

Is Education in English Language Successful in India?

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to bring to the limelight of the English teacher's problems in teaching English; how Junior colleges fail to provide the right platform to the engineering aspirants to master the language skills which will complement to learn the content subjects and how English education in India is creating disproportionate syllabus to the same citizens of the nation, thereby creating the disparity among students when come to B.Tech I year which is a common platform for all. Is it not high time to create a common syllabus across India irrespective of the background of the student and the State? Would the State and the Central governments take this issue as a challenge and come with a tangible solutions?, though the education is in the concurrent list of the constitution.

Keywords: English; teachers; students; central ; syllabus; State; engineers

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I. INTRODUCTION

English teachers in India play a pivotal role in grooming and moulding the students. They are like potters and the clay is the students who are raw materials in their hands when they come to schools or colleges. Hence, it is moral and ethical responsibility of the teachers to transform the students into society ready-and, employable gainfully and also industry-ready products. But in the process, some of the teachers are not aware of the full armour they have to wear in the battle field. So the presenter has gone ahead to do field work and showed the problems of the English teachers and the students.

II. ANALYSIS

Junior college is the base from where the students join technical courses. Therefore, the language skills are to be learnt at Intermediate or +2 level. That is the reason why the researcher has undertaken an opinion survey among the teachers of Intermediate colleges to know about their proficiency in LSRW skills and Phonetics. There were 300 teacher- participants in the study.

The survey showed that a majority of the teachers in these Junior colleges are not versed to teach English language. Junior College data is collected to bring official authenticity to what is said. The survey has been done with a view to write an in- depth paper eventually and the data thus collected from Junior colleges and engineering colleges has been compiled by the presenter for future presentation of a detailed paper.

Data obtained from this study is divided into quantitative and qualitative data.
There is an important distinction between quantitative and qualitative research:

In qualitative research, the information obtained from participants is expressed in their own words (exactly quoted). The quotations are much revealing; hence, they can be used to strengthen the case to change the mode of pedagogy for L2. Taking the validity of these quotations, further alterations or changes can be carried either in the methodology or syllabus of English learning/teaching.

The qualitative method has been popular for the past hundred years. Researchers have started using this qualitative approach since the mid-1980s. Though quantitative approach has scientific base, there was some dissatisfaction with the approach. Coolican (1994) discussed a quotation from Reason and Rowan (1981), which expresses the dissatisfaction very clearly:

There is too much measurement going on some things which are numerically precise are not true; and some things which are not numerical are true. Orthodox research produces results which are statistically significant but humanly in significant; in human inquiry it is much better to be deeply interesting than accurately boring.

In qualitative research there would be raw data. It is nothing but direct quotations from the participants. The data from this perspective is divided into two categories i.e., school teachers and intermediate lecturers. The questionnaires are supplied to them; and accordingly, their opinions, attitudes and the data are recorded. The

major concern is in the variety of meanings, attitudes, expressions and feelings of the participants. Some of the quotations taken from the school teachers have been produced below verbatim:

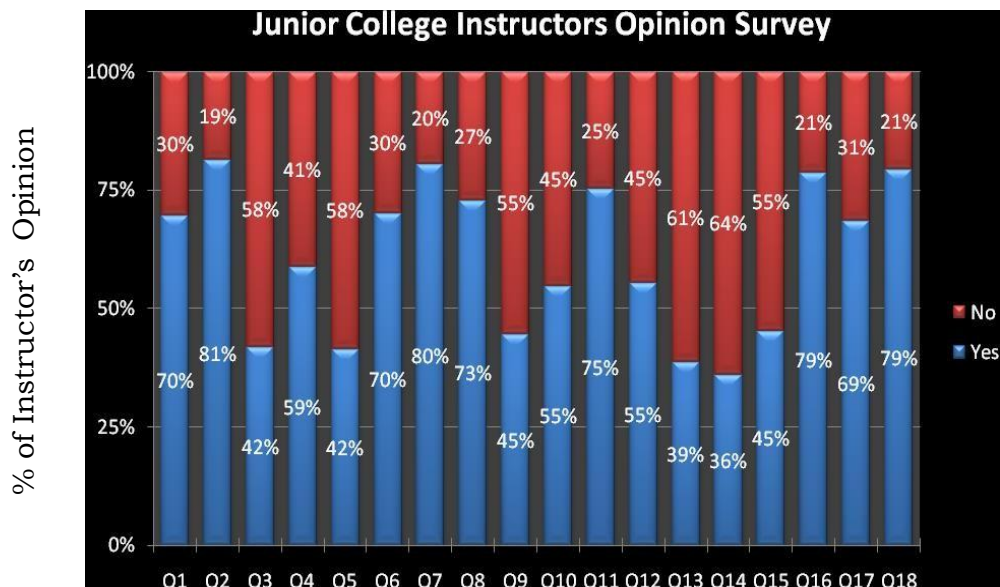
- “All the schools must have English medium only.”
- “English medium should be introduced from lower kindergarten onwards.”
- “The primary school English medium teachers have less awareness about LSRW in English to teach English as a medium of instruction.”
- “Most of the primary School teachers can speak in English.”
- “The school teachers cultivate the habit of speaking in English in the School.”
- “The school teachers believe that the present educational system is anomalous.”
- “As vernacular media students study English for six years only, they can not cope with the technical subjects.”
- “English language is not taught as a skill-based subject.”
- “English medium students study for twelve years the English subject, whereas vernacular media students study for six years. In our opinion it is not justified.”
- “CBSE, ICSE students learn more English from content subjects rather than English language subject.”
- “Vernacular media students do not feel comfortable in English medium of high school studies.”
- “For English medium students, class X English textbook is challenging to them.” (50% teachers expressed this opinion.)
- “For English medium students, class X English textbook is not challenging to them.” (50% teachers expressed this opinion).
- “Graded syllabus must be introduced during schooling to make further courses comfortable.”
- “English subject must complement the other content subjects during schooling.”
- “Reading skill is an important skill for second language learners.”
- “Introduction of CBSE English textbook into state syllabus from class V to class X in school is agreed by fifty percent of us, and the remaining fifty percent disagree.”
- “Importance of Indian writers and poets in the curriculum to be given.”

The data of the questionnaires answered by the teachers are enclosed in appendices. This type of qualitative research is very useful within the geographical areas. It also throws light on the implementation, alterations effected in the education system. The research highlights the socio- educational problems of the students who cannot face examinations on national and international platforms though they study English for twelve long years during schooling.

Some of opinions of the Intermediate course lecturers on the course are stated below in verbatim:

- “As per the Supreme Court direction environmental studies is to be included in intermediate curriculum.”
- “Telugu medium students have no base in English in high school. They cannot get good marks.”
- “Intermediate textbook is not challenging for English medium students and it is more difficult for Telugu medium students, especially the subjective part.”
- “CBT test should be included to Senior Intermediate.”
- “Some more spoken topics should be introduced for the development of communication skills of students.”
- “Intermediate textbook is of high standard for the students of rural/Telugu medium background. They have to be improved since their school age.”
- “Importance to Indian writers and poets in the curriculum to be given.”
- “The textbook English is to score marks but not to learn the language.”
- “IELTS or TOEFL pattern of academic skills are to be incorporated.”
- “Different textbooks should be prescribed for academic and vocational courses.”
- “CALL must be used.”
- “Moral lessons must be included in syllabus.”
- “The English textbook is good, but not on par with their creative levels, need for a review taking some professional help even from corporate sector.”

The one questionnaire is given in the Appendix I.



Serial Order of Question Numbers

Graph 1: Junior College Instructors Opinion Survey

A Questionnaire has been supplied to Junior College Lecturers to gauge their reactions, attitudes, preferences while teaching English. The graph above illustrates their responses while the actual questions and the response references have been listed below:

Question	Yes%	No%	Response Inference
1. Are you trained in phonetics?	70%	30%	This means 30% of the students are at a disadvantage.
2. Do you think that phonetics and teaching of phonetic symbols/transcription is necessary at the Intermediate level?	81%	19%	Actually it is not. It means they are not aware of the fact that the students should be taught English sounds and not the symbols. However, they could not justify their positive answer to this question or give reasons for teaching phonetics at the Intermediate level.
3. Is Intermediate English textbook challenging to English medium students?	42%	58%	Hence, there is need to improve the standards of the English syllabus.
4. Are vernacular media students comfortable	59%	41%	Hence, half of the students are uncomfortable with the text; so, it

	with intermediate English text book?			is desirable to have different textbooks to English and vernacular medium students.
5.	Do MBiPC course aspirants like to study English textbook intensively?	42%	58%	English subject is not taken seriously by technical or medical aspirants; hence they cannot take the international standards English test successfully.
6.	Do you think that the intermediate syllabus/EAMCET/ AIEEE, must be given with in the stipulated two years in the intermediate course?	70%	30%	This reply from the Junior college staff shows that they themselves do not realise that English is being submerged under the weight of the optional subjects. Hence they do not seem to take care to cultivate the language skills among the students. They mechanically complete the syllabus.
7.	Does English syllabus help Intermediate students to comprehend their content subjects?	75%	25%	A strong case for making English syllabus more robust as 25% is denied of this advantage.
8.	Does the English text- book of Intermediate course complement the learning of content subject?	73%	27%	There seems to be some disappointment with the textbook as considerable chunk feels it is not.
9.	Can Intermediate students write independently?	45%	55%	This feedback is a proof that enough skills are not taught by the time the students enter tertiary level of education.
10.	Have Advanced Vocabulary and Advanced Reading been introduced at the Intermediate level?	55%	45%	It reflects on the poor standard of the students in Vocabulary and Reading by the time they enter the professional courses.
11.	Do you cultivate skimming and scanning skills while teaching Reading?	25%	75%	It infers a disappointing situations as the students would not learn the difference between Intensive and Extensive Reading and can never become good readers.
12.	Are any special classes conducted for vernacular media students to bridge the gap and keep them on par with the English medium students?	15%	85%	As it is not included in the syllabus, it is left to the mercy and commitment of the individual teachers. It can be surmised that no effort is made to help the vernacular media students to gain the needed language skills.
13.	Is Intermediate English	39%	61%	It is pertinent here to draw the

	language syllabus need- based?			attention to the entire English teaching system at the Intermediate level. A casual course, not focused on specific needs, is not helpful even to the English medium students. The syllabus is not in sync either with the equivalent courses of ICSE and CBSE or with the expected entry behaviour of the students who enter the professional courses.
14.	English syllabus is not comprehensive	36%	64%	It is a very paradoxical situation as a second language is studied for a purpose and not pleasure. A syllabus which is not comprehensive would leave dents in the language acquisition of the students which would affect their performance in the future courses.
15.	Intermediate English syllabus is not graded.	65%	35%	As it is the entry behaviour of the Intermediate students in English is very disappointing for many reasons. An ungraded syllabus further confuses them and slows down the process of language acquisition.
16.	Do you encourage them to practice silent reading? Do you have any follow up programme to test their comprehension after they read silently	79% 10%	21% 90%	Without teaching the sub-skills of reading such as skimming and scanning and without any follow up programme, merely practicing silent reading would not help.
17.	Do vernacular media students display diffidence in comprehension of the English text lessons?	69%	31%	This is alarming as no effort is made to alleviate their diffidence in English which is challenging to them.
18.	Do you introduce remedial reading?	05%	95%	Teachers displayed ignorance about remedial reading. The response shows that no effort is made to improve the reading skills of the student, particularly the weaker ones.

Table.1 Inferences of the Junior College Instructors Responses

Evaluation

Qualitative analysis is subjective and impressionistic, so it is influential. The data or an analysis of qualitative approach varies from one researcher to another. But qualitative analysis can be strengthened when oral statements can be corroborated with personal observation. Both analyses have considerably replicated one another. Beside this, the qualitative approach is highly reliable because questionnaires are filled by the individuals.

Data Presentation

Data Presentation is giving information about the scores in a sample. Scores representation can be done in several ways. If it is presented in statistical data or graph, the people may find it easier to understand what has been found. Data representation could be easier than the central tendency and dispersion to understand. The

foremost feature of graphs and charts is the labelling. The presentation and labelling of graphs and charts helps the reader to make out the sense of the information.

Test Administered to I year B.Tech Students:

The Research issue is to study the present situation in the professional colleges of Telanagana State with reference to the role of reading skill in their success in the technical subjects. Field work is done through the distribution of questionnaires to study the standard of the I year students of B. Tech. course.

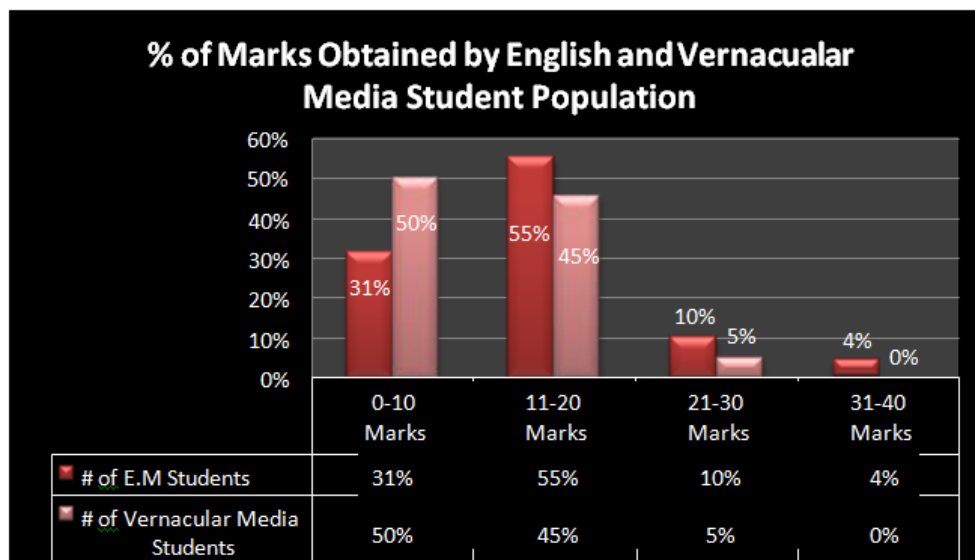
The test was administered to I year B.Tech students (570) of 4 colleges to get an authentic idea of their proficiency in Reading of English texts. This test has been done on a micro level taking a few samples from the colleges.

Quantitative Analysis

The measures of central tendency, which provide some indication of the size of average or typical scores, are the mean, median and mode. But calculations in mean are furnished below:

Mean

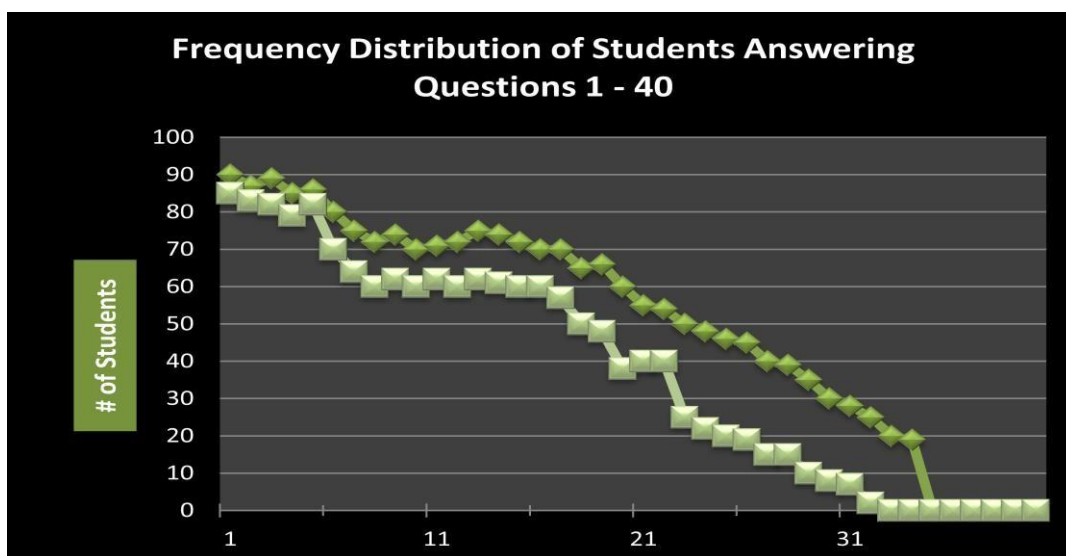
The mean in each group or condition is calculated by adding up all the scores in a given situation, and then dividing by the number of participants in that condition. The score of the 7614 is divided by the total number of participants. That is $7614 / 616 = 12.3603896$. Hence, the mean is 12.3603896. The mean takes all the scores into account. This is the main advantage of the mean.



Graph: 2. Percentage of Marks Obtained by English and Vernacular Media Student Population

The above graph tries to explain the divide between students coming from an English medium (henceforth referred to as EM) of instruction and vernacular medium (henceforth referred to as VM) of instruction. The difference between EM and VM is clearly illustrated by the percentages given above. The EM students have always managed to outscore the VM students. Only 31% of EM students achieved between 0 and 10 marks whereas 50% of VM students secured between 0 and 10 marks. About 55% of EM students achieved between 11 and 20 marks whereas about 45% of VM students obtained between 11 and 20 marks. About 10% of EM students obtained between 21 and 30 marks in contrast to 5% of the VM students achieving between 21 and 30 marks. And only the EM students scored more than 30 marks in the test. The EM students clearly have an edge over VM students due to their constant exposure to English as a medium of instruction. There is a pressing need to bridge the gap between EM and VM students before they enter the professional courses as they would be placed and evaluated on the same platform thenceforth.

Frequency of Questions Answered by English and Vernacular Media Students



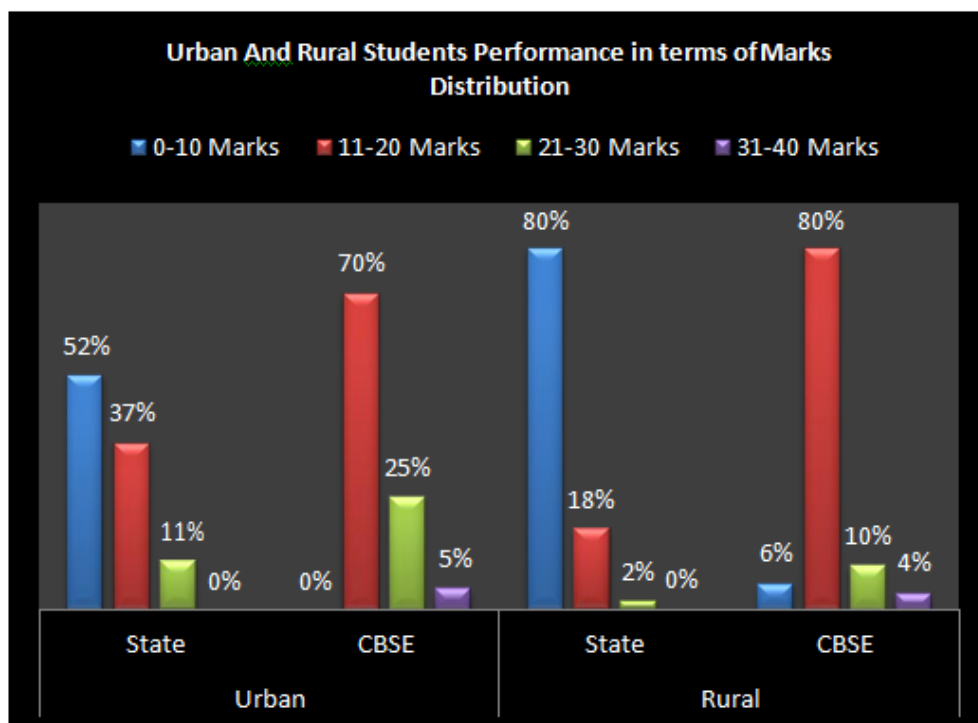
Graph 3. Frequency Distribution of Students Answering Questions 1-40

Q. No	# of English Medium Students	# of Vernacular Medium Students	Difference English Vernacular students	between and medium
1	90	85	5	
2	87	83	4	
3	89	82	7	
4	85	79	6	
5	86	82	4	
6	80	70	10	
7	75	64	11	
8	72	60	12	
9	74	62	12	
10	70	60	10	
11	71	62	9	
12	72	60	12	
13	75	62	13	
14	74	61	13	
15	72	60	12	
16	70	60	10	
17	70	57	13	
18	65	50	15	
19	66	48	18	
20	60	38	22	
21	55	40	15	
22	54	40	14	
23	50	25	25	
24	48	22	26	
25	46	20	26	
26	45	19	26	

27	40	15	25
28	39	15	24
29	35	10	25
30	30	8	22
31	28	7	21
32	25	2	23
33	20	0	20
34	19	0	19
35	0	0	0
36	0	0	0
37	0	0	0
38	0	0	0
39	0	0	0
40	0	0	0

Table: 2.The Results of the Frequency Disitribution of Students Answering Questions 1-40

The above table shows how many students of English/Vernacular media attempted each question. There are 40 questions in total in 3 passages. Passage I contains 1-15 questions, Passage II contains 16-28 questions and Passage III has 29- 40 questions. The degree of difficulty in reading comprehension increases from Passage I to III. The Passage I which is easier, has been correctly answered by both English and Vernacular media students. Passage II which is easier than Passage III is answered almost equally by the students of both media. Passage III which is relatively difficult passage could not be answered well by the students of both media. The inference, therefore, is the standards of English Education with regard to English reading comprehension skills have to be improved for both English and Vernacular media students.



Graph 4.Urban and Rural Students Performance in terms of % of Marks

Marks Obtained	Syllabus	0-10 Marks	11-20 Marks	21-30 Marks	31-40 Marks
Urban	State	52%	37%	11%	0%
	CBSE	0%	70%	25%	5%
Rural	State	80%	18%	2%	0%
	CBSE	6%	80%	10%	4%

Table 3 Urban and Rural Students Performance in terms of % of Marks

The graph above illustrates the difference in the English Reading Comprehension skills of urban and rural students and contrasts the State and CBSE syllabi too. The urban students score better than the rural students and which is clearly seen in the graph above. About 80% of rural state-syllabus students scored between 0 and 10 marks where as only 52% of urban state syllabus students scored between 0 and 10 marks; and similarly, 6% of the CBSE students scored between 0 and 10 marks in the rural sector whereas no urban CBSE student scored between 0 and 10 marks. Only 2% of rural state- syllabus students scored between 21 and 30 marks where as 11% of the urban State syllabus students scored between 21 and 30 marks; and similarly, 10% of the rural CBSE students scored between 21 and 30 marks whereas 25% of the urban CBSE students could score between 21 and 30 marks. This clearly shows the lines drawn between rural and urban divide and also emphasizes the difference in the robustness of state and CBSE syllabi.

The interaction and the test conducted revealed some strange facts dissipating the general notions on the English proficiency levels of the students of the English (CBSE & ICSE) and vernacular media. That study helped in establishing the importance of explicit teaching of Reading skill in an ESL situation and the role of Reading ability in educational and professional success. The research has also proved that the Technical students are not given adequate training in Reading skills either in the pre-professional or professional course. This is proved through the diagnostic test. English medium students prima face appear to be proficient in English; but as far as the academic reading is concerned, their performance is not different from that of the vernacular media students. In fact, this has been a shocking experience to the researcher too. Students from the English medium background who are proficient in general English, may be because of the standard textbooks of English and more exposure to English, too are poor readers when it comes to academic reading skills.

III. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the aim of the researcher is to focus the issue that both English and regional media students should have a higher level of Reading skills to be successful in their respected technical courses.

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