

## An Appraisal of Objectives of the Course of English for Bachelor of Arts Students

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### Abstract

*Nobody can deny the primacy of objectives because they play a pivotal role in the success of a language course. The nexus and affinity between objectives and language course can produce optimum learning. Achievable and suitable objectives according to the need and level of learners benefit the learners and make the course a success. Keeping in view the language learning needs and level of learners, the researchers probed the concordance between the objectives spelt out by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the compulsory B.A. English language course of University of the Punjab. One questionnaire and a composite checklist were used for data collection. Objective and Subjective data was analyzed and interpreted to get the results by following the Evaluation research model of Charles.*

### 1. Introduction

Setting objectives is a prerequisite of a language course. The point is almost unanimously accepted by the linguists. Without objectives both teachers and students will be taking a journey without any destination. The course designers and textbook writers are expected to set objectives of the entire course, each component of it, and each lesson of the textbook. Paradoxically, only course objectives have been set by Higher Education Commission. But the course contents selected by University of the Punjab have no compatibility with these objectives. Furthermore, lessons do not have set objectives at all. Neither are the lessons selected with objectives in view, nor are the teachers and students clear about them. That is why there is no sense of accomplishment by the time the teachers and students complete a lesson. The students are completely blacked out about what language items they have learnt.

English language is a compulsory subject from grade one to graduate level in Pakistan. An appraisal of objectives of English language course at graduate level is important for myriad reasons. This level is a stepping stone to university education. It is the turning point in the career formation of students. English is a compulsory subject of instruction in all branches of professional and non-professional education at graduate level. The use of English language is one of the primary needs of a professional career. It is necessary to take into consideration Pakistani college students' present and future needs of English. A critical appraisal of the present syllabus, methods and mode of assessment of the compulsory English paper at the college level is also required (Malik, 1996, pp. 3-4). India and Pakistan have been cited as prime examples where there is a justifiable concern about stultifying effect of dull and outdated official textbooks backed by all the authority of the educational system and academic hierarchy (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p. 328).

University of the Punjab is the oldest university in Pakistan that was established in 1882. When Pakistan came into being in 1947, it had only one university that was University of the Punjab (Abedi, 1991, p.29). It is the only university whose English language course is approved by HEC.

That is why English language course of University of the Punjab is adopted by many universities of Pakistan. The existing English language course of University of the Punjab is being taught in many public and private sector universities of Pakistan i.e., University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir; Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad; Islamia University, Bahawalpur; Government College University, Sargodha; Government College University, Faisalabad; Gift University, Gujranwala; University of Gujarat, Gujarat; Karakorum International University, Malakand; University of Hazara, Mansehra. It is noteworthy to pinpoint that it is written in the charter of University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) that it will follow the courses of University of the Punjab at graduate level. Therefore, the B.A compulsory English course of University of the Punjab is being taught in all the degree colleges affiliated with the above mentioned universities of Pakistan. 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed a great boom in the total number of private and public sector universities in Pakistan. This mushroom growth has given rise to the quality of ELT courses and materials at higher education. The number of students in public and private institutions has multiplied in the present era. The concern for the quality of higher education also came to surface. Higher Education Commission (HEC) has also constituted quality assurance committee to check the standard of teaching and research in public and private sector universities.

## **2. Literature Review**

Evaluation of teaching materials entails a variety of aspects. Linguists have outlined numerous parameters for the task. They range from the objectives of the course through needs analysis, curriculum, syllabus, methodology of teaching, contents of the course, and textbooks to assessment criteria. Some of the renowned linguists have devised checklists for evaluation. They serve as useful tools in this connection. Evaluation of an English language course on these criteria in the backdrop of English language teaching scenario in Pakistan is a prerequisite for a meaningful change. Present study is limited only to the appraisal of objectives of English Language course at Graduate level.

### **Objectives of English Language Teaching**

Setting of objectives is the foremost step to proceed with the task of course development. Objectives provide the destination for the teachers and the learners to reach. They also give the insight to pave the track to reach that destination. Formulation of objectives is as great an uphill task as it is important. Success of the language course chiefly rests on the clarity of objectives. They are viewed from various perspectives.

Aims are very general statements of the goals of a programme. The term aim refers to a description of the general purposes of a curriculum and objectives to refer to a more specific and concrete description of purposes. An aim refers to a statement of a general change that a programme seeks to bring about in learners. In order to give a more precise focus to programme goals, aims are often accompanied by statements of more specific purposes. These are known as objectives (Richards, 2007, p.120). 'Goals are general statements of the overall, long-term purposes of the course. Objectives express the specific ways in which the goals will be achieved. The goals of a course represent the destination; the objectives, the various points that chart the course toward the destination (Graves, 2001, p.181). To arrive at the destination, one must pass each of these points'.

Liskin-Gasparro contends that objectives detail the goals of a language programme. They identify the kind and level of language proficiency the learner will attain in the programme. Sometime programme objectives may be stated in terms of a proficiency level in a particular skill area or in the form of behavioural objectives. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages has developed provisional proficiency guidelines for use in planning foreign language programmes – “a series of descriptions of proficiency level for speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture in a foreign language. These guidelines represent a graduated sequence of steps that can be used to structure a foreign-language programme”. (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2000, p. 157)

Decisions about programme goals and objectives, whether expressed in terms of behavioural objectives, proficiency levels, or some other form, are essential in language programme design. Without clear statements of objectives, questions of content, teaching and learning activities and experiences, materials, and evaluation cannot be systematically addressed. In cases where a specific method is being considered for use in a language programme, it is necessary for the programme planner to know what the objectives of the method are and the kinds of language proficiencies it seeks to develop. Nunan (1998, p. 61) observes that objectives can be useful, not only to guide the selection of structures, functions, tasks, and so on, but also to provide a sharper focus for teachers, to give learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a language programme, to help in developing means of assessment and evaluation, and so on.

#### **Benefits of Objectives**

Objectives are beacon light for all the stakeholders involved in the development of the course. They force the policy makers, course designers and teachers to come down to earth, and start thinking in specific terms instead of vague hopes and aspirations.

Davies (as cited in Richards, 2007, p.31) points out the usefulness of objectives as he thinks that objectives provide a very useful stimulus to clear thinking as well as a means of allowing teachers to communicate with each other in a relatively precise and unambiguous manner.

#### **Characteristics of Objectives**

Certain points characterize the objectives of a course. The courses designers have to take them into consideration. Richards (2007, pp. 123-24) has pointed out the following characteristics of objectives:

- i. Objectives describe a learning outcome.
- ii. Objectives should be consistent with the curriculum aim.
- iii. Objectives should be precise.
- iv. Objectives should be feasible.

Objectives of English language teaching from level One to Intermediate are framed by Curriculum Wing, Ministry of Education Islamabad whereas at Graduate level they are spelt out by the Higher Education Commission Pakistan. Behavioural objectives are generally used for English language

teaching in Pakistan. The word behaviour refers to performance and is not related to behaviourist psychology. Mager (as cited in Richards, 2007. p.139) described three components for the description of behavioural objectives:

- **Performance:** an objective says what a learner is expected to be able to do
- **Conditions:** an objective describes the important conditions (if any) under which the performance is to occur
- **Criterion:** wherever possible, an objective describes the criterion of acceptable performance, describing how well the learner must be able to perform in order to be considered acceptable

Nunan (1989, pp. 63-64) declares that objectives which specify what learners should do as a result of instruction are sometimes called 'performance objectives'. He further explains that performance objectives contain three components. The first of these, the performance component, describes what the learner is to be able to do, the second, the condition component, specifies the conditions under which the learner will perform, and the final component, the standards component, indicates how well the learner is to perform. The behavioural objectives and performance objectives are more or less the same.

Eisener (1992, p.304), distinguishes three types of objectives that can be used in curriculum design: *instructional* objectives, which can be expressed in behavioural terms; *expressive* objectives, which are concerned with personal responses and are not susceptible to behavioural justification; and finally, what he calls *Type III* objectives, which specify problems, the solutions to which are left to pupil initiative and justification.

In Pakistan, behavioural objectives for language teaching are performance based. English language teachers are supposed to be aware of the objectives for language learning from Grade One to Graduate level.

The Curriculum Subcommittee of English Language Teaching Reforms (ELTR) Project conducted a survey with objective to improve the link between the HEC/ELTR affiliated Government Degree/Intermediate Colleges and the autonomous degree awarding Universities across the country in 2007. The findings of the study revealed that there was no link between English language courses at Intermediate and Graduate levels. (ELTR, 2007)

### 3. Research Methodology

#### Research Design

The research design of the study was based on evaluation research model of Charles (1995, pp. 238-239). According to this model, evaluation research is designed, first, to determine the contents, status, or results of whatever is being evaluated and second, to compare the assessment against a set of criteria that indicate desired traits. The degree of correspondence between assessment and criteria is used to indicate the worth of whatever is being assessed, and the resultant information is used for making decisions or changes. In the present study, contents of B.A compulsory English textbooks are evaluated to determine their correspondence to the curriculum objectives. A composite checklist was formed and used as criteria for subjective

evaluation of B.A. English textbooks. The present study was carried out to suggest remedies for English language course improvement at B.A. level.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To examine commensurateness between the contents of B.A. English course and objectives of Higher Education Commission.
- ii. To assess how far the course and objectives of Higher Education Commission meet the language learning need of the students.

### **Population for the Study**

The population for this study was all the teachers teaching English language at degree colleges affiliated with University of the Punjab.

### **Sample for the Study**

The sample for the study was randomly selected. The sample for the study comprised 100 male and female college teachers teaching at graduate level in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Chiniot districts of the province of Punjab

Sample teachers were randomly selected from the colleges listed below:

1. Federal Government Postgraduate College, H-8, Islamabad
2. Federal Government College, H-9, Islamabad
3. Federal Government Margala College for Women, F-7/4, Islamabad
4. Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2, Islamabad
5. Gordon College, Rawalpindi
6. Government Postgraduate College for Women, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi
7. Government Municipal Degree College, Faisalabad
8. Madina Town College for Women, Madina Town, Faisalabad
9. Government Islamia College, Chiniot
10. Government College for Women, Chiniot

### **Significance of the Study**

The study may be useful for various government and non-government institutions and organizations in a variety of ways. It may prove useful to fulfil Government of Pakistan's Education Policy of 2009. It may facilitate Higher Education Commission in its commitment to raise the standards and quality of curriculum, syllabus, textbooks and English language teaching system and teacher development programmes. All the public sector graduate and postgraduate institutions affiliated with the University of the Punjab, Lahore and all the universities where this course is used for English language teaching including Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad which has recently affiliated the colleges of Islamabad Capital Territory. Findings of the present study may prove helpful to course designers of graduate level in particular and other levels in general. Many public sector and private universities have started four year B.A Honors degree programmes. This study may provide a guideline for curriculum developers and syllabus designers of these programmes to meet their ends. The study may prove helpful to bridge the widening gulf

among the courses of various universities. Despite the realization of the primacy of evaluation, no concerted effort has so far been made at graduate level. Consequently, English language teaching at this level sticks out like a sore thumb. This study is an attempt to make a meticulous evaluation of realization of objectives of B.A English language course. The findings of this study may prove beneficial not only for National Committee on English to achieve its goals. It may also prove useful for students and teachers who are the main stakeholders of the course. It may also help to improve their learning system. In short, the present study may prove a pioneer research on English language courses at graduate level.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to B.A compulsory English course of University of the Punjab. An English language course includes aims and objectives of language teaching, contents of textbooks, methodology, needs analysis, motivation, audio-visual aids, teacher training and assessment procedures. The above mentioned variables of the course were important but the study was limited to the appraisal of objectives of learning English of 04 textbooks due to constraints of time.

### **Research Instruments**

A questionnaire for teachers and a composite checklist as criteria were developed for data collection. The present study is also a kind of action research because researchers had been teaching this course since its inception in 1993. Observation of the students' learning for more than 20 years was also used as a research instrument.

### **Criteria**

In the research model of Charles (1995, pp. 238-239), criteria are specific indicators of quality. They might have to do with contents or traits or end results. One might evaluate a series of textbooks to determine if their contents correspond to curriculum objectives and items on standardized tests. Or one might assess student learning occurring in the language arts programme. In the present study, contents of B.A compulsory English textbooks are evaluated to determine their correspondence to curriculum objectives. A composite checklist was formed and used as criteria for subjective evaluation of B.A. English textbooks.

The study was based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. "In language programme evaluation both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collecting information are needed, because they serve different purposes and can be used to complement each other" (Richards, 2007, p. 297). Picciano (2007, p. 32) quotes that qualitative research relies on the meanings, concepts, context, descriptions, and while quantitative research relies on measurements and counts. Both approaches stress the importance of objectivity in observations and data collection, although qualitative research by its very nature is more dependent upon a researcher's subjective interpretation. The composite checklist served this end. Qualitative research requires seeing and hearing and, perhaps, touching and experiencing activities in natural environments.

### **Creation of the Composite Checklist**

Checklist is a cherished instrument of evaluators for textbook evaluation. Cunningsworth (1988, p. 74) believes that checklist is intended as an instrument, or a useful tool, for evaluating teaching material. Miekley (2005, p.2) endorses that it is a valuable tool for evaluating textbooks for use in

ESL/EFL classrooms. A cohort of checklists is available for this purpose. Tomlinson (2007, p.15) asserts that no two evaluations can be the same, as the needs, objectives, backgrounds and preferred styles of the participants will differ from context to context. Garinger (2002, p. 2) suggests that selecting particular items to create a personal evaluation index is the best method for ensuring that the realities of each individual learning situation are addressed. That is why a composite checklist in the form of questions was developed to suit the local context.

Cunningsworth (1998, p. 74) succinctly observes that “professional judgement founded on understanding of the rationale of language teaching and learning and backed up by practical experience, lies at base of evaluation procedure”. Tomlinson (2007, p. 11) again suggests that “the obvious but important point is that there can be no one model framework for the evaluation of materials; the framework used must be determined by the reasons, objectives and circumstances of the evaluation”. In the same vein, McDonough and Shaw (2004, p. 61) assert that “we cannot be absolutely certain as to what criteria and constraints are actually operational in ELT contexts worldwide and some teachers might argue that textbook criteria often are local”. Keeping in view the aims and objectives of teaching English language at B.A level laid out by Higher Education Commission and plethora of checklists and practical experiences of the researchers, a composite checklist was formed to suit the local setting and context of the research. For this study, the composite checklist was used to evaluate textbooks to know how successful they were in meeting the objectives of the curriculum. The following checklists were studied to form the composite checklist. The study of Fareeda Javed Malik (1996) was also consulted to form the questionnaire and the composite checklist.

- 1 Checklist of Tucker (1975)
- 2 Checklist of Dougill (1987)
- 3 Checklist of Breen and Candlin (1987)
- 4 Allan Cunningsworth’s Criteria (1988)
- 5 Coursebook Criteria of Sheldon (1988)
- 6 Checklist of Hutchinson and Waters (1989)
- 7 Checklist of Griffiths (1995)
- 8 Checklist of Mc Garth Ian (2002)
- 9 Checklist of Harmer (2003)
- 10 Evaluation Criteria of McDonough and Shaw (2004)
- 11 Checklist of Canado and Esteban (2005)
- 12 Checklist of Miekley (2005)
- 13 Checklist of Ur (2006)

#### **4. Triangulation**

Triangulation is a multi method technique of data analysis. Grix (2004, p. 176) asserts that the term (triangulation) has come to be associated with the practice of drawing on a variety of data sources, which are cross-checked with one another to limit the chances of bias in the methods or sources employed. It is common practice to attempt to measure one particular variable using a variety of different methods, for example mixing statistical analysis with qualitative methods to gain further insight into ‘reality’ on the ground. Alderson (1992, p. 285) observes: “The notion of triangulation is particularly important in evaluation. Given that there is No One Best Method for evaluation, it makes good sense to gather data from a variety of sources and a variety of methods,



so that the evaluator can confirm findings across methods". Campbell and Fiske (as cited in Cohen et al. 2007, p. 141) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. The use of multiple methods, or the multi-method approach as it is sometimes called, contrasts with the ubiquitous but generally more vulnerable single-method approach that characterizes so much of research in the social sciences. In its original and literal sense, triangulation is a technique of physical measurement: maritime navigators, military strategists and surveyors, for example, use several locational markers in their endeavours to pinpoint a single spot or objective. By analogy, triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrative concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research. In present study, the composite checklist was used to test the validity of questionnaire for teachers

### **5. Data Analysis**

According to Charles' (1995, p.240) model of evaluation research, data is analyzed either statistically or qualitatively, using procedures that facilitates comparison of data to criteria. The analysis is based on evaluation research criteria spelt out by Charles.

The study is also closer to evaluation research models of Hutchinson and Waters (1989), McDonough and Shaw (2004) and Tomlinson (2007). The researchers calculated the total value of the numerical data with simple arithmetic. They multiplied the total number of respondents on a certain point with the maximum value of five in five point Likert scale questions. A few questions were checked off in polar terms (i.e. yes or no) according to the nature of questions.

One questionnaire was developed and served on teachers. The main variables on the questionnaire were aims and objectives of English language teaching at graduate level framed by Higher Education Commission and content of textbooks of B.A. The study was conducted to ascertain concordance between the objectives of English language learning outlined by the Higher Education Commission in the curriculum 2002 and B.A. compulsory English language course. On the other hand, the study also highlighted the constraints being faced by stakeholders especially the teachers and the students. The researchers analysed and interpreted the questionnaire for teachers and the composite checklist to deduce results and conclusion.

### **Demographic Data**

The demographic data of teachers of English is presented and discussed.

#### **Teachers**

There were 100 teachers of English in the sample. All belonged to public sector degree colleges. Other details are:

#### **Gender**

The researcher chose the respondents both from male and female teachers for survey questionnaire.



Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	50.00
Female	50	50.00
Total	100	100.00

Table 1 indicates that the gender composition of the teachers was equal in proportion, that is, 50% each of male and female.

The composition of the respondents will ensure the equal participation of both the genders in opinion making in the present study.

### Objectives of Teaching and Learning English

#### Teachers' Awareness of the Objectives of Teaching English

A question was asked from the teachers of English if they were aware about the objectives of teaching English to B.A. students.

Table 2: Awareness of the Objectives of Teaching English to B.A. Students

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	18.00
No	72	72.00
Missing	10	10.00
Total	100	100.00

Table 2 indicates that only a small minority of teachers (18.00%) was aware of the objectives of teaching English to B.A. students while an overwhelming majority (72.00%) was unaware of the objectives. A considerable percentage (10%) did not respond.

Teaching a course without objectives is like driving a car without a steering or driving a ship without a rudder. Higher Education Commission (HEC) – erstwhile University Grants Commission (UGC) – framed objectives of teaching English at B.A. level in the Curriculum 2002. Tragically, a very high percentage of teachers (72%) responded that they were not aware of these objectives. Only 18% sample male and female teachers knew the objectives of English language teaching. The reluctance of 10% of teachers implied that they might not have knowledge of these objectives and they did not answer for face saving.

There may be many reasons for this murky situation. First, HEC might have sent copies of the curriculum to the administration of all the colleges of the country but it was not communicated to the concerned teachers. Second, the curriculum might be available in the libraries of the colleges but concerned teachers had no knowledge of it. Anyhow, it is striking that the teachers were unaware of the objectives of teaching at B.A. level in spite of the fact that 6 out of 10 sample colleges were located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The data reflects that objectives might not be considered crucial for language teaching at B.A. level.

**Support for Achievement of Curriculum Objectives**

Questions were asked from the teachers of English language on the potential of the course to achieve the objectives designed by the Higher Education Commission.

Table 3: **Support for Achievement of Curriculum Objectives**

Teachers	Level of Support					Cumulative
	5	4	3	2	1	
To use grammar and language structure in context	18.00	04.00	20.00	10.00	48.00	46.80
To acquire appropriate listening and speaking skills	10.00	06.00	26.00	16.00	42.00	45.20
To develop the ability to comprehend spoken English	12.00	06.00	30.00	08.00	44.00	44.80
To express personal likes and dislike, ideas/opinions on topics related to students' life	-	12.00	12.00	20.00	56.00	36.00
To write critically and creatively on various aspects of real life	10.00	08.00	16.00	31.00	35.00	45.40

Table 3 maintains that mostly the teachers of English did not think (cumulative score 46.80) that B.A. compulsory English language course encouraged students to use grammar and language structure in context. Grammar is part of the course but the catastrophic point in this connection is that it is not properly taught. The results are therefore horrible. Those who pass cannot get mastery over the intricacies of grammar. The periodical tests of students and the final examination papers are evidence over this.

The table manifests that a minority of teachers (cumulative score 45.20) believed that B.A. compulsory English language course encouraged students to acquire appropriate listening and speaking skills. The second objective of teaching English at graduate level pinpointed by Higher Education Commission focuses on the acquisition of listening and speaking skills. Listening and speaking skills are part of the curriculum but they are not part of the course. It leaves no scope for these primary skills to teach in the class. Even if the teachers wish to teach them out of their own judgment, many factors hamper them from taking initiative. Firstly, the teachers themselves are not skilled in speaking. Secondly, there is no equipment for it. Thirdly, the course coverage lags behind. Lastly, despite expressing their fondness for learning speaking, students are not ready to learn it. The main reason is that these skills are out of course, and they are not tested in the examinations. That is, the students think that time spent on speaking will not be rewarded. All these factors combined, listening and speaking are not supported in the pedagogical system. The main responsibility lies with the course. The score is justified. Being more realistic, it is still exaggerated. May be the teachers did not like to undermine their position as the ones who neglected their responsibilities and ignore the skills that have got prime importance.

The table depicts that sample teachers (cumulative score 44.80) asserted that B.A. compulsory English language course encouraged the students to develop the ability to comprehend spoken language. It is the third objective of teaching English at graduate level mapped out by the Higher Education Commission. First of all, the notable fact here is that this objective means the achievement of listening skill. It has already been stated in the second objective. The point that there is no support of the course for listening and speaking has also been discussed already.

The table demonstrates that a minority of teachers (cumulative score 36.00) endorsed that B.A. compulsory English language course encouraged expressing personal likes/dislikes, ideas/opinions on topics related to students' life. It is the fourth and major objective of teaching English at graduate level devised by Higher Education Commission. This objective implies the achievement of communicative skill. This skill is not included in the course. Therefore, there is no chance of its development among the students. The course contents, examination system and classroom pedagogy are the proof for it.

The table refers that sample teachers (cumulative score 45.40) declared that B.A. compulsory English language course encouraged the students to write critically and creatively on various aspects of real life. It is the fifth objective of teaching English at graduate level stated by Higher Education Commission. The achievement of this objective asks for practice of writing in context of real life situations. Using authentic materials is one mode of this practice. The course does not give any scope of the use of authentic material. There is no such provision announced for the teachers in the curriculum or syllabus. Furthermore, the fact is that the teacher cannot give enough practice of academic writing, not to speak of writing critically and creatively on various aspects of real life. Lengthy courses do not allow him any such freedom. The score depicts the real state of affairs.

## **6. Discussion**

### **Checklist Analysis**

As mentioned earlier the formed a checklist based on the checklists of renowned linguists. Here is the analysis on the basis of that checklist.

#### **1. What are the formal stated objectives of English Language Course in the Curriculum 2002?**

In order to give a more precise focus to programme goals, aims are often accompanied by statements of more specific purposes. These are known as objectives (Richards, 2007, p. 120). Higher Education Commission enunciated certain objectives for teaching English language at graduate level. The Commission formulated five major objectives of teaching English Language at B.A. level in Curriculum 2002. (Curriculum of English, 2002, p 15) They are:

1. To use grammar and language structure in context
2. To acquire appropriate listening and speaking skills
3. To develop the ability to comprehend spoken English
4. To express personal likes/dislikes; ideas/opinions on topics related to students' life and experiences e.g. food, music, films, sports, places of interest etc.

5. To write critically and creatively on various aspects of real life.

#### **A. A. Review**

The researchers reviewed the objectives of the English language course pronounced in Curriculum.

##### **i. To use grammar and language structure in context**

This is the first objective of teaching English at graduate level. This objective means that teaching of grammar will not be in the form of isolated sentences but in context. It means that four textbooks will be teach grammar and through sentences in the lessons. According to Curriculum 2002, the grammar points selected to be taught and activities are to be based on the readings presented in Paper A. The following areas have to be covered

- i. English Clause Elements: Subject, Verb, Object, Adverbial, Component
- ii. Frequent tenses and aspects (with emphasis on meaning rather than on structure that has been the main concern of earlier English classes): Simple Present, Simple Past, Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Present perfect, Past perfect
- iii. Different ways of expressing "Future" in English
- iv. Modal auxiliary verbs
- v. Conditional and concessional sentences
- vi. Simple, complex and complex compound sentences
- vii. Voice

Paper A does not test any item on grammar given in the curriculum. Paper A is totally based on 04 textbooks (mentioned in the next question) and questions are totally literature oriented.

##### **ii. To acquire appropriate listening and speaking skills**

This is a valid objective and it is appropriately included in the Curriculum 2002. Listening and speaking are the first two skills. They are the needs of the students in academic, educational, professional and social life. They must be included in the course.

##### **iii. To develop the ability to comprehend spoken English**

The ability to comprehend spoken English is nothing else than listening skill. Therefore, this is a mere overlapping with the second objective.

##### **iv. To express personal likes/dislikes; ideas/opinions on topics related to students' life and experiences e.g. food, music, films, sports, places of interest etc.**

This is a rightful objective. Certainly these are the areas where the students would need to use English. However, there are two points to be noted. First, this is not clear whether the authors of Curriculum meant spoken expression or written. The researchers are prone to take it as spoken. The next objective relates with writing. That makes it more likely to be taken as spoken. If it is spoken expression, then it must have been incorporated in the first objective. Second, this is certainly an apt objective. But these points are expected to be covered in early classes. Placement of this objective at B.A. level seems to be below B.A. level. Present state of affairs seems to be the outcome of the lack of coordination among the course developers of various levels.

**v. To write critically and creatively on various aspects of real life.**

This objective is appropriate. The students must be able to write critically and creatively on various aspects of real life. This is their need. The course must develop these skills among the students.

**An Overall Criticism**

There are some striking points about these objectives. The foremost of them is that reading skill is completely missing in them. Reading is the need of the students during and after educational life. Its absence from objectives, therefore, is really a point of concern. Apart from that, these objectives are still general. They have not been further bifurcated into the bench marks that the students have to reach. That is, the objectives do not indicate that the students would have learnt certain specifications of skills as they complete certain topics in certain term of time. Still a point to be noted is that most of the teachers were ignorant of these objectives (Table 2).

**2. Does the B.A. compulsory English Course match the objectives framed by Higher Education Commission?**

The successful achievement of objectives denotes the effectiveness of the course. These objectives are spelt out neither in the outline of the course of University of the Punjab nor in any of the 04 core textbooks prescribed at graduate level for the students of B.A.

**7. Course Contents**

University of the Punjab has the following prescribed course for B.A. Compulsory English.

**a. Paper A: Prose and Poetry**

Paper A comprises the following 04 textbooks. This paper carries 100 marks.

1. Book I: *A Selection of Modern English Essays*: Edited by Prof. Sajjad Shaikh
2. Book II: *An Anthology of English Verse*: Edited by Prof. Shoaib bin Hassan and Prof. Kaneez Aslam
3. Book III: *A Selection of Short Stories and One – Act Plays*: Edited by Dr. Nasim Riaz Butt
4. Book IV: *The Old Man and the Sea*: a famous novel of Ernest Hemingway

**b. Paper B: Grammar and Composition**

Paper B consists of composition, idioms, correction of sentences and translation of a passage from Urdu into English. This paper also carries 100 marks.

1. Essay writing
2. Comprehension and Precis
3. Applications/Letters
4. Idioms
5. Correction
6. Translation from Urdu into English or Dialogue

The curriculum stresses the learning of different techniques of vocabulary building because good vocabulary makes the learner comfortable in language learning. The course of B.A. does not teach parts of speech (word classes). Another technique of enhancing vocabulary is learning the rules of word formation. They include prefixation, suffixation, compounding, conversion and abbreviations. Like parts of speech, the course does not include all these rules of word formation. The curriculum again lays emphasis on the introduction of sense relation (synonym, antonym, polysemy, and homonymy) as a useful vocabulary learning activity. Unfortunately, like the previous two techniques, this technique is also absent in the course.

The curriculum stresses the inclusion of study skills in Paper A and Paper B. It shows the importance of study skills. Study skills are neither part of Paper A nor Paper B in the B.A. course of University of the Punjab. The mismatch between the curriculum and the course has serious repercussions. It reflects utter lack of coordination between the Higher Education Commission and the Board of study of University of the Punjab.

### **B-Specified Points**

Here the course is analyzed in perspective of each of the objectives of the Higher Education Commission.

#### **1. To Use Grammar and Language Structure in Context**

The first objective focuses on teaching grammar and language structure in context. No one of the four B.A. compulsory English language textbooks teaches grammar and language structure in context. Not a single book is grammar and language structure oriented. Only the segment of correction in Paper B partially satisfies this objective.

#### **2. To Acquire Appropriate Listening and Speaking Skills**

Listening and speaking skills are not part of course. They are neither taught nor tested in the examinations. All the compulsory textbooks are literature based. None of them is skills based. These books test only the literary comprehension of the learners. Listening and speaking skills are missing in the course contents beyond the textbooks either.

#### **3. To Develop Ability to Comprehend Spoken English**

As discussed earlier, this objective equates with listening comprehension. There is no instruction on listening comprehension skill included in the course.

#### **4. To Express Personal Likes/Dislikes; Ideas/Opinions on Topics Related to Students' Life and Experiences, e.g. Food, Music, Films, Sports, Places of Interest etc.**

The four textbooks are not designed to encourage the students to express their personal likes/dislikes; ideas/opinions on topics related to their life. The researchers are inclined to believe that this objective is about speaking skill. But the fact is that the textbooks are not designed to teach speaking skill at all. Even if it is taken as meant for writing skill, the textbooks are completely void of this capacity. There is almost no use of functional language in the lessons to guide the students. Nor is there any potential to lead to the functional activities of the types mentioned in the objective.

### **5. Write Critically and Creatively on Various Aspects of Real Life**

Quite contrary to the requirement of this objective, the textbooks and the other course contents do not provide sufficient opportunities for the teachers to guide the students to practice critical and creative writing. The portion of the course on essay writing has a limited scope for this objective.

### **8. Findings**

Here are the findings of the study.

1. Reading skill is missing in the objectives of English Language teaching at Graduate level in the Curriculum of HEC.
2. All textbooks are more or less reading skill oriented.
3. Majority of the college English language teachers were unaware of the objectives of teaching English language at graduate level. It was endorsed by a large number of teachers (Table 1) that they did not know the objectives of teaching English language at Graduate level.
4. There is a mismatch between the curriculum and B.A. compulsory English language course.

### **9. Recommendations**

In the light of the data analysis, checklist evaluation and findings, the researchers make the following recommendations.

1. The Higher Education Commission may update the curriculum as per requirements of the age of science, technology and commerce.
2. The B.A. compulsory English language course may be developed in compatibility with the aims and objectives of Higher Education Commission.
3. Aims and objectives of English language course should be printed at the beginning of textbooks for guidance of students and teachers at Graduate level.
4. There should be co-ordination and logical sequencing between the Intermediate and Graduate English language courses.
5. For this purpose, a link may be established between the Curriculum Committees of the Provincial Ministries of Education and Higher Education Commission, Islamabad.
6. The aims and objectives of the curriculum of English those of the courses may focus on developing linguistic and communicative ability in students.

### **10. Conclusion**

The global wave of English and its importance as an academic subject are irrefutable facts. The primacy of English language can be gauged from the fact that it is taught as a compulsory subject in the national curriculums at all levels of academics in Pakistan. The study informs that B.A. compulsory English course does not carry out the two broader aims of the curriculum. The course neither inculcates linguistic competence nor communicative competence. The course does not sensitize towards issues in human rights. Textbooks (Book I, Book II, Book III, and Book IV) do not teach language points for communicative purposes. The emerging picture confirms the view that there is no link between the objectives framed by HEC and the four textbooks prescribed by University of the Punjab. There is a great dichotomy between the curriculum and English language course at graduate level. The study has proved that B.A. compulsory English language course has



failed to achieve the aims and objectives of language teaching and to improve the language proficiency, language learning skills and communicative competence of the students.

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