



Evaluation of General English Textbooks for the Undergraduate Level Courses of Satavahana University, Telangana State

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Abstract

Textbooks are very important components in English language teaching and learning. There are technological development for on line courses and online education but the demand for textbooks continues to grow because textbooks show the way for the teachers how to teach for the learners how to learn. English language textbooks are usually changed once in four or five years at any undergraduate level courses. Satavahana University which was situated in Karimnagar dist, Telangana State provides under graduation courses in one hundred and eight colleges. All the undergraduate courses have General English subject compulsory so the subject is highly significant for students and English lecturers. The paper brings out whether the prescribed textbooks for undergraduate level students in Satavahana university covered all the language skills or not. Some recommendations are given at the end of the paper to improve the textbooks of English for Satavahana University undergraduate level students.

Key Words: English language, textbooks, undergraduate level students.

A textbook is the most important component in English language teaching and learning. It generally provides the aims and objectives of the course. Sheldon, L. (1987) says a textbook can be “referred to as a published book specially designed to help language learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities.” Does the present General English textbooks for undergraduate level courses provide the communicative abilities or not. In view of the importance of English as a globalised language in Telangana State, the researcher has examined the existing General English textbooks for undergraduate level students that are prescribed by the board of studies of the Satavahana University, Karimnagar. The textbooks are *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. The strengths and weaknesses would have a great collision on Satavahana University undergraduate level students. The analysis of these textbooks is to know whether they would fulfill all the objectives.

Textbooks provide meaning and purpose of the teaching learning process. They help for supplementing student’s language experience. Tomlinson (2001: 67) mentions that proponents of the course book argue that it is the most convenient form of presenting materials, it helps to achieve consistency and continuation, it gives learners a sense of system, cohesion and progress and it helps teachers prepare and learners revise.” Editorial board make excellence in preparing the textbooks, teachers and students are satisfied with prescribed textbooks. When they are not happy with the

textbooks, there would be a controversial issue. The textbooks give content and subject. McGrath (2002) says that “textbooks can set the direction, content and they can propose ways in which the lesson is to be taught.” Even though the textbooks are modified once in a four or five years with special attention and a lot exercises or examples, they won’t satisfy all the students and English lecturers. Earlier there was only one General English textbook for all the undergraduate level students in the state. Taking the problems of local students in the minds, the policy makes changed their idea to provide textbooks for zonal wise. The reasons are—the local students can’t understand British literature, they can’t identify themselves with old literature and the old books did not give about native literature so that the new textbooks will be emerged with color pages with new contents but many English lecturers argue that the present textbooks also won’t provide language skills and interesting literature so that there is need to evaluate these textbooks. In the beginning there are three levels in analyzing the textbooks. Littlejohn (1998) proposes:

1. At the first level of analysis the focus is on the physical aspects of materials and how they appear as a complete set or book.
2. At the second level the focus of analysis is on the actual role of learners in the classroom activities, whether language form or meaning is focused, forms of activities and classroom participation and finally the contents of the tasks.
3. The third level examines the implications derived by evaluating the overall aims of the materials, content, task selection and sequencing, teachers and learners’ roles, demands of learner knowledge, effects, skills and abilities and the role of materials as whole.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study has the following specific objectives:

- i. To study and find out the erroneousness in the textbooks.
- ii. To study the ideas of students and lecturers regarding the various aspects of General English textbooks.
- iii. To study the language works in the textbooks.

Hypothesis:

- i. The two textbooks have no mistakes.
- ii. The textbooks must be useful to the students in the modern era.
- iii. These books provide language skills in a practical way.

Qualities of a Good General English Textbook: A good English textbook must have the following characteristics.

- i. Sufficient and Useful Subject Matter:** The subject matter must be based on the psychological needs of the students. The topics should be related to the student’s environment. They must cover from biographies, autobiographies, fictions, poetry, essays and current newspapers items. All these should be given equal importance when they are incorporated in the textbooks. The board members of the books should have update knowledge so that they may keep all the things in order focusing on interesting lessons for the students.
- ii. Suitable Language Works:** Language works such as vocabulary items and grammar should be added keeping the knowledge of the students. When the textbooks are prepared for the undergraduate level students, their background knowledge must be considered. Grammar

should also be introduced in a systematic order. For vocabulary, a glossary of difficult words and structures must be given.

iii. Exercises: There must be a number of exercises at end of each lesson. The exercises should be covered from the prescribed lessons so that the students will be attracted so much as they listen to stories. The exercises must be focuses on the all the required language skills. If there are not enough exercises, the textbooks do not make the learners improve their written skills.

iv. Illustrations: The illustrations must make the content matter clear. They, if it is possible, must be given in color print. They should be attractive with good cartons also because they draw the attention of the readers.

Problems of the General English Textbooks: The two textbooks are prepared with high attention but there are some negative comments from the degree students and English lecturers. Ten colleges are selected for this study (Table 1). Ten students from each college including ten English lecturers are asked how they feel about the present textbooks. They are asked what they have in their mind regarding the syllabi and textbooks. Instead of giving questionnaires to the teachers and students, the researcher asked them orally which has given a spontaneous and real answer. Through the questionnaires, there are many students who have always depended on the neighboring students so it is better to get the answers orally. Most of the English lectures do not want to reveal their names. They want to be polite in the society without mentioning their names. They said that their names must be kept silent as they criticize the editors and board of studies, department of English, Satavahana University. The researcher has got some interesting truths about the two textbooks. They are:

1. Contents are very brief.
2. Related context are not explained.
3. Less explanation of contents.
4. No clarification in a proper way.
5. More number of translated lessons.
6. Uninterested lessons.
7. More number of motivating chapters.
8. No great literary works in the textbooks.
9. Unequal preference in allotting the prose, poetry and grammar.
10. Practical language skills are not covered. The assignments are neglected by students due to the lack of practical sessions.
11. Exercises are not sufficient. They should be added some more.
12. Unsuitability of questions is at the end of the lessons.
13. The books do not produce with latest information. It must be surely modified.

Effective Measures to Design an Ideal Textbook:

1. Enough illustrations must be added in wherever necessary. Even though the students from under graduation level, most of them do not know English properly. To make them understand, graphs and charts will help them a lot. Cartoons make them think about the subject and content. There is no single cartoon in the two textbooks.
2. Contents must be suited to the mental level of the students. The old lessons must be interesting for the students so that they remember and discuss with their friends. It should be with all type of literatures—British, American, Indian, and commonwealth with equal importance.

3. Paragraph writings are not incorporated. They are given least preference. Today competitive examination focus on paragraph reading and grammar. If the textbooks would provide comprehensions, it would be surely helpful to the students.
4. Language of the textbooks must not be either tough or easy. Some chapters must be easy and some are medium and some should be tough.
5. English grammar brings more marks for the students in competitive examinations. Most of the competitive examinations cover some questions on English grammar especially on the topics such as articles, prepositions, tenses, sentence structures. Therefore rules of all the topics including enough exercises.
6. Author's introduction must be incorporated in the books. If the readers do not know about the sketch of biography of the writers, what is the use of reading the textbook? It is a highly ridiculous thing.

Table 1: The following colleges are selected for study:

Sl. No	Name of the College and address	Year of Established	Courses Offered
1	SRR Government College, Karimnagar	1956-1957	UG /PG
2	Government Degree College, Jammikunta	1965-1966	UG
3	SKNR Government College, Jagtial	1965-1966	UG /PG
4	Kakatiya Degree College, Ganesh Nagar, Jammikunta	2005-2006	UG
5	Nalanda Degree College, Karimnagar Road, Jagtial	2005-2006	UG
6	Narendra Degree College, Metpally (M)	2005-2006	UG
7	Sri Chaitanya Degree College, Markandeya Colony, Godavarikhani	2005-2006	UG /PG
8	Trinity Degree College, Pragathi Nagar, Peddapally	2005-2006	UG
9	Vagdevi Degree College, Opp. AMC Building, Vemulawada	2005-2006	UG
10	NSV Degree College, Near Old Bus Stand, Jagtial	2006-2007	UG

Conclusion: The paper tries to bring out the qualities of present General English textbooks for undergraduate level in Satavahana University, Karimnagar and it also criticizes the unworthy things that are incorporated in the textbooks. If the mentioned effective measures are taken into consideration, there would be some satisfied textbooks emerge into the market. It is highly difficult to task to satisfy all the English teaching faculty as well as students but it is the responsibility of the course editors and board of studies to compile the textbooks without erroneous points. The editorial committee should conduct a field work across the university colleges to know what type of syllabi and textbooks do the English lecturers and undergraduate level students desire. With this the committee comes to know on what skills their new textbooks should be focused. The above research provides that communication abilities of the students are very weak because of not focusing on the skills so upcoming textbooks should be provided with practical English.

Image 1: General English First Year Textbook for UG Level Students of Satavahana University, Karimnagar, Telangana State

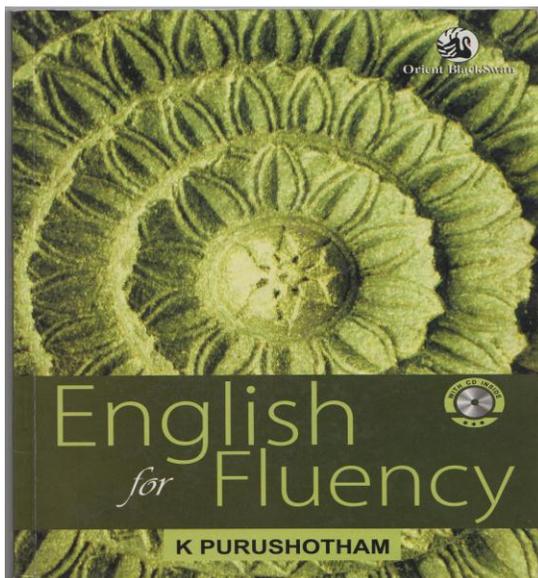
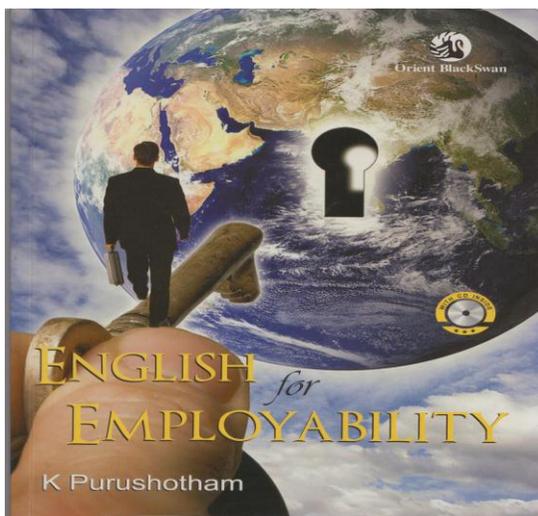


Image 2: General English Second Year Textbook for UG Level Students of Satavahana University, Karimnagar, Telangana State



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