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A scathing analysis of general English examination pattern at undergraduate level in Satavahana University

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Abstract

The present study attempts to examine critically the existing General English examination pattern at the undergraduate level in Satavahana University, Telangana State. The question papers that are given at the end of the academic year at undergraduate level encourage students to memorize the answer for the questions and do not create the place in their minds for critical thinking. The research tries to bring out the undergraduate level question papers do not aim at communication skills of the students. The question paper setters should not choose the same questions every year and they must select thought provoking questions. The present paper suggests that all the four language skills should be given equivalent weightage in measuring English proficiency at undergraduate level.

Keywords: General English, UG level, examination pattern, question paper

Introduction

English language got a prominent place in India as it is an international, link and library language. The main objective of introducing English at undergraduate level is to make the students improve communication skills as it is surmised that the students have already learnt English grammar and composition. In spite of prescribing English in high school and college level, most of the students are unable to speak in English because examination pattern focus much on writing skills rather than speaking skills. That is why the present research gets importance to find out the mistakes of question paper pattern which do not fulfill the objectives of the learning programme.

Examinations play a significant role in student's success. Examining and testing provides student's language proficiency. A test may be sometimes text based and sometimes independent but the university academic year exams for undergraduate level are completely text based. A good test tests both skills and knowledge of the students. Alderson and Wall (1993: 115) rightly mention that "Tests are held to be powerful determiners of what happens in the classroom" otherwise it is highly impossible to know the knowledge of the students. To test English language skills of the students, there must be a great balance between key aspects of language—reading skills, ability to know about language grammar, vocabulary and speaking skills. Then does the present examination pattern of UG level cover all the aspects that are discussed? The present research paper argues that the examination pattern is totally false faced. It becomes a lofty traditional factor that is to examine how many of the short summaries of prose and poetry has a learner by heart from the given prescribed syllabus instead of testing the knowledge of the student. The question papers do not aim at testing of a learner's linguistic skills and functional language in practical life; rather it examines memorizing capacity of the learner. The non-textual parts like grammar and composition in question papers are also taught to memorize the required matter without understanding the meaning. It is a ridiculous thing that student's knowledge in language is judged in a single final examination seems not an appropriate process. This particular type of examination does not succeed in eliciting communicative abilities and linguistic skills of the examinee and evaluate his competence in a successful way.

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This pattern falls apart from the instructional objectivities and fails to scale the learner's performance and competence. This magnifies, certainly, the detachment of healthy relationship between the learner and the teacher; moreover the teacher remains far off from getting a right feedback assessment to their own performance. The study of undergraduate course unlocks many a door of employment for the learners and their career building all in all rests on their proficiency in English language. But the present examination procedure is indifference to indemnify the learner's desperate destitution in language.

This observation is an outcome of analytical study of the existing materials, instructional objectives and question papers. Opinions of the teachers and the students collected in the form of the questionnaire stands in support of this observation. Keeping in view the future educational needs and employment requirement of the students, attempts have to make a new procedure for formulating the instructional objectives. This study offers some distinct innovative suggestions for the improvement of the extant examination pattern.

Concept of the Entrepreneur

An acute detective study of the present curriculum prescribed for undergraduate level students encored the entrepreneur to dig out the tangible tangles that found silent prevail into the syllabus and transformed into a terrible trauma for the language learners. Students are not getting rid of this bizarre nightmare at the cost of their utmost attempts, not they have any voice that would reach the syllabus makers. Therefore the entrepreneur is unable step to annihilate unnecessary hitches from the present curriculum and open the gates of vast Anglicized atmosphere for the foreign learners.

Concept of the Success

In this paper, after a deal of consideration, suggestions are made for the introduction of the functional English which in fact relieve the dread embedded mind of the students and lay a new path for the development of English as lingua franca. In the examination, it is suggested to test the communicative, linguistic skills of the students and prepare an adaptable syllabus.

Need of the Study

There is a gap between students' knowledge and high range syllabus. To abrogate the abnormalities of the syllabus, necessary measures to be adopted to facilitate the above aspects.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the errors in General English syllabus at undergraduate level in Satavahana University, Telangana State
2. To denote the inappropriate contents of the undergraduate General English syllabus.
3. To contemplate over the imbalance between students ability to perceive and the prescribed study material.
4. To design on apt syllabus to meet the perception ability of the students.
5. To suggest for proper syllabus to improve students language skills.
6. To develop certain guidelines for promoting apt syllabus and appropriate question pattern for undergraduate level.

The present study attempts to catch the above aspects and tries to explore the possible ways that bring the radical changes in the examination pattern.

Collection of Data

For the present study purpose, data is collected from question papers of Satavahana University for undergraduate level courses. The question paper setters usually prepare the papers based on the prescribed syllabus and textbooks. They are General English textbooks—*English for Fluency* for the first year students and *English for Employability* for the second year students. These books were published by Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad. Further, the responses of the lecturers and learners of English are analyzed.

Analysis of Data

As the purposive sample constituted the population itself, probability tats became inapplicable. Instead, the analysis was made on the basis of the study of the total population by using percentages and averages.

Limitations of the Study

Owing to several constraints, the study is limited to the General English examination pattern of the undergraduate level (common core) in Satavahana University, Telangana State. It excludes special English or modern Language or English literature taught at undergraduate level in some of the colleges and English taught at different professional colleges in the state.

FACULTIES OF ARTS/SCIENCE/COMMERCE/SOCIAL SCIENCES

B.A./B.Sc./B.Com./B.B.M. (I Year) Examination

(New)

GENERAL ENGLISH

Paper I

Time : 3 Hours]

[Max. Marks : 80

Answer the following questions from 1 to 10.

1. Answer any five of the following in about 150 words each: (5 × 7 = 35)
 - (a) What efforts did Mrs. Murthy put to know her real name?
 - (b) What kind of relation does Pochamma have with her Goddess?
 - (c) What is the role of her mother in the Kitchen that Vimala remembers?
 - (d) How did a legend develop around the figure of 'Yanadi'?
 - (e) Why would the adivasis be considered one of the first teachers for the rest of humanity?
 - (f) Why are the house owners reluctant to let out their rooms to the narrator in "For Vegetarians Only"?
 - (g) Explain the humour that evoked at the end of the story "Lawley Road".
 - (h) What is the essence in Nehru's Letter to his daughter?
 - (i) Write briefly about Steve Job's childhood, education and career.
 - (j) How should one behave with friends and foes according to Rudyard Kipling?
2. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow: (5 × 1 = 5)

'At first they are long, bell-shaped yellow flowers', she said. Then from the middle of these flowers bloom other flowers like roses, but the colour of Sandalwood'. 'Do they have any fragrance? Can they be used for Puja'? I enquired, unable to restrain my curiosity. They have no fragrance, but they are very beautiful to look at. They won't fade if we keep them in a vase! Strange! I didn't know what this was. I never saw such flowers. Better to plant Sannajaji, So we will wave a lot of Sweet-smelling flowers. Young girls can deck their plait with them. The flowers are a nice gift to give women visitors.

 - (a) How are the flowers at first?
 - (b) What bloom from the middle of the flowers?
 - (c) Do the flowers have any smell?
 - (d) Why did she advise to plant Sannajaji?
 - (e) What was strange?
3. Fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) The Soldier fell the horse.
 - (b) He doesn't believe ghosts.
 - (c) They go to college foot.
 - (d) My friend spoke to me the telephone.
 - (e) This story is written Mark Twain.
4. Fill in the blanks with suitable articles: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) Mount Everest is highest Peak in world.
 - (b) Quran is holy book of Muslims.
 - (c) Bill Gates is Kubera of modern times.

[P.T.O.]

5. Supply one word substitutes for the following: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) Suitable for eating.
 - (b) A detailed plan of journey.
 - (c) A person who speaks many languages.
 - (d) A set of ancient myths.
 - (e) An impressive view of a wide area of land.
6. Fill in the blanks with suitable idioms using the help box: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) He by making fun of the failed candidate.
 - (b) He wants others to be at (obey his orders).
 - (c) The manager without coming to the point.
 - (d) Mr. John when he tried to help his friend.
 - (e) Don't believe him, he sheds
(beat about the bush, his beck and call, burnt his fingers, crocodile tears, add fuel to the fire)
7. Fill in the blanks with suitable phrasal verbs using the help box: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) The cost of vegetables bumped heavily last year.
 - (b) Working on large projects calls good team work.
 - (c) I never entered any action without consulting my father.
 - (d) The officer gave the charge of his office to his successor.
 - (e) Mrs. Girija cashed her savings from a bank to buy a new car.
(Upon, in over, for, up)
8. Fill in the blanks with suitable verb forms: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) All the students in our college (know) English.
 - (b) Bullet trains (run) very fast.
 - (c) They (play) from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. yesterday.
 - (d) If he were the minister, he (give) jobs to all the unemployed.
 - (e) My teacher (teach) English since 1990.
9. Correct the following sentences: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) The bulletin covers only the news that are of interest to the members.
 - (b) Ramayana is the first epic in Indian literature.
 - (c) The police is searching his house for the stolen articles.
 - (d) He is teaching us English since 2011.
 - (e) He is having many friends in the town.
10. Supply suitable question tags to the following using the help box: (5 × 1 = 5)
 - (a) The children are in the playground,?
 - (b) I am a doctor,?
 - (c) Coffee tastes bitter,?
 - (d) Help me with bag,?
 - (e) The chairman is not coming to the meeting,?
(doesn't it?, aren't they?, is he?, aren't I?, could you?)

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S UG 201/N

FACULTIES OF ARTS/SCIENCE/COMMERCE/SOCIAL SCIENCE
B.A./B.Sc./B.Com./B.B.M. (II Year) Examination
GENERAL ENGLISH
Paper II
(New)

Time : 3 Hours] *[Max. Marks : 80*

Answer the following questions in the same order from 1 to 9.

- Answer any five of the following questions in about 200 words each: (5 × 7 = 35)
 - How is the title 'Six Sigma: Dabbawala' justified?
 - Describe the risk taken by Jyothi Reddy in leaving for the US.
 - Narrate the events in Qamar Rahman's life that culminated in international recognition for her.
 - Bring out the strong emotion in 'When I Born, I Black'.
 - 'Make the world a better place through technology'. How is Satya Nadella's life a step in that direction?
 - Describe Dhirubhai Ambani's journey from Bhajias to Reliance.
 - How does the poem 'Success' portray a successful man?
 - Give a brief account of Indra Nooyi's personality and leadership style.
 - How did a debilitating accident bring out the best in Sudha Chandran?
 - Describe Chhavi Rajawat's endeavour to uplift Soda village.
- Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow: (5)

I thought about it. The advantages were clear; in particular, working with them meant I would be able to extend my Visa. If my career was confined to working at Movie Times, then my future in the U.S would be in jeopardy. Due to US Law, I could not procure a work permit under a B-1 Visa. In fact, the work I was doing at Movie Times was unauthorised. But if I shifted to Sanjay Kumar's Company, I knew I could obtain a work permit and gradually obtain a social security number. With that stage complete, I could even try to get an H-1 Visa through Sanjay's company. It was obvious What to do, and I contacted Sudhakar and told him I was ready to join his agency.

 - Where is the narrator working at present?
 - Is her work authorised?
 - Why couldn't the narrator get a work permit inspite of having a B-1 Visa?
 - Which company is the narrator considering to shift to?
 - What three things the narrator can get after joining the new company?
- Read the following passage and make notes: (5)

Skimming a text means reading quickly to get an overall idea of the text. In this type of reading, you are not interested in complete details or any specific information. The purpose of reading is to get the gist of the text. Scanning, on the other hand, is looking for required information. The reader knows what he or she is looking for in the text. For example, if you are looking for the meaning of a word in a dictionary, you already know which word you are searching for. Similarly, if you are searching for the phone number of a particular person in the telephone directory, you know whose number you are looking for.

[P.T.O.]

4

S UG 201/N

- Fill in the blanks with suitable words given below: (5)

The greatest is not TB or leprosy, it is being unwanted, unloved, and for. We can cure diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread, but there are many more for a little love – Mother Teresa.
(physical, disease, dying, uncared, hopelessness)
- Prepare a resume to apply for the post of a lecturer in a private college. (10)
- Identify the words spelt correctly in the following: (5)

(a) Calandar	Calander	Calender	Calendar
(b) Leisure	Lisure	Leesure	Liesure
(c) Buzines	Business	Bizines	Business
(d) Coruption	Corruption	Corrupsion	Corupsion
(e) Municipal	Muncpal	Munsipal	Munscipal
- Re-arrange the jumbled words to make meaningful sentences in the following. (5)
 - is / state / formed / Telangana / newly / a
 - Noble Peace Prize / Kailash Satyarthi / were / Malala Yousufzai / and / awarded
 - be / US President / next / our / Obama / will / guest / on / Republic Day / our / the
 - is / virus / Ebola / a / deadly
 - remember / is / key / comes / confidence / when / interviews / it / to / the
- Write five sentences of your own in the following conjunctions: (5)
 - if
 - but
 - so
 - thus
 - so
 - yet
- Expand any one of the following proverbs in atleast 50 words: (5)
 - Where there is a will, there is a way.
 - Nothing succeeds like success.
 - A friend in need is a friend indeed.
 - An idle man's brain is a devil's workshop.
 - Empty vessels make much noise.

Image 2: General English Second Year Question Paper for UG Level Students of Satavahana University, Karimnagar, Telangana State (March 2015)

The examination pattern is completely focused on writings skills so in a roundabout way it supports by-heart method. The students memorize the answers for some questions and attempt it in the examinations and so it is argued by English lecturers that only ten to twenty percentages of the students attend the English classes even though students come to college. Most of the them escape from attending the classes because the marks they secure in the English subject will not

be counted at the end of the course but the fail marks are calculated, therefore, students give more importance to achieve the pass marks only. It shows how an Indian education system and examinations work out. The English lecturers and students condemn the board of studies and question paper setters for not treating English subject like other optional subjects. More than ninety percentages of the students utter that they desire to achieve pass marks only, not

more marks and speaking skills because they do not need speaking skills in English in the regional and local areas. The theory examination consists of eighty marks and practical examination consists of twenty marks. It is ridiculous to announce that the practical examination is treated as an internal assessment instead of taking as external examination. Record book that has been copied some topics such as one word substitutes, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homographs, homophones, regular and irregular verbs for the first year students and phonetics symbols, resume for the second year students give them ten marks and the rest of the ten marks are allotted for viva voice. This is highly condemned that merely five marks are allotted for listening passage and five marks are allotted for speaking activities. Students neglect this aspect because they get ten marks for copying the record which is very enough to qualify in the internals and it is so simple job to get qualifying marks in the theoretical examination of General English. The examination pattern provides easy questions on basic grammar. (See the scanned question papers) Two question papers have three aspects—reading, writing and grammar.

Reading: The objective of reading given on the question papers is to make the students identify the important points of text. In the both first and second year question papers, we find reading comprehensions from the prescribed texts. There will be given five questions to be answered. The answers will be found in the paragraph.

Writing: Both the question papers have essay type questions. Students are asked to attempt any five out of ten questions. In the second year question paper, they are posed to write a resume and an essay for a proverb. By these two items, students won't improve writing skills because most of the students might have prepared resumes at intermediate level.

Grammar: While testing grammar, the question paper tests the previous knowledge of the students regarding the traditional grammatical questions. They have grammar items like tenses, articles, propositions, conjunctions, vocabulary tasks etc. Spelling tests are also given on the second year paper (bit no. 6), all these come under traditional grammar. English lecturers and students argue that undergraduate students need communication skills rather than conventional grammar.

Findings

1. The examination pattern of undergraduate level at Satavahana University restricts the content based teaching.
2. English lecturers, course designers and question paper setters ignore speaking and listening skills.
3. Examination papers focused on reading and writings only. They won't persuade the students to think logically so their learning becomes passive.
4. The examination pattern fails to prepare the students for competitive examination and corporate examination.

Conclusion

The examination system in Satavahana University is still depended on old imperial system. It must be re-changed. The question paper setters should think about the teaching methodology, learner's strategies and choice of materials while preparing papers. It is very clear that they do not

consider all these things. The present papers are made as per conventional procedures and so the examination pattern must be revised and the test should not be traditional in nature, especially using textbook based questions on literature and grammar. The reading comprehension passage is taken from prose lessons and given with open-ended questions which can be usually answered easily sometimes and by lifting sentences from one line or two lines from the given paragraph sometimes. The paper points out all that all these must be stopped and new approach, new evaluation patterns and new examination patterns should be implemented as per the necessity.

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