

A Need Based Syllabus for Non Technical Learners

S. Subha¹, K. Abirami^{2*}, M. Ambikavathy³, M.K. Durgamani² and N. S. Yoganantha Rao²

¹Department of Science and Humanities, M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering, Thalavapalayam – 639113, Tamil Nadu, India; subhaprasath2012@gmail.com

²Department of English, SASTRA Deemed University, Thanjavur – 613401, Tamil Nadu, India; abirami@src.sastra.edu, durgamani@src.sastra.edu, yoganandaraao@src.sastra.edu

³Department of English, Periyar University College of Arts and Science, Dharmapuri District –636905, Tamil Nadu, India; visit.ambika@gmail.com

Abstract

Objectives: The study is to make a critical analysis of the existing syllabus of the non technical programmes. A survey on the second language syllabus of the non technical learners of a university was conducted and has incorporated useful suggestions for the improvement of the syllabus. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** The research used random sampling method and studied the response of the learners through questionnaire. Likert's scale was used in the questionnaire on a five point scale. SPSS software has been used for the analysis of the data and the observations and conclusion were made thereafter. **Findings:** The study found that most of the universities recommend updation of the syllabus with respect to the change in job scenario. The students feel that syllabus have to be updated often and the teachers also to be trained to handle and teach the syllabus. **Application/Improvements:** The survey can be extended to any other syllabus of the subject and can be taken as a catalyst for improvement of the syllabus.

Keywords: Language, Need based Syllabus, Non Technical Syllabus, Syllabus Design, Technical

1. Introduction

In this competitive world, pupil study for their employment needs. Every student aims to get a job after completing the courses. The present research provides some of the suggestions to enhance the language skills to cope with employment opportunities of the L2 learners of English language.

The research hypotheses are:

- The Academic achievements don't guarantee the employability which demands development of specific skills.
- Syllabus should cater to the needs and requirements of the learners.

- Employment and Employability should be the key determining factors of syllabus framed for L2 learners of the English language.

The objectives of this research are:

- To find out how far the existing general English syllabus meets the students' employment needs.
- To study the merits and demerits of the present general English syllabus as well as to identify the gaps in the syllabus, and make the syllabus relevant to employability.
- To propose modifications and revisions in the existing syllabus so that the employment needs of non-technical learners are fulfilled.
- To equip them with LSRW skills needed for academic as well as in workplace contexts.

*Author for correspondence

The researcher has read some articles in which the scholars had suggested to update the existing syllabus. Here are some notions of the scholars who appreciated and evaluated the need based syllabus to the target audience which helps the present researcher to develop a need based general English syllabus to the non-technical learners.

According to Candlin, curriculum refers to content learning whereas syllabus is more localized. Widdowson regards syllabus as only a point of reference¹. In² proposed six types of syllabi. They are structural syllabus in which language is taught as forms and structures, usually grammatical elements such as verbs, nouns, past tense and so on. A notional/functional syllabus is a collection of the functions where language is used to express. A situational syllabus is a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. A skill-based syllabus is a collection of specific abilities, in content-based language teaching, the primary purpose of the instruction is to teach some content or information using the language where in a task-based syllabus the content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students want or need to perform with the language they are learning.

In a research article by³ discusses the guidelines to design an effective English language teaching materials. The researcher talked about the pros and cons of English language teachers designed their own teaching materials. While preparing the material a teacher should follow some of the guidelines such as English language materials should be contextualized, interactive, and generative, it should develop learning skill and provides opportunity for an integrated language use, authentic, attractive, appropriate instruction and it should be flexible.

In^{4,5} proposed some of the factors involved in writing course material for example, in testing the grammar activities the practice should be meaningful, mechanical and communicative. When focusing the mechanical practice, the learners where not necessary to understand the language they used rather it would be repetitive and substitutive drills. In communicative practice, the learners where given a real communicative situation. So, they came out from their own ideas. As a result, it helped the hypothesis that a syllabus which the researcher provides should be more interactive as it related to¹.

In⁶ the researcher examined the English language syllabus of various engineering colleges and analyzed whether the syllabus is useful in real life situations or not. The researcher conducted the survey by the questionnaire method and found that the present syllabi were not

fulfilled the needs of the learners. So, the researcher has recommended that there should be more interactive sessions to improve their communicative competence. In⁷ made a Need based approach to design an ESP courses. The researcher also found that the revision of the current programme seems to be necessary for effective ESP courses for the students of architecture in Iranian universities.

Furthermore, in a research article by⁸ in the context of ESP for law courses found that a specific terminology is a hindrance to effective communication in English and so there must be a bigger focus on learning vocabulary.

In⁹ analyzed sixth grade text book to find out the extent the text book has incorporated in communicative approach. Thus, the study presented the key issues in syllabus design to improve the current syllabus of technical and non technical programmes. It is necessary for the teachers of English language to fix their knowledge and skills to enhance their learners' ability. Furthermore, the scholars focused on developing specific English programmes but there is a wide range of gap found in developing the syllabus for the non technical programmes. Hence, the researcher analyzed the existing general English syllabus of non-technical programme.

2. Research Methodology

For this, the researcher has used a questionnaire method to analyze the present General English Syllabus of non-technical programme of some private institutions to find how far the syllabus meets the employment opportunities of the non-technical learners. A survey was conducted among the learners who were successful in getting themselves placed. The researcher has included 100 non- technical learners in the data collection. Based on the analysis of their feedback, collected in the form of a questionnaire, the researcher has suggested some meaningful changes to be incorporated in the syllabus to enhance their employability. To be more specific, this action research evaluates the syllabus in vogue to make it more effective in terms of Employability. With the help of software package SPSS, collected data were analyzed. A statistical technique like percentage analysis was used to evaluate the primary data.

3. Results and Discussions

The questionnaire contains 27 questions and the scripts were collected and analyzed using the Likert scale and the

outcome was categorized into five different modules for clarity.

Inference: Table 1 indicates that the gender of the respondents. 32% (103) of them are male and 70% (103) of them are female. Therefore it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents are female.

Inference: Table 2 indicates the English Language Learning Background of the Respondents. According to the Board of study, the respondents are classified into two categories. 22.3% (103) of them studied in Matriculation and 77.7% (103) of them studied in State Board. Therefore it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents studied from State Board.

Inference: Table 3 indicates the distribution of the Student Sample. According to the medium of instruction and it is inferred that 40.8% (103) of them were instructed in Tamil and 59.2% (103) of them are female. Therefore it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents were instructed in English.

Inference: Table 4 indicates the area of the respondents. 38.8% (103) of them are belongs to rural area and 61.2% (103) of them are belongs to urban. Therefore it can be inferred that majority of the respondents are belonging to urban area.

3.1 Division of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into five categories based on the role of the syllabus. i.e., the role of the syllabus in developing LSRW Skills, in career development, in learning activities, in learning specifically Grammar and the need to enhance the existing general English syllabus.

Table 1. Distribution of the student sample according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	33	32.0	32.0	32.0
Female	70	68.0	68.0	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. English language learning background of the respondents

Board	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Matriculation	23	22.3	22.3	22.3
State board	80	77.7	77.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The following tables were analysed based on the Likert scale where SA indicates to Strongly Agree, A to Agree, N to Neutral, D to Disagree and SDA refers to Strongly Disagree

Inferences: Table 5 represents the role of syllabus in developing LSRW skills. The data given in the Table 5 were considered in percentage.

- For the statement 1, nearly 57% (103) of the respondents disagreed and only 45% (103) of them agreed with the statement. Therefore it is inferred that the prescribed general English syllabus only being partially helps to improve the four skills [Listening, Speaking, Reading, writing] of the non-technical learners.
- For the statement 2, 62% (103) of the respondents were disagreed and only 41% (103) of them were agreed with the statement. Hence it is proved that the general English classroom activities partially enhance the LSRW skills.

Table 3. Distribution of the student sample according to the medium of instruction

Medium	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tamil	42	40.8	40.8	40.8
English	61	59.2	59.2	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Distribution of the student sample according to urban and rural areas in percentage

Area	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Rural	40	38.8	38.8	38.8
Urban	63	61.2	61.2	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Role of syllabus in developing LSRW skills

NO	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	The prescribed general English syllabus helps to improve the four skills.	7	38	1	36	21
2	The general English classroom activities enhance my LSRW skills.	4	37	0	45	17
3	The general English syllabus developed LSRW skills uniformly.	4	7	0	74	18

- For the statement no.3, almost 92% (103) of the respondents disagreed and only 11% (103) of them agreed with the statement. Hence it is proved that the general English syllabus didn't develop the LSRW skills uniformly.

Table 6 represents the role of syllabus in career development. The data given in the table were consider in percentage. It is inferred that English language is important for their career development. The prescribed general English syllabus and also the activities given in the classroom were insufficient to meet the employment opportunities of the learners. Only by their own efforts the respondents got placed. Therefore, necessary measures need to be taken to improve the general English syllabus of the non-technical learners to provide employment opportunities.

Table 7 represents the role of syllabus in learning activities. The data given in the table were consider in percentage. It is inferred that the majority of the respondents 89% (103) were interested in attending English for specific purpose course (ESP) and 76% (103) of the respondents disagreed that the literature components prescribed in general English syllabus helps to improve their communicative skills. Moreover, 63% (103) of them agreed that the exams in general English were memory based and 89% (103) of them thought that it will be better to include language practice activities and grammar practice activities in the general English syllabus.

Table 8 represents the role of syllabus in learning Grammar. The data given in the Table 8 were consider in percentage

- From statement 1, it is inferred that 91% of the respondents disagreed that the grammar in the prescribed general English syllabus is applicative. So the examination we conduct should be applicative.
- From statement 2, it is inferred that 98% of the respondents disagreed that the prescribed general English syllabus gives exposure to idiomatic usage of English.
- From statement 3, it is inferred that 71% of the respondents disagreed that the prescribed general English syllabus develops accuracy and fluency of English. So we must conduct many language lab classes to give exposure to the native speaker's speech.

Table 9 represents the need to enhance the existing general English syllabus. The data given in the Table 9 were

Table 6. Role of syllabus in career development

NO	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	English language is important for my career.	48	51	0	2	2
2	I know, I must improve my English to find a good job.	61	37	0	5	0
3	The general English syllabus prescribed should be job oriented.	9	20	0	57	17
4	I put efforts on my own to get placed.	43	31	1	24	4
5	The general English syllabus I studied is sufficient to meet the needs of employment opportunities.	5	20	0	51	27
6	The assignments and the classroom activities in the general English class help me to get placed.	5	18	0	49	31

Table 7. Role of syllabus in learning activities

NO	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	I am interested in attending more English classes related to my field of study.	37	56	1	7	2
2	I will speak better if I attend English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course.	33	56	1	11	2
3	The literature components prescribed in the general English syllabus helps me to improve my communicative skills.	1	26	0	54	22
4	The exams in general English are memory based.	28	40	0	30	5
5	The prescribed general English syllabus can be stretched further for many activities in language learning.	2	39	2	45	15
6	I think it will be better to include language practice activities and grammar practice activities in the general English syllabus	60	29	0	10	4

consider in percentage, it is inferred that 72% (103) of the respondents disagreed that the prescribed general English syllabus caters to the needs of all level of learners .So, the

Table 8. Role of syllabus in learning Grammar

NO	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	The grammar in the prescribed general English syllabus is applicative.	0	12	0	52	39
2	The prescribed general English syllabus gives exposure to idiomatic usage of English.	0	5	0	63	35
3	The prescribed general English syllabus develops accuracy and fluency of English.	11	21	0	48	23

Table 9. The need to enhance the existing general English syllabus

NO	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	There are differences I found between the school and the university general English syllabus.	20	43	1	30	9
2	The prescribed general English syllabus caters to the needs of all level of learners.	1	29	1	50	22
3	The prescribed general English syllabus covers, the syllabus of the current competitive exams.	9	25	0	43	26
4	The general English syllabus needs revision	53	35	0	9	6
5	The general English class includes interpersonal activities.	8	50	0	36	9
6	The learning materials provided in general English syllabus improves life skill.	6	17	0	50	30
7	The prescribed general English syllabus helps me to develop Inter personal skills.	6	39	1	37	20

syllabus we design will suit to all level of learners based on the cognitive domain in a heterogeneous classroom and only 32 % (103) of the respondents agreed that the prescribed general English syllabus covers, the syllabus of the current competitive exams. In addition to that 58% (103) of the respondents agreed that the general English class includes interpersonal activities. Furthermore, only 23% of the respondents agreed that the learning materials provided in general English syllabus improves life skill. And finally 88% (103) of the respondents needs revision in the existing general English syllabus.

3.2 Findings and Suggestions

World Health Organization (WHO) has laid down the core Life Skills. They are Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, Coping with stress and emotion^{10,11}. These life skills cannot be developed through teacher centric-method. Academicians should move completely from teacher centric method to learner centric method. Learners should occupy the center stage. Teacher should act as facilitators. A cursory glance at the syllabus prescribed by the universities to the non- technical students reveals that, the syllabus is still in the old method of teaching English through prose and poetry though the curricular objectives have undergone changes. One cannot deny the fact that language in its entirety can be learnt only through literature. Yet a heterogeneity that one come across in a typical Indian classroom makes it obligatory on the part of the teachers to switch over to discrete materials and newer strategies of instruction like group discussion, role play, seminar, symposium, field visit etc.

The researcher submits the followings as recommendations to be incorporated in the syllabus to enhance the employment opportunities. They are:

- Development of interpersonal skills.
- Enhancement of LSRW skills for language competence.
- Teaching technical English.
- Conducting applicative examination.
- Teaching grammar through inductive method.
- Gives priority to the current competitive examination.
- The assignments and classroom activities given will have to be in such a way that they develop both language competence and grammar proficiency for effective communication.

- Finally, the syllabus will have to suit all levels of learners based on the cognitive domain in a heterogeneous classroom. If these elements are included in the general English syllabus means, the employment opportunities may rise.

4. Conclusion

Today, the techno-friendly learners don't like the chalk and talk method. They want to involve themselves in the teaching method. So the syllabus must be learner centered. Learners should occupy the center stage and teacher should act as facilitators. Accordingly the syllabus and learning methods should be aligned.

5. Reference

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