. A syllabus set out in

this way will provide little scope for confusion with the textbook and will lead
the teacher to rely mainly upon her own resources. Instead, our syllabus is
content-based. Shakespeare, Keats, Milton and other literary figures find a place
in the course (in the general English course of II nd year degree class) though
the student fails to make the ‘subject-verb’ distinction. No attention is given to
the central purpose of General English – developing the language skills.
Banerji has rightly remarked:

The GE syllabus at present seems to fulfill merely an administrative
requirement. It is there because it has to be. Appalling irrelevance
and lack of purpose characterize it and this is a sad commentary on
the educational planning of a country which has made significant
progress in many other fields of knowledge and activity²³.

Our students who are supposed to read poetry (in II nd Year Degree
Course) can hardly write a grammatically correct sentence or can hardly
express themselves in English. It would be better if we taught them language
skills especially the speaking skill rather than teaching them poetry. Lado
rightly believes that “conversational dialogues are preferable to poetry or
formal prose because conversation shows a greater range of the basic
construction of the language in matter-of-fact context”²⁴. Lado further states
that “one cannot jump from the structure of a language into its literature
without passing through the cultural content of the language. Careful selection
of contextual areas for the dialogue and reading material permits full use of the
language in limited areas early in the course. Pictures, slides or a film may help
significantly to provide cultural content for observations by the students”²⁵.

²⁵. Lado. P 151.
One major drawback in our syllabus is that it ignores the learner altogether. The learner should form an essential component of the teaching process because without his active participation any teaching programme is bound to produce least results. Noss believes that:

... for an individual to learn a new language, whether that individual is learning his first language or an adult learning his fourteenth, three elements must be presented in a positive degree: aptitude, motivation and opportunity\textsuperscript{26}.

Our existing system takes none of these crucial elements into account. Neither does our system see the aptitude of our learners, nor do we concern ourselves about whether they are ready to learn, nor do we provide them with opportunities to use the language in such a way as will be relevant to them in their everyday life.

Moreover our syllabuses overlook the great heterogeneity in the levels of the achievement of students. Students from different educational backgrounds with varying levels of achievement are all grouped together. The proficiency level of our students varies greatly from student to student. This is mainly due to the varied level of English our students are exposed to in their schools. The exposure they get varies from 2 years to 15 years depending upon the type of school they have attended. Added to this varied exposure to English at the school level is the varied socio-economic background of our pupils. We have now been getting more and more students from the lower strata of society and from rural areas. They are first generation students with poor learning environments. There is none at home competent enough to guide them in their studies and they do not have the resources to hire one. They also lack modern

technological means such as TV, VCR, computers etc., which positively affect the child’s personality and his communicative skills. Many of them are unable to buy even the presented textbooks not to say of buying extra reading materials. Moreover, these students have very little time to devote to their studies as they have to help their parents in the fields or at their homes. Above all they are from regional medium schools in the rural areas with hardly any language teaching/learning facility. Our students, therefore, differ not only in their exposure to English but also in their socio-economic backgrounds. In fact Sood has rightly pointed out that:

excepting age (18+) sex (both male and female) and nationality (Indian) there is hardly anything else in common among these groups. 

The result of such grouping is detrimental to the interests of the bright students as well as the dull students. While the bright students get bored by repetition and lose their motivation, the dull students want continuous repetition and drilling. The grouping of such students is, therefore, disastrous for them both.

The third factor (in English Language Teaching) is the teaching material used. Our teaching material is neither purposeful and need based, nor interesting and motivating. Our textbooks have so far been selected without any prior thought about the suitability and authenticity of their language and content. They are not written with a definite aim in view. One finds a big gap between the language used in these texts and the needs of the students who use these textbooks. Srivendra Verma suggests that we should choose and select textbooks “... on the basis of our needs, our problems and limitations and the

sociocultural settings in which we are learning and teaching English. (Emphasis mine)\textsuperscript{28}. Our prescribed textbooks are not suitably edited for foreign learners/teachers. Widdowson describes the principles of evaluating and selecting authentic texts for communicative language teaching. He believes that the authenticity of materials depends not only on thematic appropriacy but also on its style (i.e., who wrote it for whom):

The material written by a scientist in a professional journal would differ if he were writing the same material in a school textbook for a group of students or if he were writing it for a popular daily. The problem is to edit our materials in such a way as to guide the learners to an awareness of the communicative conventions operating in the kind of discourse they will be concerned in real life\textsuperscript{29}.

Our instructional materials are often selected by Boards of Studies (at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels) and by the Boards of School Education at the school level. Although teachers are represented on these boards their selection is made on seniority basis. A few representatives from a large population of teachers often results in decisions which, more often than not, are reluctantly accepted by the remaining teachers. Also the senior teachers who become the members of these Boards neither possess the necessary expertise and knowledge of writing and developing materials nor feel motivated to allow any radical changes even if a large number of teachers as well as students feel totally dissatisfied with the existing materials. Naturally the selection is made from the commercially available textbooks which the Indian publishers produce for no obvious purposes and no particular learning


aims and objectives in view. This dependence on the available textbooks makes the teachers and students adhere to either the exercises given at the end of the texts or in the absence of these exercises rely on student guides (which are known as Bazaar Notes). These ‘Bazaar Notes’ get authenticity once the examination papers are based on them (and that very often happens).

Our textbooks have no positive aim to teach language use in real-life situations. They do not take the reader beyond the ideas that the writer wants to convey. The exercises at the end are mostly textual, on the theme, on subject matter etc., of a particular passage. Any attempt to teach language as such, if at all made, is confined to the teaching of linguistic items and other grammatical forms, for instance ‘direct and indirect speech’ etc. The textbooks that belong to the literary genres like Drama, Novel etc. (however high they may be in their style and theme) do not equip the students with the communicative skills that he needs in interacting in real-life situations. Neither Thomas Hardy nor Haldane can become a model for language use in social interactions.

In selecting texts for our students we have to, moreover, decide about the extent and kind of cultural exposure that would be desirable for our students. Should we expose them to the Indian culture or to some western and alien culture or to some world culture? In making our selection we have to see that the cultural content that is sought to be taught through the textbooks should be oriented to cater to the needs of the students who are born and brought up in the Indian cultural milieu. We can possibly include those things which will enhance the student’s vision of the diversity of Indian culture. Such elements of culture should be given priority as are known to the students. Sareen believes that:

Anything that is too unfamiliar, remote or too incogruent may baffle and bemuse the learner rather than aid learning.

Halliday believes that if the cultural items in our textbooks are too remote they “might provide a cultural shock and impede the learning process...”.

Keeping these aspects in view let us look at length at the syllabus of B.Sc. Part II and B.Sc part III of the Three Year Degree Course for General English (in operation since 1999). For B.Sc part II we have the following format:

**Paper A**

The following texts are prescribed

1) A Choice of Poems (Macmillan)
2) Six Famous Plays (Ed S. Single)
3) A Selection of English Prose (Orient longman)

Only the following poems are prescribed:

- Sonnet L Shakespeare
- Sonnet XVII (on his Blindness) John Milton
- London William Blake
- Resolution and Independence William Wordsworth
- Song to the Men of England Shelley
- La Bella Dame Sans Merci John Keats
- Dover Beach Matthew Arnold
- Adam’s Curse W.B. Yeats
- The Unknown Citizen W.H. Auden

Examination Pattern:

Q.1. One compulsory question on explanation with reference to the context from *A Choice of Poems*: three out of six passages to be attempted.

(15 marks)

Q.2. One question with an alternative from *A Choice of Poems*.

Q.3. One question with an alternative on *Six Famous Plays*.  

(15 marks)

Q.4. One question with an alternative on *A Selection of English Prose*.

(15 marks)

Q.5. One question on *Six Famous Plays* with an alternative on *A Selection of English Prose*.

Paper B:

Communicative Skills - II

1) Formal letter writing.

2) Comprehension passages with questions

3) Vocabulary testing

   a) Spelling

   b) Use of idioms and phrases into sentences

   c) Use of a word as different parts of speech

4) Translation of a passage from Urdu/Hindi/Kashmiri/Punjabi into English.
Examination Pattern

Q.1. The candidates will be asked to write a formal letter out of two choices. (20 marks)

Q.2. A comprehensive passage followed by questions. (15 marks)

Q.3. (a) One question on correct spelling. (5 marks)

(b) One question on idioms and phrases. (5 marks)

(c) One question on the use of a word as different parts of speech. (5 marks)

Q.4. (a) Five sentences involving the use of prepositions. (15 marks)

(b) Five sentences involving the correct use of articles. (5 marks)

Q.5. A passage in Urdu/Hindi/Kashmiri/Punjabi to be translated into English. (15 marks)

Books Suggested:


Looking at the syllabus of B.Sc Part II we find that the texts are literature based. We are teaching our students language through literature. All the three texts are different forms of literature (poems, plays and prose). The irony is that while our students find it hard to form a grammatically correct sentence we are thrusting works of literature down their throat. What justice they can do to these texts and how much they will be benefited by them is quite obvious. The whole syllabus seems absurd and meaningless. Literature and
especially the kind prescribed for our degree classes is as Rodger believes, such that it "... itself presupposes by its very nature a command of the language so complete that it forms the background against which the reader interprets the writers' deliberate and significant deviations..."\textsuperscript{32}. He further adds "...(it) can mean nothing to a student who is unable to construe the text and so discover what its meaning potential is"\textsuperscript{33}. This is exactly the case with our students. The prescribed literature means 'nothing to them' since they are 'unable to construe the text'. Literature shall not be ignored. It shall assume its due place in the later years and can be taken up as an optional subject at the higher level. Jain has rightly pointed out that since 'much emphasis is laid upon the linguistic exercises... the aim and purpose of teaching a piece of literature is defeated.'\textsuperscript{34} Similarly the teaching of a short story or a one-act play or a drama is not possible through methods of teaching which lay much emphasis upon linguistic aspects\textsuperscript{34}. Rodger, therefore, suggests "that the selection of the material for study be made on (i) linguistic rather than aesthetic grounds and (ii) teachability of the material..."\textsuperscript{35}. Widdowson also agrees with this view when he says that:

we need to choose initially what is stylistically simple, culturally bridgeable, compatible with genuine literary utterance and likely most effective to develop sensitivity of response\textsuperscript{36}.

At present there is a wide gap between the proficiency level of our college students and the proficiency demands of our texts. The two are

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid p 87.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Alex Rodger. 1983, p 88.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} H.G. Widdowson. \textit{Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature}. Longman 1975, p 17.
\end{itemize}
incompatible. This is again evident when we consider the syllabus of B.Sc Part III of the Three Year Degree Course for General English (in operation since 1999). We find the following format:

**Paper A**

Following texts are prescribed:

- **Arthur Miller** : *All My Sons*
- **P.G. Wodehouse** : *The Inimitable Jeeves*
- **Enlightenment** : *A selection of essays for awareness*

**Examination Pattern**

Q.1. One compulsory question on explanation with reference to the context from *All My Sons*. Three out of six passages to be attempted. (15 marks)

Q.2. One question with an alternative on *All My Sons*.

Q.3. One question with an alternative on *The Inimitable Jeeves*. (15 marks)

Q.4. One question with an alternative on *Enlightenment*. (15 marks)

Q.5. One question from *The Inimitable Jeeves* with an alternative on *Enlightenment*. (15 marks)

**Paper B**

Q.1. Essays out of five given topics. Candidates to attempt one. (25 marks)

Q.2. Precis writing (15 marks)

Q.3. Applied Grammar

   a) Pairs of words (4 marks)
b) Modal verbs (4 marks)
c) A passage for change of narration (8 marks)
d) Prepositional phrases (4 marks)

Q.4. Translation from Hindi/Urdu/Punjabi into English. (15 marks)

Books Recommended

Sora Freeman : *Written Communication in English* (Orient Longman)

Mohammad Aslam : *Communication Skills - III*

Paper A, as we have seen consists of works of literature and we are again teaching language through literature. The problems are the same as discussed. These works of art in no way help our students to use language efficiently and effectively. As Lado rightly believes that:

> to know a language is to use its pattern of construction with appropriate vocabulary at normal speed for communication.

Our students lack this ability (to use language) and our syllabus and the textbooks used add to this inability to communicate. Gatenby is of the opinion that:

> One of the greatest faults we make in our present system of education is the attempt to teach a second language as if it were an ordinary school subject like history, geography, literature or science all of which can be learnt by listening to a teacher....


A rich variety of linguistic and socio-cultural material with its focus on 'what to say when and how' is of paramount importance in second language learning.

The most challenging problems for the teacher to tackle is the one arising out of students' incompetence in handling written English. Aslam rightly points out that "their English is neither acceptable nor correct.... They fail to write correct English not only at the sentence level but also at the discourse level"39.

One of the reasons for this incompetence could be the passive attitudes which the present method implies on the learner. The learner is not actively involved in the classroom activity. The classroom activity remains a teacher-dominated exercise giving lectures for forty-five minutes (which includes the taking of attendance) explaining the meanings of difficult words and phrases, preparing students for examinations and finishing the course within the stipulated time is all that our existing classroom teaching means. There is very little interaction between the teacher and the students or among the students to ensure the promotion of communicative skills. The whole classroom activity seems to be a futile exercise with the teacher desperately trying to thrust the prescribed material upon the students without having any time left for assessing the assimilation of these ideas by the students. The time factor is a very restricting factor. If we consider the syllabus of B.Sc Part I of the Three Year Degree Course in general English we find that we have to cover three texts. *Twentieth Century Prose* has twelve essays out of which eight are for detailed study from which questions of reference to passages are asked in the examination. In addition there are twelve short stories to be taught from the selected short stories40. In addition we have a novel - *The Old Man and the


113
Sea. Besides we have to teach grammar. All this has to be covered in the short span of six months with a calculated 16 hours time in one month (given 45 min per day and 6 days a week). The problem of lengthy syllabus gets aggravated by the overcrowded classes which extend to even more than 100 students in a class when ideally the roll should have been not more than thirty five. In the short span of 45 min it takes 15 min to mark the attendance reducing the time for actual teaching by almost half. As such the syllabus becomes a burden for the teacher more than for the student. The teacher, no matter how efficient she is, is pulled down by these circumstances and cannot do justice to her job.

In an extensive survey carried out by this researcher in the Kashmir Valley some ten colleges were surveyed. They are

1. Govt. Degree College for Boys, Bemina.
2. Amar Singh College for Boys
3. Islamia College for Boys
4. Women's College M.A. Road
5. Women's College, Nawakadal
6. College for Education
7. Govt. Degree College for Boys, Baramulla
8. Govt. Degree College for Girls, Anantnag
9. Govt. Degree College for Boys, Anantnag
10. Govt. Degree College for Girls, Sopore

About 200 questionnaires were distributed - 100 to teachers and 100 to students. The questionnaire for teachers was different from the questionnaire

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40. I personally find these stories dull, uninteresting and demotivating for the students.

41. The same is true of the lengthy syllabus of B.Sc II and B.Sc III of the Three Year Degree Course for General English.
for students. These have been attached as Appendix A and Appendix B at the end of this chapter. There were three columns for each question. There was a "Yes" column, a "No" column and a separate column for the comments of the students and the teachers. Sometimes the teachers and the students ticked just the 'Yes' or 'No' column without passing any comments. Sometimes the teachers and the students besides marking 'Yes' or 'No' gave their comments in the comment column. While tabulating the responses of the teachers and the students I have, therefore, made a separate column for those who passed their comments besides marking 'Yes' or 'No'. Those that did not comment at all and just marked 'Yes' or 'No' have also been listed in the 'Didn’t Comment' column.

Below are given the questions and their responses from the questionnaire given to teachers.

Q.1. Do you think the syllabus for General English for the Three Year Degree Classes is interesting, motivating and relevant to the need of the students:

Yes □ No □

Comment_________________________

Response: Yes □ No □ Comment □ Didn’t Comment □

30% 70% 90% 10%

It is obvious that a majority of the teachers are not satisfied with the syllabus. The 90% that commented felt that the syllabus is very lengthy; neither interesting and motivating nor relevant to their needs.

Q.2. Does the syllabus teach all the four skills of language (SRWL).

Yes □ No □

Comment_________________________

115
It is obvious that the majority is of the view that the syllabus does not teach all the four skills. 83.5% of the teachers who commented, remarked that the listening skill is only marginally developed. The teachers feel that if listening would have been followed by comprehensive question-answering then it would have developed this skill to a great extent, since listening would have been with a purpose. Since listening is not followed by any comprehension question-answering, it is not sure whether the students have been actually listening or just watching. The speaking skill is not touched at all, since there is no time for it. The teacher is hard pressed for time so that the speaking skill cannot be stressed.

Q.3. Does the syllabus contain clear guidance for the teacher about how the material can be used to the best advantage of the student (for example in a teacher's book).

Yes □ No □

Comment_________________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn't Comment

30% 70% 83.5% 16.5%

It is obvious that the 10% of teachers who said 'Yes' did not quite comprehend the question otherwise they would have answered in the negative; as we know there is no such thing as a teacher's book for the guidance of the teachers. The syllabus doesn't contain any guidance for the teachers. It is wholly examination-oriented. This in turn affects the classroom teaching.
Q.4. Are the integral parts of the material (i.e the course books, teachers book, tapes etc) available.

Yes □ No □

Comment ______________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

0% 100% 84% 16%

The 84% of teachers who have commented state that only the course books are available. There is no such thing as teacher book or tapes etc. available.

Q.5. Does the syllabus provide a balance of activities that is appropriate for your students (i.e listening activities and problem-solving activities).

Yes □ No □

Comment ______________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

6.6% 93.4% 66.7% 33.3%

Again I feel that the 6.6% of teachers who have answered in the affirmative have not comprehended the question well. There are no activities provided in the syllabus. The syllabus is content-oriented and not skill or activity-oriented.

Q.6. Is there a sufficient amount of communication output in the material in the course? (i.e does the material put the students into communication?).

Yes □ No □

Comment ______________________
I personally feel that there is nothing in the material that could lead the students into communication with each other. The 70% that commented feel that the teacher could have introduced it by her innovativeness and resourcefulness but because of the limitations of time and the unmanageable class roll he/she is practically helpless.

Q.7. Does the material provide enough ‘roughly-tuned input’ for your students?

Yes □ No □

Comment________________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

23.3% 76% 70% 30%

This question posed a little problem. Most of the teachers did not understand the term ‘roughly-tuned input’. I had, therefore, to explain this term and what the question asked to get their response.

It was remarked that the materials used i.e., the textbooks, are greatly above their level of comprehension so that the teacher has to make extensive use of translation to make it comprehensible to the students. The material should have been properly graded to suit their standards so that translation would be avoided and the students would get exposed to the right kind of input.

Q.8. Is the language introduced in realistic contexts:(i.e in context taken from real-life situations).

Yes □ No □

Comment________________________
In fact the 6.6% of the teachers who answered in the affirmative have misunderstood the question, since the language is not presented in real life-like contexts but in dull, boring and uninteresting texts.

Q.9. Would you recommend continuing with these materials for your students?

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<td>93.4%</td>
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As is obvious the majority of the teachers are not satisfied with the materials. As most have commented that the material is far beyond their level of comprehension so that instead of a language class it becomes a translation class where the maximum time is spent in translating the difficult words into Urdu or into Kashmiri. The very essence of the language class is therefore lost.

Q.10. Besides lecture mode what other mode do you use in teaching English?

Response: 100% of teachers use the lecture mode. Out of these 40% engage the class in small discussions. All feel that they are limited by the constraints of time, lengthy syllabus and huge class roll.

Q.11. Would you label yourself as a) Innovative 2) Average 3) Resourceful?

Response: 76.6% feel they are average.

13.5% feel they are resourceful.
10.1% feel they are innovative but they cannot use their innovativeness and resourcefulness because of the limitations of time, very short periods, unmanageable classroll and lengthy syllabus.

Q.12. If you feel your students are not understanding you do you:

1) At once switch over to explaining and translating the difficult words into the second language (Urdu) or the mother tongue (Kashmiri).

2) Continue explaining in English giving synonyms and like examples and avoiding translation into L2 or L1.

Response: 60% use translation as a technique.

33.3% use the Direct Method.

6.7% use translation as a last resort.

The 60% who use translation as a technique feel that they use it against their will and would like to do otherwise but because the texts are far beyond the comprehension of the students, they (the teachers) have to resort to translation to make the texts comprehensible to the students. They feel that the Direct Method becomes irrelevant in our situation. Again the 6.7% avoid using translation initially but use it as a last resort to make the students comprehend the texts. The above response shows that we make use of translation as a technique and not as a mode in teaching grammar rules. It also shows that we use an eclectic method in language teaching.

Q.13. What sort of activities would you like to engage your class in? (Arrange in order of your preference).

a) Copying written material, memorizing drill and repetition work.
b) Grammar exercise  
c) Communication tests and problem-solving.  
d) Language games, role play, reading articles and close (gap-filling) exercises.  
e) Listening and note taking.  
f) Reading books and newspapers.  
g) Using audio visuals, T.V., Video etc.  

Response: 93.3% feel that communication test and problem solving should be first in priority.  

63.3% feel that language games, role play, reading articles and close (gap-filling exercises) should come second.  

76.6% feel that grammar should occupy the third place.  

63.3% feel that reading books and newspapers should come at the fourth place.  

50% feel that listening should come fifth in priority while the other 50% feel it should come sixth.  

50% feel that audio-visual should be sixth in priority. Out of the other 50% - 30% feel it should be second in priority.  

As is clear from the responses the majority of the teachers are wanting a switch over to the communicative methodology. They are giving clear preference to communicative activities and to grammar.  

Q.14. What sort of activities do you actually engage your class in?
Responses: When personally contacted to know what sort of activities they engaged their class in, the teachers frankly admitted that there was no scope for any activity since the constraints of time, lengthy syllabus and unmanageable class rolls were very high.

100% teachers engage their class in lecture-listening.

Q.15. What according to your view do the students respond more eagerly to:

(Arrange in order of their preference)

a) Copying notes, memorising, drill and repetition work.

b) Grammar exercises.

c) Listening.

d) Answering questions.

e) Discussing exercises and view points among themselves.

f) Discussing issues and view points among themselves.

g) Communicating their ideas with each other and discussing with the teacher.

h) Confining themselves to the syllabus and the examination pattern and avoiding any out of syllabus discussion.

Response: 98.4% of teachers feel that the student respond most eagerly to listening, confining to syllabus, copying notes and grammar exercises and least to discussions, answering questions and any communicative activity.

1.6% feel otherwise.
Q.16. Do you feel our students fail to express their ideas in the English language?

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All the teachers invariably feel that the students fail to express themselves in English.

Q.17. What in your view is the reason for their failure?

Response: 99% of teachers feel that the main reason for the failure to communicate is deficient schooling; late start for teaching English at the school level; lack of exposure both at school and at their home.

1% feels that in addition to the above reasons one major reason is that English has been treated as a content subject and not a language subject.

Q.18. Has your method/material used helped the students to improve in any way?

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<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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The 67% of teachers that claim that their method/material has helped the students to improve, frankly admit that the improvement has been to a very small extent. 33% clearly state that there has been no benefit at all.

Q.19. What are the major problems faced by you as a teacher of English (arrange in order of significance).

i) Faulty syllabus.

ii) Faulty methods of teaching

iii) Inappropriate learning activities

iv) Irregular attendance

v) Inappropriate objectives

vi) Poor attention in class

vii) Poor motivated students

viii) Learner attitude not positive

ix) Very large and unmanageable class roll

Response: 100% of teachers feel that the most grave problem faced is unmanageable classroll.

80% feel that the fault lies with the method.

20% feel that the fault lies with the learner.

Q.20. Would your response to errors be (i) Tolerant (ii) Corrective at all cost.

Response: 93.3% feel their attitude to errors is corrective at all cost.

6.7% find their attitude tolerant

Q.21. What do you think are the remedial measures for these problems?
100% of teachers feel that the most important remedial measure is to reduce the class roll to forty so that individual attention is given.

98.1% feel that the time allotted to language classes is not sufficient and that it should be extended to 1 hr.

99% feel that the problems faced in the colleges have their roots in faulty teaching of the English language at the school level. Therefore, they suggest that the remedial measures should start at the grassroots levels. English should be made compulsory from the nursery level in all schools.

90% feel that there should be a screening test for the students before entrance into colleges. The dropouts should attend a bridge course to get more competent.

89.7% feel that the syllabus is too lengthy and it results in a rush through due to lack of time. They, therefore, suggest that the syllabus be considerably reduced.

97.8% feel that the materials used are beyond the comprehension of the students, so that much time is spent in translating the difficult words into L2 or L1. They, therefore, recommend material which is appropriate to the level of the students.

96.8% feel that orientation and refresher courses be made compulsory for all teachers after every 8 months.

Q.22. Do you feel that the teacher is restricted by the syllabus and by the limitations of time as far as using her own techniques in teaching the four skills are concerned?

   Yes □         No □

Comment ____________________________
Response: Yes          No          Comment          Didn’t Comment
100%          0%          56.7%          43.3%

All the teachers agree on the point that they are definitely restricted by the constraints of limited time, lengthy syllabus and also unmanageable class roll. The comments reveal that in order for language teaching to be productive and effective these three limitations have to be rectified at the earliest. No matter what methodology we use, these limitations pose a serious problem and should be dealt with as a first step towards improvement.

Q.23. Indicate by giving a rating from 1 to 4 (1 most important) who in your opinion should be primarily responsible for carrying out the following curriculum tasks. Give a rating from 1 to 4 for each task.

A - Teacher-in-charge of the centre
B - Classroom teacher
C - Outside curriculum specialist
D - Curriculum advisor

Tasks | A | B | C | D
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1. Initial needs analysis
2. Goal and objective setting
3. Selecting/grading content
4. Ongoing needs analysis
5. Grouping learners
6. Devising learning activities
7. Instructing learners

8. Monitoring/Assessing progress

9. Course evaluation

Response: 100% of teachers feel that it is the teacher who should do the initial needs analysis. 90% feel that the teacher, the curriculum specialist and the curriculum advisor should set the goals and objectives and select the contents.

84.3% feel that the teacher, the curriculum specialist and the teacher-in-charge of the institution should do the ongoing needs analysis.

85.6% feel that the grouping of the students should be done by the teacher and the head of the institute.

87.9% feel that the devising of learning activities, assessing of progress and course evaluation should be done by the teacher, the curriculum specialist and the curriculum advisor.

As seen in the above responses the role of the teacher is considered as of paramount importance. The teacher needs to be consulted at every stage of curriculum-planning (curriculum spoken of in its broader sense). The majority of the problems that we presently face are mainly because we overlook the crucial role of the teacher. Presently the teacher is merely the interpreter (or rather translator) of the text of the framing of which he has no access. He has to present what is handed down to him without having any say in it. The little innovativeness which he/she would like to introduce is snatched away by the various constraints under which he/she has to operate. This results in poor results. The role of the teacher, therefore, needs to be redefined.
Q.24. Would you recommend continuing with the present method of teaching.

   Yes □  No □

Comment ____________________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

24% 76% 80% 20%

Response: 76% of teachers do not want to continue with the present system because it is outdated and does not teach all the four language skills.

24% feel that in our present set up with limited time, unmanageable classroll and lengthy syllabus, no innovations is possible so they would continue, since there is no other alternative.

Q.25. Do you think that English should be taught through literature or through language courses. Give reasons?

Response: 70% feel that language should be taught through language courses alone to improve the four skills.

30% feel that language should be taught through both because both are complementary and add to one another, almost all are convergent on the point that to appreciate literature language skills should first be developed through language courses (till the 10 + 2 stage). Later in the colleges the two should be well integrated, co-ordinated and intertwined, as it were, to make it interesting and enjoyable for the student.

(1) Individually  (2) In small groups  (3) In one large group.

Response: 89.5% prefer teaching in small groups while 10.5% feel that under the present circumstances it is not possible to form small groups. (due to the constraints already discussed) so they would teach in one large group as there is again no alternative.

Q.27. Would you like teaching from:

1. Television/Video/Films  Yes/No
2. Radio  Yes/No
3. Tapes/Cassettes (eg. labs, cassette players)  Yes/No
4. Written material  Yes/No
5. The blackboard  Yes/No
6. Pictures/Postures  Yes/No

Response: While 93.4% of teachers, would like to use all the mentioned aids. 6.6% would not like to use radio as an aid, perhaps because the material on the radio is not under your control. They would rather like to use tapes and cassettes where the input is directly under control.

From the above responses the following glaring points stand out prominently:

1. The teachers are by and large dissatisfied with the syllabus, the method, the material and the class room techniques used.
2. The teachers are desirous of having communicative activities introduced in the classroom.

3. The teachers feel handicapped in the present situation under the constraints of time, syllabus and unmanageable class roll.

4. The teachers are ready to accept a change for the better.

Having discussed the teachers' response, let us now discuss the response of the students who were given the following questionnaire. About 100 questionnaires were circulated in the already mentioned colleges. The students who were contacted belonged to various streams of Arts, Sciences and Commerce. The questionnaires were distributed to the students by various teachers and later collected and handed over to the scholar.

**Questionnaire for students**

Q.1. Do you think the syllabus for general English for the Three Degree Classes is interesting, motivating and relevant to your needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comment________________________

Response: Yes ☑ No ☐ Comment ☐ Didn't Comment ☐

72.5% 27.5% 77.5% 22.5%

The students seem to be satisfied with the syllabus

Q.2. Do you feel the syllabus teaches all the four skills of language ie., speaking, reading, writing and listening?
Once again students feel satisfied that the syllabus teaches them all the four skills, when we know that the listening and speaking skills have been totally ignored in the syllabus.

Q.3. Are the integral parts of the materials i.e., the course books available?

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Response: Yes □ No □ Comment □ Didn’t Comment

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The students seem satisfied with the availability of their course books.

Q.4. Does the syllabus provide a balance of activities that is appropriate for you?(e.g. listening activities and communicative activities).

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Comment_________________________

Response: Yes □ No □ Comment □ Didn’t Comment

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A positive response has come from the majority of the students though there are no activities in the syllabus that teach the speaking and listening
skills. Perhaps the question was difficult.

Q.5. Are the materials designed in such a way so as to provide sufficient amount of communication output? (i.e., put them into communication with each other).

Yes □ No □

Comment __________________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

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A positive response has come from the majority of the students, though the materials provided in the syllabus do not put them into communication with each other. Perhaps the question was difficult for the students.

Q.6. Is the material designed for you.

a) Slightly above your level of comprehension?

b) Greatly above your level of comprehension?

c) Just right for your level of comprehension?

d) Below the level of your comprehension?

Response: 55% of students say that the material is just right for their level of comprehension.

27.5% say that the material is slightly above their level of comprehension.

17.5% say that the material is greatly above their level of comprehension.
The response seems to be fifty-fifty. While almost 50% feel that the material provided in the syllabus is just right for their comprehension, almost 50% feel it is above their comprehension.

Q.7. Is the language presented to you in realistic life-like situations? (i.e in contexts taken from real-life situations).

Yes ☐  No ☐

Comment _______________________

Response:  Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

45%  55%  32.5%  67.5%

The 45% of students who believe that the language is presented in realistic life-like situations seem to be confused with the material being realistic and it (material) being presented in a realistic life-like situation. Perhaps due to this lack of comprehension the majority of the students (67.5%) did not comment at all.

In no case is the language presented in realistic life-like situations. It is content-based but not context-based.

Q.8. Are you satisfied with the material recommended for you?

Yes ☐  No ☐

Comment _______________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

47.5%  52.5%  77.5%  22.5%

Almost 50% seem to be satisfied and 50% not satisfied.

Q.9. Besides lecture mode which other mode does your teacher use in teaching English?
Response: 100% of students admit that the lecture mode is the only mode used in teaching English. They, however, feel that lengthy syllabus, limited time and huge class roll is responsible for this.

Q.10. If you do not understand what your teacher says, does she:

i) Switch at once to explaining and translating the difficult words into L2 or L1?

ii) Continue explaining in English giving synonyms and like examples and avoiding translating?

Response: While 67.9% say that the teacher at once switches to Urdu or Kashmiri 32.1% say that the teacher uses synonyms or like words in English and avoids translation?

Q.11. Would you label your teacher as:

i) Innovative  ii) Routine/Average  iii) Resourceful

Response: 57.5% label their teacher as resourceful.

32.5% label them as average.

10% label them as innovative. Although the students admit that the teacher is resourceful yet she cannot benefit the student much due to the constraints under which she is working.

Q.12. What sort of activities does your teacher engage you in class?

i) Copying written material

ii) Grammar exercises
iii) Listening and note-taking

iv) Communication tasks and problem solving activities.

v) Language games, role play, reading - activities and gap filling exercises (arrange in order of preference)?

Response: 80% feel that the first preference is given to listening and note taking.

70% feel that the second preference is given to grammar.

63.8% feel that the third preference is given to copying written material and drill.

Options (iv) and (v) were left unmarked since these activities do not take place at all.

Q.13. What learning activities do you prefer:

i) Copying material, memorising and repetition work.

ii) Grammar exercises

iii) Reading from books

iv) Listening

v) Answering questions

vi) Discussing issues and viewpoints among your classmates.

vii) Communicating your ideas with each other and discussing with the teacher.

viii) Confining yourself to the syllabus and the examination pattern and
avoiding any out of syllabus discussions?

Response: While 87.5% would prefer communicating and discussing and engaging in communicative tasks,

12% would like to engage in listening, reading and grammar exercising.

5% would like to confine themselves to the syllabus.

This response from the students is very crucial. It shows that the students are ready to accept the communicative methods of teaching. They would prefer discussing, communicating their ideas and engaging in grammar exercises. This response shows the psychological readiness on the part of the students to accept the communicative techniques.

Q.14. Has the method/materials your teacher used helped you to improve upon your skills?

   Yes ☐  No ☐

Comment ____________________________

Response: Yes  No  Comment  Didn't Comment

   85%  15%  85%  15%

The 85% of students who feel they have been benefited have clearly commented that the benefit is limited to writing and vocabulary development. Their speaking skill is not developed.

The 15% who say that they have not been benefited again are speaking in terms of their speaking skill. They lack the ability to communicate their ideas in English and hence admit not to have been benefited.
Q.15. Is your teachers’ response to your errors.

1) Tolerant  2) Corrective at all cost?

Response: 75% feel that their teachers’ response is corrective at all costs, while 25% feel that they are tolerant of their errors.

Q.16. Are you satisfied with the way your teacher teaches you?

Yes □  No □

Comment_________________________

Response: Yes No Comment Didn’t Comment

80% 20% 80% 20%

80% feel that they are satisfied with the way their teacher teaches them. Yet they have a few suggestions to make. Some of them would like role play to be introduced in the class while drama is being taught. Most would like some sort of communicative activity to go on in the class.

This response is again very crucial since it shows the psychological readiness on the part of the learner to accept the communicative techniques. However, they all believe that the teacher is restricted by various limitations so that she cannot exploit her full potential. The 20% that believe they are not satisfied feel that the English class is a mere translation of difficult words into Urdu. The students are not made to speak, so the speaking skill remains undeveloped.

Q.17. Do you feel that you fail to express yourself in English?

Yes □  No □

Comment_________________________

137
Out of 47.5% who claim that they can express themselves in English, 14% did not comment at all. 33.5% who commented could not make proper sense of what they were saying. In fact the students' responses served a good example for examining and assessing the errors of the students. Some of the comments of the students who feel they can express themselves perfectly well in English are quoted.

“It helps us to pronounce proper English words”.

“Because I properly understood the words which are too difficult with the help of dictionary”.

“I personally make efforts of talk”.

“I think on English usually”.

The situation is quite clear. Although 47.5% claim to be able to express their ideas in English, actually only 19% can really express themselves manageably well.

Q.18. What in your opinion is the reason for this failure (to communicate)?

Response: 20% feel that this failure is due to poor schooling.

15% feel that it is due to the faulty methods of teaching.

10% feel it is due to lack of exposure both at school and home.

12.5% feel that this question does not apply to them since they can communicate their ideas perfectly well.
The comments of 5% were unintelligible.

12.5% feel it was due to lack of confidence.

25% did not comment at all.

Q.19. What are the main problems faced by you as a student of English (arrange in order of significance) which have led to failure in achieving desirable results.

i) Faulty syllabus

ii) Faulty methods of teaching

iii) Inappropriate learning activities

iv) Irregular attendance

v) Inappropriate objectives

vi) Poor attention in class

vii) Poor motivation on your part.

viii) Lack of positive attitude on your part.

ix) Very large and unmanageable class roll.

Response: 22.5% feel that the fault lies with the learners.

14% are not clear about the problems faced though they are sure that unmanageable class roll is of paramount importance.

40% feel that the fault lies with the methods.

12.5% did not comment.
11% feel that they faced no problems at all.

Q. 20. How do you think these problems could be overcome and rectified?

Response: 35% say that the class roll should be limited to thirty so that individual attention is given.

25% say that the material should be such as will promote all the four skills. They suggest that communicative activities be promoted so that interaction takes place and their speaking skill gets improved.

10% say that the syllabus should be reduced to half so that the teacher has enough time to use her innovative ways.

30% of the response was unintelligible and irrelevant.

Q.21. What is your educational background:

i) Come from govt. schools.

ii) Come from private schools.

Response: 52.5% come from government schools while 47.5% come from private schools.

Q.22. How will you rank yourself as far as your hold on the English language is concerned?

i) Above average (ii) Average (iii) below average

Response: 82.5% have labelled themselves as average.

10% have labelled themselves as above average

7.5% have labelled themselves as below average
I personally feel (from my experience as a teacher) that 82.5% are below average, 7.5% are average and 10% are above average.

Q.23. For what purpose do you wish to learn English?

i) Passing the exams  (ii) For other reasons: Specify

Response: 12.5% study English to pass the exams.

10% did not comment at all.

62.5% study English so that their communicative skill gets developed and they are in a position to communicate their ideas to the rest of the world and also to gain social status.

12.5% study English in order to be able to benefit from the scientific knowledge and the technological development that are available in the language.

2.5% want to study English surprisingly to know about the culture of the English.

Q.24. Where do you need to use English on long term basis. Is it in your:

i) Medical profession

ii) Engineering profession

iii) Software profession

iv) Teaching profession

v) Business profession

vi) Tourism or some other profession

vii) None of the above
Response: 30% of students want to use English in the teaching profession.

20% want to use English in the business profession
15% want to use English in the tourism profession
2.5% want to use English as journalists
10% want to use English in the software profession
15% don't want to use English in any of the above-mentioned professions.

7.5% of the students did not respond at all.

A majority of the students want to use English in the teaching profession. It is imperative, therefore, that they be taught through productive teaching methods so that they carry the same on to the next generation.

Q.25. Indicate by giving a rating from 1 to 4 (1 most important) who in your opinion should be primarily responsible for carrying out the following classroom tasks.

A. Teacher in charge of the institution.
B. Classroom teacher
C. Outside curriculum specialist
D. Curriculum advisor

Tasks A B C D
1. Initial needs analysis
2. Goal and objective setting
3. Selecting/grading content
4. Ongoing needs analysis
5. Grouping learners
6. Devising learners
7. Instructing learners
8. Monitoring/Assessing progress
9. Course evaluation

Response: 52.5% did not seem to understand the question. Their response was a random single tick.

22.5% did not respond to this question at all.

15% felt that it was the teacher, the curriculum specialist and the curriculum advisor should make important decisions like initial needs, analysis, goal setting, selecting and grading, devising learning activities and assessing and evaluation, whereas the teacher in consultation with the teacher-in-charge of the institution should do the ongoing needs analysis and grouping learners. These students feel the teacher to be of paramount importance.

10% feel that it is the curriculum specialist and the curriculum advisor that should take the decisions of goal sitting and grading contents, devising learning activation and assessing progress and course evaluation whileas the teacher should do the initial and the ongoing needs analysis and the grouping of learners.

Q.26. How do you like learning in class? Put a circle around your answer.

1) Individually?
2) In pairs?

3) In small groups?

4) In one large group?

Response: 67.5% want to read in small groups.

17.5% want to study in one large group.

5% want to read individually.

5% did not comment.

A majority of the students want to read in small groups. This again is a welcome sign for introducing communicative methodology. The students (majority) are psychologically ready to accept the techniques employed in the communicative methodology.

Q.27. Would you mind if other students sometimes correct your written work. Yes/No

Response: Yes 15%  No 85%

The majority of the students would not mind if other students corrected their work. This again is a positive response if we want to introduce the communicative method. The students are seen to respond positively to all the crucial issues involved in communicative methodology. This once again shows that they are psychologically ready for a change although they do not themselves perceive it.

Q.28. Would you mind if the teacher sometimes asks you to correct your own work. Yes/No

144
Again the majority of the students would not mind correcting their own work. Once again the students are ready to accept the classroom techniques employed in the communicative method.

Q.29. Would you like learning from:

1) Television/Video/Films  
Response: Yes/No

2) Radio  
Response: Yes/No

3) Tapes/Cassettes (e.g. language labs, ................, Cassettes players)  
Response: Yes/No

4) Written material?  
Response: Yes/No

5) The blackboard?  
Response: Yes/No

6) Pictures/Postures?  
Response: Yes/No

Response: 80.3% are ready to learn from T.V.

63.1% would like to learn from the radio.

81.7% would like to learn from tapes.

87.5% would like to learn from written material

72.5% would like to learn from the blackboard

55% would like to learn from pictures/postures

I feel ‘pictures/postures’ to have been ranked low either due to misunderstanding the word ‘picture’ or else they feel it would not be feasible at this late stage.
Once again the responses show that the students are ready to accept the innovative classroom techniques.

Looking at the present scenario, therefore, we find that all the aspects involved in language teaching are defective. The curriculum is framed by the ministries and handed down to the teacher. The aims and objectives are not clearly stated. The role of the teachers and that of learners, the method to be used, the classroom techniques to be applied are all ambiguous and dubious.

The syllabus, as both the teachers and learners feel, is too lengthy for all the three classes. It is not relevant to the needs of the students. Only the senior members of the teaching faculty are consulted when framing the syllabus and this has not in any way improved the contents either quantitatively or qualitatively. Moreover, our syllabuses are not listed. There is no instruction whatsoever as to how to proceed, how much time to spend on each topic; which skills to be taught first.

The teaching materials used are not relevant to either their needs or to their standards. They are difficult both as regards content and language. Moreover, they are not interesting. The responses given by the teachers clearly testify this:

73.4% of teachers feel that the materials used are greatly above their (students) level of comprehension.

70% of teachers feel the syllabus is uninteresting, demotivating and non-relevant to the needs of the students.

70% feel the syllabus does not teach all the four language skills.

90% feel that the syllabus does not contain clear guidance for the teacher as to how the material can be used to the best advantage of the student.

100% feel that they are handicapped due to lack of a teacher book.
93.4% feel that the syllabus does not provide a balance of activities appropriate for the students.

76.7% feel that materials used do not lead them into communication with each other.

93.4% feel that the materials used are not presented in realistic contexts.

86.7% are not in favour of continuing with these materials.

Regarding classroom procedures:

100% of teachers use the lecture mode with translation as the main technique.

93.3% feel that communicative and problem solving activities should be introduced. Teachers are giving clear preferences to communicative activities and to grammar (response 13 of teachers).

99% of teachers feel that the failure of our students to communicate is due to deficient schooling; lack of proper exposure to the language; late start for teaching English at school.

100% of teachers feel that the most grave problem facing them is unmanageable class roll, lengthy syllabus and limited time available.

100% of teachers feel that they are handicapped as far as using their own techniques in teaching the four skills are concerned.

89.5% of teachers prefer teaching in small groups.

70% of teachers feel that initially language should be taught through language courses alone to improve the four skills.

76% of teachers are not in favour of continuing with the present method of teaching.

Regarding the method teachers use a mixed method, using some features of Direct Method and some of the Grammar-Translation Method. They,
however, find that this method is not helping their students to communicate.

From the present scenario (taking the responses of both the teachers and the students) it is obvious that the whole curriculum setting needs a revamping. Not only need the aims and objectives to be clearly defined but the syllabus, the material used, the method used, the techniques used in the class, the teacher's role, the learner's role, all need to be redefined. The responses of the teachers and more so of the students reveal that they are all set to face the challenges of the CLT, they are both prepared to accept the method (though they don't seem to be conscious of it). It is not only desirable at this juncture but is of prime necessity. If we want our teaching/learning to be productive we have to pay attention to several grave problems facing us at present. A specially designed curriculum would be necessary so that our teaching and learning becomes effective and caters to the needs of our students. The curriculum should aim at specifying the objectives, relating these objectives to the needs of students, designing materials for achieving those objectives; and proposing effective and efficient teaching methods that would help to make learning easy and relevant to real life situations. These issues have been ignored so far and need a careful consideration if we wish to make our teaching and learning of English relevant to our needs. These and other related issues will be the topic of my discussion in the chapter that follows.

42. The problems can be listed as:
   i) Unmanageable class roll
   ii) Limited time
   iii) Lengthy syllabus
   iv) Lack of proper planning
   v) Unspecified aims and objectives
   vi) Unrealistic materials
   vii) Out-dated methods
   viii) Faulty testing techniques, and
   ix) Lack of feedback.
Chart showing that the syllabus for general English for the Three Year degree Classes is neither interesting and motivating nor relevant to the needs of the students.
Chart showing that the present syllabuses of general English do not teach all the four skills of language
Chart showing our present syllabus lacks guidance for teachers
Chart showing the comprehensibility of the material to be greatly above the level of comprehension of students
Chart showing the materials are not be continued with.
Chart showing that our students cannot communicate in English.
Teachers feel that the most grave problem faced is unmanageable classroll. They feel that the fault lies with the method and the syllabus. Some feel that the fault lies with the learner.

Chart showing the reasons for the failure of students to communicate.
Chart showing that the present method of teaching should not be continued with.
Feel that language should be taught through language courses alone to improve the four skills

70.0%

30.0%

Feel that language should be taught through both

Chart showing that the language should be taught through language courses alone to improve the four skills
Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. Do you think the syllabus for General English for the Three Year Degree Classes is interesting, motivating and relevant to the needs of the students?
   Yes No
   Comment. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Does the syllabus teach all the four skills of language (SRWL)?
   Yes No
   Comment. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Does the syllabus contain clear guidance for the teacher about how the material can be used to the best advantage of the student (for example in a teachers book)?
   Yes No
   Comment. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Are the integral parts of the material (i.e. the course books, teacher book, tapes etc) available?
   Yes No
   Comment. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Does the syllabus provide a balance of activities that is appropriate for your students? (i.e. listening activities and problem-solving activities)
   Yes No
   Comment. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
6. Is there a sufficient amount of communication output in the material in the course? (i.e. does the material put the students into communication)  
Yes  No  
Comment. ___________________________  

7. Do the materials provide enough roughly-tuned input for your students?  
Yes  No  
Comment. ___________________________  

8. Is the language introduced in realistic contexts? (i.e in contexts taken from real-life situations).  
Yes  No  
Comment. ___________________________  

9. Would you recommend continuing with these materials for your students?  
Yes  No  
Comment. ___________________________  

10. Besides lecture method what other methods do you use in teaching English?  
________________________________________________________________________  

11. Would you label yourself as:  
1. Innovative.  2. Average/Routine.  3. Resourceful.  

12. If you feel your students are not understanding you do you:  
1) At once switch over to explaining and translating the difficult words into the second language (Urdu) or the mother tongue (Kashmiri).
2) Continue explaining in English giving synonyms and like examples and avoiding translating into L2 or L1?

13. What sort of activities would you like to engage your class in? (Arrange in order of your preference).
   a) Copying written material, memorising, drill and repetition work?
   b) Grammar exercises?
   c) Communication tests and problem solving?
   e) Language games, role play, reading topical articles and close (gap, filling) exercises?
   f) Listening and note taking?
   g) Reading books and newspapers?
   h) Using audio visuals, T.V., Video etc?

14. What sort of activities do you actually engage your class in?

   

   

   

15. What according to your view do the students respond more eagerly to: (Arrange in order of their preference).
   a) Copying notes, memorising, drill and repetition work.
   b) Grammar exercises.
   c) Listening.
   d) Answering questions.
   e) Discussing exercises and viewpoints among themselves.
   f) Discussing issues and viewpoints among themselves.
   g) Communicating their ideas with each other and discussing with the teacher.
   h) Confining themselves to the syllabus and the examination pattern and avoiding any out of syllabus discussions.
16. Do you think our students fail to express their ideas in the English language?
   Yes  No
   Comment. ____________________________________________
17. What in your view is the reason for this failure (to communicate)?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
18. Has your method/material used helped the students to improve in any way?
   Yes  No
   Comment. ____________________________________________
19. What are the major problems faced by you as a teacher of English language (arrange in order of significance)?
   i) Inefficient learning strategies
   ii) Faulty methods of teaching
   iii) Inappropriate learning activities
   iv) Irregular attendance.
   v) Inappropriate objections.
   vi) Poor attention in class.
   vii) Poor motivated students.
   viii) Learner attitude not positive.
   ix) Very large and unmanageable class roll.
20. Would your response to errors be i) Tolerant or ii) Corrective at all cost.
21. What do you think are the remedial measures for these problems?
   i) ____________________________________________________
   ii) __________________________________________________
   iii) ________________________________________________
22. Do you feel that the teacher is restricted by the syllabus and by the limitations of time as far as using her own technique in teaching the four skills are concerned?

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23. Indicate by giving a rating from 1 to 4 (1 most important) who in your opinion should be primarily responsible for carrying out the following curriculum tasks. Give a rating from 1 to 4 for each task.

A. Teacher in charge of the centre
B. Classroom teacher.
C. Outside curriculum specialist.
D. Curriculum advisor.

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24. Would you recommend continuing with the present method of teaching?
   Yes  No
Comment. ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

25. Do you think English should be taught through literature or through language courses. Give reasons.
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

26. How do you like teaching in class? Put a circle around your answer.
   1) Individually?
   2) In small groups?
   3) In one large group?

27. Would you like teaching from?
   1) Television/video/Films? Yes/No.
   2) Radio? Yes/No.
   3) Tapes/Cassettes? (e.g. lang labs, lang masters, cassette players)
   4) Written material? Yes/No.
   5) The black board? Yes/No.
   6) Pictures/posters? Yes/No.
Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

1. Do you think the syllabus for General English for the Three Year Degree Classes is interesting, motivating and relevant to your needs?
   
   Yes  No
   
   Comment. ________________________________

2. Do you feel that the syllabus teaches all the four skills of language i.e. Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening.
   
   Yes  No
   
   Comment. ________________________________

3. Are the integral parts of the materials i.e. the course books available?
   
   Yes  No
   
   Comment. ________________________________

4. Does the syllabus provide a balance of activities that is appropriate for you?(i.e. listening activities and problem-solving activities).
   
   Yes  No
   
   Comment. ________________________________

5. Are the materials designed in such a way so as to provide sufficient amount of communication output?(i.e does the material put the students into communication).
   
   Yes  No
   
   Comment. ________________________________

6. Are the materials designed for you.
   
   a) Slightly above your level of comprehension?
   
   b) Greatly above your level of comprehension?
   
   c) Just right for your level of comprehension?
d) Below the level of your comprehension?

7. Is the language presented to you in realistic life-like situations? (i.e. in contexts taken from real-life situations).

8. Are you satisfied with the material recommended for you?

9. Besides lecture method which other method does your teacher use in teaching English?

10. If you do not understand what your teacher says, does she/he:
   i) Switch, at once, to explaining and translating the difficult words into the second language (Urdu) or the mother tongue (Kashmiri)?
   ii) Continue explaining in English giving synonyms and like examples and avoiding translating?

11. Would you label your teacher as:
   1. Innovative. 2. Routine/Average. 3. Resourceful?

12. What sort of activities does your teacher engage you in class?
   i) Copying writing material, memorising drill and repetition work?
   ii) Grammar exercises?
   iii) Listening and note taking?
   iv) Communication tasks and problem solving activities?
   v) Language games, role play, reading activities and gap filling exercises?

   (Arrange in order of preference)

13. What learning activities do you prefer:
   i) Copying written material, memorising, dull and repetition work?
   ii) Grammar exercises?
   iii) Reading from books?
iv) Listening?
v) Answering questions?
vi) Discussing issues and viewpoints among your classmates?
vii) Communicating your ideas with each other and discussing with the teacher?
viii) Confining yourself to the syllabus and the examination pattern and avoiding any out of syllabus discussions?

14. Has the method/material your teacher has used helped you to improve upon your skills.

Yes

No

Comment.__________________________________

15. Is your teachers' response to your errors:

1. Tolerant?  2. Corrective at all costs?

16. Are you satisfied with the way your teacher teaches you?

Yes

No

Comment.__________________________________

17. Do you feel that you fail to express yourself in English?

Yes

No

Comment.__________________________________

18. What in your opinion is the reason for this failure (to communicate)?

________________________________________________________________________

19. What are the main problems faced by you as a student of English language (arrange in order of significance) which have led to failure in achieving desirable results?

i) Insufficient learning strategies.

ii) Faulty methods of teaching.

iii) Inappropriate learning activities.

166
iv) Irregular attendance.

v) Inappropriate objectives

vi) Poor attention in class.

vii) Poor motivation on your part.

viii) Lack of positive attitude on your part.

ix) Very large and unmanageable class roll

20. How do you think these problems could be overcome and rectified?

i) ____________________________________________

ii) ____________________________________________

iii) ____________________________________________

iv) ____________________________________________

v) ____________________________________________

vi) ____________________________________________

21. What is your educational background?

i) Come from govt. schools.

ii) Come from private schools.

22. How will you rank yourself as far as your hold on the English language is concerned?

i) Above average.

ii) Average

iii) Below average.

23. For what purpose do you wish to learn English?

i) Passing the exams.

ii) Other reasons: specify. ______________________

24. Where do you need to use English on long basis. Is it in your:

i) Medical profession?

ii) Engineering profession?
iii) Software profession?
iv) Teaching profession?
v) Business profession?
vi) Tourism or some other profession?
vii) None of the above?

25. Indicate by giving a rating from 1 to 4 (1 most important) who in your opinion should be primarily responsible for carrying out the following classroom tasks?
   A. Teacher in charge of Institution.
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26. How do you like learning in class? Put a circle around your answer.
   1) Individually?
   2) In pairs?
   3) In small groups?
   4) In one large group?

27. Would you mind if other students sometimes correct your written work?
   Yes/No.
28. Would you mind if the teacher sometimes asks you to correct your own work? Yes/No.

29. Would you like learning from:
   1) Television/Video/Films? Yes/No.
   2) Radio? Yes/No.
   3) Tapes/Cassettes (e.g. language labs, lang masters) Cassette player? Yes/No.
   4) Written material? Yes/No.
   5) The blackboard? Yes/No.
   6) Pictures/Posters? Yes/No.