Chapter-VI

AN ANALYSIS OF ESSENTIALS OF MANAGEMENT AND BASIC COMMUNICATION AND ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS COURSES FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN VIGNAN UNIVERSITY

6.1 THE CHALLENGE FACING ENGINEERING EDUCATION

Globalisation has changed the requirement of skills and competencies for Engineers who are hired by the industry and the service sector. Consequently, the responsibility of Universities in educating and training the Engineers has changed dramatically. Engineering graduates are required, at present, to have multi-skills, flexibility, managerial competencies and work ethics, in addition to the technical competence. Engineering curricula must ensure that the graduating Engineers should meet the new expectations of the industry.

Universities have to redesign and upgrade their curricula to meet the expectations of the industry. The formal education system has to be supplemented with a modular system of education whereby Engineers would be able to acquire skills and competencies on a continuous basis. Engineers must be capable of learning new skills in a fast and discreet way, to meet the ever-changing requirements of their employers. The present educational systems should offer courses based on e-learning formats using web-based tools etc. These courses should be offered to the practising Engineers and should be based on their needs - taking into consideration an Engineer’s specific requirements for new knowledge and skills.

Fast-paced technological changes are driving certain industries into obsolescent. The outcome of this is that Engineers must be capable of participating in continuing
education programmes in collaboration with the industry. The competency profile of the Engineers is changing dramatically. Engineering colleges can no longer design their educational programs on their own. The vital link between different disciplines of study in Engineering and the needs of an industry has to be forged.

6.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ENGLISH COURSE

Based on the new trends in Engineering education, an attempt has been made to analyse the textbooks prescribed by Vignan University, another Deemed University in Guntur district. The aim is to find out the scenario of language learning and methods of learning, teaching and testing. A review of these materials is done to check to what extent these materials or the methods they assume and demand are in accordance with the realities, needs and expectations of the learners. Moreover, this dissertation aims at analysing how far these materials would minimise the conscious efforts at acquiring the language skills.

6.3 TECHNICAL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

The main focus of Technical English in the I Year B.Tech Course of the Vignan University is on improving the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Syllabus design in this University is also common to all the branches of I Year B.Tech Engineering Students like the Acharya Nagarjuna University, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (Kakinada) and Koneru Lakshmaiah University.

6.4 SAMPLE STUDY

A random sample of 180 students from the Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE), Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE), Computer Science
Engineering (CSE) and Civil Engineering (CE) disciplines in the Vignan University was taken to assess the four main factors in communication skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW), which are necessary for the students. Out of the 180 students taken as random samples, 162 respondents had the State syllabus, while the remaining 18 had the Central syllabus in their X Standard.

6.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The Engineering Students of Vignan University were given the same questionnaires which were given to the students of the Acharya Nagarjuna University, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (Kakinada) and Koneru Lakshmaiah University, to obtain their views on various aspects of English teaching and the syllabus. The questionnaire was designed to elicit the responses that would help the researcher to analyse the English syllabus of the Engineering College at Vignan University.

6.6 SYLLABUS

Vignan University introduced a new module of Technical Communicative English -- Essentials of Management and Basic Communication in their I B.Tech first Semester and Advanced Communication Skills in Second Semester. It is obvious that contains Management skills, emphasising at the same time the need to improve the communication skills of the students. The syllabus prescribed for first year Engineering students in Vignan University is given in Appendix-VI. No specific book is mentioned as a “Textbook.” A list of suggested reading has been provided to the teacher and the teacher is expected to choose items relevant to the syllabus from out of the list.
6.7 THE CONTENT OF THE SYLLABUS: AN ANALYSIS

Content analysis was made to assess whether the syllabus contains tools adequate to motivate the learners and its usefulness in providing information to them. Corporeal aspects were studied to see its usefulness to the students to gain and retain employment. The last but not the least is the communicative aspect. Any Engineering Course for a second language learner should make them proficient in their communication in English. It is the link between ideas and action. It is the emotional glue that binds humans together in relationships, personal and professional. It is, as the poet William Blake puts it, “Execution is the chariot of genius” (1966: 454).

An analysis of the following three aspects of the syllabus was made:

1. The Content Aspect
2. The Corporeal Aspect
3. The Communicative Aspect

6.7.1 CONTENT ASPECTS

The syllabus should motivate the students to get interested in the activities mentioned therein. The questionnaire has two direct questions with regard to the content aspect.

6.7.1.1 Improvement in Creating Motivation

Q. Does the syllabus create an interest in you?

Response: From the answers obtained for this question are can draw the conclusion that the activities did not motivate all the students on the same level. 18.33% of the students gave a positive answer. A few students (20.50%) who hailed from the rural areas and the
vernacular medium of study did not feel that the activities are interesting. 61.11% of the students felt that they provided motivation ‘to some extent.’

**Analysis:** A question arises whether the syllabus provides necessary motivation to the learners and the teachers. Motivation alone makes them go forward to achieve the intended objectives. Regarding the fulfilment of the objectives of the syllabus, majority of the teachers felt that the Reference Books contain sufficient tools/materials to motivate the students in the classroom and make them interactive.

**6.7.1.2 Suitability of the Syllabus to the Engineering Course**

Q. Are the topics relevant to Engineering Course?

**Response:** As far as the relevance of the topics is concerned, only 38.89% felt that the topics are relevant. From among the others, 17.18% of the students are unaware of the relevance and usefulness of the topics. About 43.33% did not express any opinion.

**Analysis:** A syllabus should impart skills in the target language; but, it should also be relevant to the learners and the course. When the question is asked whether the concerned syllabus is relevant to the Engineering course, almost all the learners responded that it is relevant, as most of them would like to do MBA after their B.Tech.

**6.7.2 CORPOREAL ASPECTS**

The corporeal aspects concentrate on the enhancement of the skills and the need for the use of imagination in the learners. So some questions have been set to extract their individual opinions on aspects such as the cover design and a few important factors in language learning etc.
6.7.2.1 Proper Design of Technical Terms

Q. Are the technical terms included in syllabus properly designed?

Response: The results show that on the whole 35.56% of the students do not think that the terms are clearly defined. Even the Central Board students are unable to comprehend the technical terms. 44.44% of the students think that the technical terms are defined ‘to some extent’. The remaining 20% of the students are positive to the proper design of the technical section.

Analysis: The analysis represents that the students feel difficulty in understanding the meaning because all the concepts are related to management which are unfamiliar to the students of the technical stream. They also feel that the reference books are of a higher standard than they could comprehend.

6.7.2.2 Promotion of Technical Knowledge or Language Learning

Q. Do the technical materials in the syllabus help the learners to increase the technical knowledge or help them to increase the rate of language learning?

Response: 40% feel that it promotes the students’ technical knowledge and a very surprising response of 74.44% were positive in saying that technical terms included in the syllabus increased their language learning levels.

Analysis: The syllabus given under Technical English is aimed at helping the students by increasing their chances of employment. But, strangely, the response of the students is that it merely improved their management skills but did not improve them in their technical skills.

6.7.2.3 Development of Creativity

Q. Do the tasks prescribed in the text encourage you to improve your creativity?
Response: The answers for this question lead to the conclusion that the concepts do not encourage all the students on the same level, in using their creativity. 24.45% of the students gave a positive answer. 22.22% of the students did not feel that the concept is encouraging. 53.33% of the students felt that the concepts provided encouragement to the learners’ creativity ‘to some extent.’

Analysis: The concepts in *Essential of Management and Basic Communication* in Semester I are completely dry and no tasks are given in their reference books.

### 6.7.2.4 Importance of Eye-Catching Cover Design

Q. Is the cover design attractive?

Response: The finding shows that, except for a few students, all the other students felt that the cover-design is not attractive. Nearly 36.67% of them, including Central Board students, opine that the cover-design is not inspiring.

Analysis: Findings represent that a very few students have seen some of the prescribed books and they are of the opinion that the cover design of those books is not so attractive. It is noted from the study that it is very difficult for the students to procure all the extensive list of books referred by the syllabus designers. The absence of a prescribed textbook and giving a long list of reference books has confused them as to what they should take from them and as to how they will have to use the material given in the reference books.

### 6.7.2.5 Language Usage in Other Situations

Q. Do you find it easy to use new words (vocabulary) in your interaction in other than classroom situations?
Response: It has been observed that on the whole, only 28.33 per cent of students are able to use the language in other situations. Though 52.78% students are able to comprehend the activities, it does not help them in the use of language in practical and real life situations. 18.89% of the students are completely unable to use it successfully.

Analysis: Required vocabulary and structures that are introduced in theory and practical lab classes will help the students in their corporeal life. If the material is not given properly to them, even the best selection would be in vain.

6.7.3 COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS

As mentioned in the content of the syllabus for I/IV B.Tech. I Semester and II Semester, Vignan has a multi-skilled syllabus for English; and, therefore, covers and integrates both productive (Speaking and Writing) and receptive skills (Listening and Reading). However, it does place larger emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Even the teachers at Vignan have stated that the syllabus of Essentials of Management and Basic Communication and English Language Lab for I/IV B.Tech. I Semester students does provide a balance of the four language skills; but, the students are unhappy with the representation of the skills and they feel that the deserved attention is missing. Indian students are generally used to learn English with the help of a prescribed syllabus which is delivered through the textbook, right from the primary level at school to the higher level of tertiary course of +2 education.

The present generation of students are aware of the importance of oral communication, hence there is a tendency and desire to learn conversational and functional English, consequently there is a focus on Speaking and Listening skills. This
tendency is so deeply ingrained in them that any time spent in the class on Reading or Writing they feel, is likely to be a waste of time.

A more positive characteristic of the integrated syllabus is the fact that the linguistic elements of the syllabus such as grammar and vocabulary items are closely connected to the skills-base. So, as the course progresses and the vocabulary base becomes more demanding, the demands on skill-based exercises is greater. Listening to passages introduced in the Lab sessions take considerable time, though the response is faster and the accent or dialect is not upto given standards. It is obvious that there is a certain amount of unintelligibility on the part of the listener and that he/she is not aware of the basic features of Spoken English. The discourse structure within these texts is also complex and time consuming. Complex inferential and interpretative questions which require students to undertake more difficult tasks such as inferring meaning or extracting certain relevant information from a mass of less relevant information. In the absence of effective teaching, these may not yield ‘good’ results. An analysis into the treatment of receptive and productive skills as well as the productive skills of Speaking and Writing in the Vignan University Technical English Syllabus has led to the following observations.

6.7.3.1 Comprehension of the Topics in the Syllabus

Q. Are the topics easy to understand through the support material provided in your reference books?

Response: 43.89% of them felt that the topics are easy to understand, and 36.11% of them could understand the topics “to some extent.” Few teachers expressed the opinion that they are not familiar with the technical terms and management skills included in the syllabus.
Analysis: Most of the Syllabus in Semester I is theoretical; so the students pay little attention in the language classes. As major part of the syllabus on management topics are being dealt with by non-language teachers, the students find these topics not much interesting.

6.7.3.2 Pictorial Presentations

Q. Are there adequate pictures, charts, graphs to understand the concepts in the reference books?

Response: From the collected data, 21.11% of the respondents expressed their opinion that there are no adequate pictures, charts and graphs to understand the context. 33.89% of the respondents consider that there are adequate pictures, charts and graphs to understand the context and 45% of them expressed their satisfaction, to some extent.

Analysis: The topics appear to be simple in language presentation as the majority of students find them to be comprehensible. But their response is negative to the question whether the presentations have any pictures, charts or graphs. The reference books for Engineering students should have these aids as they deal with them in their optional subjects. Moreover, “information transfer” from one medium to another is an important skill. Hence, converting the text into a picture or a graph or representing the material studied in the form of a table improves not only the skill of learner but also stimulates his imaginative powers. This point has to be taken into consideration when it comes to the important task of selection of reference books.

6.7.3.3 Development of Language with respect to Grammar

Q. “Do you think that your language has improved with respect to Grammar through the material provided in your text?”
Response: Nearly 26.11% of them have responded that they have improvement in grammar. 51.11 percent of the students have acknowledged that they are able to improve their grammar only ‘to some extent.’ The remaining 22.78% of them are not sure of their improvement.

Analysis: Grammar teaching would help the learners internalise the structures taught in such a way that they can be used language in everyday communication. The learners have to be provided with opportunities to practice the structures taught in the classroom through different activities, first under controlled conditions, and then under more normal communicative situations.

Grammar rules should help the learner understand the language, giving them the feeling that they can understand the structures of language and they can gain linguistic competence. These activities will enable the students to be grammatically correct in their usage. Such of these exercises will make the learner discover the choices involved in applying the correct rules of grammar.

6.7.3.4 Language Development through Tasks

Q. How do you rate these tasks?

Response: The findings show that the tasks promote learning in a sequential manner. Except for a few students (18.89%), to all the other students, the tasks seemed to be moderate and easy. An overall percentage of 61.67 students found the tasks moderate and 19.44% found them easy.

Analysis: The latest methodology of language teaching does not consider talking about the errors committed by the learners. ELT experts feel that the time spent in talking
about errors may be more gainfully and meaningfully spent in teaching the right forms of usage. Hence, the item -- “Correction of Sentences” can be reconsidered.

6.8 ANALYSIS OF THE SYLLABUS WITH REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE SKILLS

Good Language Communication and Management Skills are the key elements in the skills portfolio of any successful professional. Communication is so vital to an organization’s decision-making process that all the project managers must have the skill to initiate and respond to all forms of communication. The gateway for a successful manager to build collaborative relationships is through active listening. He/She can dramatically increase productivity by arranging professional meetings and business discussions. Building collaborative relationships based on trust and respect, gaining commitment for the vision, and leading a team and taking the consensus of all the stakeholders is crucial for the success of today’s project managers.

6.8.1 Listening Skill

The importance of Listening in communication is enormous. People often focus on their speaking ability believing that ‘good’ speaking is a component of ‘good’ and successful communication. The ability to listen is very important.

The way to become a perceptive listener is to practice "active listening." Active listening is necessary for following directions, understanding concepts and maintaining discipline. This is where the listener makes a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is uttering; but, more importantly, it involves the effort to understand the complete message given. In order to do this, a learner must pay total attention to the other person.
Listening is the main skill in the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Listening is the skill that forges the bond and keeps the relationship -- personal or professional -- moving forward.

Table 6.1

Overall Improvement in Listening Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Grade</th>
<th>State board</th>
<th>Central board</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36.03</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>06.83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey.

The above table (6.1) shows that nearly half of the students (46.11%) were found to be ‘very good’ in their Listening Skill. Among the others 11.11% were found to be ‘good’, 36.11% ‘excellent’ and 6.67% were ‘average’ in their improvement. The response of the students to the question on improvement of their Listening Skill clearly indicates that they had enough practice in Listening, in the Language Lab.
Figure 6.1
Overall Improvement in Listening Skills

Source: Survey

6.8.2 Speaking Skill

Speaking is a muscular activity. People use speech organs to produce sounds. As Alfred William Fribsy in his book, *Teaching English: Notes and Comments on Teaching English Overseas*, reveals, in the process of speaking one’s own language, one acquires certain specific muscle habits. When sounds of a second language are different from those of one’s mother tongue one has to learn new muscle habits (1957: 43).

There must be some kind of exposure to the language input, so that the natural learning mechanisms have something to work on. Learners have to be exposed to English through clearer pronunciation, slower pace of utterance, simpler structures and common
vocabulary. Many writers believe that it is the interaction with other people, which plays the most crucial role in enabling the acquisition of language. Natural learning depends on the learner’s active engagement with language.

Speaking skills are certainly a central focus in second language learning. Many items in the syllabus focus on the conversational fluency and the lab activities provide plenty of opportunities for oral communication. Speaking practice takes place through oral presentation and practice of speaking new language items, such as dialogues, role playing, group-discussions, and classroom activities. Mechanical aspects of speaking are also occasionally covered in pronunciation practice. In addition, a number of specific conversation strategies can be provided, such as practicing the ability to open and close conversations, introducing and developing topics, turn-taking, clarification requests, checking, and practicing a variety of idiomatic expressions. Much of the speaking practice can be found in dialogues, which are also role-playing exercises, designed to introduce new structures and present functional and conversational expressions. When students are paired together in role-playing activities it would lead to better modes of communication. Finally, concepts such as informal speaking, asking questions, improving replies, agreeing and disagreeing, complaining and apologizing, advising and persuading, taking initiative, expressing doubt and reservation etc., are intended to involve the students in active information sharing, freer cooperative group tasks and other types of exercises designed to encourage communication skills. These latter exercises are a central component of each unit and they allow the students to extend, refine, and personalize the material they have practiced and studied in each unit.
With respect to pronunciation, the results of the survey seemed to demonstrate that this is one of the major weaknesses of the syllabus (See Appendix: VI). One of the most glaring inadequacies is absence of some important features of pronunciation such as word stress, sentence stress, and intonation.

Authors such as David Brazil (1985), Richard Caudwell and Martin Hewing (1996), Charles Clenell (1997) and John Levis (1999) have suggested that the problems of intonation are typical of both the traditional and modern ELT textbooks and pointed out that these shortcomings could often be overcome or “greatly lessened by thinking differently about the uses of intonation and the needs and abilities of learners” (1999: 63) More specifically, they have argued that pronunciation skills such as stress and intonation should only be taught in an explicit method so as to emphasize their communicative value and relevance. They have further argued that teachers and textbooks should only describe intonational meaning very generally at the outset, but gradually work towards the demonstration of specific meanings, roles, (i.e., information markers, discourse markers, conversational managers, attitudinal or affect markers, grammatical/syntactic markers, pragmatic markers), and grammaticality (i.e., tone group divisions, marked and unmarked tonic syllables, pitch change, pitch choice) by presenting them in particular contexts through systematic exposure to meaningful, authentic, and phonologically salient texts. In addition, they suggest that one should not only focus on affective and attitudinal meanings but also examine the impact that intonation and stress have in a communicative conversational setting. Moreover, they recommend that the ELT materials and the teachers should never use generalized affective meanings that depend on the native speakers' intuitions, as overtly precise meanings are rarely conveyed by
intonation and stress alone. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, they suggest that the primary purpose in teaching intonation should be to highlight its role, purpose, use, and its significance in communication and discourse; simply teaching intonation patterns is of absolutely no use as intonation is a part of functional conversation and not just an isolated feature.

**Table 6.2**

**Overall Improvement in Speaking Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Grade</th>
<th>State board</th>
<th>Central board</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>49.69</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29.81</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.77</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>03.73</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Survey

An overall percentage of 47.78 of the students have opined that they had improvement in Speaking Skills through the use of the textbook. There are a plethora of tasks that can be given in a language lab, to improve the learners’ skill in speaking. But some students are dissatisfied with the software procured by the University. They desire for the upgradation of the software.
Overall Improvement in Speaking Skills

Source: Survey

6.8.3 Reading Skill

Reading is one of the essential skills for overall development of the learner. It is also an activity that demands greater levels of concentration and adds to the conversational skills of the reader. It is an indulgence that enhances the knowledge acquired, continuously. The habit of reading helps the technocrats to decipher new words and phrases that they have come across in everyday conversations. In the contemporary world, the technology provides the scientific findings in the form of written texts. So, the need for reading and extracting information seems to be a healthy habit. As stated in the article “Challenges to Reading Research from a Multilingual World” by Elizabeth
Bernhardt, the ability to read is the most stable and durable of the second language modalities (2003: 38(1): 112-117). Wilga Marie Rivers, in her article “Foreign Language Acquisition: Where the Real Problems Lie”, propounds that reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language (1980: 1: 48-59).

Peter Strevens also emphasizes the importance of Reading for the learners for two reasons:

First of all this skill provides the learners with access to a great quantity of further experience of the language. The second reason is presenting a window onto the normal means of continuing the learners' personal education by Reading Skill (1977: 10/3: 145-163).

Through reading, the learners will be able to develop a sufficient language base that enables them to produce the spoken or written messages which they are eager to communicate to others. Kent Chastain believes that “without this knowledge, students are not likely to be successful in the typical language class in which all four language skills are stressed” (1971: 376-384).
Table 6.3
Overall Improvement in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Grade</th>
<th>State Board</th>
<th>Central Board</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>04.97</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45.34</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey.

From the above Table (6.3), it can be understood that nearly half of the students (46.67%) are of the opinion that they have only an ‘average’ improvement in Reading Skills through the use of the textbook. Only 04.44% of the learners were found to be excellent in their Reading Skills. From this, the inference is that they need the necessary tasks to do the reading comprehension exercises better. The workbook provides a variety of tasks giving them the opportunity to use their ability, for an answer, to think critically, to analyse, to give titles to the paragraphs, to argue or justify in a proper manner.
6.8.4 Writing Skill

The main focus of Vignan University syllabus is on writing, a skill which has not been accorded the attention it deserved. The first observation that can be made is that even though the Writing Skill is essential for all the students, it is frequently considered to be less significant than the skills in reading and speaking.

According to Sarah Hudelson (1988), the development of students’ Writing Skills could be defined as “the creation of original text using the individual’s intellectual and linguistic resources, rather than copying someone else’s text, using a prepared list of
words to create sentences or stories, filling in the blanks, or practising handwriting.” This kind of writing is considered in the Vignan University, as significant as the other skills as it is always used to assess students in both formal and informal tests. Besides, learning to produce real-life written texts involves learning to consider the reader’s needs which, in turn, enable students to develop their communicative skills.

As Peter Wingard has said, writing can be considered as a channel or as a goal of language learning. The first idea, writing as a channel is followed in I/IV B.Tech. I Semester, where students write to learn the language; that is, they use ‘Writing’ alongside ‘Listening’, ‘Speaking’ and ‘Reading’ in the process of learning important elements of the language and developing command of the language writing as a goal of language learning. The second idea, writing as a goal of language learning has been implemented in the II Semester, students learn to write; therefore, writing as a goal basically focuses on “the development of Writing Skills to fulfil such purposes as note-taking, summarising, narrating, reporting and replying, required for various real-life situations” (1981: 139-140).

Maria Palmria Massi has stated that the aim of writing activities is to engage students in a dynamic, interactive process which reinforces “an awareness of audience, purpose and intentionality” by constructing real-life and meaningful activities (2001). It is indispensable to create the conditions for interaction in which meaning will be negotiated between the teacher and the students. Maria Cabral has said that writing must be considered a problem-solving activity at the professional level aiming at setting “the pedagogical climate for the development of the task which requires students’ active involvement” (2004).
Besides, learners are expected to work in tandem with each other in order to perform the writing activities assigned to them. Pair work seems to be more effective because, as George M. Jacobs and Jessica Ball suggest, it enhances the opportunities for each member to participate actively in the activities and reduces the complexity of group management. Furthermore, writing is viewed as a recursive process which requires students to plan and revise, rearrange and produce multiple drafts before the finished document is produced. The activities should basically focus on writing as a goal without repudiating the interest in grammatical accuracy (1996: 50/2: 99-107).

A final observation that could be made is that the development of students’ Writing Skills requires the learners to be exposed to texts belonging to that particular genre. According to Maria Cabral (2004: 10/2), it could be done “through the exposure to similar texts, students can notice the specific configurations of that genre. Besides, learners can activate their memory of previous reading experiences of texts similar to the one they are being challenged to produce. A final point that should be made relates to how the teacher could help students to become effective writers. It is worth citing Paul Ammon’s remark which asserts that the success in helping students to learn to write in English as a second language hinges primarily on the use of instructional activities that are rich in opportunities for exposure to, production of, and reflection on English discourse. Such activities must include frequent writing, with guidance and feedback, on topics of personal interest. In this respect, no textbook was prescribed for Vignan University Engineering students to give them the necessary inputs.

The overall improvement of the students, in Writing Skill, using the reference books prescribed, was however, found to be good.
Table 6.4

Overall Improvement in Writing Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Grade</th>
<th>State board</th>
<th></th>
<th>Central board</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>06.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>00.00</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>05.26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>46.58</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.69</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31.68</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey.

The above table (6.4) shows that the overall improvement in Writing Skill could be registered as being ‘good’, in 49.44% of the students. The response of the students to the question on their improvement in Writing Skill clearly indicates that they are not totally unaware of the importance of Writing in a Language Learning Programme. If only the textbook had been presented giving due importance to this skill, the students also would have learnt to listen to write better.
6.9 EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH THE PRESCRIBED SYLLABUS IN ENGLISH

The table shows an overall analysis of the textbook. It indicates whether the objectives have been fulfilled or not. The objectives are: improvement of second language learning, comprehension of the text and learning of all communication skills, language learning with respect to grammar, and using second language in other situations.
Table 6.5

Level of Satisfaction on Learners' Second Language Learning through the Prescribed Syllabus in English in Content and Corporeal Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Highly Satisfied %</th>
<th>Satisfied %</th>
<th>Dissatisfied %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in Creating Motivation</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>61.11</td>
<td>20.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of the Text to the Engineering Course</td>
<td>38.89</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>17.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Design of Technical Terms</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>35.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Creativity</td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Eye-Catching Cover Design</td>
<td>18.89</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>36.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Usage in Other Situations</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>52.78</td>
<td>18.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey.

**Content Aspects:** The students expressed their satisfaction when it came to the content aspect. Those who were dissatisfied felt the acute need for a prescribed text book in the absence of which students have been compelled to depend on supplementary material provided in a long list of reference books which are obviously beyond the means of any student to procure them.

**Corporeal Aspects:** The students responded in the same way to this aspect as well. While the group of satisfied students comprise 50% of the number, a few others expressed their dissatisfaction for similar reasons.
Figure 6.5

Level of Satisfaction on Learners' Second Language Learning through the Prescribed Syllabus in English in Content and Corporeal Aspects

Source: Survey
Table 6.6

Level of Satisfaction on Learners' Second Language Learning through the Prescribed Syllabus in English in Communicative Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Highly Satisfied %</th>
<th>Satisfied %</th>
<th>Dissatisfied %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension of the Text</td>
<td>43.89</td>
<td>36.11</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of language-learning through grammar</td>
<td>26.11</td>
<td>51.11</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of language through tasks</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>61.67</td>
<td>18.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skill</td>
<td>36.11</td>
<td>46.11</td>
<td>17.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking skill</td>
<td>47.78</td>
<td>32.22</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading skill</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>46.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skill</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>49.44</td>
<td>30.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Survey.

**Communicative Aspects:** Out of the four major objectives of the imparting communication skills, Listening and Speaking were found to be satisfactory. The remaining skills, Reading and Writing have to be paid much more attention. The Comprehensive reading of the text enables students to be thorough with LSRW skills. Language-learning through grammar-oriented tasks help the learners to be proficient in the language, which requires a much more attention.
Among all the objectives specified, some of them have been found to be fulfilled. The majority of informants understand the text and only a few cannot comprehend the text. In the objectives of language-learning with respect to grammar, most of the students feel that they have improvement.

The informants have expressed satisfaction about their improvement through task-oriented grammar. Among the four skills seen earlier they lack in Reading and Writing skills whereas 70% of them have improved their Listening and Speaking skills.

Source: Survey.
6.10 COMMUNICATION SKILLS LABORATORY

“English Language Lab” is the course title for communication skills lab sessions in Vignan University. The objective of the course is mainly the development of two specific skills, i.e., Listening and Speaking, in order to improve the communicative competence of the learners in those areas. Activities in the language lab will stimulate actual discourses that the students will engage in, in their interaction with their peers, teachers or strangers, in their day-to-day life.

By the time the students complete the course, they would be able to identify and use most of the general features of discourse development, which may be realized differently in different specific communication situations. The concepts covered under the English Language Lab are: Units I and II are on Speech Mechanism and Phonetics; Unit III deals with the tasks related to Listening, Speaking and Reading Comprehension, Unit IV aims at including within the syllabus speech constructions and exercises in gaining fluency. Finally Unit-V is on Vocabulary.

**Speech mechanism and Phonetics:**

In face-to-face communication speech is perceived non-verbally, more through body language. The speaker's articulatory gestures are observed and the speech sounds are heard simultaneously. Whilst acoustics can be often understood without visual information, viewing articulatory gestures helps hearing substantially, even in distracting conditions. The suggested software is *Speech Solutions* and *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. 
Listening, Speaking and Reading Comprehension:

The main concept in this Unit is recognizing the structure of a lecture or a talk. The topics introduced are Active Listening, Guessing and Deducing meaning of unfamiliar words and word-groups from the context and the tone of the speaker, Recognizing Implications, Recognizing the speaker’s attitude etc. The software suggested by the University is Rosetta Stone and TOEFL Mastery.

Speech Constructions and Fluency:

The notion of this Unit is to avoid communication apprehension. Communication apprehension is far more dangerous than the first stage fear frequently found in a classroom when students are made to speak. As James C. McCroskey defined communication apprehension as an “individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (1977: 4/2: 78-96).

Communication Apprehension is a pattern of anxiety, established often in the elementary grades, which can profoundly affect much or all of a student's oral communication, social skills and self-esteem. General personality traits such as shyness and reticence frequently precipitate Communication Apprehension. According to Paul G. Friedman (1980: 520) when the ability and desire to participate in discussion is present, but the process of verbalizing is inhibited, shyness or reticence is occurring. The degree of shyness, or range of situations that it affects, varies greatly from individual to individual.
As James C. McCroskey and Byron D. Bond (1980: 29: 239-244) have observed that the following seven factors can be identified in a child who is quiet:

- low intellectual skills
- speech skill deficiencies
- voluntary social introversion
- social alienation
- communication anxiety
- low social self-esteem
- ethnic/cultural divergence in communication norms

The environment in the college can play a vital role in the prevention of communication apprehension and in this respect Paul G. Friedman has made the following suggestions:

- creating a warm, easygoing climate in the classroom
- helping students get to know one another at the beginning of the year
- using drama and role-playing situations
- having students speak to the class in groups or panels rather than individually
- allowing students to work with classmates with whom they feel most comfortable
- having students speak from their seats rather than from the front of the room
- presenting students with oral activities in a developmental sequence (1980: 520).

Keeping this in view, English Language Lab Course Designers of the Vignan University have introduced some of the topics in this section, such as speaking in formal and informal contexts, introducing oneself, asking questions, improving replies, taking the initiative, asking for information and using telephone to lessen the learner’s communication apprehension.

**Vocabulary**

Most of the learners in India spend many years studying English grammar; yet they cannot speak fluent and natural English. Grammar is only the basis of a language. No doubt, proficiency in grammar can help one to speak and write correctly. However, more importantly, one needs to have a ‘good’ vocabulary to speak and write naturally and
effectively. More than the possession of all these language features, one should have adequate practice of the language in use.

English has a rich vocabulary, which is particularly increasing rapidly due to the developments in science and technology. To have a ‘good’ command over a fund of vocabulary and repertoire of words, however, does not mean that one has to memorise thousands and thousands of words in isolation. In fact, most native speakers know only a small number of the English words. However, they can almost always get their points across effectively by using word combinations, idioms, commonly used expressions, and phrasal verbs. Being able to speak and write properly, therefore, requires a section on vocabulary.

Barnhart, Clarence Lewis defines vocabulary as, “all the words known and used by a particular person” (1968). It is especially important for technically oriented people to pay attention to their vocabulary. When it is said, “technically oriented people,” it specifically implies those who are ‘good’ in their technical subjects. While they are brilliant in these subjects, many of these people are not so brilliant when it comes to Writing or Speaking in English.

The next chapter would present the structure of a ‘good’ curriculum design and its different aspects. An analysis of the objectives of the English Courses of the Engineering and Technology Colleges, of the four selected Universities, has been taken for study, in this study. The required changes in the syllabi and in the approaches of testing have been suggested, along with the findings of the researcher with reference to the prescribed books in these four Universities selected for study.