

**From Content-based to Skill-oriented Testing:
Resistance, Prospects and Possibilities**

**Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

by

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December 2022

DECLARATION

I, Afsal Jamal. P hereby declare that the thesis entitled *From Content – based to Skill-oriented Testing: Resistance, Prospects and Possibilities*, submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an original record of observations and bonafide research carried out by me under the guidance of Dr. Abdul Latheef. V, Assistant Professor of English, Govt. Arts and Science College, Kondotty, and that it has not been previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma or similar titles.

Malappuram
12 December 2022

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *From Content –based to Skill-oriented Testing: Resistance, Prospects and Possibilities*, submitted by **Afsal Jamal. P**, to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an original record of observations and bonafide research carried out by him under my supervision and that it has not previously been formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma or similar titles.

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Chapter 1

The Global, National and Local Scenario of English and ELT over the Years

Introduction

The English language, due to various reasons ranging from political, commercial and technological, has spread so much in use that it has become an integral component of the educational system of countries across the globe. English is the Mother Tongue (MT) of more than 300 million people around the globe. Though English is next only to the Chinese language, in terms of the number of people that use it, there is a noteworthy dissimilarity in the distribution of the speakers of these two languages. While Chinese is limited to the Chinese sub-continent, English has a wider use across the world. As it has a wider acceptance, it is understood by people of all countries. A lions' share of the world's communication is in English. The United Nations has six official languages and English is one among them. Apart from this, it is the link language of the Commonwealth countries. Most people opt for English when there is a requirement for cross geographical interaction.

The global status of a language depends on factors like the number of people who use it and the political as well as economic supremacy of those people. In the past, Latin became an international language, primarily because of the Roman Empire. Even after the deterioration of the Roman Empire, the dominance that Roman Catholicism has on people facilitated the language to preserve this status for almost a millennium. For a language to attain the status of lingua franca, a strong power base of some sort- political, cultural, religious, scientific or technological is compulsory and history of English language underlines this. The life and triumph of any language in the world, history teaches, depend upon the success and influence of the people who use that language. History shows that Greek became a language of

international communication for more than two thousand years, not because of the existence of the great philosophers, but because of the political power enjoyed by Alexander the Great. The reason for the spread of Arabic in North Africa and Middle East, Spanish and French in America was not different. During the renaissance, the rulers used their military power to control the territories and subsequently that led to the spread of their languages also. The history of English as a global language is no exception because it also spread as a result of the expedition of people, particularly at the earlier periods, by sailors.

It is interesting to note that not merely the political power that is behind the growth of a language as a global one, the economic backup too has a significant part in preserving and spreading that language and its position. During the 20th century, the world has switched over to digitised communication technologies that have triggered both the economic as well as linguistic developments. It was the period of the surfacing of multinational organisations along with the considerable growth of advertising. Printing became predominant during those periods, which was later substituted with broadcasting media that brought the latest news to any corner of the world at a flick of a second. Entertainment industry, principally movies, is another factor that helped the growth of English and its pace got high when Hollywood became the head quarters of world movie industry. 19th century witnessed the progression of Britain as a leading industrial country. The English speaking country, US turned out to be the fastest developing economy of the world at the end of the century. During the 19th century, the colonial conquests by the British led to the spread of English round the globe. On the other hand, the economic supremacy of the US also kindled the progress of English as a global language. In the 20th century, the economy replaced politics and the growth of the US economy became instrumental in the growth of English.

Industrial revolution of the 19th century was a turning point in the history of humanity and the global spread of English. Numerous fresh words were coined through neologism for machines, processes and products. Timeworn words that were in use with a particular meaning were given the latest meanings, for instance, locomotive, vacuum, factory and new words were formed as a consequence of

amalgamation of existing words (Typewriter, horsepower). So, there was a drastic transformation in language in order to accomplish the requirement of the juncture and to cope with the brisk alterations in technology. Until the commencement of the 18th century, human beings largely depended on agricultural engagements for their existence. But the century that followed was one replete with novel ideas and the consequent development resulted in the emergence of industrialised and urbanised countries. These growing changes necessitated a common language for communication and English managed to get into that position. The innovation of steam technology in the practice of printing gave way to the institution of high speed rotary press, Linotype machine for casting and setting type and all these spawned publications in English at a massive scale. David Crystal in *English as a Global language* opines:

The formation of The League of Nations in 1920 was another milestone in the history of English which was considered as one of its official languages. In The League of Nations, most members were non-European countries and it necessitated the use of a single language as a lingua franca for effective and uninterrupted communication among the members from diverse linguistic backgrounds. When The League of Nations was replaced with The United Nations (UN) in 1945, this need became stronger because the UN consists of various organisations, agencies, commissions, bodies of experts. English is one of the official languages in all of these. In various parts of the world, English plays a working role in the proceedings of major international political gatherings, world summits and such gatherings of international significance. ASEAN, the Commonwealth, European Union, NATO, OPEC are some of the examples. Whenever a choice of linking language comes, English is the first option. International sports organisations like the Asian Amateur Athletic Association and the African Hockey Federation use only English. Hence, when these organisations conduct international events, automatically English becomes the lingua franca. As far as the scientific organisations in Europe are concerned, they work only with English. The European Association of Cancer Research, Academy of Anaesthesiology and

The European Academy of Fish Pathology are some of these. These organisations use only English in their proceedings. Such a group includes the European Bridge League and the European Air Law Association. Even though for bodies like Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisation, there are three official languages, French, English and Arabic, the working language it uses is English (73).

Another landmark in the growth of English is the creation of The European Union. It is an organisation where a large number of nations partake with a privilege to use their own language. So there is a crisis in which over hundred pairs of languages require translation and interpreting service. It is practically unmanageable to locate translators or interpreters to manage these situations. The situation became worse when the number of nations in the organisation increased. So, to handle these problems successfully, they adopted an innovative proposal by which they used English as an intermediary language. By this, the European languages after translating to English would be later translated to the target language. By 1995, around 42 percent of the European Union claimed to communicate in English and in 2002, it had risen to 47 percent.

U S linguist Richard W Bailey in his *Cultural History of the Language, Images of English*, in which he compiled the opinion of various writers on the use English, observes:

It is evident to all those who have devoted any portion of attention to the subject, that the English language would, if proper care were devoted to its advancement, stand an excellent chance of becoming more universally diffused, read and spoken, than any other now is, or ever has been. In Europe, the study of it seems to be gradually spreading. In Germany, Russia and Scandinavia, it is esteemed an essential, in France a highly useful branch of education; in Africa it is gradually superseding the Dutch and becoming the medium of valuable information. In Australia, it is not only widely spoken as the only European language known on that vast continent, but written and printed in an almost incredible number of newspapers, magazines

and reviews. In Asia, so great is the desire manifested to learn it that it was thought by Bishop Heber, that, if proper facilities were afforded, it would, in fifty years, supersede Hindoostanee and become the court and camp language of India. In America, millions already speak, write and read it as their mother tongue...never before did a language look forward to such a bright prospect as this (107).

The English language broadcasting that began in Canada, Australia and New Zealand during the 1920s, the Indian Broadcasting Company from Bombay and Calcutta in 1927 and the commencement of radio services by the European countries during the same period prompted urgency for an international agreement over the use of wavelengths. Apart from these, there were many other organisations that functioned on a regional basis, such as the European Broadcasting Union, the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association. In the case of all these organisations, there was a mounting dependence on English as a link language. English is the official language of the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union, for example. The language English has attained the colour of freedom, modernism and rebellion among the younger generation in many countries by the lyrics of Bob Marley, Bob Dylan, John Lennon and others. Lines like 'We Shall Overcome', that echoed in many gatherings, especially political, provided the people a sense of the amalgamating power of English language. The signs in the shop windows at the tourist spots are most commonly in English. Menus found in restaurants have a parallel version in English. The use of English as an auxiliary language is often found in the scenario of international travel, business meetings, international conventions, academic meetings and sporting occasions. Coming to the safety instructions on international flights and sailings, directions to major locations are now increasingly in English along with the regional languages. The International Civil Aviation Organisation, founded as a result of a conference held in Chicago in 1944, which laid the foundation for the post war civil aviation system, reached a consensus that English should be the international language of aviation. The language of the Allied leaders was English and the manufacturers of aircraft, post war pilots, most of them were

English speaking. It was then natural that English became the acclaimed language of international air travel (Crystal 91).

David Crystal further comments:

For the last half century, the English language teaching business has become one of the prominent industries around the globe. The development and growth of the English language goes back to history. This trend started during the end of the 18th century when various examples of English grammar have been translated into numerous languages. The British Council, having a network of offices in more than hundred countries, also accounts for the growth and development of English during the modern period. During 1995-96, nearly fifty thousand candidates around the world attended English language examinations coordinated by the council and around 130,000 students were acquiring English and other skills through the innumerable centres of the British Council. It is fascinating to note that this number has grown later. As per the testimony of the British Council in 1997, thousands of schools and other institutions are dedicated to English language teaching and in the instantaneous future, the amount of such people would reach over one thousand million. People who were resourcefully involved in English language teaching from around ninety countries were given a questionnaire connected to the role and future of the English language, in a global consultation exercise in 1995. This was originated by 'English 2000', a project by the British Council. The survey reached a conclusion with the replies that English language teaching, as far as its global market is concerned, would proliferate over the next twenty-five years. Central and eastern Europe was recognised as a particular growth area and also the countries of the former USSR. Similar estimations were conveyed by various countries which unhesitatingly gave the label of global language to English (104).

The emergence and elaboration of the digital world, including the internet, paved the way for storing the world's information in the English language.

Information stored by private corporations like business organisations, educational institutions, libraries, individuals and information that can be accessed through the internet, sending and receiving mail, participating in debates and discussion via online platforms, are in English. The role of the USA in the computer industry, presence of most of the Internet hosts there, all these contributed to the growth of English language with the dissemination of computers and internet. The language used in ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), founded in the late 1960s was English. ARPANET, which was envisaged as a decentralised national network, had the target of linking countless government institutions in order to endure the local destruction in case of a war. Later, as people of diverse countries began to get connected with this network, the users confronted a situation where they were unsurprisingly made to use English. This use of English later unearthed a wider scope when this service was prolonged to private and commercial organisations. When such new technologies fetched new prospects, English surfaced as a first rank language that influenced all walks of the society- advertising, the press, movies, telecommunication, broadcasting . At the same time, there emerged an extraordinary demand for a link language as the world was looking for networks of international alliances. In this situation too, the first preference was English. Apart from these, English gained a global status during the first half of the 20th century when many countries bequeathed a special status for English, including India, following their political independence. The electronic revolution of this period also boosted this process of acquisition of the status of a global language for English. Ulrich Ammon in *The Dominance of English as a Language of Science* quotes Salman Rushdie, “For Salman Rushdie, speaking from the Indian experience, this is already an accomplished fact: the English language ceased to be the sole possession of the English some time ago” (79). The fact is, the biggest English speaking country, the US, has merely twenty percent of the English speakers of the world. It is clear that no one can claim the sole ownership of the language. And this definitely makes the English language a global one. English accordingly performs the purpose of global language. In *The Amazing World of Englishes: A Practical Introduction*, Peter Siemund and *et al.* quotes:

The US linguist Braj Kachru has suggested that we think of the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles, representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is currently used. Although not all countries fit neatly into this model, it has been widely regarded as a helpful approach (18).

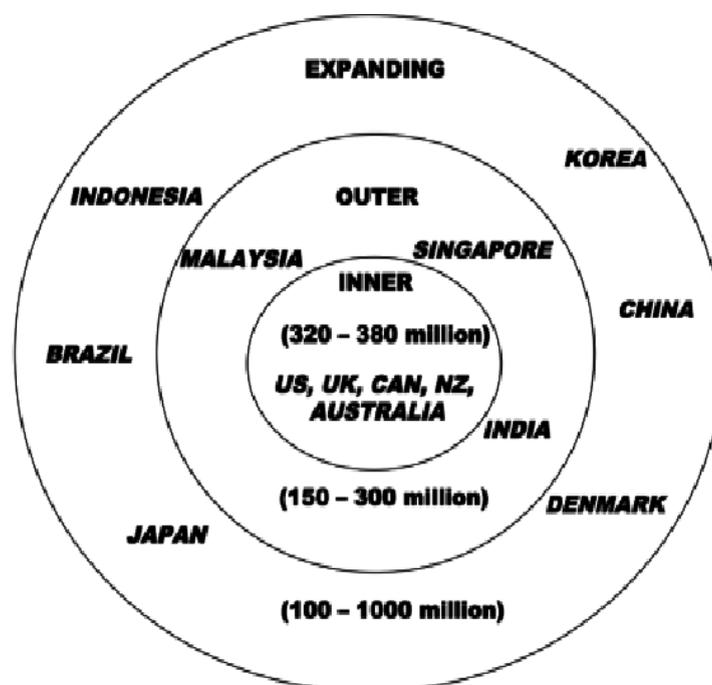


Figure 1. Kachru's concentric circles of English

Source: Andy Kirkpatrick, *The Routledge Companion to English Studies* (12)

The inner circle refers to the traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language: it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The outer or extended circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions, and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories.

The expanding or extending circle involves those nations which recognise

the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have a history of colonisation by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any special administrative status. It includes China, Japan, Greece, Poland and (as the name of this circle suggests) a steadily increasing number of other states. In these areas, English is taught as a foreign language. (The term ‘expanding’ reflects its origins in the 1980s: today, with English recognised virtually everywhere, a tense change to expanded circle would better reflect the contemporary scene) (13).

David Crystal in *English as Global Language* defines global language as a language that has developed ‘a special role that is recognised in every country’ (3). Moreover, the upshots of Industrialisation triggered substantial modifications in the English language along with the society at large. The invention of devices like telegram, telephone, television led to novel forms, style and varieties of English language. The discovery of the printing press and the growth of newspapers steered to different styles of writing like report writing, editorials, features and unusual conversational styles and expressions developed by the use of telephone, all contributed to the progress of English as a global language. The wonderful contribution of modern science, namely the internet, has made the English language an accustomed one amongst the global population. As the internet forms the platform for education, entertainment, culture, arts and sports and so on, the language English has become so prevalent among the internet community that a day without English, a world that moves by the clicking of the mouse, becomes impossible nowadays. The proliferation in the usage of internet and information technology to interchange thoughts and opinions has made English language to rule the international scenario. In *English in the New World*, David Crystal opines:

To be worthy of the designation ‘global’, a language needs to be present, in some sense, in every country in the world. English has probably now achieved this position. It is used as a first language by some 400 million people, mainly in the USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. It has achieved special status as a ‘second’ language in over 70 countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria, India, Singapore and Vanuatu, spoken by 400 million. And in most ‘perhaps now all?’ Of the remaining

countries, it has become the foreign language which children are most likely to learn in school. The number of foreign learners may now exceed a billion.

Although estimates vary greatly, 1500 million or more people are today thought to be competent communicators in English. That is a quarter of the world's population. So, is English a global language, when three out of four people do not yet use it? Given the areas of world influence where it has come to have a pivotal role, the answer has to be yes. The evidence suggests that English is now the dominant voice in international politics, banking, the press, the news agencies, advertising, broadcasting, the recording industry, the motion picture, travel, science and technology, knowledge and management, and communications. No other language has achieved such a widespread profile – or is likely to, in the foreseeable future (16).

The concept of 'Global Language' may open an immense collection of implications and elucidations. The most fitting implication of the idea is that it is a language that possesses a distinct position and performs a noteworthy position in each country. David Graddol suggests that the proportion of the world's population who have English as a first language will decline from over 8 per cent in 1950 to less than 5 per cent in 2050 (61). To benefit an incomparable esteem in a country never means that the language should be verbalised as a first or a second or a foreign language, but it ought to be the language predominantly used as a means of interface in the greatest portions of the country. This is one of the striking qualities of a global language and English as a global language has a significant role in the contemporary job market. The world in this 21st century perceives an immeasurable outburst in the professional development and career profiles. This variety of an inclination, a phenomenal progression and a rapid advancement, has never been experienced by the world before. It has retained a relentlessly increasing requirement on the scholarship of English language. In order to make oneself equipped to maintain swiftness with the professional enhancements, the notable requirement of the job seekers is to improve proficiency to undertake the requirements of the employers. Effective communication and listening know- hows, that are the demands of the corporate sector, is earnestly contemplated over by the employment pursuers. The

contemporaneous global scenario of employment looks for reasonable and good command over English language in the candidates, that are to a great extent, least recognised due to the imperfect system of English language education.

The prominence of English as a lingua franca is of extra ordinary significance in the present-day world. Whether it is amongst groups or midst individuals in the transnational societies, of academic, business and economic, English as a link language is of excessive demand. An online video conference, for instance, among the professionals from diverse segments of the world or an interaction, becomes effective only if there is a shared language. In almost all such circumstances, English is the most selected language. Uses of technologies like this and introduction of mobile, that made people more tech savvy, was a congenial atmosphere for a global language to develop and flourish. The materialisation of global villages is the by-product of the use of English as a global language, as English is used in digital communication, that made the world virtually shrink into a small village.

Global ELT practices

The entire scenario of teaching-learning is undergoing transformation at a rapid pace. Conventional methods of education, especially language instructional practices, have been replaced with innovative techniques of teaching, learning and testing in which the emphasis is markedly placed on learners and their performative competence. Spread of capitalism and significance gave to higher education have also contributed to English being a language of social status in various parts of the globe.

Learning a language, in the 21st century global scenario, concentrates on individualised, customisable, learner centred approach which has solid foundations on the principles of learning through participatory tasks and active involvement. Activities that require learner's reflections on the concepts are largely incorporated into teaching materials and evaluation systems. The application of student portfolios in education is growing and it provides them opportunities to demonstrate their learning. This tendency is gaining momentum at a swift velocity. Technology is

widely implemented in learning and testing languages unlike the preceding centuries. In short, the focus of language teaching is no more on grammar, memorisation and learning byheart, but on using language as a tool for effective communication in personal and professional situations. It is the skills of the learner that are given utmost importance. The language skill that each student is capable of putting into practice is considered as a major criterion for placement in the world around them. The role of teachers in the 21st century is also a serious question to be addressed.

According to Pauline Rea- Dickins of The University of Bristol, there is a trend in language education over all to incorporate student self-monitoring and self-assessment. The asset based assessment is a trend of the day which pays particular attention to the learner's capabilities (14). Asset based teaching seeks to unlock student's potential by focusing on their talents. It fills the gap with the traditional ways of assessing language acquisition which is inadequate in today's world as the complexity of language learning cannot be assessed by this.

There has been universal progress towards the framing and completion of benchmark systems and frameworks that obtain an asset based technique to testing of language. To quote a few, the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) for Canada's two official languages, English and French. A Common European Framework of Reference for Languages invented by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2001) which is implemented by over forty nations in Europe. The English language educators as well as researchers of other countries also use this framework as a point of reference. Traditional techniques of assessment exposed gaps in a student's knowledge. The anticipation is that only if the gaps are filled, genuine education takes place. But this is an obsolete notion. The appropriate method is to identify the student's proficiency to snatch, produce and make use of language in numerous forms and for miscellaneous situations. The most modern tendency in language evaluation is skill based approach by means of the benchmarks and frameworks.

The English language teaching in this century around the globe which is

concentrating on the four Cs- Collaboration, Communication, Creativity and Critical thinking is changing at a swift velocity. The learners of this century are in need of these skills. This perspective has originated as a byproduct of the refashioning of education across the world for the past twenty years. The utmost challenge that the language teachers confront in the classrooms these days is how to inculcate these skills in their students. The future demands the capacity of critical thinking in the students. What leads to critical thinking is the capacity to look at a problem from various angles in order to analyse, with an open mind. It is based on the capacity to conduct minute analyses of problems. Creativity has multiple layers of meaning in a classroom. The last two, Collaboration and Communication are the other two skills that a language teacher should be aware of. Teachers, to build up the skills of collaboration and communication use various strategies in the classrooms nowadays. The students who are well versed with these competencies are highly demanded in the corporate sector. The capacity to communicate and collaborate excellently is the most wanted quality that they look for before absorbing a person to their firm. So, the time given to improve communicative competency of the students in a language classroom can be treated as the quality time in language teaching. It is believed that this is the apt moment for a paradigm shift which tries to shed light upon the changing roles of English in the field of language research and pedagogy.

The present trend around the world is that English is preferred as a second language to other languages and it is intensively taught in many educational institutions. Even parents demand more serious teaching of English due to the perception that social and economic honour is related with English. For instance, in Hong Kong, there is heated public debate regarding the significance of English medium schools and the apt time to introduce English education. In Japan, attempts have been initiated to commence teaching of English in the primary classes. Local universities are opting English as the main language of instruction, setting up off campuses. Universities in China have been insisting to use English as the medium to teach at least ten percent of their syllabus. In Japan, the universities are providing education in English as there was a hike in the demand for university education. In Scandinavian countries like Norway and Sweden, English is displacing the national

language as the medium of instruction, especially in science and engineering streams. It is in Finland that the highest proportion of university level courses is taught in English outside English speaking nations. The present trend in the new Europe is that English is acquiring the status of the *de facto* official language. Across the world too, similar deliberations are spreading to enhance the speed of spreading and growth of English language (Yeung 5).

There is a worldwide transformation in the case of English language teaching from Grammar Translation method to Communicative Approach, in fact because of the social demand for skills in communicative English in recent years. Following the suit, the English education in Macau, China has shifted from Grammar Translation to the communicative front. Over the last fifty years, in Hong Kong too, the ELT approaches took a similar turn. During the 1970s, the Grammar Translation method as well as Oral-Structural method was in vogue which were later replaced with the Communicative Approach in the 1980s. “One defining feature of the Communicative Approach is its equal emphasis on forms and function of language, and that the design of teaching materials takes students’ needs and interests as points of inception” (Wyse 454). This student centred approach to teaching stresses the pruning of a student's communicative competence in English language. With the development of the global economy, by the growth of the international business sector, the demand for English language has attained its climax, especially among the immigrants to those countries where the official language is English. Moreover, the growth of the tourism sector too contributed to the development of English as a language of international communication. As a result of the globalisation policies of the non English speaking countries, ELT programs exclusively for the adult learners have been constituted in the workplace and community.

Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin comments in the chapter ‘The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching’ in *Innovation in English Language Teaching*:

Communication in everyday life synthesises ideational, interpersonal and textual knowledge-and the affects which are part of such knowledge. But it is

also related to and integrated with other forms of human behaviour. In learning how to communicate in a new language, the learner is not confronted by a task which is easily separable from his other psychological and social experiences. The sharing and negotiating of potential meanings in a new language implies the use and refinement of perceptions, concepts and affects. Furthermore, learning the conventions governing communication within a new social group involves the refinement and use of the social roles and the social identity expected by that group of its members. Thus, learning to communicate is a socialisation process.[...]Therefore, it makes sense for the teacher to see the overall purpose of language teaching as the development of the learner's communicative knowledge in the context of personal and social development (11).

Day by day the world is changing; day by day the methods too are changing. The decline in the demand for traditional human resources and the proliferation of novel knowledge economies compelled the newcomers to be extremely proficient in communicative competence of English language. In order to pursue education and employment, more people are migrating to English speaking countries. This trend was mainly as a part of developments like the spreading out of the European Union. During the last two decades, the number of foreign university students in Australia, Canada, the US and the UK has increased enormously. In most of the US, English was made mandatory for instructional purposes. As early as 1990, the then president of Korea directed the Ministry of Education to alter from traditional Grammar Translation to Communicative Approach. In 1996, EPIK (English Program in Korea) was launched by the Ministry of Education. This was to overcome the weaknesses of the Korean English teachers who were with poor speaking abilities. By the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Koreans acknowledged the significance of English to survive the severe struggle in the world market. By this, as part of the globalisation policy of the government, the main aim of English teaching in Korea became the enhancement of the communicative competence of their students. In China, numerous models and methods were developed that left a country wide impact on ELT. "Among these was Zhang, Sizhong's teaching method, with its core

principles synthesised in four phases with sixteen Chinese characters, namely, using blocks of time for teaching vocabulary and structures; recycling constantly what is learned; reading authentic texts; catering for individual needs"(Cummins 93). In Beijing, a classroom teacher developed the 'word, sentence and discourse' model in 2004. In this model, vocabulary and structures were taught by creating meaningful situations where novel words are taught with various examples for the learners to listen and replicate. After that, the teacher constructs a short discourse as a model and the learner will be urged to follow it using as many words as possible. It was only in 1993 that the word 'communication' found a place as the objectives of teaching in China. The insertion of daily expression in communication, paved the way for a paradigm shift from Grammar Translation and Audio Lingual, towards communication oriented language instruction. The Research team of the Department of Foreign Languages, Beijing Normal University found out that China had witnessed a gradual break away from the Grammar Translation method to a practice oriented, student centred approach.

In India, by the year 2000, the innovation phase, supported by the government, began which was a crucial move towards quality oriented education. The government, along with teachers and parents, identified that there was something unfair with the present educational methods. The entire student community spent much of their time memorising facts for examination while the teachers resorted to spoon feeding to deliver knowledge. It resulted, unfortunately, in creating a student community that lacked the capacity to think freely, to manage real life situations, to take care of others and to learn by themselves. In such an educational environment, learning becomes a herculean task rather than a pleasurable experience for many children and young adults. Even though many achievements are accomplished due to the various reforms implemented in English language teaching, there remain important issues that need to be addressed at the earliest. Mostly, teachers focus on the delivery of knowledge about vocabulary, grammar and syntax and fail to put emphasis on the application level of the language and the communicative competence of the students. The present system of instruction is mostly teacher centred and seldom promotes the interest and

motivation of the students to learn the subject, thereby shutting the doors to the development of the individuality of the student. The latest teaching approach at global level insists on developing the student's overall capacity to use language, the educational system existing in India concentrates on rote memory, the significance of which ends by the end of the exams. What is necessary in India at present is reframing the entire language educational framework so that the objectives for each level are explained in terms of what the student ought to be able to perform rather than what the teachers should instruct, transforming the present system more student centred. For the achievement of such a goal, instruction that is task based with an importance on skills development, language use in situations and problem solving, needs to be invented. The new method should create novel principles for assessment with a shift of focus from traditional exam oriented to a more practical oriented progress based one. In fact, many of the teachers have already identified a necessity to bring a paradigm shift in the way they teach to enable them to find out the probability of reframing their existing method of teaching according to the latest concepts in teaching and taste of their students. Xuesong Gao in *Second Handbook of English Language Teaching* rightly observes:

In short, the recent approach promotes students' development of logical, critical and creative thinking. Through such character education in subject learning, students are expected to become accountable and responsible citizens in the society. Since 2015, the practice of activity-based approach has been experimented in classrooms where teachers' instructional strategies gradually shifted from focusing on language knowledge and skills in a separate manner to a holistic approach to meaning exploration based on texts under thematic contexts (see Wang et al. 2018). With some support from teacher educators, teachers were able to implement the activity-based approach into practice with prescribed texts. The activity-based approach made their classroom teaching more engaging as students actively participated in the process of meaning exploration with other students, independent thinking and using what is learned creatively. The approach also integrated the process of meaning exploration and the process of knowledge

and skills acquisition into one learning process for students. As a result, teaching leads to a less observable inward change or mental reconstruction on the side of students rather than at the outward level, which should undoubtedly be the ultimate goal of education (126).

In the recent world, the status of English has been strengthened by a proficiency needed in various nations for admission to higher education and for many types of employment. The linguistic diversity of the world and the ubiquitous use of technology have made English a primary commercial tongue for international enterprise. In line with the changing trend, teachers identified the new role assigned to them, by which their duty is not merely equipping the students to imitate the native English speakers, but to make them fully competent users of language, who can think critically and become productive social alteration agents. The TESOL field has evolved from the application of traditional Grammar Translation method to Communicative Teaching approaches where the centre of attention is given for teaching language on meaningful language use in a broad context: the 21st century is what Kumaravadevelu (2001, 2006), Brown (1994, 2007) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) referred to as the 'Post-Method Era' in which the ELT discussions are more focused on eclectic approaches rather than on a single method or approach. Brown (1994) called it enlightened eclecticism. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2002) have used the term 'principled eclecticism' to describe a coherent and pluralistic approach to language teaching and learning (Mwanza 55).

ELT in India

The invasion of colonial powers and their staying back in the country for long periods have had a significant impact on English being the official language. It has been imparted and well-read in India for over two centuries. This language, the queen of languages, was instrumental in arousing patriotism and national thoughts all over the country. The English language accomplished the prestige of Associate Official Language even after that. But Indians are still far away from the position of being excellent listeners and speakers in this language, though the British ruled us for over two centuries.

The British trade company set up in 1600, namely English East India Company, though paid attention to trade only at the beginning, began to interfere in the politics of India. Afterward, it turned out to be the supreme power of the nation. The Charter Act of 1793 suggested sending teachers to India. This was precluded and in 1813, the Charter Act was renewed. The Clause 43 of the Charter, that encompassed the educational policy of the government, made a provision for incorporating a sum of not less than one lakh rupees per annum for the teaching of literature and also for an awareness of science among the people of British India. This Clause laid the foundation of English education in India. Christian Missionaries too, exclusively by the approaching of St. Francis Xavier, began their endeavour for the implementation of education in India. The East India Company was made to take up educational events by these missionaries. Thus, English education has launched in India which later took an unfathomable root in the Indian soil at a breakneck speed. They had many objectives in imparting English education to Indians, like teaching the offspring of militias, to generate an English speaking staff for the British for the smooth conduct of their government and to inculcate western scholarship in order to enlighten and upgrade Indians.

In 1833, a new Charter was evolved that was due to the dissatisfaction of the British government over the immobile educational activities of the English East India Company. This Charter had a stipulation for appointing a Law member to the Executive Council of the Governor General. Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay was selected as the Law member who was also the President of the Committee on Public Instruction. He, later, in 1835, developed an innovative policy document memorably known as Macaulay's Minute. According to this, English education should be the target of Indian education that could use English as the medium of teaching. The then Governor General Lord Bentinck showed green signals to the designs and concepts of Macaulay and ordered encouragement for European literature and science in India. David Crystal in *English as a Global Language* perceives:

During the period of British sovereignty (the Raj), from 1765 until independence in 1947, English gradually became the medium of administration and education throughout the subcontinent. The language

question attracted special attention during the early nineteenth century, when colonial administrators debated the kind of educational policy which should be introduced. A recognised turning-point was Lord William Bentinck's acceptance of a Minute written by Thomas Macaulay in 1835, which proposed the introduction of an English educational system in India. When the universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were established in 1857, English became the primary medium of instruction, there by guaranteeing its status and steady growth during the next century (47- 48).

The present education system in India was started by Macaulay's Minutes, through which he wanted to anglicise the entire nation. He wanted to form a class of persons who are blood and colour Indian, but in their taste, morals, intellect and opinion, English. At the beginning, the British had no plan of accustoming the Indians to Western education. They were afraid Indians would empower themselves to question the authority of Britain. But as the years passed, it became a necessity to implement European education in India. Though English education commenced at the hands of resident English teachers, a number of Indian teachers became excellent later. When English became the official language of governance, administration and law courts, the country witnessed mushrooming of English at a larger scale. It became a vital subject at school and colleges when it became the language of governance. Moreover, English became the medium of instruction at university and higher education levels. It became the linking language too.

The situation began to change when Indians became independent. There was a second thought on this system of English education. The Union government supported Hindi as the national language and as medium of communication and backed up its expansion. The constitution that came into being in 1950 gave English the position of official language for the coming fifteen years. This attempt of the Union government faced many hurdles across the nation. Especially from the south, there was a remarkable resistance to Hindi. This disinclination to accept Hindi by many Indians forced the Central Government to pass a bill in 1963 that declared English as the Associate Official language for an indeterminate period. Crystal further states:

In India, the bitter conflict between the supporters of English, Hindi, and regional languages led in the 1960s to a 'three language formula', in which English was introduced as the chief alternative to the local state language (typically Hindi in the north and a regional language in the south). It now has the status of an 'associate' official language, with Hindi the official language. It is also recognised as the official language of four states (Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura) and eight Union territories.

English has, as a consequence, retained its standing within Indian society, continuing to be used within the legal system, government administration, secondary and higher education, the armed forces, the media, business and tourism. It is a strong unifying force. In the Dravidian-speaking areas of the south, it is widely preferred to Hindi as a lingua franca. In the north, its fortunes vary from state to state, in relation to Hindi, depending on the policies of those in power. In Pakistan, it is an associated official language. It has no official status in the other countries of South Asia, but throughout the region it is universally used as the medium of international communication. Increasingly it is being perceived by young South Asians as the language of cultural modernity (48- 49).

Since independence, the impact of English has amplified significantly over the years. The English language has a dominant role in the national scenario even now. It is used as the medium of instruction in public schools, Universities, technical, law, medical and other scientific and research institutions. English is the language of communication between the Union Government and the states. The National Policy on Education adopted in 1968 by the Government of India has insisted on the study of English and commented; "Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth, but also make her own significant contribution to it. For this purpose, study of English deserves to be specially strengthened" (40). Today, India, after the UK and the USA, is the largest English speaking country in the

world. Some educationists support mastering the English language in educational institutions and continue to believe that it has "encouraged mechanical learning through memorising and discouraged inquisitiveness and an experimental bent of mind" (Jayaram 85).

One of the objections raised against the acceptance of regional languages as a medium of teaching is that the availability of books is very scarce in them. In most of the selection process, English is the official language. Admission to IIMs, IITs or other such national or central institutes as well as employment to the corporate sector are gravely grounded on the expertise in communicative skills in English. English is a coalescing power in a country which is rich in multiplicity.

Universities and colleges in India teach reading and writing English, but testing is done only in writing, that too rote memory. The other three components of language as a skill, namely reading, listening and speaking, are not examined at all as these are beyond the purview of classroom activities. The teaching of English in our country has witnessed many vicissitudes since its implementation. The excellence of a student in English, in the present framework, is simply based on his proficiency in the written language. When it comes to the competence in communication, even such brilliant students turn out to be a catastrophe. It is not merely the fault of the student concerned. There are many factors behind this incapacity of the students, including the faulty methodology of teaching and learning, in fact the traditional method of language evaluation and testing that need to be revamped upon a war footing. The standard of English education varies from state to state as the year of commencement of English language teaching is different. The syllabi of the universities and colleges are not the same, which again contribute to the difference in knowledge of language. It is the teaching of literature that is given preference over providing training in the communicative aspect of English language. The curriculum is not in line with the present-day immediate need of teaching English language. The literature oriented syllabus of UG and PG programmes always keep a deaf ear towards objective language learning. Teaching language through literature is a round about method that neither helps students to acquire skill in using language for communicative purposes, nor enriches their

vocabulary. The communicative approach to English language teaching is neglected; thereby students lack the skill and competence in language. In the present Indian scenario, teachers are not provided with sufficient space to use and provide communicative tasks to the students. The students from Indian universities turn out to be virtually 'unsellable' in the international market and subsequently unemployable because of all these. Michel P Breen and Christopher N. Candling in an article "The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching" opined :

The use of these communicative abilities is manifested in communicative performance through a set of skills. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills can be seen to serve and depend upon the underlying abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation. In this way, we are suggesting that the skills represent or realise underlying communicative abilities. The skills are the meeting point between underlying communicative competence and observable communicative performance; they are the means through which knowledge and abilities are translated into performance and vice versa.

In selecting any target repertoire, therefore, a communicative curriculum also distinguishes and specifies the target competence on which the performance of such a repertoire depends and through which it is achieved. This specification would indicate the ideational, interpersonal and textual conventions—and the affective aspects of such conventions—as a related and underlying system of knowledge which is shared and developed within the target community. The specification would also indicate the demands upon the learner's communicative abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation, similarly underlying communicative performance in the target community—and the range of skills which manifest these abilities. Such a specification would account for what the learner needs to know, and how the learner needs to be able to use such knowledge. The ultimate demands on the learner in terms of some specific target repertoire will, in our view, derive from and depend upon this

underlying competence of communicative knowledge and communicative abilities (92).

In India, the quality of English education is affected by the overcrowded classrooms and the scarcity of trained English teachers. It is only recently that English began to be taught by trained teachers at high school level. English was taught by teachers of any discipline that invariably affected the quality of language learning by students. The consciousness of the prominence of English ensued in the mushroom growth of English medium schools in the country, even in villages. But it has created a disparity between the English medium schools and the government /aided schools. While English is taught from the primary or even pre-primary level in the English medium schools, where it is trained equally as a subject and a vehicle of tutoring, it is only at a delayed phase that English is imparted in government /aided schools. This disparity in the quality of students, due to the different period of exposure to the language, makes the teachers in higher education background land in trouble. This even affects the quality of teaching at higher education level as the teacher, sometimes, has to start from the basic concepts of language. Moreover, the present curriculum in India at college level, which is neither functional nor skill based, seldom gives the student an opportunity to use and practice the language in the classroom itself.

History says that in India, teaching English has always faced multiple complicated situations. For any language teaching, to make it highly effective, instructional aides like best text books, work books along with television, computer and internet connectivity are necessary. But in many of the places, these facilities are not provided to teachers or students. As a result, sometimes, effective teaching learning becomes merely a utopian concept rather than real. Moreover, in India, good language teachers are very less in number. Even if the teachers are trained in language teaching, they are trained by the teachers of English in India and not by the native English speakers. Apart from that, the methods adopted are not suitable. Especially the oral training which is the cornerstone of language acquisition has been completely neglected. Huge number of students in the class, insufficient time for individual attention and training, lack of motivation and faulty examination and

assessment system are other instances. All these have led to the low standard of English language in India. In such circumstances, the responsibility on the shoulders of the English teachers is high, since they have to make the class interesting within the limited resources and situations. Hence it is the need of the time that we find solutions to these challenges. If the teachers can become resourceful, these challenges can be turned into opportunities. The assessment strategies designed help the student to pass the exam with good grades, but on the basis of rote learning and not on testing the ability in English language. When we examine the questions, it will disclose the fact that real competence in the English language is not needed to score high marks. Even after the completion of a programme in language, the students lack all those objectives, which the students are supposed to attain as per the syllabus. The ultimate impact by this faulty system on the students is that they are forced to opt for rote learning and other tricky methods to pass the examination. By this, the validity of scores is questioned. It affects the quality of assessment systems too.

Testing tools of other disciplines are entirely different from the assessment tools for measuring skills in language. Ability to exhibit mastery of linguistic competence is expected in the application of the language assessment tools. To frame a test, various types of skills are needed from the part of the examiner. The credibility of the test can be established by making the student score based on the actual learning of the content and not based on rote learning. The assessment method should discourage rote learning and cheating on tests. The assessment tool should be open ended so that the students find it difficult to predict the answers. The conventional tests check the memory of the students rather than the skill or competency to evaluate critically or linguistically. Instead of reproduction, assessments have to generate chances for creativity and expansion for the students. Each and every question that finds a place in the question paper should carry a justification for its inclusion.

Quality compromise is very much found in the higher education sector in India. UGC's decision for a paradigm shift from the subjective test to a multiple choice one for its National Eligibility Test for selecting the Assistant Professors in

English can be counted as a move to this effect. It has adversely affected the quality of the language teaching community as teachers deprived of language proficiency are accepted to teach language. Reintroducing the former subjective type of questions and revamping the present pattern is the need of the hour. This can ensure that the candidates selected through the test are really competent with language proficiency. Apart from this, there is a disparity between the skills acquired by the students graduating from Indian universities and the demand in the employment sector. It is because the employability of English graduates in India is one of the least concerns in the curriculum. By evaluating the malfunction of the literature oriented Common English classes to encourage necessary linguistic and communicative competencies of under graduate students; committees were constituted from time to time to review the teaching of English. These committees suggested exceptional programs for enhancing the employability of the students.

The foremost shortcoming discovered in the syllabus, which is on English language education, is that the objectives laid down do not accomplish the envisioned target. As there is less time for class room transactions, teachers stick to those skills that have significance in the examinations. In the present-day world of globalisation, where students want those aptitudes that would benefit them to converse excellently in English is seldom focused. Moreover, the teaching of language is done via literature that fails to serve the purpose. Subsequently, the students flop to attain confidence and this harmfully affects their performance. The examination system simply demands the memory of the students and thereby teachers spend their time in the classroom to make the child byheart content and rarely do they consume time on the communicative aspect of the language. It is certainly a challenge for the English teachers that they find diverse students in their class room, some from the rustic background while others from English medium schools. In such a problematic situation, the teacher either has to overlook the intellectuals or the weaker ones. This also upsets the total performance of the class. Apart from that, the existing syllabus fails to give uniform weight for the whole four skills of language. In most of the cases, only writing and reading are given preference, while the application level, namely, listening and speaking are neglected.

The huge numbers of students in the common course classrooms, that demand bifurcation at the earliest, also pose intimidation in the form of inconvenience to switch over to practice oriented classrooms, even if the teacher chooses.

ELT practices in Higher Education in Kerala

Language teaching at Higher education level in Kerala is in a deplorable condition nowadays. Quite a number of decades back, the pass minimum at school level was forty percent. So a number of students were detained in a class for want of this pass percentage. As a result, students worked hard to achieve this minimum and somehow, most of them qualified as a result of their hard work. So, during that time, it created almost a challenging situation for the students. In the case of Secondary School Leaving Certificate, thirty five percent was needed to qualify. Later, due to the lesser number of students who scored the minimum mark, the authorities diluted quality of assessment and this move led to deterioration, especially in language education. In fact, this was done to overcome the deficiency of students who qualified subjects like mathematics and English.

In the higher education scenario, for around fifteen years, there is a considerable loss of its former quality. The marks most of the students score, because of liberal valuation, has reached above ninety or even hundred in languages. The provision to give internal marks has been used unethically by many higher education institutions as part of contesting to produce outstanding results. This trend, of course, questions the trustworthiness of the educational calibre of the students. The present structure followed in English Common classes is the clubbing of two or more classes into one. This leads to an enormous number of students in every Common class; thereby the teachers find it almost impractical to carry out assessment or other evaluative measures and to assign marks/grades. Such a huge number is not feasible for activity oriented classes, though the best way to teach language is through activities. In order to save time and effort, teachers switch over to Grammar Translation method that itself upsets the purpose of language teaching.

The syllabus of the universities in the case of language studies is not up-to-

date. The latest trends in international language education are not reflected in the syllabus. Moreover, the syllabus gives weight to teaching classical works of literature to give a glorified image for the student rather than facilitating the acquisition of English language through works of literature. May be; only in Kerala, the student unions and politicians decide what should be included in the syllabus.

A fundamental overhauling took place in the field of higher education of Kerala in 1990. The self-financing sector in education, which was started in the 1990s grew steadily and became a strong domain by 2000. By the proliferation of Arts and Science colleges, these institutions are recurrently considered as the last resort for those who fail to get admission in any professional colleges. Since the quantity of seats in most of the self - financing colleges is filled with least scoring students, in a way, it began to reveal the worth of the products at higher education levels. Since the year 2000, the number of colleges in the self - financing sector has become higher than the government and aided sectors together. The Kerala State Higher Education Council, started in 2007, initiated greater changes in Higher Education. The globalisation emerged generated in the 1990s has increased the relevance of higher education as the employment sector demanded much quality from the candidates, including proficiency in English language use. Tapping the resources connected to ICT also was a growing trend during those days, which insisted the government to invest more in the higher education scenario. Unlike other states in India, Kerala has a well established general education system, but is weak in higher education. Even today, in colleges, teaching the content for the exam is the trend, without having a holistic approach that can help the student to acquire the practical use of learning a subject.

In language teaching, the very purpose is hijacked when the majority of the English teachers opt for the traditional Grammar Translation method. This method, besides wasting the precious time of learners, fails to up skill them with skills needed for their professional success. Consequently, the learners end up with a question, 'why should I learn English if I am not able to communicate'. Though the medium of university education is English, most of the teachers, for convenience, use the mother tongue. The ultimate result is, the students fail to defend oneself

when such a necessity comes, whether in the employment market or in one's social life. Especially in IT related jobs, Keralites are almost unemployable because of poor command over the English language. The tendency of students from Kerala to seek admission for the higher education in institutions outside Kerala is going up and this can be linked to the fact that they want to improve their English language proficiency. In another perspective, this flow of students is indicative of the poor English language skills they acquire in the course of their studies in Kerala. Even the new generation courses, that are available outside Kerala, are a mirage for the Keralities. Too much political interference in campus also compels the students to move out of Kerala. The parallel colleges, started in the 1970s, became a significant feature of the higher education of the state. These undergraduate teaching institutions, producing a good number of graduates may not be able to maintain the academic quality of the students, contributing to the decline of the standard of higher education in the state.

The low educational background of learners' families plays a vital role in the acquisition of communication skills in English. The children coming from such families are the first generation learners as far as their higher education is concerned. These students will not get a proper direction for the selection of programmes and further studies. These families cannot provide a platform for the students to use English language at their home or some other places outside the campus. Even inside the campus, when teachers engage English classes in the mother tongue, the chance to use and thereby improve the English language proficiency is lost forever.

Review of literature

In *Redundant factors in second Language Learning*, Manjooran L stressed the necessity of testing the skill of the students in learning and applying language rather than focusing on the text book teaching that insisted on learning the content byheart. P.Bhaskaran Nair in "English in Kerala: Plus Ca Change?" sheds light on the status, ecology, use and the teaching /learning of English in the southern Indian state of Kerala, where English is still treated and taught as a 'subject' in the school curriculum rather than as a grave communicative tool. He justifies the need for

developing 'a dynamic model of English teaching'. Hughes in *Testing for Language Teachers* talks about assessment, stating that testing is one variety of evaluation. Denis Jackson in her article 'Testing a model of undergraduate competence in employability skills and its implications for stakeholders' highlights those elements which impact on competence in employability skills and identifies ways in which stakeholders can regulate curricula and pedagogy to augment graduate skill outcomes. 'Assessing English Communication skills of UG students through mobile assisted language testing tool STEP' by Velagini Kumari overviews the environment of using mobile phones at UG level in testing the communication skills of the students. Her study attempts to evaluate English communication skills of undergraduate students by means of STEP which is an online tool for testing English proficiency of students and pushes the learners to improve their language through mobile assisted language learning. The literature review conducted shows that no methodical work has been performed till date to study the need for a shift from content based to skill oriented testing at the UG level, under the University of Calicut, with special reference to the UG Common Course.

Scope and significance

This study enquires whether the existing system of assessment followed can reliably assess the language skills of the students. It tries to evolve novel ideas for making the assessment more effective and realistic. It is believed that the change in the present system of assessment towards a skill oriented mode could enhance the language competence of the students by means of opting remedial measures by the teachers as it can provide the epitome of the performance of the students.

It is anticipated that the study will give a better understanding to the facilitators regarding the changes to be brought in the teaching methodology of the language classrooms and invent new ways of looking at the language texts. It is also expected that the study will prompt the teachers to switch over from translation method to skill oriented by providing more opportunities for practice in the language classrooms where the students learn by doing. As the study ponders over the students' strength in the Common classes at the UG level as one of its main

concerns, it may lead to bifurcation of the existing classes in order to have a viable number.

Recently the university results of the first ever skill oriented text with a skill oriented assessment has come out. It shows a very good performance of the students, compared to the results of the conventional texts. So an enquiry into the causes of students' poor performance of the conventional texts is the need of the hour. Hence, this study has great relevance in the present educational context at the UG level. It is believed that the findings of the research could provide scope for further studies; even to check the feasibility of skill oriented approach in teaching literature.

Research design

The study proposes to focus on the following areas

1. Introduction: It will give a comprehensive picture of the skill based assessment practiced at the global level. The conventional method followed at the UG level in Kerala with its drawbacks is also looked upon. The need for an upgradation in the present style is emphasised by analysing the skill-score mismatch of the students in relation to the proficiency at the use of language.
2. Current scenario at UG level: This section will analyse the current scenario of skill based assessment at the UG level where English is taught as a Common Course for all the students. The number of students of the Common classes, normally more than 70, becomes a real challenge for the teachers. The need for reducing the number to a manageable one is also an area of investigation.
3. Implementation of skill based assessment: A generic scrutiny of testing practices adopted at global level for language skill assessment shows that performance competence of learners is preferred to content memorisation ability. This will focus on the scope of implementing the skill oriented testing with reference to the UG classes and also assess the attitude of the teachers towards this.
4. Methodology: This chapter will describe the methods of data collection, primary tools like questionnaires and additional tools like structured interview being

used in the study. The chapter will also give an outline of the respondents involved in the process.

5. Data Analysis focuses on a detailed examination of the data collected from all the sources and will try to interpret it in order to answer the research problems raised at the beginning. The interpretation will be based on the pie diagrams.

6. Findings and conclusions: The final section sums up the findings of the study. It will also include the recommendations based on the research and scope for future studies in the field of skill based testing.

Methodology

The researcher plans to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect the required data for analysis. This study proposes to gather required data from learners and teachers using well designed tools and authenticated questionnaires. Teacher questionnaires try to investigate how the teaching community looks at the feasibility of a skill oriented test, their beliefs about language testing in general and their reflections on the current testing practices in English. The learner questionnaires attempt to find out how the student community responds to a change in the present system of assessment and their perceptions about introducing skill oriented testing even for literature dominant Common English Courses. It also intends to investigate their experience of writing both skill based tests and content based tests.

Another tool the researcher plans to employ is a structured interview in which the questions will be re-wordings of those in the questionnaire, but they will require the respondent to give answers in detail.

Conclusion

English language education, in the present world, is changing at a drastic speed, especially by the availability of internet based tools. It has redefined the style of acquiring a language, in most cases, by facilitating self learning. The international platform of language teaching has switched over to practice oriented learning and

the evaluation system has become purely skill oriented. The multinational companies and corporates that are the biggest employment market today are looking for candidates who are well versed in professional use of the English language. So, any methodology that is not equipping students to apply language in one's professional life is a faulty one. Today, there are around 1.5 billion English language learners worldwide and English has acquired prime status because it has achieved the position of the most widely spoken language of the world. It is taught all over the world as a second language too. English has become almost a universal language by the spreading of the internet. The leap in science and technology, business, diplomacy and politics has made English the leading language in the present world. In *Global English and Arabic: Issues of Language, Culture, and Identity*, Ahmad Al- Issa and Laila S. Dahan deal with Arab English speakers observing that much of the Arab world, once an understudied region of the world, has accepted and began to use English as a second language.

As a language of education, future and modernity, English has a wider acceptance around the world. It has an inexorable position in the field of English language teaching in India too. But the difference in the approach of teaching the English language, based on rote memory, has led to producing candidates who fail in applying the learning at the time of demand. There are many constraints at present in higher education that prevent it from producing candidates who excel in English language proficiency. Lack of qualified teachers, colleges wanting infrastructural facilities, scarcity of language learning tools and platforms to apply English language are some of these. Since language is a skill that has to be developed by the application of practical means, the present common classes of English at higher education institutions, that are overcrowded with students, do not provide a congenial atmosphere. The teachers fail to give individual attention to develop the language skill of students because of the unscientific number of students in the classrooms.

The pattern of evaluation at the UG level unfortunately contributes to the deterioration of the language proficiency of the students. An assessment method that tries to identify the skill of the students is seldom found. As the present system of

evaluation demands only the memory capacity of the students, even teachers are interested merely to complete the portions following the easiest Grammar Translation method. The ultimate result is, the students are left worthless as far as their communicative competence is concerned. Hence a paradigm shift in the current system of assessment is of high significance. This study enquires the feasibility of a new method of assessment which is purely skill based so as to overcome the shortcomings of the present testing mechanism. A new method, that can be used to test language skill, could be tried on literature too so that the teaching of English, whether language or literature, may serve its real purpose.

Chapter 2

Vivisectioning English Language Education at the UG level

Chapter summary

This chapter, beginning with English Language Education, its history and policy examines the existing situation of skill based evaluation at the UG level where English is taught as a common course for all the students. The strength of students of the common classes, normally more than 70, becomes an actual challenge for the teachers. The issues faced by the teachers in such combined classes are addressed. The need for dropping the number to a convenient one is also an area of exploration.

English Language Education (ELE), history and policy

Human beings use language for the purpose of communicating emotions, thoughts and feelings. We learn our mother tongue as a part of life, unknowingly. But when it comes to learning a second language or a foreign language, some people excel more than others. English, because of its capacity to act as a global language by facilitating people to know the latest developments in all streams of knowledge, took the whole world into such a position that those who do not study English became almost a frog in the well. English gets the significance of an international language as it is spoken and understood by people around the globe.

The richest collection of literature could be found in English. It is a vista that leads us to the magnificent world of knowledge. Hence it becomes almost mandatory for every scholar or graduate to acquire proficiency in English for the proper exploration of knowledge. Competence in the English language is, in the academic world, an established standard of scholarship. In the present world, which is well known for knowledge explosion, most of the items are recorded in English. So if a student is not equipped with English language proficiency, he/she will not be anywhere near this academic world. So as long as English maintains its significance

as a library language, it should be taught with great care at the graduate level. Kothari Education Commission Report highlights the importance of English, “English as an important library language would play a vital role in higher education. No student should be considered as qualified for a degree, in particular, a Master’s degree, unless he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in English” (146).

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) observes that the unity of the nation, either in political or in other spheres of activity has been manifested through English. Communication among the people hailing from various states becomes possible by the use of English. Scholars and students from various Indian universities get an international exposure as well as job and scholarship and international career only because of English. The Kunzru Committee, because of the multiplicity of Indian culture, insisted that the secondary education should not only target to prepare the children for higher education, but also equip them vocationally. This could be realised by acquiring reasonable proficiency in the English language. Out of the total books at the higher education level, more than 80% is in English. The academic community retains English for the purpose of keeping pace with the knowledge explosion. According to the Report of the Knowledge Commission (1964-65), English should be taught for practical purposes. The report observed that special units for teaching English should be set up at university and college level which can provide a skill based awareness regarding the English language with the support of modern teaching methods.

The role and function of English in India has undergone remarkable change. India, one among the third world countries, recognised the significance of English in education when it began to look for the latest scholarship available in the world. Hence, the significance of English as a second language at the higher education level has become heightened. This trend is not merely in India, but in the former colonies of Britain, namely Japan, some Latin American countries and various European countries too. English is taught as a second language, of course insisting on its education out of utilitarian perspectives. The practical use of English as a world language is, in fact, the motivating force behind the English education in all these

countries. As a language that facilitates better communication and understanding, English is now no longer the language of Great Britain.

As per the report of the Kerala Education Commission, the state average of English papers in Kerala, in relation to the other subjects, is very low and it does not come to the expectations of a state with high literacy (83). The same group of students enters the higher education sector and it affects the result at the college/university level. The inevitability to enhance the quality of English language education at the school level is a necessity. It has to be done by integrating drastic changes to the system in such a way that those changes bring about qualitative transformations in the English language skills of learners. From school to college, English has a predominant place in the curriculum of our country. Since our country follows the three language formula, as a result, English occupies an equal position with other regional languages. In Kerala, English is introduced in the first grade/standard itself and continues up to the graduate level. The Central Board of Secondary Education framed the syllabus in such a fashion that the students, at the end of their education, will have enough communicative competence in the English language. The method followed as per CBSE curriculum is Communicative Approach, where the learners' minds will be engaged in activities and the students learn the language by using it while engaging themselves in activities.

It is unanimously supported and suggested by the education commissions appointed by the Indian government from time to time to maintain English as a Second Language. Because of the position of English as a world language, the National Education Policies of 60s and 80s suggested the three language formula along with the necessity of teaching English in India. The language English gets high priority from higher secondary onwards and is taught as a compulsory subject, while the regional languages are made elective. At the college level also, English is one of the obligatory subjects for all disciplines of study while the regional languages are taught as a second language, where the scholar gets a provision for an option. The medium of education also, from higher secondary level, is English. English is given superior weightage in our curriculum and as a consequence, the students of Science stream are made to write their exams only in English though

there are several relaxations for the students of Humanities where they can write the answers in their mother tongue. Still, compared to other states, English gets more priority in the curriculum.

Translation of works from English to Malayalam and vice versa is very popular in Kerala. Most of the world classics as well as significant works of various branches of knowledge are translated into Malayalam. It enhances the necessity to learn the English language with proficiency so that one may excel in the field of translation. Translation studies have become part of the University curriculum where students do practical works of translation. English subtitles for Malayalam movies are another area where proficiency in the English language is demanded. It not only helps the foreigners to appreciate the Malayalam works, but also gives an opportunity for the Malayalam movies to create a space of its own in the circle of the world cinema. These uses and scope of language again increases the importance of English language education, especially in Kerala.

The CMIE (The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) conducted a survey in May 2020 which shows that the unemployment rate in Kerala has increased nearly 10 percentage points rising to almost 27%. The huge number of unemployed is alarming, which is almost 37 lakhs. This condition has necessitated the educated Keralites to move to the nearby states and to different foreign countries for procuring some reputed professions. So, the intense need to acquire proficiency in the English language compelled them to join institutes that offer programs on spoken English as well as courses related to International English proficiency tests. ELE takes a different form here that goes out of the college classrooms. These additional supports needed for the students to qualify such competitive exams show that the present ESL situation in Kerala demands a complete change, especially the method of teaching followed which merely demands the memory capacity of students. If the whole method of ELE switches over to skill oriented, there comes no need for a supportive system, in the form of language institutes that one can see throughout Kerala. The present system of English language teaching proved to be a failure in achieving its outlined objectives or outcomes as it falls short of equipping the students in the language competence.

The material

In English language education, learning materials have an important role. It enables the learners to acquire and understand the concepts in a better and comfortable way. Along with that, the study materials facilitate the teachers to easily express the concepts of the text books, taking the students to a higher level of learning. Learning materials like multimedia, video and audio support the learners to explore verbal as well as non verbal aspects of the English language. Various applications, including mobile applications these days, for example ELSA SPEAK, help the students to move to an application level of languages. Multi sensory materials like audio visual aids that address all skill domains of students are available that give chances for them to practice by themselves leading to self learning.

The Common English Course at the higher education level has a literature orientation. Language as a component found a lesser significance. Shakespeare and World Classics were mandatory in the syllabus. But worldwide, English is taught with the help of specific language texts and not the Classics. Later, on a par with the international trends, English language began to get quite an important place in the syllabus. But still the change has not been completed. It is on its way to attain the goal and almost partially completed the process.

As a part of imparting knowledge related to English language and literature for the degree students, the Common English is prescribed for the first four semesters in the form of six Courses. But, sad to note, only one book is skill oriented and the rest of the five follow a conventional structure. There are two textbooks prescribed by the university for the first semester in UG Common English. The Codes given for the two courses are A01 and A02 with the titles *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* and *Ways With Words; Literatures in English* respectively.

A01, *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* is a skill oriented text.

It has five modules, each of which aims at enhancing the communicative

competence of the students. Module 1 *Pronunciation* centres principles of English pronunciation and the basic elements of the English sound system. It concentrates on the typical pronunciation problems of Keralites. This section has sub divisions like Speech sounds, Consonant sounds, Word stress, L1 interference and E/M Learning Corner. A comprehensive view, including mispronunciation, forms part of this module. Since this text follows a skill based approach, there is enough space for both the teachers and the students to apply the knowledge in the process of learning pronunciation.

Vocabulary, Module II, helps the students to enrich their vocabulary via manifold examples and exercises. The areas that are stressed in this module are idioms, phrasal verbs, synonyms, collocations that are made use of in order to make the interpersonal communications effective. This module expects the instructors to apply a lexical approach. As far as its practical side is concerned, group works by the students are advised. Apart from that, guessing the meaning from the situations is also an area where students are educated in.

Module III, *Grammar* helps the students to comprehend the grammatical structures like Tenses, Modals, Questions and other structures in specific contexts. The items that come under grammar in this section are areas that have use in day today life. Students are made to deduce the rules of grammar from the presentation. This module encourages group work.

Module IV is on productive skills, *Speaking Skills*. It stresses on developing the communicative competence of the students. Students are exposed to various life situations, artificially created in the classroom where the teachers promote the use of communication in the English language. Training in interpersonal interactions is provided by this module. Teachers, in order to support the learners, engage in role playing that may leave a permanent impact on the students and facilitate their learning skills. This section has two parts, Part-I on Every day Transactions and Part-II on Academic Transactions. Part-I focuses on personal life while Part-II, more on professional life.

The last section, Module V is on one of the receptive skills in language namely Reading Skills. There are passages for reading comprehension. After each passage, there are sections like Vocabulary, Recognising reference, Finding facts, Making inferences, Understanding cause and effect and Understanding the main idea. As a whole, the text book, *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* sheds enough light on the language skills and provides enough scope for its application in the classroom itself. The assessment on this Course is skill based.

Ways with Words: Literatures in English is the second Course under Common English with the code A02. This text, unlike A01-*Transactions*, follows the conventional pattern in its content as well as assessment. This text has four sections, each in the genres like Poetry, Short Stories, Prose and One-Act-Play.

Section 1 *Poetry* contains works by seven poets, *Sonnet 29* by William Shakespeare, *Ode to Autumn* by John Keats, *A Road side Stand* by Robert Frost, *The House of My Childhood* by Dilip Chitre, Maya Angelou's *Old Folks Laugh*, *Once Upon a Time* by Gabriel Okara and Bob Dylan's *The Times They are A-Changing*.

Section 2 *Short Stories* includes four works, *Appointment in Samara* by W Somerset Maugham, Graham Greene's *A Shocking Accident*, *Lamb to the Slaughter* by Roald Dahl and *It Used to be Green Once* by Patricia Grace. Two prose pieces are in Section 3. They are *Bores* authored by E V Lucas and *Night Walkers and Mystery Mongers: Sense and Nonsense at the Edge of Science* by Carl Sagan. The final section, Section 4 has a play by Tennessee Williams, *Something Unspoken*.

The text *Ways With Words; Literatures in English* follows the conventional structure and pattern of a typical English text. It satisfies the demand of the academic community who prefer to have a taste of English literature. The questions for the exams too, following the conventional pattern, demand the rote memory of the students. Questions to check the comprehension of the students on the content are included. No question that demands the higher order language skill of the Students has any role in the assessment of A02-*Ways With Words; Literatures in English*.

The method

“A language teaching method is a single set of procedures which teachers are to follow in the classroom. Methods are usually based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning.” (Nunan 5). The English language facilitators use a variety of strategies to deliver English lessons and to impart language skills, even though each strategy has its own pros and cons. For a long period of time at school, higher secondary and graduate level, a number of methods were in use.

Unfortunately, none of these methods attained the goal of English language teaching, namely competency in English language. The system followed here makes it almost impossible to bring a paradigm shift in the present methods of language teaching. The biggest fault is that the assessments check merely the memory capacity and completely ignore the language skill of the students. Practical tests to identify the English language proficiency never find a place in the assessment mechanism. The background, the principles, characteristics, the strength and weakness, the significance are all different when we move from one method to the other. In most of the cases, at higher secondary level and degree classes in Kerala, English is taught as a second language utilising the scope of a bilingual approach.

The Grammar Translation Method (GMT)

The merging of the activities of grammar and translation, namely the Grammar Translation Method (GMT) has its roots in the teaching of Greek and Latin that was in vogue for so many centuries in Europe. The techniques in translation from and into the target language, the teaching of grammar, its technique and use were the focus of this method. This method was based on three suppositions. In the process of translation, foreign words and phrases are interpreted which assures the understanding of the vocabulary and other usages of the foreign language. During this process, the foreign words are picked up. When compared with the mother tongue, the pattern of the target language is easily understood. During the 18th and 19th centuries, this method was very famous. It stressed comprehending the rules of grammar while keeping aside the language fluency of the student. But even today, this method is followed by many people. This method is fit for teaching large

classes with limited resources. Moreover, teachers need not be very skilled in the target language. The teachers will be very comfortable in this method as they have to simply follow the text carefully and explain it by the application of mother tongue. This method, though apt for many situations, has many drawbacks. During 1900, there was a movement against this method in Europe. The realisation, that mere translation as a method of teaching language would be ineffective, led to this reaction. Harold Palmer, the famous British Applied Linguist and the originator of Structural Method criticises GMT thus:

It is one which treats all languages as if they were dead, as if each consisted essentially of a collection of ancient documents to be deciphered and analysed (...). It is the one which categorically ignores all considerations of phonetics, pronunciation and acoustic image and boldly places language on a foundation of alphabets, spelling and writing systems (57).

Australian academician and writer Wilga M. Rivers in her *Interactive Language Teaching* ponders over the limitations of GMT and states:

Little stress is laid on accurate pronunciation and intonation; communication skills are neglected; there is great deal of stress on knowing rules and exceptions, but little training in using the language activity to express one's own meaning, even in writing (...). The language learned is mostly of a literary type and the vocabulary is detailed and sometimes, esoteric. The average student has to work hard at what he considers laborious and monotonous chores-vocabulary learning, translation and endless written exercises (...). His role in the classroom is, for the greater part of the time, a passive one - he absorbs and then reconstitutes what he has absorbed to satisfy his teacher (17-18).

In the area of ELE in India, GMT has been practised in schools and higher education institutions. By the passing of time, numerous changes have taken place in the methodology of English Language Teaching. Introduction of innovative techniques in addition to the changes in the present system has pushed the GMT to the last position. This was the change witnessed by the world of ELE and ELT at the

superficial level, but in actuality, nothing has happened. In most of the cases, GMT was practised widely. This was adapted to various other methods. Coming to the Kerala situation, one can see that the case is not different from the style practised elsewhere in India. The perspectives of teachers, especially in the rural parts, have not changed much. Multiple factors like low standards of the students, big classrooms and wide syllabus, all contribute to this, besides the incompetency of the teachers.

The Direct Method (DM)

In some cases, teachers use target language as a medium of instruction in the classroom where by limiting the scope of translation as a method. This method, though applied in limited circumstances, enhances the capacity of the students to communicate in English by creating a situation in the classroom which is congenial for it. According to Mackey, this method, termed as Direct Method has certain features:

- (1) The use of everyday vocabulary and structure.
- (2) Grammar taught by situation.
- (3) Use of many new items in the same lesson to make the language look sound and natural and to encourage normal conversation.
- (4) Oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary.
- (5) Concrete meanings through object lessons: abstract ones through the association of ideas.
- (6) Grammar illustrated through visual presentation.
- (7) Extensive listening and imitation until forms become automatic.
- (8) Most of the work is done in the class; more class hours needed for the method.
- (9) The first few weeks devoted to pronunciation.
- (10) All reading matters first presented orally (152).

This method, i.e. Direct Method (DM), avoiding any sort of influence by the mother tongue, expects that the people would be prompted to use English as a medium of communication and connect the ideas and concepts through the new medium. Even though this method had kindled many controversies, it appealed to the academic world immediately. It focused on practice, use of vocabulary and presentation of ideas in English. This method, applied by the competent teachers in language class rooms, proved exceptionally good for the improvement of students in

their communicative competence. The foremost advantage of this method is that students get numerous chances to listen to spoken English. Listening, being one of the important skills in language learning gets a pivotal position in this method. This method enables the students to use the target language even to think and they seldom make use of the mother tongue in the process of the generation of language. Treating the process of acquisition of both the mother tongue as well as the second language alike is one of the drawbacks of this method. Greatest significance is given to spoken exercise while keeping away the other language skills, Writing and Reading, is a major disadvantage of this method. Enough chances for communicating in the target language are key features of this method and it necessitates the learner to acquire better communication skills. Teachers and instructors with excellent language proficiency is the prime requisite for the triumphant execution of this method. The victory of the technique depends upon the aptitude of the teachers. Those who can use the language with fluency like a native speaker, turns out to be the ultimate instructors for this technique. While elucidation in the mother tongue saves time, DM that sticks on to the use of English consumes much time even to explicate an easy concept.

Though DM has numerous flaws, it had its profound power in the academics of several countries over the years like the US, England and lots of other European countries. It was all through the thirties of the 20th century that DM was introduced in India. *The Direct Teaching of English in Indian Schools*, authored by P.C. Wrenn, being the first book, supported the use of this method. Even though this method was introduced across India, it emerged unproductive as there were numerous limitations. These include the impact of the three language formula on the school time table, large classes stuffed with indifferent students as a result of the universal education programme and the ever growing demand for the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. These situations demanded an ELT which concentrated on an effective and practical method.

Audio Lingual Method (ALM)

GMT and DM prospered in the European education system, while in the US,

Audio Lingualism emerged. Audio Lingualism had its impact on the language learning method of the world. In fact, it appeared in various names, it was Nelson Brooks who suggested the term 'Audio Lingual' in addition to another term 'New Key' for the same. 'Audio Lingual Habit Theory' was a term given for this method by Carroll while 'functional skills strategy' was given by Smith. As per the Audio Lingual Method (ALM), one should teach language through oral presentation before written presentation. It is the speech which is given utmost importance in this method. Though spoken language is given highest importance, the preference for reading and writing is well maintained. The students are highly motivated in this method. Audio Lingualism, similar to DM, tries to enhance skills of the target language without linking to the mother tongue. Skinner's 'Operant Conditioning or Instrumental Conditioning' theories influenced the supporters of Audio Lingual methods. Actions that are followed by favourable results are likely to be repeated as per Skinner's theory. In the Audio Lingual method, students are perfected in language by reinforcement. As per this method, language learning is a form of habit formation. It offered the prospect of language learning irrespective of academic background. It extended language learning even to the world of the common man. But the significance provided to attain oral accuracy has raised various questions in the mind of the critics regarding the very necessity of a teacher. By the end of the 1960s, as a method, it failed. The leading among those who criticised was Albert Valdman. Apart from this, the fact that the endeavour of memorising and drilling could turn out to be monotonous and unexciting was the second objection to this. To overcome these practical difficulties, the teacher should be highly imaginative. This could raise another threat to a teacher since high competency from the part of the teacher is demanded by this method. In order to make it productive and fruitful, the teacher should be resourceful and highly creative and gifted. Preparing the teaching materials that are motivating and interesting really poses a challenge for the teachers. Besides, the teacher has to find innovative methods to introduce materials to keep away boredom. Hence, for the successful implementation of this method, well trained and talented teachers are indispensable. Since well trained teachers are scarce, the successful practice of this method in our colleges and schools is still a

mirage. Up to the secondary level in Kerala, untrained teachers, having no knowledge of phonetics and phonology are forced to handle the subject English. Moreover, adequate facilities including language laboratories are not available. All these act against the successful implementation of Audio Lingual method.

The Structural Approach (SA)

At the Institute of Education, University of London, elaborate studies were conducted on ELT as a foreign language in the 20th century. This led to the emergence of the Structural Approach (SA) which in one way was an upgradation of the Direct Method. The basic principles of these two methods are the same. According to this approach, since language consists of structures, mastery of the structures is more significant than the lexis or the students should master the pattern of sentences. The objectives of this approach are to establish the foundation of English through practice, to support the students to equip themselves with over 3000 root words for active use, to teach fundamental language skills like reading, writing, speaking and understanding and to lay emphasis on activity methods to acquire language skill. SA relies on the idea that structure of language can be constructed upon structures already learnt by the student. Learning of structures is done through drill or oral work. Selection and grading of vocabulary and structures, giving importance to the activity of the students rather than of the teachers are some of the strengths of this approach. It merges the characteristics of DM and Oral Method.

Teachers have to select the structures based on their capacity and the availability of devices. While making such a selection, the teacher will have to consider the age of students, their talent as well as the time available for them. The four principles on which selection is done are teachability, convenience, practicality and productivity. Such structures that occur frequently in our day to day life are meant by practicality. There are two types of structures, productive and non-productive. A structure with which other structures can be built are called productive, the mastery of which helps a student to construct other structures. The simplicity of a structure is decided by its form and meaning.

It was around 1950 that SA came to be used in India, the ideas of which were

based on concepts evolved at the London Institute of Education. The English teaching specialists of the British Council and various English language teaching institutes in India gave publicity for this. The Madras Syllabus of that time was based on the ideas of the London Institute of Education. Over two decades, this method had its wider use in various states of India. It was in the All India Seminar conducted at Nagpur in 1957 that the SA was recommended for its use in schools.

Later, the language experts invented classroom materials and the curriculum was framed as per this approach. Most of the teaching learning activities, since then, have been conducted through this approach. Most of the short term courses conducted for the secondary teachers by the State Council for Education Research and Training are still considering this approach. But unfortunately, the result took a negative turn, the foremost reason being the scarcity of talented and well competent teachers.

Communicative Approach (CA)

As a method, Communicative language teaching, these days, has become well preferred. It became an accepted scheme of teaching English as a foreign language. The roots of this method could be identified in the British language teaching legacy from the mid decade of the 20th century. It emerged as the product of displeasure among the linguists with the Audio Lingual and Grammar Translation methods. A range of linguists as well as the Council of Europe contributed to the growth of this method. In addition, the emergence of developed countries in Europe led to the formation of European international market which also necessitated the use of English as a lingua franca among these countries. The Council of Europe arranged scores of programs on language teaching. Since then, the Communicative Approach got wider acceptance in many nations. Publication of books and articles that highlighted the want for a novel method from the then practicing methods were also done by this Council.

The linguists connected with this technique identified that the students were not acquiring the language in a suitable manner that helped them to employ it in real life situations. As an alternative to learning the purpose of the language, they relied

on the construction of it. The goal of Communicative Approach (CA) is to facilitate the students to converse confidently in the target language. Language, as per CA, is a social apparatus. Hence it is essential for a second language learner to be well-known with the functions of the language like unfolding, assuring, hospitable and excusing. Since language is an instrument for communication, the endeavour of language teaching is to build up 'communicative competence'. The practical feature of language is converted by this approach, there by building the learners employed in creative writings like letters, poems, stories, dialogues, travelogues. The conventions of grammar are of no use according to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), save they are useful to real life situations. For this reason, CLT does not ignore the place of grammar in the language learning procedure. So, to study a language successfully, it is essential to generate real life situations in the classroom. There should be a shift of importance from usage to that of use of the language. The consciousness of how to implement a language rightfully in a given state of affairs to accomplish the popular goals leads to 'Communicative Competence'. So, simply the grammatical competence is not enough for better communication. Thus practical, communicative and community based schemes should be stressed on. Emphasising the communicative aspect of language learning, Canale and Swain have perceived:

Communicative competence is composed minimally of grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, communicative strategies or what we will refer to as strategic competence. There is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is more or less crucial to successful communication than is socio-linguistic competence or strategic competence (21).

One of the most important components of CA is the interactive model of language teaching. Interaction, being the heart of communication, is the collaborative swapping of ideas, concepts, thought, feelings among individuals. It is said to have a reciprocal effect on each other. It leads to self motivation as students become engaged with each other in speech acts and feel satisfied and motivated. Interaction demands a certain extent of risk since failure to produce intended

meaning may lead to rejection by the audience. The speaker should be familiar with the cultural nuances of the language which enables one to communicate better. In an interactive classroom, the tutors' role is vital in starting and maintaining the whole communication flow. They have a tactical function to carry out in this replica of language teaching. The teacher is the master organiser here by cautiously preparing the methodology, mapping out the outcome and giving appropriate instructions. It is the tutor who groups the students and plans and frames the action plan. The teacher facilitates the students to identify language through usage rather than telling the usage. It is the teacher who gives immediate feedback to the students on their performance that could motivate the students for a better performance. This can promote learner autonomy and liability. This approach demands creative designing by the instructors as teacher creates the situations that give rise to communication among the students. The interaction takes place among students and also between the linguistic domain and students. The choice of resources, done by the teachers, should be genuine or should be on those concepts that the students confront in their day by day life situations. It stresses on the necessity for the participation of the students where the student is situated in real life environments. Group works and language tasks based on a range of events are necessary components of this approach. This approach, like many others, has some negatives as well. The task of the teacher in this method is tough. Apart from the customary duties of evaluation, translating and maintaining class order, the teacher here is a manager, director, overseer and leader. So, an instructor who follows the distinctive role of a teacher may not be triumphant in applying this approach. Hence, proficient guidance in this field is obligatory. It also makes mandatory the proficiency of language from the part of the instructor. If the instructor is not well versed with the target language, this approach may face hurdles in achieving its target since learning takes place from various other enterprises besides the text activities. The language used by the teacher at the time of managing and executing various activities under this approach does perform an active role. Hence for many learners, the language used by the instructor as part of the activities like commanding, encouraging, suggesting, describing and narrating, impart a lot of exposure to the target language, especially of the casual

talk which one may seldom find in the textbooks. Assessing the performance of the student will be more difficult compared to the former approaches. Moreover, the teacher needs to be more encouraging, inclined to engage in activities, liberal and patient in managing errors and provide much freedom for learners. Students, unlike other approaches, will have the central role in the classroom activities.

In his article 'Approach Method and Technique' E.M. Anthony considers an approach as:

A set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning (...) It states a point of view, a philosophy and an article of faith-something, which one believes but cannot necessarily prove. It is often unarguable except in terms of the effectiveness of the methods, which grow out of it (94).

Eclectic Approach

In this, keeping in mind the capacity of the student and the objectives of the Course, various Methods and Approaches are merged to teach the English language. Hence it is also termed Mixed-Method. The English linguists Harold Palmer and Henry Sweet first used it in the 1920s. To suit the requirements of the students, diverse methods are borrowed and adapted. Strategy to attain the main target of the teaching goal and multiplicity in adapting techniques are the characteristics of this Method. Flexibility to include students of different capacities is one of the advantages of this Method. At the same time, it fails to identify the individual contribution of the Approaches and Methods in the development and progress of the child. Since this is an integrated approach, the drawback of one Method/Approach can be compensated by the other items or activities.

Post Method

During most of the 1980s, there was something lacking in the teaching profession, namely social and political awareness. Later, language studies have shifted away from following or applying any particular theories which was a trend until then and began to concentrate on practice. This resulted in the upsurging of a

novel debate that advocated vanishing of any method from the deliberations and birth of Post Method debate. The latest belief prevailing in the field of English language teaching is that it is an era of 'Post Method' where no method is followed or implemented in the classroom. An impact of the common dissatisfaction on multiple methods used in the teaching process resulted in Post Method conditions. It was identified by Kumaravadivelu in 1994, adapting the approach to the demand of the regional and contextual elements while a variety of 'micro strategies' moving along with it to guide. In *Post Method Discourse and Practice*, Ramin Akbari propounds:

Instead, the post method discourse has laid down a number of principles according to which language teaching should proceed. These principles, which address aspects of practice (pedagogy of practicality), context (pedagogy of particularity) and empowerment (pedagogy of possibility), aim at providing a more comprehensive context for language teaching in terms of its social engagement and political accountability (642).

Competence and efficiency that should lead to a social change are demanded from teachers by this method. In the past, teachers were comfortable with working in a readymade framework based on the objectives. By this Post Method, as the existing methods are gone, every teacher has to generate ways to address and thereby fulfil the social responsibility bestowed upon them as a part of their profession. Three principles summarise Post Method in second language teaching; pedagogy of practicality, particularity and possibility. Critical Pedagogy which concentrates on questions like social transformation or social justice that can be attained through education is one of the strengths of these Post Method deliberations. It attempts to include all those categories that are left out from education based on gender, social caste or race. It is a wider world that comes under Critical Pedagogy that visualises having an impact on the outside world by what happens inside the classroom:

In language teaching, critical practice is—about connecting the word with the world. It is about recognising language as ideology, not just system. It is

about extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use (Kumaravadivelu 70).

There are two problems identified by Kumaravadivelu in the implementation of the Post Method in L2 teaching, namely Pedagogical barriers and Ideological barriers. Pedagogical barriers deal with the transmission of knowledge on which the teacher's education is relied on and Ideological barriers are the politics behind considering what kind of knowledge is valid. There comes lesser scope for teachers to apply their practical knowledge acquired from experience as valid or authentic. Hence teacher autonomy and free will are questioned. More than the implementation level of teaching, Post Method is much concerned with the philosophies of teaching.

The current manner by which English is taught as a second language at school and college levels, under unfavourable situations, generated out of the absence of a regimented method, makes the studies in teaching methods relevant and serious. For a number of years, many methods have been adopted by instructors for teaching English in high schools which have turned out to be ineffective due to the lack of precise objectives as well as absence of trained teachers in English language teaching. It has been a practice at high schools to engage English classes by teachers of any subject. It led to the subsequent deterioration of the standard of English among students. The students, being taught English by teachers of various disciplines, were poorly motivated. The competency of language that a student acquires after the completion of secondary level is far below the expected learning outcomes.

It is a point of concern that there is a growing discrepancy between steadily increasing pass percentage of school level examinations and the poor practical competencies students possess in English skills. The inevitability for a neatly prepared plan at a higher level is reiterated by this tendency. An approach that can include the till now well performed methods like DM, GT as well as Audio Lingual will be appropriate. Teaching of the English language needs to be promoted seriously since English enjoys the prestige of an associate official language, a lingua franca among the educated class and an important tool for communication in the

international platforms. The history of English language teaching shows that though multiple methods were in vogue from time to time, none has proved an ideal one and failed to achieve the proposed target of improving the overall quality of English. Since the established methods failed in equipping the students with a better language competence, it is high time to frame a novel method by incorporating the positive components of the former methods. In the Kerala context, a more effective approach is needed at the higher levels to learn English as a second language. To frame a new method, one has to conduct surveys of the present strategy and based on the responses; frame an approach that could address the present issues in English language teaching. Apart from the surveys based on the questionnaire, one can use interviews, observing classes as methods to collect data. In the Kerala background, most of the teachers believe that the mother tongue helps the students for a better comprehension of the text as well as kindling thought processes that could facilitate their studies. But "for students who find the language study difficult, explanations in the native language which are brief, coherent and to the point followed by active practice of the features under discussion are more effective" (Rivers 86).

Assessment mechanism

Language, in fact, is a skill that one learns through practice and activity. Real life situations, created by a talented instructor can provide an apt platform for the students to learn language since there is no shortcut for language acquisition other than using it. Timely guidance by the teacher to make students engage effectively in spoken, written as well as listening activities enhances the probability for a better result. Teachers can act as coordinator, mastermind, designer and executor of the activity. Though activity oriented language learning can motivate the students, the practical difficulty faced by the teachers in the form of overcrowded classrooms act as a hindrance in achieving the expected goal.

The current learning scheme in the Indian context has been set in such a manner that a student will have to attain a minimum predetermined grade to qualify in a subject. As far as the language expertise is concerned, the whole system fails to recognise the capability as it stresses only on rote memory. There comes the

inevitability for an evaluation mechanism purely on skill based activities that can perceive the capacity of the students in language. The activity format that the students are fascinated in can be better applied for detecting the language aptitude. But the students, to attain excellent marks, study only the question- answers given at the end of the lesson and totally fail to think of the language part of the text concerned. With the assistance of the guides or other such resources, they manage to crack the grammar as well as reading sections.

The necessity for mastery in English occupies importance in Kerala, the most literate state in India. The number of aspirants in higher education has increased, who have proved their mettle in the field of competitive exams and research as well as professional sectors. Even though there is a policy for the change of syllabus for English in university level at a regular interval; the revisions seem to leave assessment method untouched. Consequently, English examinations and question formats are mostly assessing the rote memory of students. Activities to build confidence in the students to become competent users of language are missing in the curriculum. Even though changes are imported to the syllabus, the teaching community is not wholeheartedly accepting the latest trends. Moreover, proper in-service courses are not provided to the faculty for handling the innovative transaction techniques. Creative works and multifaceted activities to strengthen the language competence by providing real life situations and linguistic environments are the need of the hour which is lacking in higher education section. The learners are not aware of the real aim behind learning the language that leads to treatment of the subject as an insignificant component in their life. This is a perspective that the students acquire from their school days.

Once they come to the higher education, either they have to follow the same attitude or to struggle to master the English language. But, because of the present methods and assessment systems, the students find it comfortable not to change their attitude to learning English there by upsetting the targeted aim and objectives of teaching English at the higher education level. The level of performance of the students has gone down considerably because of too many written tasks including written examinations. Right from the schools, the students are trained for writing the

exams that give importance to byheart the content. There begins the notion in the mind of the student that language is not to be stressed compared to the content. Learning of the language for its practical use is treated with lesser importance. Students are taught at schools that the marks scored in languages seldom help them to get admission in colleges, except for degree programmes in the languages concerned. Moreover, even the marks scored for English is not based on their proficiency in language, but their capacity to memorise the content. It also leads to negotiation in preferring the English language proficiency over content knowledge. Hence, even the grades that they acquire for the assessment has no direct relation to their proficiency in language. As the language is skill based, that has to be taught meticulously, contains four sub skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. One has to go through tests related to the productive skills of Speaking and Writing and receptive skills like Reading and Listening in order to prove one's capacity in language, moreover, one's proficiency. However, in the present assessment mechanism at higher education, no attempt is made to assess the four sub skills, namely LSRW of students. Since the assessment at present demands only the rote memory of the pupils, the application level of the language is completely sequestered.

Need for a change

The assessment system in language at higher education fails to find out the capacity of students in using English as a tool for interpersonal communication. There are no such questions set to extract this talent of students. The classrooms fail to provide space for students to engage in creative activities for enhancing the communicative competence. Even the skilled teachers find it a herculean task to create such a situation in a classroom which is overcrowded. The vast number of students in a class room, in particular of Common English, that demands urgent bifurcation, is the chief obstacle to accomplishing that objective for a teacher. It becomes truly irritating to go for performance based activities in such a classroom because the supervision becomes truly painstaking. Similar is the case with generating factual life situations in the classroom.

Effective acquisition of language takes place only if there is a need. The instructor should implement various strategies in the classroom so as to generate such thoughts in the mind of the students. The present system of language teaching at higher education level in Kerala needs revolutionary steps for the upliftment of English competency. The entire structure of the curriculum should be modified to accommodate activity oriented instruction and skill based assessment. Such a qualitative change will have an impact on the linguistic competence of the students. Provision for a variety of discourses like report, narrative, speeches, story, poem should be included in the syllabus so that teachers may get enough space for converting the classes to student oriented ones. The teacher should, with the assistance of the syllabus, be capable of altering the students into such a position where every student finds oneself competent to use the English language with simplicity and assurance. The focal point of language teaching should be building of information rather than its alteration. The assessment has to be framed in such a style that it traces out the aptitude to create information by the students.

The proliferation of social media and the internet has brought a revolutionary change in the way people learn languages. The communicative approach, though started in the 90's, is still in vogue in the world of English language teaching. Training programmes under TESOL/TOEFL these days follow this strategy. The traditional concept of language learning, i.e. learning grammar and vocabulary, has to be changed. There is minimal involvement by the students because classes are teacher oriented. This orientation has to be changed. Shifting from the content of a subject to its skill has to be implemented so that the declared objectives of language learning, namely language competency, maybe attained. Task based approach can be an effective pace for supporting the students to obtain language proficiency by giving model tasks. In this technique, students acquire the possibility to use the language rather than simply recreating what they have acquired. For a successful implementation of this technique, the teacher has to get a design concerning the demands of the students and their needs. Unluckily, as the syllabus has been prepared already by the universities concerned, teachers are made to pursue the set paths. Here the real purpose of learning the language is not served.

At the higher education level, especially in Kerala, graduates are coming out of colleges with good qualifications. But most of these, whether from Arts, Humanities, Commerce or Science stream, lack the capacity to communicate what they have learned. Education becomes ineffective until one learns to communicate the acquired knowledge. Facilitators must support their disciples to achieve their professional or personal goals. Regarding language learning, a practice oriented approach should be opted by the academic community so that the students who complete their studies with a good score may perform on par with international standards.

Conclusion

Since this is an era of digitalisation, the academic community should make use of its benefits for the promotion of learning. In the field of language acquisition, multiple mobile applications exist and they can act as a tool for learning. The students as well as teachers have to make use of the benefits of digitalisation. A transformation from the existing conventional pattern of teaching- learning can be attained through this process. Dictionaries, vocabulary learning tools and grammar reference applications are available online that can enhance classroom teaching- learning. There are mobile applications using which students can record the voice themselves and can receive feedback on their specific activities. Free access to online exercises and practices is another facility that a language learner can make use of. Even the teachers can make use of mobile applications for maintaining attendance, assigning works and conducting surveys. As an attempt to be eco-friendly, teachers can share the pdf version of textbooks and the academic community can go for a makeover by becoming paperless.

Chapter 3

Implementation of Skill Based Assessment

Chapter summary

This chapter deals with the scope of implementing the skill oriented testing with reference to the UG classes and also assessing the attitude of the teachers towards it. A generic scrutiny of testing practices adopted at global level for language skill assessment shows that performance ability of learners is preferred to content memorisation ability.

Uniqueness of language assessment

Assessments are methods to measure the knowledge, ability or capacity of the students in the subjects concerned. It is always considered that a good test has some distinct features. For instance, a test should be reliable. By reliability, it is meant the consistency by which a test provides the same result whenever it is used in the assessment process. A test is reliable when the score is stable. So reliability of a test is the extent of consistency between two results of the same thing. This implies that a test administered in a class should have the same average score even though it is held twice in the same class. If in the second attempt, the average score found to be different from the first, it means that the assessment lacks the quality of consistency. The reliability of a test is helpful in detecting how effective a test is in withstanding the changing situations in the case of a student, like mental state or changing moods at the time of writing the exams or other external factors that may have an adverse effect on the performance. So, while preparing the questions, the teacher should frame the questions in such a fashion that it may uphold the feature, namely reliability. This characteristic will help to minimise the subjectivity of the test.

If the teacher uses the wrong instrument in assessment, the result may turn out to be wrong and meaningless. Hence, opting for adequate components is

mandatory to create a test which is valid. Validity of an assessment refers to the relation between the purpose of assessment and the data that the test takes into consideration. It is the accuracy with which a test measures what it intends to assess. There are external and internal components or factors that decide the validity of a test. If a student has a lower level of confidence in the area that is tested, naturally the students will be performing poorly. The anxiety level of the student including physical discomforts like sweating, tummy upset and fear may lead to the poor performance.

Flexibility is another quality that makes an assessment ideal. It has the feature of motivating the students and providing positive support. Numerous ways are available that can make an assessment flexible. One such way is related to the deadline where students are permitted to choose the time line for submission of work or provide the students to attempt a test within a flexible time span or give extra time to students. Flexibility regarding the marks/grades is another option which can be managed by programming in the online learning management system. Here grades/marks are rearranged so that the student gets the higher grades out of the total assessments. The lower grades/marks are omitted for the final grade card/mark sheet. They will be given a chance to opt for either two smaller assignments or one large assignment. Permission to submit assignments as a written assignment, online submission, oral or video material also comes under flexibility. The examiner must fit the content of the assessment to the condition of the students.

Whether the assessment pattern provides multiple types of items for a student, it forms another feature of a good assessment, namely, variety. If the questions in an assessment are difficult as well as easy items, such an assessment can claim the feature, variety. Since various types of questions serve different purposes, an assessment with variety can collect a comprehensive idea regarding the performance of a student. To get the depth of knowledge of a student in a subject, or to elicit meaningful understanding about the skills or capacity of a student, the teacher has to give a wide variety of questions to select from. Since each student varies from the other in capacity, knowledge level, calibre, they acquire and express the ideas too in multiple ways. Hence, it is necessary that several assessment formats

should be made available for students so that they get their own way of expressing ideas. It leads to comprehensive learning and an ideal form of assessment. Along with that, students should be given a chance to select from the available options. The variety in assessment could be report writing, literature review, research writing and personal reports.

An ideal assessment should be objective. In no way, an assessment should disclose the preferences, likes or dislikes of the examiner. The soft corner, if any, for any student should not play any role in the assessment or grading. The sole point that the examiner should look for, in an assessment, must be performance of the student. Each student should have confidence in their instructor. If a proper rapport is maintained between the instructor and students, the success rate of an assessment increases.

Students benefit usually from assessments. The corrections that the instructor does along with the positive comments and support help a student to improve. Inspiring students in areas of lesser accomplishment and promoting their strengths and praising their achievement are good positions that an instructor can take. It is better for a teacher to keep away completely from negative comments even if a student commits any error. The ideal aim of an assessment needs to be the comprehensive improvement and up gradation of a student. The instructor should always honour the personal feelings of the student. Hence it is always advised that even if there is any necessity of criticism, the instructor may try to have it in private.

Comments after valuing the scripts are of high significance. Specific recommendations and proper comments should be given to the students. Once they get their answer scripts, they have to get a concrete picture of their strengths and weaknesses, where they performed well and where they failed and which are the areas to be improved. Clear and well founded instructions must help a student to know why he was unable to score high for a specific answer. A statement with constructive value enables a student to find the method of improvement, which normally forms part of the benefits of assessment.

Difference between test in a language and test in a subject

A test in a language is entirely different from a test in a subject since the goal is different in the two cases. A test in a subject, for example in Physics, demands a student's memory in Physics. It checks whether the student can reproduce the content in the exam script. The pattern of the question paper itself will be in such a fashion that it could elicit the knowledge of the student. Here, no question that demands the skill of the student finds a place in the assessment process. So, testing the rote memory is the sole purpose of these tests. Questions at the application level seldom find a position. Here, the capacity of a student to analyse the content as well as to apply the learned knowledge has no role in the assessment process. It rarely measures the creativity, talent, imagination, curiosity or a lot of other important qualities of the students. These types of tests fail to achieve the declared objectives of teaching those subjects concerned. It is intended to measure the knowledge level of a student, but seldom the skill in that subject. Unfortunately, there is no benchmark in the case of assessment. Usually, assessments are shaped by various components like the educational philosophy, size of the class, IQ level of the students, policy of the institution, requirements of the community. A content based test sometimes fails to collect the real capacity of a student because of the chance for cheating on tests. It is the process of engaging in malpractice by various means by a test taker. It may be in the form of bringing some notes or copying from the neighbour's answer script, or getting the answers orally from another student. In such cases, the evaluator, who gets the answer scripts without any knowledge of the student and the history at the examination hall, gives good grades, only by going through the answers. Here also, the proper assessment disappears, leaving the unworthy to get undeserving credits.

The greatest drawback found in a content based test is its limitation in identifying the application level of the subject concerned. Language, which is basically a skill, cannot be measured or evaluated as other subjects are assessed. Being a skill, the questions connected to language assessment should contain scope for the application of the skill of the student. The entire conceptual framework of a skill based language assessment has to be different. The assessment should be

fashioned in such a manner that the student be given a chance to apply his knowledge on language. The four language skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing have to be given an adequate space in a language test, detecting the types of skills that need to be mastered. The test in language should not follow the conventional pattern of a Content based test. It has to check, for instance, the ability to apply/ identify 'Noun' in a sentence rather than defining what a 'Noun' is. A conversion from acquired knowledge to skill and to identify that capacity of the student should be the target of skill based assessment. In the job market, the employees use skill assessment tests for the purpose of short listing the candidates. It is their method to decide whether the candidate is suitable as per their requirements. Even if a candidate claims various qualifications in the resume, they have to appear for the screening test, often skill oriented. If a student, during the period of his education, is well versed with skill oriented testing, that would be highly beneficial for overcoming the hurdle of the screening process. Hence to qualify such a selection procedure in the job market, one has to be acquainted with skill based assessment.

Recent trends in testing language skills

The relation between language teaching and testing is clearly visible throughout the history of English language teaching. In the international contexts, language tests, sticking onto reliability and practicality in scoring, are in vogue. It is the multiple choice format that is used to ensure the objectivity of assessment. Standardised tests like IELTS, TOEFL are also popular and widely used. These are used to assess the proficiency standard of teachers, students and the end users. There is a demand for desired skills and competencies in English language learning by the academic community. Along with the knowledge of the English language, proficiency in information technology is mandatory these days. The internet has created a virtual platform for every learning domain. The strategy of teaching learning process, including assessment has changed accordingly. It can make the process of education a borderless classroom. Web based learning also is a novel paradigm. Flexibility for learners and also responsibility for their achievement form the keywords of web based learning. To attain the targets of language learning and

testing, the stakeholders have to understand the benefits and drawbacks of the assessment methods when analysing the learning outcomes.

Many of the language teachers lack concrete ideas about assessment. Even though workshops are arranged by various universities from time to time, only a minority makes use of such opportunities.

John C Cliff believes that assessment must be used to help students. It can operate in two ways:

Firstly, any teacher knows that assessment, particularly in the form of examinations, will determine to a large extent when students will study, what they will study and the effort they will put into their work. Secondly, when students are provided with a programme of progressive assessment with appropriate information as to their strengths and weaknesses, they can take action to correct and improve performance prior to any major or definitive assessment (17).

The present testing system, which follows a conventional pattern, seldom checks the ability to perform a required skill. The traditional assessment pattern obstructs the learning in multiple ways. Because of its limitations, it repudiates the base of quality education. Assessment these days has various purposes. Apart from assessing the performance of students, it should contribute to the teaching learning process, supplying details regarding the academic community and curriculum. The latest notion that everyone is capable of learning and is ready to dedicate themselves to the acquisition of knowledge has made the conventional pattern of assessment that checks the accountability of the students only outdated and ineffective. This reconceptualisation of testing has led to the emergence of new theories. Dynamic Assessment (DA), developed by the Soviet Psychologist Lev Vygotsky is one of the latest trends where Instruction and Assessment are not separated, instead teacher and pupil work together towards the future upliftment of the student. While the traditional summative assessments try to find out the performance of the students at a specific point of time, most probably at the end of the semester/Year, they fail to provide feedback that would help the teacher to support the student for progression.

In the case of DA, the student and teacher interact to identify the student's level of knowledge and competency and the teacher evolves and suggests methods to improve the performance. So this kind of continuous and timely intervention by the teacher becomes an essential part of this method. The future development of the student is concentrated here, not the performance based on the past knowledge or development. Assessment and instruction are integrated to interpret the capacities of the students and to give adequate back up for their future development. It is an interactive approach with an aim to administer assessment within the purview of psychology, education or speech that highlights the capability of the students to respond to intercession.

According to the conceptual framework of DA, the environment where a child grows and the interaction with its components including parents, siblings, friends and society have a predominant role in the evolution and shaping of the cognitive skills of a child. The cultural mediation which is realised through the interaction is mandatory in the development of the cognitive skill. Human learning also takes place through this process. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a term related to the Socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky that states the extent to which a child can perform with others' help that a child cannot, if alone. ZPD defines the development of a learner not merely the real level of development, but also the attitude towards the social transactions that would help the teacher to support the student for his future development and progress. Learning becomes a reality when the child interacts with a much more learned person or a veteran in the field concerned. Moreover, such interactions will help students to procure those mental operations that are required for cultural mediation. DA is based on the concept of ZPD. Through DA, assessment of the talent and capacity of the student is done with a strategy that is remarkably different from the conventional pattern. It is an interactive approach. DA highlights the entwined nature of teaching and assessment and the building up of the future progress. Hence it addresses the upcoming future, rather than any specific station in one's life. It is a broad approach where the three, student, skill and teacher are focused. The process identifies the cognitive skills in a child and the need to develop it, the required cognitive skills needed for performing

various tasks. Along with teaching the cognitive skills needed for a student, it gives due importance in teaching traditional curriculum too.

DA has three phases, a pre-test, teaching and post test. In the second phase, the students will be taken to deliberations. The psychometric model put forward by Budoff in 1974 is the basis of *test-train-test assessment*, which forms the first among the five models of DA. The post test score is used to design the instructional activities of the future, considering the cognitive strength of the student. *Learning Potential Assessment Device: Meditational Assessment* by Feuerstein, the second model of DA, observes that lack of exposure to learning experiences leads to deficiency in the cognitive realm. This model advises the teacher/ examiner to arrange environmental exposures to the students in order to acquire learning experiences. *Testing-the Limits Assessment Approach*, the third model, states that because of individual and intellectual dissimilarities, differences happen in the acquisition of information. It facilitates intervention straight into the test situation. Even a student with a learning disability or low level of intelligence will be able to perform well when the procedure incorporates changes. *Graduated Prompting Assessment Approach* is the fourth model. Though it does not make any inferences, it predicts the willingness of the students to acquire experiences from learning. It helps the teacher to find out the minimum level of support needed by a student, to engage in problem solving, there by assessing the capacity of a student in learning. The fifth model is *A Continuum of Assessment Model—Mediated and Graduated Prompting*. This model provides worthy information about learning. Mediation Dynamic Assessment helps students to perform well on tasks already taught.

The conventional pattern of assessment, which has been in practice for a number of years, tested whether the student achieved predetermined objectives. The limitation of the conventional pattern is that it never prompts the learner to be well versed with problem solving or constructors of knowledge. Only passive participation is expected from the students. But DA found acquisition of language as information generation as a result of the transaction between the facilitator and the learner. This method can overcome the cultural insensitivity latent in the conventional assessment pattern. People from various cultural and ethnic

backgrounds and bilingual children are assessed effectively using DA. It identifies the learning potential of a student rather than attesting the current pathetic performance. DA keeps a student, rather than examination, nearer to an environment of testing.

Computer based language testing makes the assessment process easier and quicker. In computer based testing over the internet, the foremost benefit is that this can be accessed from anywhere and on any device having internet connectivity. Moreover, there is flexibility over the structure and content. One can prepare question types like pull down menu, multiple choice, or combination of these or even descriptive types. Reliability and validity, the qualities of an ideal test can be found here too. A computer can measure active skills like writing and speaking. Unluckily, people are still not so aware of computer based assessment. Computers are used to store both the questions as well as the schedule related to it. When it comes to creating question papers using randomised selection, the stored data will be used by the computers. Accuracy in calculation, even complex, compared to humans, makes computers the best choice. This feature helps us to complete larger numbers within a short span of time. Grading of exam papers is done by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. Since the computer based assessment has no bias, students feel more confident in appearing for the exams. The assessment by Pearson, PTE Academic, which is a computer based English language test for non native English speakers who plan to have their studies abroad, tests the four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of the learners online. It is one of the examples of computer based language assessment with the features of reliability and objectivity. The advantage is, with PTE Academic Online, one can take the test from anywhere, whether from home, office or any other space which is congenial for such an academic activity. It incorporates innovative integrated test items. Its automation eliminates the examiner's bias. The various scores are compartmentalised to facilitate the learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It is highly beneficial for the learners as it helps them to identify the areas where improvement is needed. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in grading of the students is a big leap in the field of assessment. Consistency as a feature of evaluation is always

present with computer based testing. It shows that the horizon of English language assessment is growing day by day and is becoming futuristic.

Types of tests

The requirement of assessing the learning outcome of the students led to the development of various language tests. Basically, any test format of languages tries to identify the knowledge of the learner in vocabulary and grammar. Alderson, Charles J, et al. in *Language Test Construction and Evaluation* remarks, “Teachers who wish to enter their students for some public examination need to know which test will be most appropriate for their learners in relation to the course of instruction that they have been following” (10). Hence, testing as a methodology to find out the quality of the student has its own vital role in the world of academics, especially in language learning. Language tests vary based on the way they are framed, what they are meant for and criteria to be measured. It facilitates the testee to find out what he/she knows or can do. It helps the instructor to conclude if the student is fit for a certain profession or admission to any institution, whether successfully completed a programme, can be promoted to the next level. There are multiple types of tests in the world of academics that identify and locate various aspects of language learning.

Achievement Test

An Achievement Test or Summative Test is designed to assess how far one has acquired the proficiency in language related to a particular course of study or Programme. The end semesters tests, meant to check the proficiency, are examples of Achievement Tests. Along with identifying the acquisition of language by students, it helps to get a picture of the effectiveness of instruction by a teacher, how far he/she has succeeded in imparting the knowledge of language to the students. So it has a twofold aim. It is always limited to the content of a curriculum. The prime target is to measure the progress of an individual in the content he/she has learned.

Cloze Test

To measure the reading comprehension of the students, there is a Cloze Test where students will be given paragraphs with missing words. They will be asked to

fill up the gap by guessing the exact words that can fit into it to give a meaningful sentence. Either *acceptable word method* or *exact word method* can be used by the student. Grading will be based on how far the student has succeeded in completing the passage meaningfully. Even though the students miss the chance of producing the language spontaneously, this method is followed in various levels of teaching-learning process.

Discrete-Point Test

Language test which assesses awareness of individual language components, like a grammar test that finds out having different sections on tenses, adjectives, pronouns and adverbs is known as Discrete-Point test. A language consists of various sections like grammar, sounds, vocabulary, pronunciation and the four skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. All these components of a language can be assessed separately. Multiple choice questions normally form a Discrete Point test. While a Discrete Point test checks various skills separately, an integral test makes the learner use multiple language skills at the same time.

Language Aptitude Test

A Language Aptitude Test assesses the aptitude for language learning by an individual. This is used to detect the learners who have genuine capacity to acquire a language. It is both linguistic and psychological. It also takes into consideration the syntactic as well as the phonological abilities. Usually, a person with high language aptitude will grasp it more quickly than a person with a low language aptitude. Different test items that measure various abilities form part of the language aptitude test. The expertise to identify the grammatical functions of the various parts of a sentence, *Grammar-Coding ability*, talent to memorise words, rules of language, *Memorisation*, the capability to evolve meaning without explanation in a foreign language, *Inductive learning Ability*, the potential to identify and memorise new sounds in a new language, *Sound-Coding Ability* are the various items that measure multiple proficiencies in languages.

Diagnostic Test

In order to diagnose some specific linguistic aspect, Diagnostic Tests are used. These tests facilitate the learner to create *learning paths* to start their own personal learning programs. It gives the learner a way to test their proficiency in language. It also helps the learner to have a clear picture of one's strengths and weaknesses. Usually it is used before a student joins a Programme in order to assess the language skills (LSRW) as well as the linguistic knowledge, i.e. knowledge about and of the language. To denote a Diagnostic Test, the term Formative is also used.

Proficiency Test

A proficiency test is used to find out how much ability or proficiency that one has attained in a language. Proficiency tests are not part of any specific program. It helps one to identify the general standard of mastery in a language. Usually, it concentrates on testing vocabulary and grammar basics. TOEFL is an example of a Proficiency Test. The University of Cambridge offers the most advanced proficiency test, namely the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or the CPE, which is recognised worldwide. PET, the Cambridge Preliminary English Test, CAE, the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English, FCE, the Cambridge First Certificate of English and KET and the Cambridge Key English Test are the four types of Cambridge Proficiency Tests. Measuring what the student has acquired with respect to a purpose is the activity performed by a Proficiency Test.

The most widely used and well known language assessment test in the world at present is TOEFL, the Test of English as a Foreign Language. In 1963, it was developed in the US to check the language competency of the non-native speakers. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, administers this standardised language test of English proficiency. It is mandatory for a foreign student, who wishes to get an admission in the higher education institutions of America, to qualify this test. iBTOEFL, launched in 2005, is an innovative test which is an internet based TOEFL. A speaking section and a listening section that are skill oriented, which are tasks both independent and integrated, find a place in this latest version.

IELTS

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is meant for non native speakers of the English language. It is controlled jointly by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English. This testing system was established in 1989. It is meant for those who prefer to study abroad or migrate to those countries where English is the mother tongue, like the USA, New Zealand, Britain, Canada. The minimum age required for this exam is sixteen. Its result is reported in the 9-band scale, the lowest being 1. The validity of IELTS Test Report Form (TRF) is for two years. It tests the entire skills required for success in the new career and studies abroad. One will be assessed on the four language skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. IELTS Academic or IELTS General Training is the two types of tests available. The first test measures one's proficiency in language to find out if one is apt for an academic environment. The second type of tests measure one's language capacity in a practical, day to day situation.

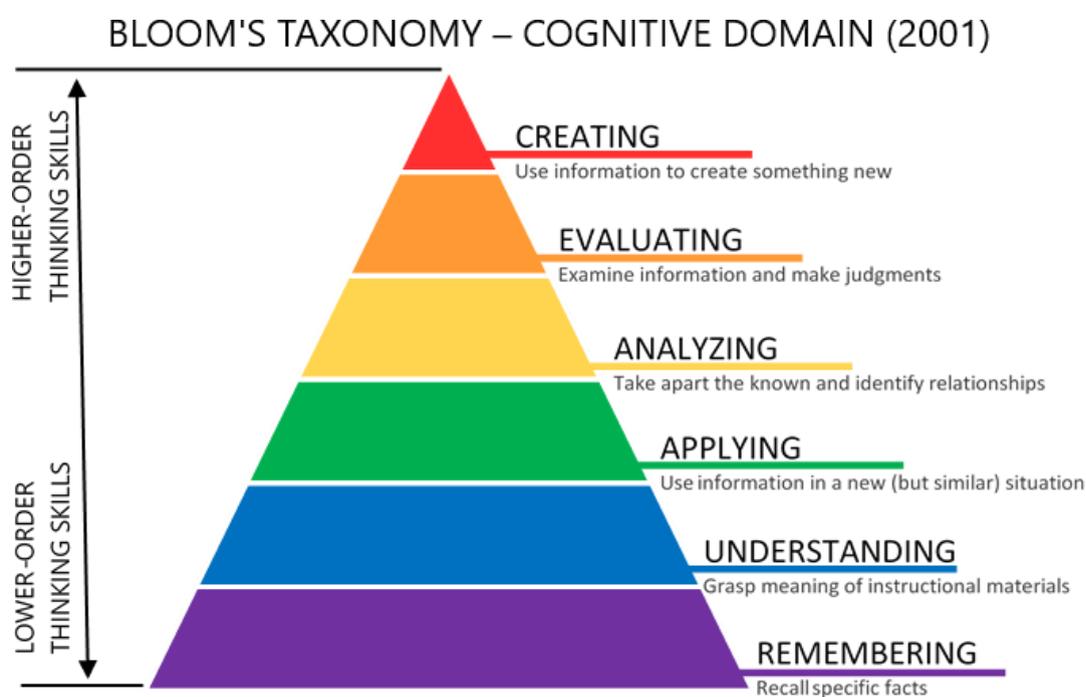
Progress Test

Progress tests that are conducted at the closing of a unit, semester or a course are similar to an Achievement test. It is specific to any particular content or course. Hence it facilitates the teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of their instruction. It helps the learner to identify the areas of difficulty there by functioning as a diagnostic test in nature.

Ideal test design

An ideal test design in language education should measure the skill of the student in the subject concerned. Testing merely the rote memory will not help in any manner in the development of the quality of language acquisition. The present system, which focuses on the content knowledge of the English language/ literature like any other subject, does not serve the purpose of assessing the language proficiency of students concerned. The test pattern followed these days fails to remediate the skill-score mismatch. Hence a novel method that can validate the score by evaluating the performance competence of the student is necessary.

An overhauling in the present system by including questions that measure the language skills of students can be an ideal test design. English language education at the UG Common Course consists of Prose, Poetry and Grammar. In all the question papers, only the lower order skills of the students are tested. Such a score will not be reliable since it is not valid. It leads to skill score mismatch. This has to be changed. Question papers should aim at the higher order skills as specified in Bloom's Taxonomy i.e., Applying, Analysing, Evaluating and Creating.



Source: <https://citt.ufl.edu/resources/the-learning-process/designing-the-learning-experience/blooms-taxonomy/>

The question pattern at present, to a certain extent, checks the skill of the students in the English language. This pattern is followed in A01, *Transactions; Essential English Language Skills*. It tests the Speaking, Pronunciation, Grammar, Reading and Vocabulary of the students in the 2017 admissions question paper. But in 2019 Admissions, there was a slash in the number of questions and limited skills were tested, i.e. Speaking and Reading. A02, *Ways With Words: Literatures in English*, both 2017 Admissions and 2019 Admissions, tested the comprehension of

the students, hardly giving weight to the language skill of the students. It consists of one word, one or two sentences, paragraph and essay questions. In 2019 Admissions, five multiple choice questions were omitted that were there in the 2017 admissions question paper.

The five sections in A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* are Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking Skills and Reading Skills. The items in the text are congenial for conducting a test at the application level. In the case of the first module, *Pronunciation*, including questions to identify the sounds, IPA Script along with oral tests can be of help. Students may be given pictures of different objects and pronounce the words correctly, making them listen to the speech of native speakers and let them recognise the words.

The second module, *Vocabulary*, can be tested by various types of skill based assessments and practices. Students may be given passages with words underlined and ask them to use synonyms. Other types like multiple choice, cloze test by deleting words at regular intervals, guessing from the context, reordering the letter to make meaningful words, correcting the spelling, use of phrasal verbs and idioms and prepare passages on specific topics can be included.

The third module, *Grammar*, the depth of knowledge in it may be checked by making the students write an imaginary story based on some given pictures. Students may be asked to prepare story covering the three periods of time, i.e. Past, Present and Future. An oral test assessing the awareness of grammar too is advisable.

Module four, *Speaking skills*, has two subsections, Part I- *Everyday Transactions* and Part II- *Academic Transactions*. Part I which is based on day to day conversations is ideal for an application level assessment. Conversations of various types can be given to students and make them present in groups. In the meantime, the examiner assesses the performance of the students based on which grades may be awarded. For Part II also, Discussion, Debating and Presentation skills, making the students into groups and testing their communicative competence is the best method of assessment.

Module five, *Reading* has no other option but to test by checking the ability of the students to comprehend the idea after going through a given passage. Questions to test the understanding level of the students may be included.

A02- *Ways With Words* has four sections- Poetry, Short Stories, Prose and One Act Play. The present structure of the university question paper is conventional. It tests merely the rote memory of the student or the level of comprehension. This question pattern upsets the very objectives of English language teaching, i.e. acquisition of language proficiency through various genres.

The conventional pattern needs to be thoroughly revamped and reconstructed on par with the international standards of English language testing. Poetry, Prose and Grammar are the constituents of English literature through which one learns the language. Hence, teaching of these items should uplift the language capacity of the students. Reading poetry can enhance the vocabulary, fluency and creativity of the students. So, the testing pattern too should trace out these faculties of the students.

The question paper should have various segments that check the language skills of the students irrespective of the texts being skill based or literature oriented. This has to be in line with the higher order skills as illustrated in Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy. Segments on the cognitive domain should cover questions on various levels like Knowledge/Remember, Comprehension/Understand, Application, Analyse, Evaluate and Create. Knowledge level should have the least number of questions as it does not in fact assess the development of communicative competence. Under Comprehension, students may be asked to compress a big paragraph in their own language so that they try to understand the given specimen and also express what they have understood in their own language. In section on Application level, grammatical concepts can be tested where students are prompted to apply what they have already learned, i.e. Grammatical rules. The section on Analysis can contain questions like comparing and contrasting characters from a select story highlighting some unique features. Students may be asked to create an alternate ending for a story/poem they have learned or using the characters or incidents, frame an entirely different story or a poem which tests creative writing.

By following this pattern, the higher order skills in the Cognitive domain of the student are addressed. A blended/ Hybrid model of assessment, where Offline mode covers 60% of the total score and Online 40% ,which is conducted by the colleges, can be introduced. Universities can provide the online link for the exams directly to the colleges. Online patterns can include Fill in the blanks, Multiple choice, Accent, Pronunciation, Speaking, Listening and Vocabulary while the Offline mode provides space for creative writing, mixing up of imagination, short answers, paragraphs and essays.

Rationale for the new design

Since learning a language implies ability to apply the language skills in real or imaginary contexts and the focus of language testing has to be on the competency level in the language, the pattern of assessment in languages should be different from that of subjects. The assessment should kindle the habits of reading and writing and to follow the language with multiple accents and pronunciations. The ultimate target is to enable the students to use and apply error free language in their daily life. Hence, if the exams on English language are designed similarly to other subjects, the objectives of language teaching will be unfulfilled. To overcome this concern, assessments should be modelled on standardised tests like TOEFL, IELTS. A test has to identify the learning gap of the students along with recognising the strengths.

Holistic changes that ensure the attainment of skills and real life success for the students need to be brought in. Even though teaching methodology or even texts like *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* are obviously communicative, tests become invariably conventional at the UG Common Course targeting mainly the lower order skills. Such a system has to be replaced with a novel method where Offline and Online models are blended. One of the major drawbacks of the existing assessment pattern at the University level is that though there are various types of texts, only a uniform pattern is found. More than 90% of the questions address only lower order skills. Most of the questions tested only rote memory of the student. Unlike the assessment patterns at the international level, there is no integration of technology in the testing process. While the students are well versed with the

application of technology in the learning process, implementing a blended model will not be a challenge for them.

Most of the students, as the data says, prefer a skill oriented assessment pattern (*A01- Transactions: Essential English Language Skills*) because they found it easy to procure a good score. Since it has no descriptive questions like Paragraph or Essay, it can be answered quickly. Some students believe that such application level questions can improve their linguistic skill. In addition to that, it provides enough room for giving logical answers too. Logical distribution of weight to each skill is an appealing feature of skill oriented testing as per the opinion of many students.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Chapter summary

This chapter on Methodology will deal with the various methods of data collection, primary tools like questionnaires and additional tools like structured interview that are used in the study. An outline of the responses received will also be given in this chapter. In any quantitative study, methodology is an integral component. So a chapter exclusively on methodology is included.

Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering information from all the possible sources by making use of various methods. It helps to find the answers to the research problem that one identifies before the commencement of the research, makes it convenient to test the hypothesis and ensures the credibility and the reliability of the findings of the study. To preserve the integrity of research, faultless data is necessary. It is common to all fields of study like Physical Sciences, Business and Social Sciences. Once the research problem is identified, data collection begins as a prerequisite for authentic evidence, later to data analysis and interpretations are done to reach final conclusions.

Data, based on its nature, can be broadly classified into two, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data are normally non numerical and usually descriptive in nature. This will be in linguistic format, collecting the opinion and emotions on the research problem identified. Questions under qualitative methods are open ended. Interviews, group discussions and observation are some of the methods under this. Usually this process is time consuming and impossible to generalise the results collected. It is less structured too. To ensure the reliability of the data collected, interviews can be repeated.

Quantitative data is numerical and can be analysed using mathematical operations. It includes measurement of the subject concerned. While ‘how’ and ‘why’ come under the purview of a Qualitative data, under Quantitative data, ‘what’ of an object comes. One major method followed to collect data under Quantitative approach is questionnaire. Unlike the qualitative approach, the quantitative approach is less expensive and it saves time. It depends upon random sampling. Because of the nature of the result gathered through this approach, it is easy to encapsulate the responses. Apart from the questionnaire, conducting surveys with closed ended questions, framing the same questions and conducting face to face interview which is structured form part of this process. In this era of online facilities, administering surveys using Google forms too fall under this category which can save time and cover a wider group of population.

A hybrid type which combines both the qualitative as well as quantitative methods too can be applied. This may be a mixing up of the two approaches in a study throughout or opting any of these two at different points within a study as the situation demands. The advantage is that it can overcome deficiencies if any, while using a single approach. Hence, using this method to collect and interpret the data can increase the reliability and validity of the results.

The researcher, while planning data collection, has to keep in mind two types of data, i.e. primary and secondary, which depends upon who is collecting the data. Primary data are those materials that we collect from the source, for the first time; hence it is original in nature. The data which are already collected by someone else and gone through the process of statistical analysis is the Secondary data. The liberty of opting the data, whether Primary or Secondary or both, lies with the researcher. The procedure of collecting Primary and Secondary data varies since the Primary data has to be collected from the source, say, directly from the individual, if the method is questionnaire or interview. Collecting Secondary data is nothing but putting together the materials already collected by others. Proper planning and tenacity are some of the qualities needed to collect data.

Primary data, since it is collected from the source and original, reliable and

authentic in nature, is considered the best kind of data to be used in research. Questionnaires, interviews and experiments form the methods of collecting the Primary data. Before deciding the methods of collecting the data, the researcher has to identify the target audience, nature of data required, objectives of study and aim of research. If it is a survey, then it can be offline or online. The collection of Primary data normally turns out to be highly challenging because of various reasons like scarcity of respondents and lack of cooperation of the population. Survey is the most common method used in Social Sciences and Marketing. This can have different courses of action. Questionnaire is the most widely used method under Survey. It may contain questions that are open ended or close ended. Questions with options, Yes or No questions, One word answer, all form the various types of items in a questionnaire. This can be distributed directly in printed form, or even online mode. Interview, which is a face to face talk with the select members of the targeted audience, also comes under Survey. If the interviewee deliberately hides the information demanded by the interviewer, the purpose of the interview may not be served. So, the reliability of the findings through an interview depends upon the credibility of the respondents. Observation is another way to collect the data under Survey. This can be either in a natural setting or in an artificial environment created for the purpose. This may be either by intimating the performer or without. Applying the Observation method in a natural setting without intimating the performer may lead to more authentic results. The major significance of Primary data is its quality since the researcher collects it by himself or herself. It is flexible in the sense that additional data, if required, can be collected during the same process. Deciding and selecting the exact population to extract data from is a major question before a researcher since responses by an unfit class or batch may lead to erroneous and inaccurate conclusions.

Any data that has been collected already by someone else is Secondary Data. It helps in preparing the ground for a research by way of using the Secondary Data during the spade work. To prepare the review of literature, researchers make use of Secondary Data. There are innumerable sources of Secondary Data like books, works of criticism, research articles by other researchers, newspaper reports,

websites, biographies and statistical data by the government, to mention a few. Secondary Data is different from Primary Data as far as its reliability is concerned. Since the Secondary Data is not collected by the researcher directly, he/she cannot ensure the validity and reliability of the data. But situations may creep up during one's research where there are no sources available for Primary Data or it is almost impossible to extract data from its source. In such cases, Secondary Data will be of use or the researcher will be compelled to explore the Secondary Data. But it is less expensive compared to collecting the Primary Data. The researcher will not be personally responsible for the validity, reliability and accuracy of the data. Moreover, it raises the issue of copyright.

Methods of Primary data collection

In collecting Primary Data, both Quantitative and Qualitative methods can be applied. Some methods are Questionnaire, Interviews, Surveys, Observation, Statistical method and Case studies. Questionnaire consists of a series of questions, multiple choice, dichotomous (Yes or No questions), one word or open ended varieties that try to extract the perspectives of the respondents on the thrust area of study. Sir Francis Galton invented this method. The advantage is that it is cheaper and demands less effort from the researcher, compared to telephone surveys. It is a scientific instrument to collect data from a big group simultaneously. The data thus collected, because of the nature of questions and standardised answers, are easy to compile and evaluate. At the same time, it has the same challenges related to wordings and construction of questions as any other survey. Usually the respondent has to answer in a proper format. There may be open-ended and closed-ended questions as per the nature of the topic. The distinction is that in an open-ended question, the respondent is asked to formulate his/her own answers to complete a sentence whereas a closed-ended is where the respondent is asked to pick up his answer from the list provided. The questionnaire should follow a logical sequence, moving from the least sensitive to the most sensitive, from the factual details of the respondent to the attitudinal, from the general to specific. Transition questions can be used to link various areas of the topic. Difficult questions may be kept for the end since the respondent will be ready to answer elaborately and patiently. While

framing questions, it is better to avoid statements that are vague so as to avoid a chance for wrong interpretation. Frame questions that accommodate the different views of people. The researcher, while framing the questionnaire should not be prejudiced towards the respondents. It is ideal to begin a questionnaire with collecting the personal details of the respondents like name and gender. Descriptive and analytical types of questionnaires too can be included. While the descriptive questionnaires are limited to the collection of facts, the analytical questionnaires normally attempt to collect opinion and attitudes. The respondents, sometimes, who have apprehension regarding the expectation of the researcher, may leave comments that can satisfy the researcher rather than his/her personal opinion as they prefer to look good before others. Hence, the researcher has to prepare the questions that are neutral in nature and answerable so that an objective response may be given by the respondent without any prejudice or apprehension. Since it can cover a larger population compared to other methods, the results collected via this method can be more reliable and dependable. The researcher should ensure that there is no scope for misunderstanding in any of the questions as that may lead to serious errors in conclusion via analysis. Paying attention to the wordings of the questions is also necessary from the part of the researcher as the replies, to a large extent, depend upon it. It is better to omit questions that affect the sentiments of the respondents.

The Interview Method

The Interview Method includes face to face talk with the respondents. Compared to the Questionnaire method, it is more expensive and time consuming. It can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Linguistic proficiency is not a requirement in the case of the interviewee as the interviewer collects information and compiles it into data. In a structured interview, the interviewer asks the same questions that are already prepared to all the respondents. Usually the questions will be open-ended. A well formed topic of research helps to frame a structured interview as it has to focus specifically on the thrust area. There are multiple ways to collect data via interview, can be over the telephone, face to face and web based. The data collected thus can be compared across the respondents. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer will keep readymade questions in a particular order, but

moves away from it in between as the situation demands. Since the semi-structured interview contains open-ended questions, it is advisable to record the responses using devices like tape recorder or mobile so that, later, the responses can be compiled and edited to the required format. These interviews provide enough time for the interviewer to prepare the questions in advance and allow the respondents to express their views in their own ways without any barrier. In an unstructured interview, the interviewer and the respondents will have a clear idea about the topic of discussion. Here the interviewer gives space for the respondents to express themselves in the manner they like. The questions in an unstructured interview will be open ended. Hence, the answers will be moving through an unexpected route. It will be better to record the response and convert it into a linguistic form before analysis. Unstructured interviews can be conducted as an initial step before conducting structured interviews, since the unstructured interviews can help the researcher to get a broader and deeper understanding of the topic of study. The interviewer, in an unstructured interview, is free to ask supplementary questions related to the central theme of inquiry.

Conducting an interview is an art that has to be mastered by the researcher to obtain the required data in a well-structured manner. Enough background preparations are needed for a better outcome. The interviewer has to define in black and white the role he is supposed to play. It is the duty of the interviewer to locate the respondents, explain the study in detail, seek their cooperation, motivate them to elicit their answers, convince them the relevance of the study, clear the doubts of the respondents regarding any of the questions, ensure the quality of the responses and conduct the interview which is perfect in all respects. There are some steps in conducting an interview. As a first step, the interviewer builds a rapport with the interviewee. The second step, asking questions, is the heart of the interview. The final step is closure where the interviewer gains enough data required for the study from the interviewee. While trying to elicit the responses from the interviewees, the researcher may, if needed, ask elaboration and clarification on the answers. The possibility of obtaining data in great depth is the major advantage with this Interview Method. Greater flexibility in reframing the question, especially in an unstructured

interview, is another attraction. The language of the interview has to be appropriate to the level of the interviewee.

Observational Method

Observational Method involves watching the spontaneous behaviour of the participants in the environment around us. This is the most common method applied for data collection in all the branches of study. Even though it is the simplest method in respect of extracting the data, in research, observation has to be done very seriously and systematically. This method eliminates the probability of subjective bias. Being selective is the first way to be systematic. In our daily life, we used to have multiple occasions of sensory experience. In such cases, giving importance to the incidents that are relevant for the study is a quality that a researcher, while exploring the Observational Method, has to display. Systematic observation contains judicious selection of the incidents to watch. Moreover, the incidents have to be recorded by any means to analyse and explicate it later. Observation could be natural where the behaviour of the individual is observed and no attempt is made by the researcher to bring any change in the behaviour of the observed. Use of tools of measurement is the feature of Scientific Observation, but all observations are not scientific. Observing the right thing at the right moment and right place by luck or chance is the Casual Observation. The two components in any observation are the object and the subject without which the process will not take place. Subject is the one who watches while the object is the incident being watched. The recording of one's own experience is the Subjective Observation while an observer keeps attention on a subject or a thing or an activity is called Objective Observation. Like the Interview Method, in Observation too, there are structured and unstructured observations. The various details that are to be collected and the features to be observed are decided well in advance in a Structured Observation. This is applied in those cases where it is difficult to observe using naturalistic observation. In an Unstructured Observation, the researcher records all those things which he/she finds appropriate and important while witnessing the incident. Since the Observational Method and its conclusion are based on witnessing the incidents and behaviour of people, seldom there is a chance for the personal bias of the researcher. Higher

probability for the accumulation of objective details is a major advantage of the Observational Method. Hence, reliability, as a method of procuring data is of apex significance in Observational Method. The two methods followed in Observational Method are participant and non-participant observation. In a participatory Observational Method, the researcher will be part of the environment which is viewed and evaluated while in a non-participatory Observational Method, the researcher will be keeping himself/herself away from the environment. Fixing the period, frequency and the ideal time for observation too are important. It is necessary that the credibility of the observation is needed to be tested by another individual recording the observations during the similar period, without being influenced by the observation of the researcher. In a Controlled Observation, the observation takes place in a situation which is pre-planned while Uncontrolled Observation is a method that takes place in a natural setting. The target of an Uncontrolled Observation is to record the spontaneous behaviour of the people and situations. But there is a slight chance for subjective interpretation that may question the reliability and credibility of the data. Mechanical instruments are implemented for standardisation in a Controlled Observation. This type of observation is found related to the experiments in laboratories.

Survey Method

Survey Method is used to collect the opinion, thoughts and observations of people on specific topics. Survey is based on preplanned questions to elicit data on a specific topic. Once the sample is collected, the researcher will be able to generalise the findings. Surveys can cover a wider population unlike other methods followed in the collection of data and this can be managed via electronic media. It can demolish the geographical limitations and can access a wider chunk of data. Various types of questions like closed, open ended, multiple choices, more than one response, to leave the respondents' comments, Yes/No, True/False maybe included. Information collection will be cost effective and exact in a survey. Objectives and the output required have to be decided in advance. Face to face interviews, telephone interviews, questionnaires (including electronic format like email, Google forms) all can be used to collect data. Among these, face to face interviews are more expensive

than other methodologies. Surveys are normally used in a situation where data is to be collected from a wider population. They are beneficial for summative as well as formative needs. To find out the progress of an item in a particular environment, the same survey can be repeated at specific intervals.

Case Study Method

Case study method is an enquiry done at a deeper level about a person, an incident or a group. It makes use of methods like interview, observation, questionnaire and similar other methods. It originated in medical research like the case study of patients through qualitative techniques, official documents and such data are analysed using various theories. Every aspect of the history, life and behaviour of the individual is investigated to find out the pattern behind the case. An ideal Case Study should make a difference between factual description and perspectives of the respondents. It helps to formulate hypotheses.

Methods of Secondary data collection

Compared to the collection of Primary data, Secondary data consumes less time. Quantitative and Qualitative methods can help one to collect data. By the arrival of the internet and such facilities, Secondary data has become easily available nowadays. Much information that is not available in printed format is now accessible via the internet. Books are the most authentic ones in Secondary data. Journals and periodicals, including online format, provide latest information in the branch of knowledge concerned, especially on specific topics rather than general. By the spread of the internet, personal diaries named weblogs have also become popular. Secondary data may be published or unpublished. Published data includes reports by governments, international bodies like UNESCO, WHO, books, journals, articles, magazines, reports by technical firms, banks, studies of research scholars in various fields, survey reports by statistical agencies. Unpublished letters, diaries, biographies, autobiographies available with private organisations or individuals form the unpublished data. While selecting the Secondary data, the researcher has to find out the appropriateness of the data, whether it is suitable for the study or not. The suitability of the data depends upon the thrust area of the study. Data that are fit for

one study may not suit the other. Hence, judicious decision in identifying source of the data is a necessary capacity that a researcher should possess. The reliability of the Secondary data, considering the person who procured it, the methods opted to collect it; the accuracy in collecting the data must be checked before selecting any information.

Validity and reliability

Validity is the extent to which a study projects the concept that the investigator tries to measure as part of his/her study. External and internal validity should be the concern of a researcher. The extent to which the findings of a study can be generalisable is the external validity. The plan of the study, the vigilance observed in measurement, alternative explanations for the findings related to relationships, all these form part of internal validity of a study.

The concept of reliability means consistency in the result in repeated trials. Such a measurement can be trusted and the results that one collects will be error free. With the help of such reliable research tools, the investigator will be able to reach conclusions and generalisations.

Data interpretation

The most important process in research is analysis and interpretation of data. It is the process of bringing meaning to the collected data. After deciding the analytical framework, reconstruct the gathered data to identify the pattern. Quantitative and Qualitative researchers interpret the data in diverse ways. A Qualitative researcher deals with visual or oral data while a Quantitative researcher finds answers to the research problem by discussing numbers, charts and diagrams. Data analysis demands some kind of logic applicable to research. Quantitative and Qualitative data are similar in many ways. Reasoning is used as a method to find out the results. To identify the pattern in the data collection, comparison as a strategy is used. Attempt is made to avoid false conclusions or inferences in both Qualitative and Quantitative data analysis.

Analysis of data

The data in Qualitative analysis is based on the views and opinions of the respondents, text, audio or video. The researcher applies a subjective approach. The aim of qualitative analysis of the data is to locate meaning in the events and circumstances under study. Quantitative analysis sheds light upon the cause and effect of the data. In qualitative analysis, the researcher often uses the language of the respondents itself. The conclusions are based on the assumptions of the answers. The primary step in data analysis is the organisation of that which will change according to the techniques used in data collection and the strategy fixed by the researcher. Once the data is organised, the researcher can move to the next step, namely Description. In description, the settings, the respondents, the aim of the survey, the opinion of the participants are all explained. The final step is Interpretation in which the researcher tries to answer the research questions posed at the beginning and attempts to link the data with hypothesis. Structuring and coding facilitates an analytic elaboration of data, confirming the existing theories or generating new theories. Based on the findings constructed over the analysed data, the researcher tests the credibility of the data collected. It helps the researcher to make inferences.

Quantitative data comprises numbers or numerical data. The researcher follows an objective approach. The aim is to trace particular patterns if any in the data collected. It finds out casual relationships and reaches conclusions and generalisations. Here, statistical methods are used to test hypotheses or assumptions. Sampling method is used in quantitative data. Since the researcher, who tries to study a large group may not be able to collect data from the entire members; a sample is collected from those members who actually participate in the research process. These samples will be considered representative of the group. This can be *Probability sampling*, which is a random selection and *Non-probability sampling* or non-random selection, which the researcher can decide based on the convenience. Abstract concepts are converted into quantifiable measures. Observation, survey and experiments are parts of quantitative research methods. In this, statistical analysis of the data is done to answer the research questions or test the hypothesis.

The elements of Quantitative as well as Qualitative methods are merged in Mixed Methods research. It gives one more comprehensive result as it clubs the two methods, extracting the advantages of both, leading to enhancing the probability of reliability and validity of research. This method is applied, especially in complex situational research. For instance, how far does the frequency of examination failures affect the perception of examination of a student. The limitation of Qualitative research is that the result cannot be easily generalised. But mixed methods can overcome this.

The process of data analysis is meant for arranging the data correctly, converting it to a presentable format and evolving a conclusion with it. Rational decisions can be evolved through this process. Interpretation, organisation and evaluation of data are done to present it in an acceptable format. These days, countless numbers of software are available for Quantitative as well as Qualitative data analysis. These are used to analyse, manipulate and trace out the relationship and correlation between the data sets procured by the researcher. These tools help a researcher to save time, handle large quantity of information, enhance validity and appropriateness of the data interpreted.

In order to interpret quantitative data, various software are available like Apache Spark, Python, R, SPSS, Stata . Apache Spark is a multi language engine to perform data engineering and machine learning. It processes data in batches and real time using languages like python, java. *R* is a free software which is used for statistical computing and graphics. It works on various platforms like Linux, Mac, Windows. *SPSS* (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a software that facilitates editing and analysis of quantitative data. This can be used for formulaic analysis or for data that are graphically represented. The table structure of *SPSS* data sets is two dimensional, where the cases are represented in rows and measurements/ variables in columns. Only numbers or text can be saved in data cells because only these two types of data are defined. Statistical output can be exported to text or Microsoft Word, Excel, Pdf or other formats or any type of graphic image format such as PNG, EMF, JPEG and BMP. *Stata*, *STAY-ta* is another software package used in quantitative analysis of data in subjects like Sociology, Political Science and

Economics. Custom programming, graphics, automated reporting apart from data management are some of the additional strengths of Stata which prompts the researchers to use it in analysing and interpreting the data.

To analyse qualitative data like audio, video, graphics or unstructured text-based inputs, there are software tools available that are termed CAQDAS (Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software). Qualitative data is always subjective and deep. Hence, analysing qualitative data consists of reading the data elaborately to find out similarities or differences in order to evolve conclusions and focus on the emotions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives and experiences of the population. Software under this reduces the labor and saves much time by assisting qualitative researchers in dealing with the data. Qualitative research, in the last two decades, has gained much popularity and acceptance in various fields of study. It helps the researcher to extract information otherwise unexpected that cannot be procured via quantitative methods. By compressing the data to identify significant patterns, this method draws conclusions. Categorising and coding of data forms the major part of qualitative analysis. NVivo, MAXQDA and Atlas.ti are some of the leading software packages. This software enhances the speed of coding the data. NVivo facilitates qualitative analysis beyond coding of data. It is applied in Mixed-Methods research as well. The researcher has to form a *Project* first in order to deal with the information. Since this software has a *Merge Tool*, which facilitates the researchers working in various teams to merge their works in one project. The newly released versions 7(2006) and 8 (2008) are much more user friendly and can even accommodate languages like Arabic or Chinese. MAXQDA is a software program that deals with qualitative and mixed method data. It accommodates field and case studies too. With this software, cloud space is used to share files.

MAXQDA Reader helps one to share the findings with the members of the team. Atlas.ti is another qualitative research tool that enables one to build literature review, visualisation of data, forming diagrams, coding and analysing texts. It supports the examination of qualitative data for qualitative research, quantitative research as well as Mixed Methods research. By this, even audio and video files can be analysed. Unstructured data like text and multimedia come under the purview of

this software. A wide variety of subjects and branches make use of Atlas.ti. and it supports various file formats like pdf, audio, video, images and geo-data. It can import tweets, hashtags and mentions for analysis and works on Windows and MacOS. Multiple languages like German, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese can be used as the interface languages. Results of the analysis are demonstrated using bar charts or Sankey diagrams that one can export to include in the presentations.

Methods employed in the study

In order to analyse the data collected via questionnaire, Descriptive statistics are made use of. This method is applied in order to describe, display or present data in a meaningful manner which facilitates a simpler way of understanding it. Through this method, patterns/diagrams that help to read and understand the data are created. It helps to make conclusions based on the information collected. In Chapter Five, diagrammatic representation of the data is done in order to analyse and to arrive in conclusion. It measures the frequency distribution of scores from the lowest to the top. Descriptive statistics combine graphical representation, tables and commentary. It measures the central tendency as well as the measures of spread i.e., the dispersion of data. The questions used to collect the data, from the stakeholders focus on the examination and teaching experiences of the students and teachers respectively. The two Common Courses of the first semester UG Programme, A01 *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* and A02 *Ways with Words: Literature in English* are analysed. The responses are represented using either Venn diagrams or Bar diagrams. It centres on the feasibility of implementing skill oriented testing at the UG Common Course. Disapproving the inclusion of rote memory questions, the response in general supports skill oriented in its stead. The diagrammatic representation of data enables us to comprehend the responses easily by providing visual assistance. The perspectives of the stakeholders on the changes brought in the question pattern of A01 and A02 are collected and represented by way of Venn diagram. The characteristics of the question paper that the students support/oppose are represented using a Bar diagram. Using the similar strategy, responses on other questions are also analysed. Percentage analysis is another statistical method of data

analysis applied in the study. The total number of responses collected is 916, out of which the observation of the participants on various components are recorded in percentages. These percentages are used to compare between two or more data like the percentage of application level questions in a test for assessing English language abilities (TQ 14). Percentage analysis is used to know how many of the respondents gave a particular answer.

Microsoft EXCEL is useful for the analysis of data which facilitates trouble free entry as well as manipulation of data. It helps to examine the data using a spreadsheet, though with some limitations. It accommodates simplest descriptive statistical data and limited columns. It can create diagrams and tables automatically that help a researcher to analyse and summarise the data easily, apart from the features like AutoSum, sorting, filtering, conditional formatting and also categorising the data into meaningful units. Pivot tables help the researcher to summarise data and prepare reports. Charts of various types in order to display the result for easy comprehension are another facility available in Excel. Bar charts and Pie charts are created using Microsoft Excel to present the data after analysis in this study also.

Conclusion

There are multiple methods of data analysis available which help a researcher to reach a conclusion and also test the validity and reliability of the data collected. Large numbers of data can be analysed using these methods. It saves time and also assures perfection of the findings. Descriptive statistics is used for the analysis of data in this study. Diagrams to get a concrete idea of the data are created. The pictorial representation and the visual appeal are the positive sides of this method. By this method, the numerical data is represented for anyone to understand in a better and easiest manner. Percentage analysis is also applied for data interpretation. The number of responses on a particular answer is represented using Percentage analysis. Since the data are in the form of responses to the questions administered to the students as well as to the teachers, the graphical representation of the results enables one to get a comprehensive idea of the perspectives towards skill oriented

testing. The limitation here is that only a small number, compared to the strength of the UG students of the University, is selected. The data was collected from the students as well as teachers of Government, Aided and Self-financing colleges so as to get a comprehensive idea of the issue concerned.

Chapter 5

Analysis

Chapter summary

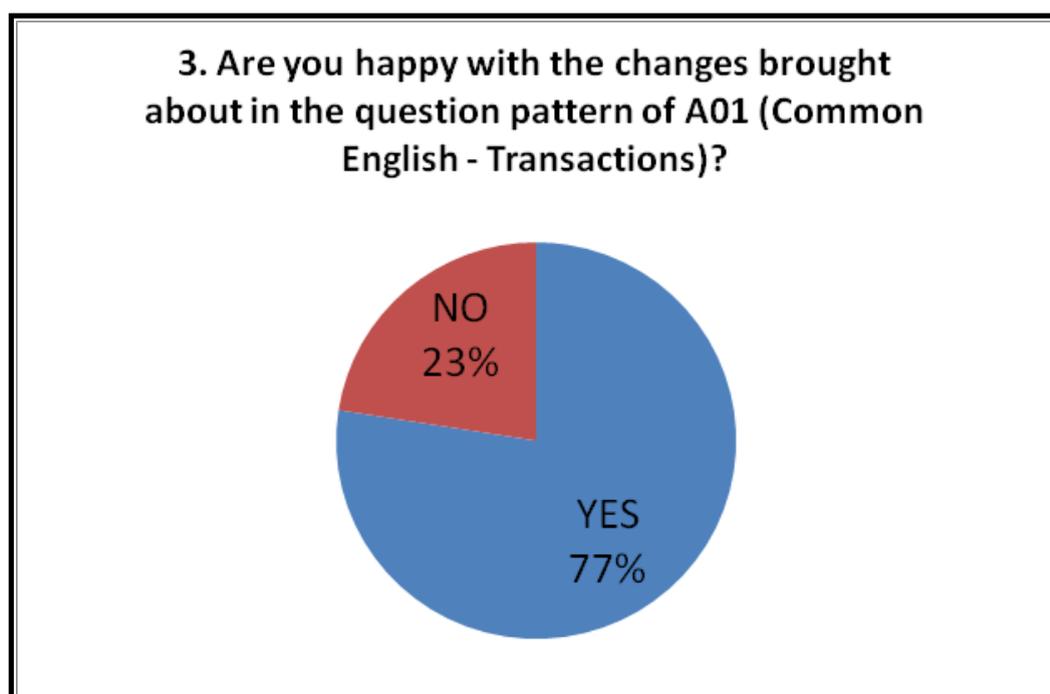
This chapter gives a comprehensive picture of the tools used for the study, a meticulous examination and scrutiny of the responses given to the teacher questionnaire as well as to the students'. In addition, the response of interviews, observations from the class and analysis of the documents that the researcher used to further validate the data collected are given. For an enhanced and unproblematic perception, responses to each of these questions included in the survey of both the teachers and students are illustrated graphically. The collection of data was completed using Google forms made available to the teacher-student community of various colleges belonging to all the districts under the jurisdiction of University of Calicut.

Investigation of the questionnaire provided to the teachers

The questionnaire supplied to the teachers consists of three parts, beginning with the instructions, followed by furnishing the personal details including the name of the institution and the final section, comprising twenty two questions demanding their responses on various aspects of the research problem. Out of the twenty two items included in the questionnaire, ten were 'Yes/No' in nature, two with a provision to tick more than one answer, four long answer questions and the rest, to collect the perspective of the teachers on the necessity of skill based assessment and a need to channelise the present educational system of English language teaching in Common English classrooms at UG level, to facilitate such an aim. The teachers, through the final question, were requested to leave their observation on how to bring changes in the present system of the test pattern and to provide suggestions on the alterations needed. For availing an inclusive and wide-ranging variety of responses by procuring data from the entire strata of the society, irrespective of financial,

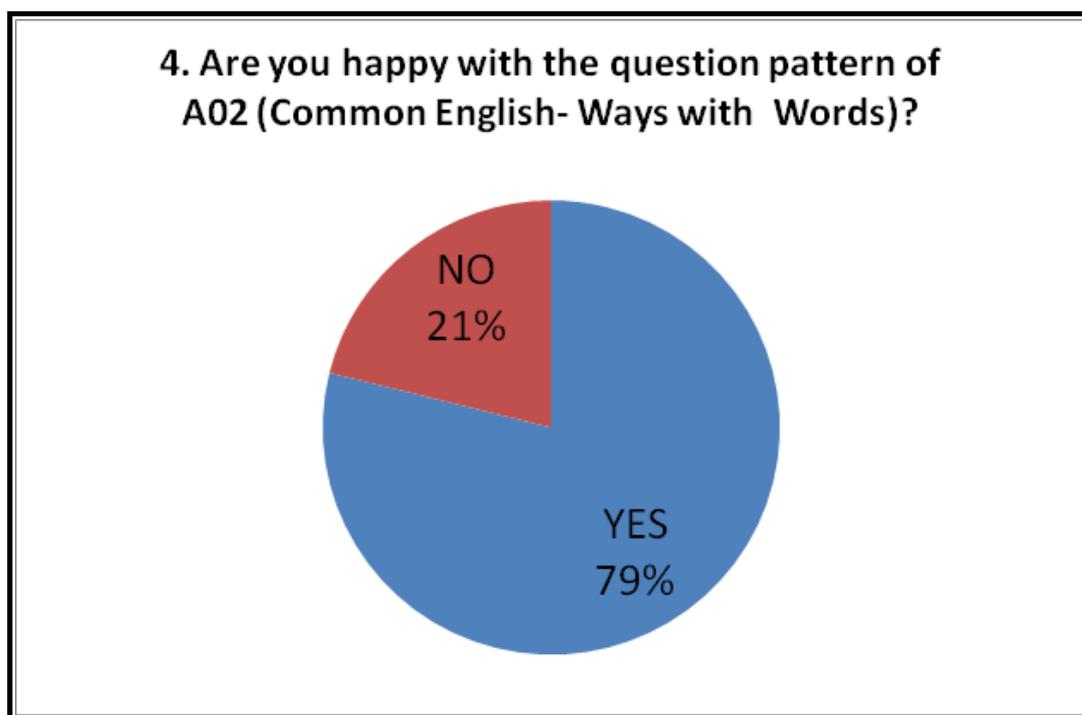
social or other yardsticks, comments were collected from the teachers of Government, Aided as well as Self-financing colleges.

The first two questions (TQ.1) (TQ.2) are related to the personal and professional details of the teachers. The name and College details are asked through these two questions. Since the study plans to collect data from the Government, Aided and Self-financing sector, these basic details will help to classify the data based on these responses.



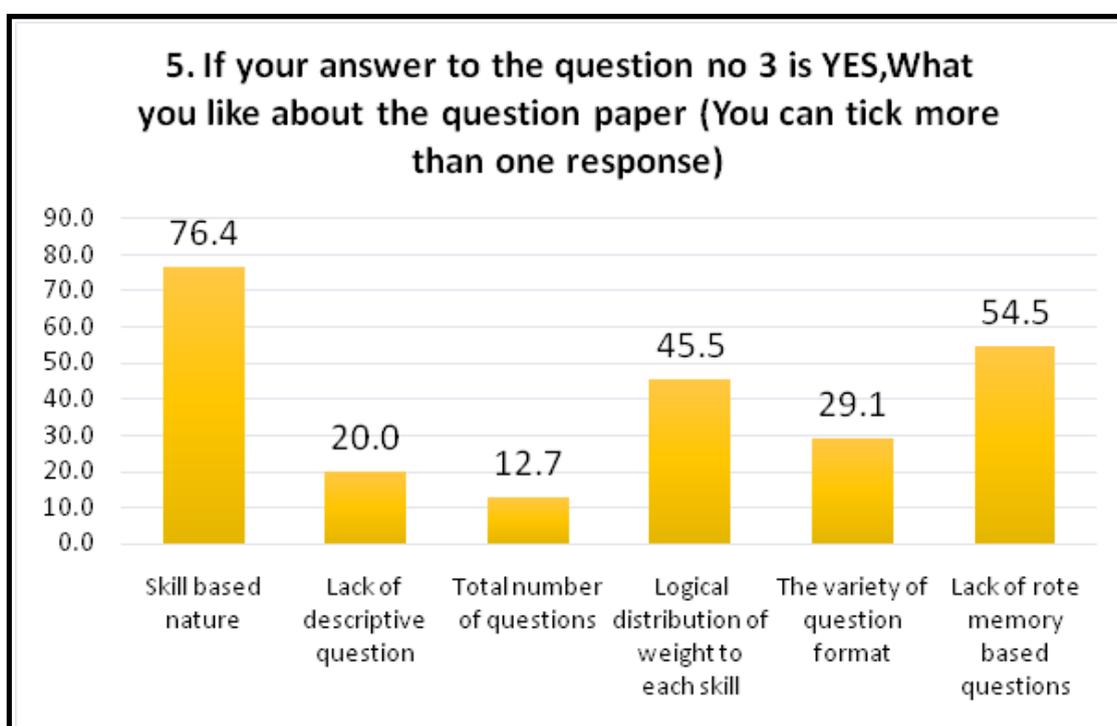
The analysis of the response to the third question in the teacher questionnaire (TQ.3) , targeting the judgment related to the changes effected in the question pattern of A01- *Transactions: Essential English language Skills*, one of the two Common English courses, meant for the 1st Semester UG students, shows that majority of the teaching community (77%) welcomes the change. From the data collected, it can be concluded that the present teaching faculty at large demands a revamping of the existing pattern of the question papers. They believe that the current pattern fails to assess the language capacity as well as skill of the students. The change brought about in the question pattern of A 01, which is different from

the traditional pattern that demands the rote memory, is on par with the international standards of language assessment. The emotion towards a need to amend and rectify the faulty structure of the current assessment system is reflected through the response to this third question. The necessity to include questions that detect the higher order skills of the students is highly stressed.



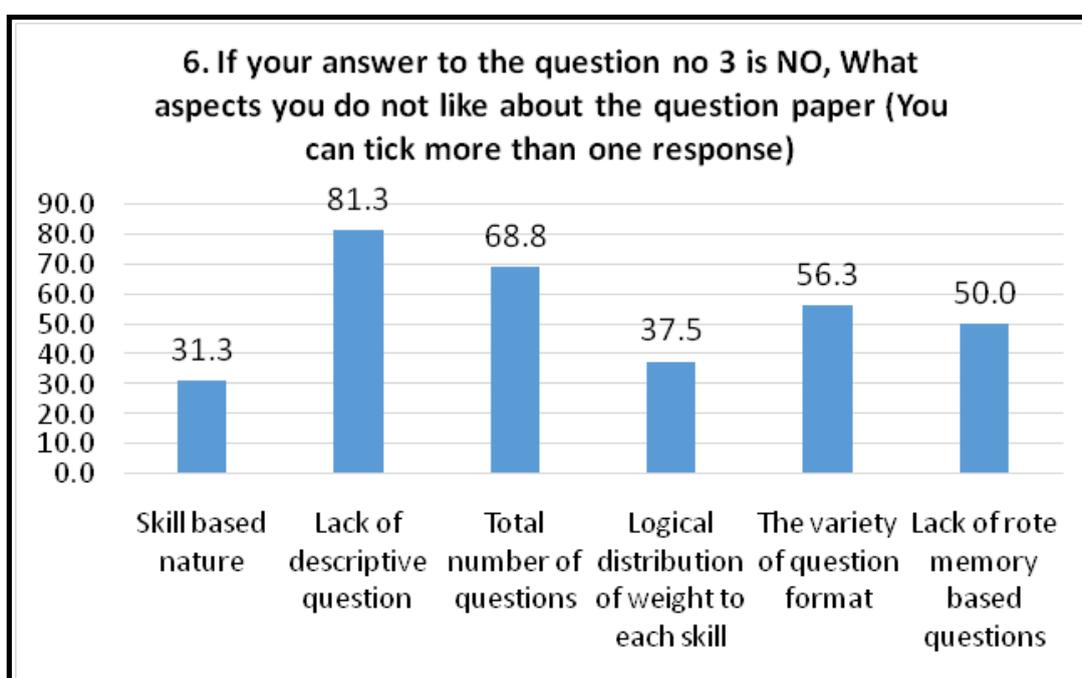
One of the two Courses of Common English is A 02, *Ways with Words: Literature in English*, which contains Poetry, Short Story, Prose and Drama. This course follows the traditional pattern of a stereotypical language textbook. The question pattern of A 02 follows the usual approach of an assessment in a subject. It demands merely the rote memory of the students. The scope of application of language seldom gets a space. The support to the traditional pattern of question paper by the majority (79%) of the teaching community shows that the shift to skill based assessment, that can fulfil the objectives of language teaching, is still a mirage in the present scenario of higher education. The scope to apply skill based assessment over areas like poetry, short story, prose or drama is an unfamiliar area, it seems. Still, though a minority (21%), who are against the present question pattern

of A 02, leaves a ray of hope among the teaching community. The response to these questions shows that an awareness and instruction related to the international trend in the language testing, which is skill based, is necessary among the major group of teachers. The reluctance to move away from the present method or to go out of the comfort zone is a challenge these days. Along with this, the teachers themselves should bring a change in their attitude towards language teaching by familiarising themselves with the recent trends around the globe.



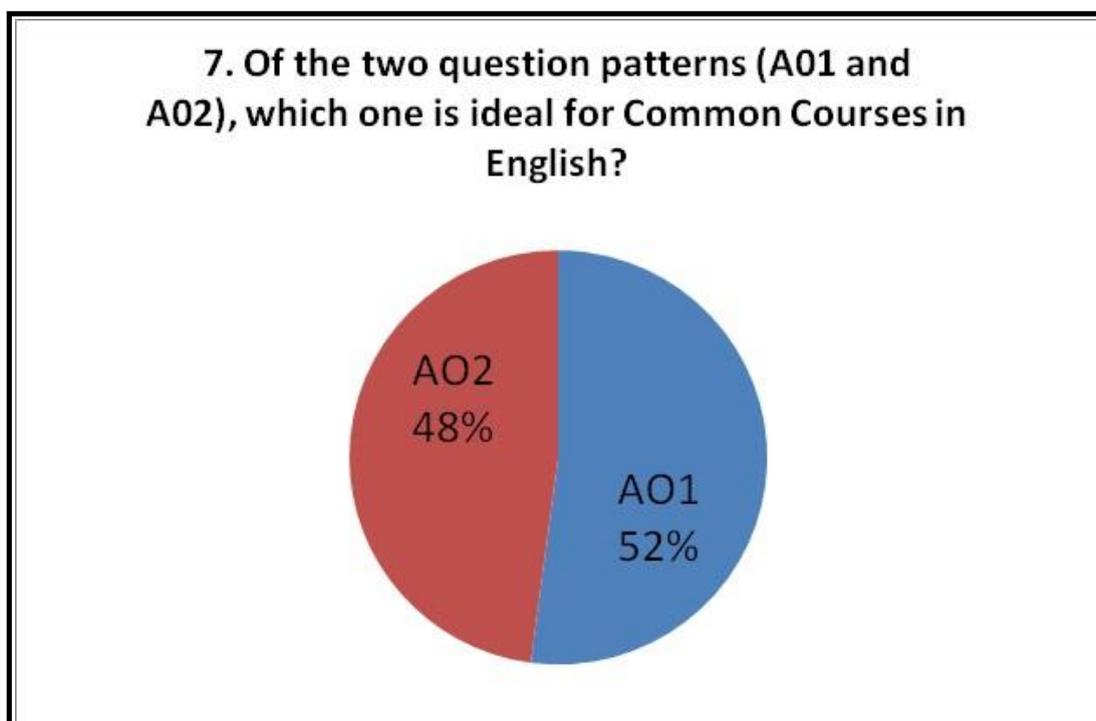
T Q 5, is related to T Q 3. The six components of the question paper A 01-*Transactions: Essential English language Skills*, are listed and teachers are asked to express their support of the various components that made them underpin the skill based question pattern. The components specified are Skill based nature, Lack of descriptive question, Total number of questions, Logical distribution of weight to each skill, The variety of question format and Lack of rote memory based questions. Skill based nature, the hallmark of A01-*Transactions: Essential English language Skills*, is preferred by the majority (76.4%) while Lack of rote memory based questions is supported by 54.5%. Logical distribution of weight to each skill is

another component which makes 45.5% favours this pattern. Lack of descriptive questions (20.0%), total number of questions (12.7%) and the variety of question format (29.1%) are also, though by a minority, supported. This response, as a whole, highlights the perspectives of the teacher community towards a paradigm shift that could bring an out-and-out change in the existing pattern. The overall nature of the response to this question backed up the claim of the study that skill oriented testing is ideal to check the higher order skills of learners as far as the study of English language is concerned.



Like T Q 5, this question is also related to T Q 3. If the answer to T Q 3 is NO, then the respondents can list out the reason to justify their reply by ticking appropriate options. The major distinction of A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language skills* from A02- *Ways with the Words: Literatures in English* is the pattern and nature of questions. Descriptive type questions that have been part of the conventional assessment pattern, found no space in the transformed question pattern of A01. But this has been the biggest drawback which made those (81.3%) who do not prefer the skill oriented type of question, leave their response in opposition to A01. Total number of questions forms the component of displeasure (68.8%) which

is in the second position. The total number of questions in A01, 2017 admission was 85 and of 2019 admission, it is 21 with some sub categories, while A02 was composed of 32 questions in 2017 admission and 21 in 2019 admission. There was a considerable slash in the total number of questions during 2019. The 23% who oppose the skill based nature of A01 are reluctant to approve the variety of question format (56.3%) and lack of rote memory based questions (50%). Skill based nature (31.3%) and Logical distribution of weight to each skill (37.5%) have a minor role to perform in the response. The feedback conveys the dissatisfaction with the skill based assessment in practice among the teaching community that still prefers the conventional pattern. It seems, the minority of the respondents believe that the grave issues concerning English language teaching in higher education scenarios need not be addressed in this way.

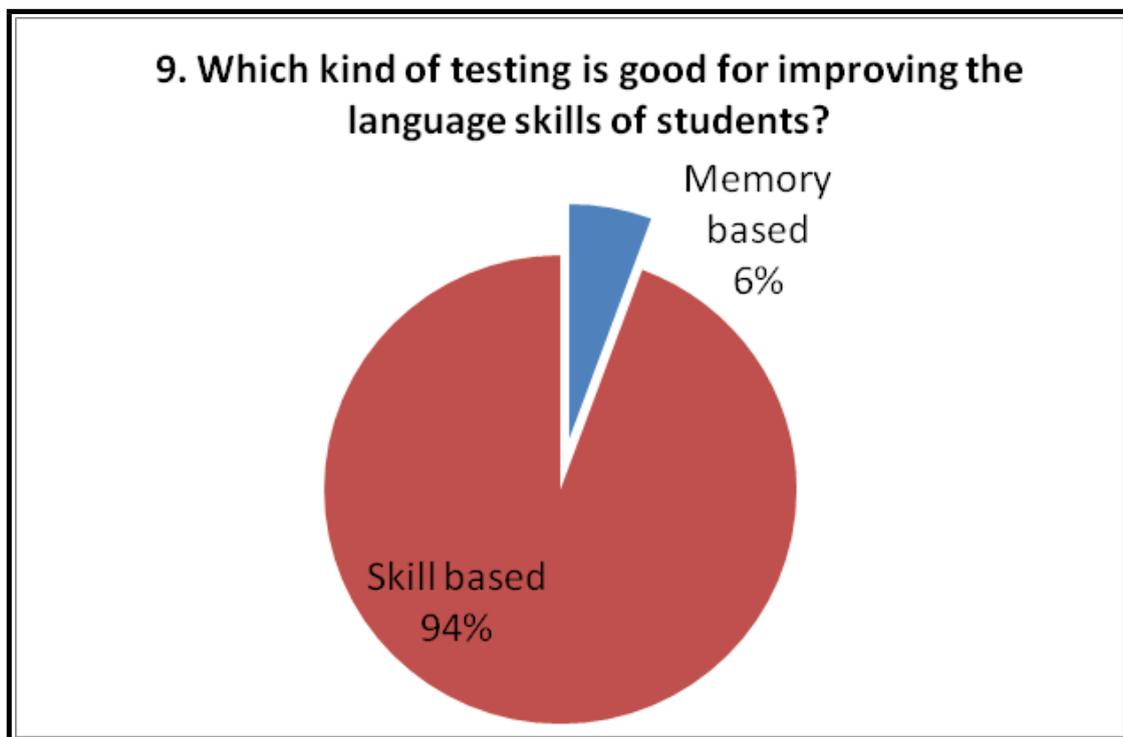


This question (TQ.7) addresses the core issue of the study, namely the ideal pattern for the Common Course in English. The two courses for Common English at UG are of dissimilar nature. The one (A01) is skill based or practice oriented while the second (A02), memory based. Since the two exams, aiming at testing the

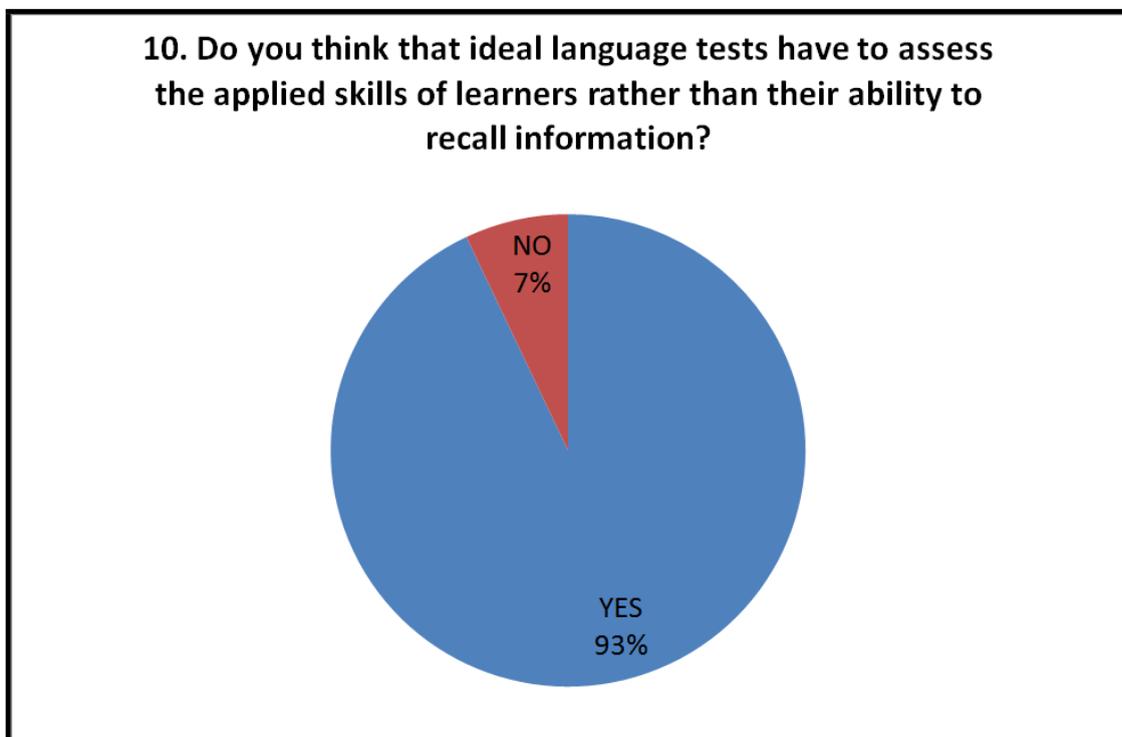
performance competence of the students, vary in its assessment. Unlike A01, A02 is a conventional text, so the question pattern too. It seldom addresses the targeted objectives of English language teaching. Moreover, A02, to a large extent, is content based in which the students are not required to apply their real language skills. The response to this question, which attempts to distinguish skill oriented patterns from content based, shows the fact that the majority of the teaching community (52%) supports the skill oriented testing of one of the Courses, A01. It also communicates their displeasure over the conventional pattern of A02, which in their view is against the widely held belief that language proficiency can be identified only through an assessment that is fit for the task. It is fascinating to note that only 48% of the informants recommended content-based test design. Moreover, the greater part of the teachers is discontent by the lack of questions to detect the higher order skills of learners. Surprisingly, the diagram leaves a positive note that a turn towards an international trend in assessment of English language is going to be a reality in the near future.

(T Q 8) is the elaboration of (T Q 7). It gives a chance for the teachers to justify why they support A01/A02 as the ideal pattern for Common Course in English. Those who support A01-*Transactions: Essential English Language Skills*, of course, the majority, have innumerable numbers of reasons for their claim. Helping students to learn more about language and its structure is an advantage. It can help students to understand the idea in their own way as they learn it by doing. It addresses the practical concerns that the students of any stream would confront in life. Ability to use English in a variety of contexts involves multiple language skills and therefore testing the four skills (LSRW) enhances the accuracy of a test. It tests the application skill of the learner rather than the capacity to memorise. The question pattern of A01 is in accordance with the objectives of teaching Common Courses in English. Some believe that it clearly checks the student's real knowledge in the writing skill and command over language, especially grammar. We need to enrich the learners with need based skills and proficiency in language rather than mugging the texts and reproducing the same without any involvement of the practical usage in real and professional life.

A02, *Ways With Words: Literatures in English* is supported by the minority of the respondents. They claim various advantages for the question pattern applied in A02. Descriptive pattern is necessary for English Common Course, forms one of the justifications for supporting pattern of A02. Students should get at least a taste of literature as A01 is exclusively on English language and its usage. Descriptive questions demand memory power as well as effective presentation. Ability to express what one knows is important. So, students must learn to do that, especially because, they are dealing with a foreign language. To test the language proficiency and literary sensibility of a student, A02 is an ideal pattern. This particular pattern provides basic details about the English subject through stories, poems, anecdotes and prose writings. Literature includes language, but language course does not particularly teach any morals and values. It does not necessarily broaden one's perspectives and vision. Moreover, students coming from other disciplines find stories and poems more relaxing. Language should be tested through descriptive mode. The pattern followed in A01 seems a bit clumsy since it edges the students on to some premeditated answers, though the analytical aptitude and rudimentary language skills of the individual students are assessed. It is positively cumbersome for them to go through and make out the whole question paper within the confines of the stipulated time in the way they are expected to. The existing structure does not succeed in eliciting the creative or intuitive or subjective response from among the student community as questions resemble and follow a pattern of objective type entrance tests or PSC exams. Thus, the pattern followed in A02 seems preferable. At tertiary level, students need to engage with the literary elements of a language. They should be introduced to the rich and varied texts of literary forms and contents. Grammar should be taught in the formative years of education in school. Reading pieces of literature is an ideal method for acquiring language skills and promoting critical thinking in students.

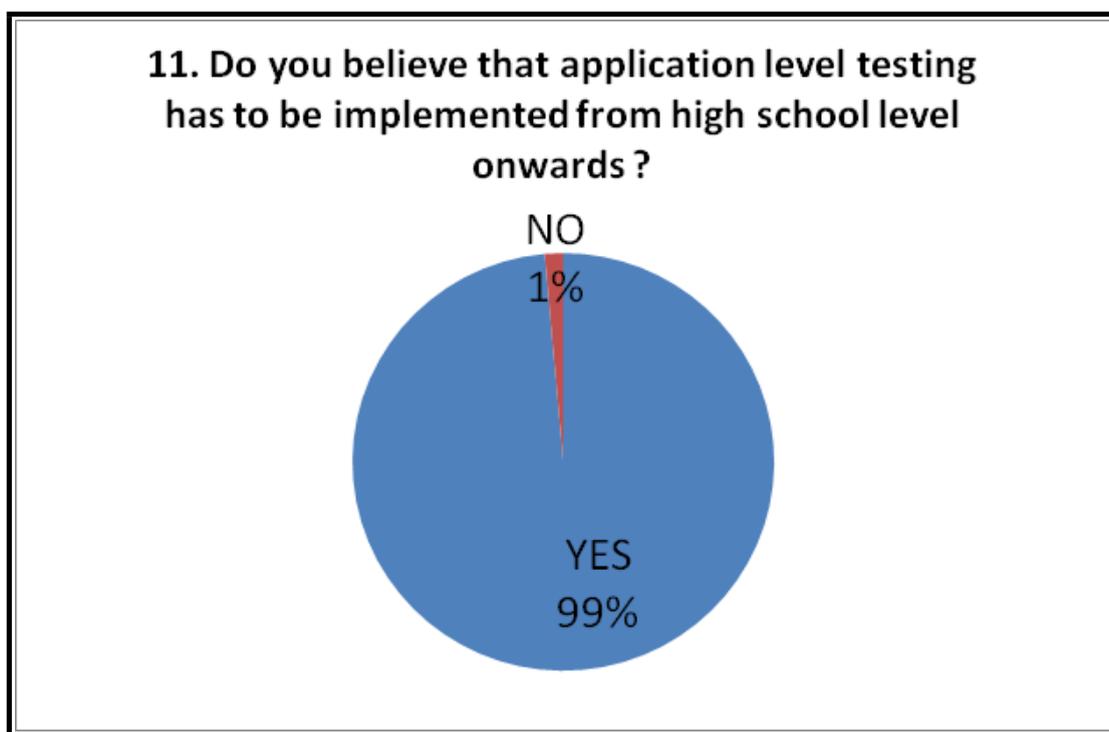


This question (TQ. 9) directly addresses one of the research concerns, the review of the present system of assessment with its suitability to attain the targeted learning outcomes. This question was intended to detect the reason why the teachers support or oppose the present assessment pattern and whether they support the Skill based tests to Memory based tests in the present scenario of English language teaching, particularly for the Common Course. It is fascinating to note that almost all the teachers (94%) support the Skill based test even though the University practises Memory based tests for the entire assessment process. The group that supports the conventional memory based test is nominal, only 6%. This diagram also underlines that the majority of the teaching community is dissatisfied with the present assessment patterns, since the University follows memory based test practice. The dissatisfaction by the majority of the teaching community over the memory based, shows that they are eager to bring a change in the present structure so as to measure the potential of the students in their language competency. It also shows that it is high time that we should switch over from Memory based to Skill based as far as the assessment of English language is concerned.



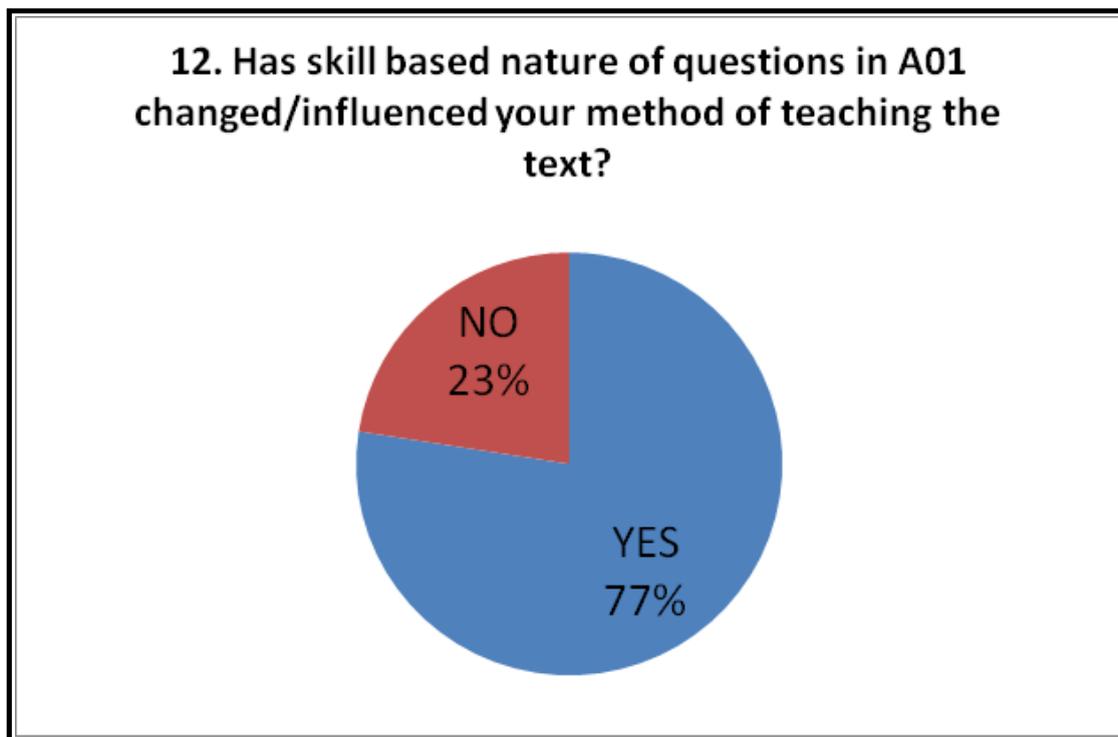
This (TQ. 10) is an elaboration of the preceding question. Language, which is fundamentally a skill, has to be measured keeping in mind the applied skills of the learners. Test in a language varies from a test in a subject, because one is a skill whereas the other merely demands the recollection of the content. The response by the majority (93%) sheds light on the fact that they support implementation of assessing the applied language skills of the learners, while a minority (7%) opposes this. Hence it is an optimistic view regarding the paradigm shift required in the field of language teaching on par with the international standards. The proliferation of websites on language assessment and various other platforms give adequate exposure for the teachers to the present system prevalent worldwide. This might have altered the conventional attitude towards the language assessment. The positive nod for the Skill based assessment pattern in the Common Course in English by the majority must be incorporated to the entire Courses by the University. The response to this query by the majority also brings into our mind that the teaching community at large is dissatisfied by the present system practised at the UG level. The support of shift from Content based to Skill oriented in assessment by the

teachers, ultimately, is going to benefit the students for getting placed in reputed professions with the benefit of their communicative competence.



Any skill, including language, has to be learned from the early stage of one's life. Practice makes people excel in the activities concerned. This question (TQ.11), directed to such an idea, attempts to collect the opinion of teachers regarding the stage from which the application level of assessment has to be implemented. The group who does not support the implementation is too little (1%) that it becomes almost insignificant. Hence it shows that the majority (99%) support the implementation of application level testing from high school level onwards. This opinion, in fact, based on the teachers' experience at the UG classes, is a grave question raised towards the educational practices at our schools. It is pathetic to note that; for a long period, the language English, at the school level, was taught by those whose core area was any subject. The outcome of mishandling English language teaching in this manner was reflected in the performance of the students who joined college. A modification has been brought only in the recent past and subsequently, English began to be handled by the teachers who are trained in English language

teaching. Even though such a change was brought in the schools, the time allotted for English language teaching, like any other subject, constrained the teachers to concentrate only on the content of the text, sparing minimal time for skill development. The ultimate result, no remarkable change was materialised by posting the trained teachers for English language teaching.

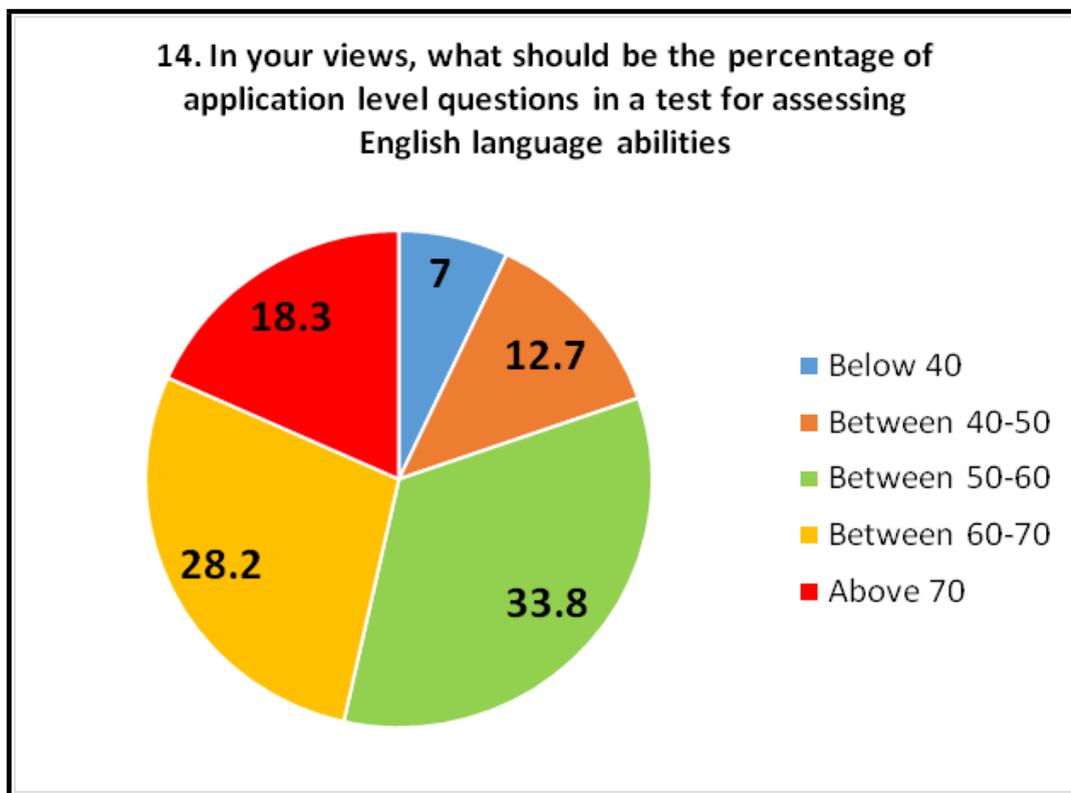


This response of T Q.12 addresses the second research question –‘To find out the stakeholders’ views on the existing English language assessment in practice’. It traces out the modifications from the part of the teachers in dealing with the text. Of the seventy one teachers who responded, a major group (77%) does agree that they brought some positive changes in the method of teaching in order to cope up with latest changes identified in one of the Common Courses, A01. A workbook that supports the students in this Course definitely made the teachers as well as students commence a new style of teaching and learning. Since the teachers of English deal with two kinds of texts, Content based (A02) as well as Skill oriented (A01), a minority (23%) still prefers the conventional pattern which they might have found congenial for dealing with the content based text. The majority of the teachers

welcomes the change and is ready to face the new challenges too. It can be concluded that if a change is brought in the pattern of A02, the teaching community at large is going to embrace it. Hence it foretells a revamping of the present pattern.

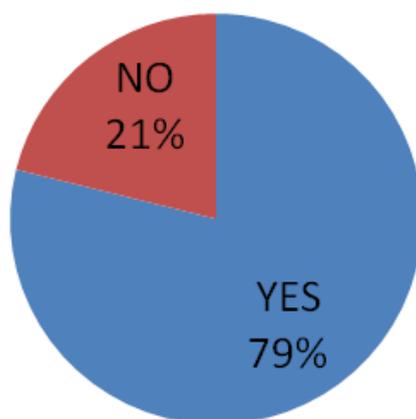
(T Q 13) is an elaboration of (T Q 12). It is about the changes identified/not identified in the method of teaching the texts due to the inclusion of skill based nature of questions. Those who have brought some kind of changes in their teaching method have many reasons to justify their current trend. Some of them have changed their instructional practices more student centred by giving them more practices. Others claim that the nature of questions definitely requires a change in the methodology of teaching and becoming specific about skills. A few teachers started to inculcate texts from news paper articles and reviews which can enhance the language proficiency of the students. Giving different exercises apart from the textbook, providing role plays for speaking skill, news articles for reading and comprehension are some types of changes brought about by another group. A good number of teachers sought to rather than teaching specific items with given examples, as the question paper pattern made them identify a large variety of problems based on the skills to teach and provide maximum exposure to students so that they could face the examination with confidence. Learner autonomy and participatory learning discourses in the classroom are ensured by someone else. Rather than teaching the students the definitions of different aspects, some teachers, they say, ask students to work on their own. They might begin with mistakes, but eventually they will learn the technique and improve.

Teachers who stick on to the usual practice have their vindication. Some hold the opinion that though A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* is skill based, a text is prescribed and the teachers are supposed to complete the exercises as most of the questions asked for the exam are based on the text. This is limiting. Also as years pass, students sit in the class after filling up all the answers from the answer key available from their seniors. This kills the motto. The huge number of students in the Common English classes is, for some teachers, the barrier to switch over to a different style of teaching.



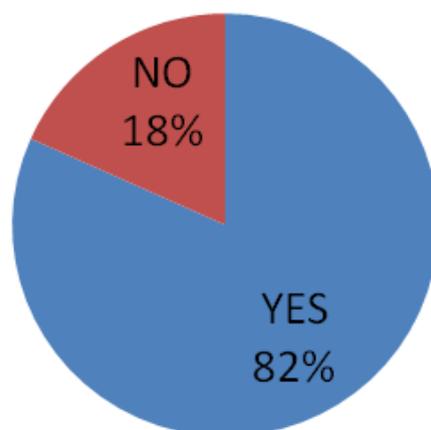
TQ 14 tries to collect the opinion of the teaching community on the percentage of inclusion of the application level questions in a test for assessing English language abilities. Five options are given and the respondents are requested to mark their preferences. It is optimistic to note that the teaching community at large supports the presence of skill oriented type of questions, though the percentage varies. 18.3% have the opinion that above 70% should be the application level questions. 28.2% believe that 60-70% is the ideal pattern. Inclusion of 50-60% is supported by 33.8% of the respondents while 12.7% agrees to the presence of 40-50% skill oriented questions. A minority, 7%, opines that it is better to have less than 40% of application level questions in testing English language abilities at the UG level. It seems to project that the attitude of the teaching community towards the assessment pattern has changed to a large extent. During the former years, all the question papers of English Common Courses at UG level followed the same conventional pattern that demanded rote memory of the students. But now, on par with the international standards, shifting to skill oriented testing is approved by the teaching community.

15. Do you believe that the skill-based approach in text books or testing (A01) has positively influenced the learning style of your students?

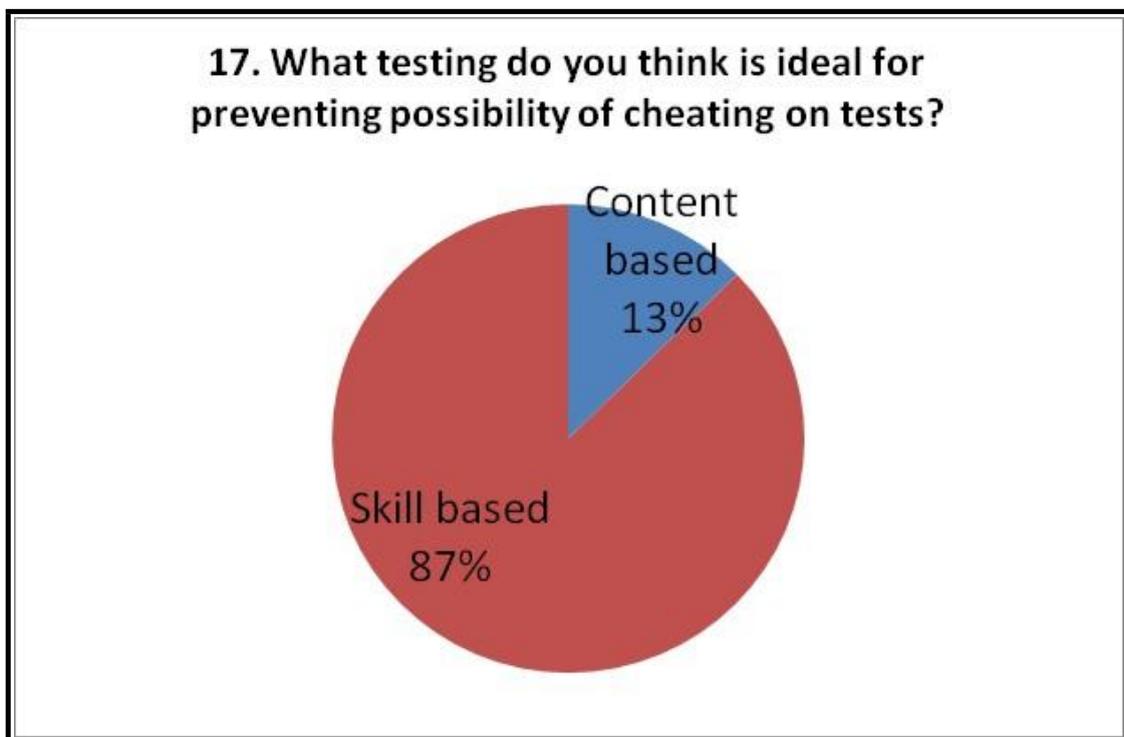


The intention of this question (TQ.15) was to detect whether the learning style of the students has been influenced, positively, by the skill based approach in textbooks or assessments. Of the seventy one teachers, a higher number (79%) strongly believe that the innovative skill based approach of the textbook as well as the assessment pattern has an effect on the learning style of the students. A switching over from mere byhearting to a practice oriented way of learning has promoted their standard of language acquisition. This query is directly related to one of the research questions, i.e. to detect whether the stake holders believe that the skill oriented assessment system can promote better language acquisition. The new style, according to the teachers' perspective has prompted a new culture in language acquisition there by the whole student community has made to opt a new path of learning, hitherto unknown to the scenario of higher education in Kerala. The work book also, as a supplement, opened a new vista into the world of English language acquisition. Since the students have altered their learning strategy, this readiness can facilitate them to solve the skill based assessment practised on A01 and welcome such a change in the case of other Common Courses too, sometimes even for Core Courses.

16. Do you believe that even A02 should have some application level questions targeting the higher order skills?

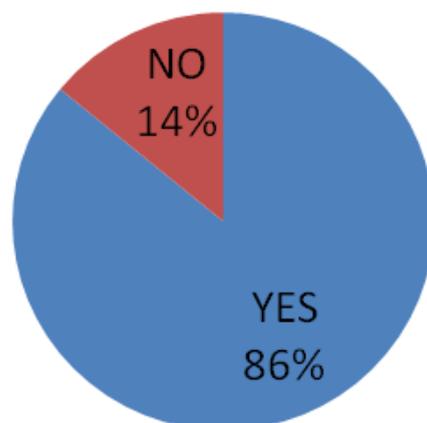


One of the two Common Courses, A02 follows the conventional assessment pattern of evaluating the rote memory of the students. This question (TQ 16) tries to collect the opinion of the teaching community on the scope of extending the style practised in A01 to A02 also. It is engrossing to note that the majority (82%) of the teachers approve the idea while comparatively a minority prefers the conventional type. The reason may be, they prefer to be in the comfort zone and not with an intention to welcome changes. The upsurging of youngsters in the teaching community, who are, it seems, the reason behind the higher support given to the skill oriented approach. The factual questions asked under A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills*, the teachers believe, make the examination aptly meant for assessing language skills in English. The application level of English language acquisition is not taken for consideration in the question pattern of A02. It is like any test in a subject that solely concentrates on the content and how much a student can reproduce it in the examination answer sheet.



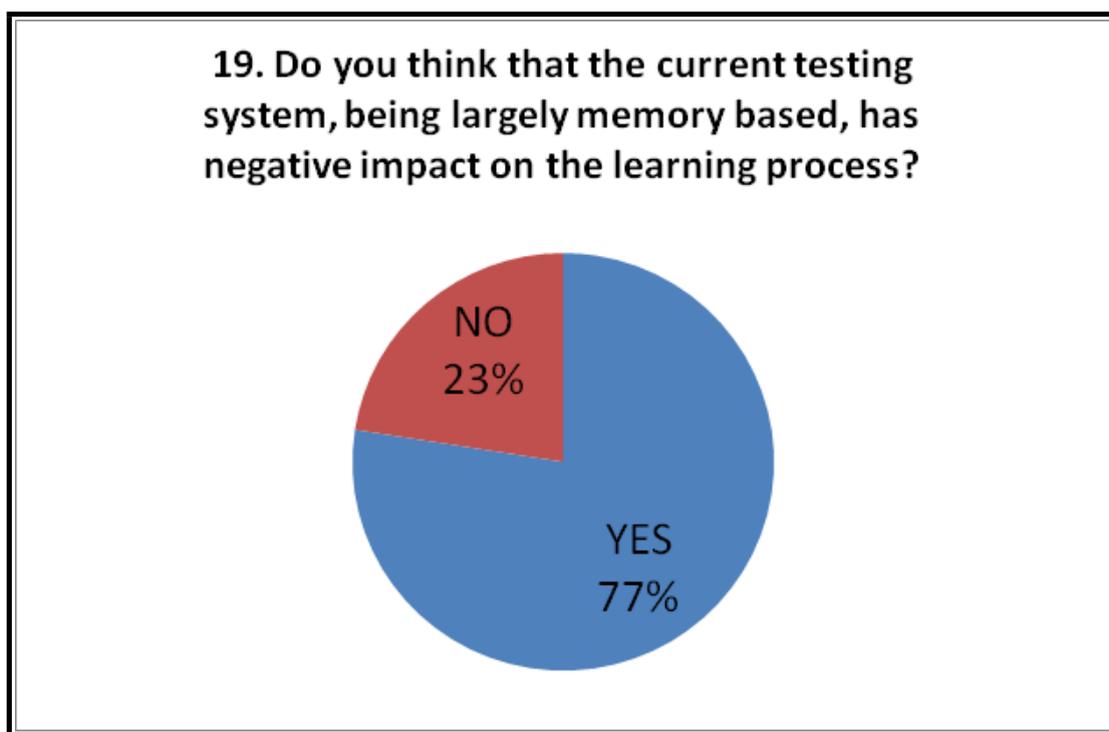
A test in a language, which is skill oriented, can provide an objective or an impartial picture of a student's proficiency. Since it is based on the application level of the language, unlike test which is memory based, students are made to solve the questions by themselves as they cannot copy the answer from the text or anywhere else. The response to this question (TQ. 17) tries to shed some light on the issue of cheating on the tests. It shows that, there is lesser chance for cheating on tests if it is skill based pattern, unlike content based. The individual differences in performance and competence of the students can be well measured using application level questions. The higher order skills of the students can be properly detected using skill based tests also. One of the greatest challenges faced by the teachers in measuring the performance competence is cheating on tests. Students try to seek the support of illegal means like books, other materials or the support of their friends. Since copying from others, to a certain extent, is impossible in the case of skill based tests, the chance for cheating on tests also reduces.

18. Do you believe that Common English tests at UG level mostly assess the learner's ability to memorise contents of the text?



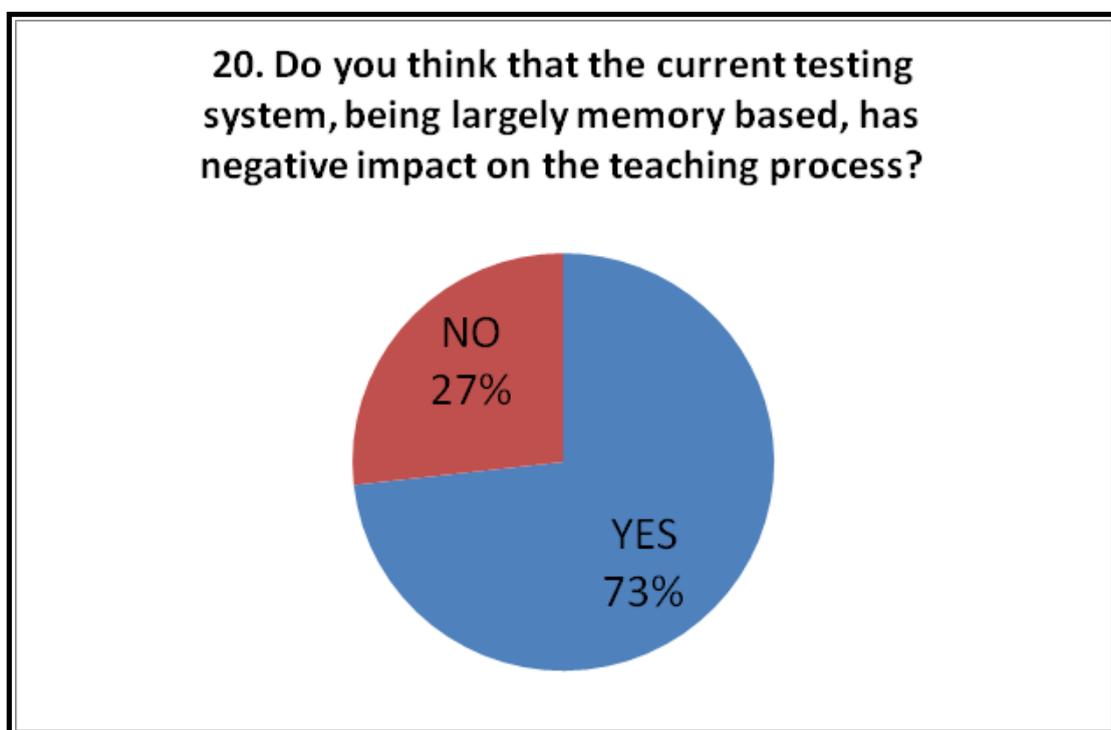
The objective of the Common Course, as included in the syllabus is to impart the necessary required micro and macro English language skills and enable the students to express their ideas and feelings on various life situations. It also aims at kindling taste to acquire advanced language skills. Question number 18, under the teacher questionnaire, attempts to trace the opinion of the teachers regarding the gap between the two, i.e. targeted aim of teaching the Common Courses and the ground reality. Students, who come to the college after their higher secondary education, expect the same kind of teaching at colleges also, namely the Grammar Translation method in the case of English language classes. They are familiar with the conventional content based tests and are comfortable with learning the text byheart. So, for a student who joins the UG program, memorising the content is not an unfamiliar idea. So, the texts at UG level, especially of the Common Course, also are prepared by visualising such a group of students, though the objectives seem antithetical to it. The inclusion of poetry, prose, plays or even short stories are merely meant to check the memory of the students. Hence, the majority of the teachers (86%) hold the opinion that tests on Common English at UG level mostly assess the learner's ability to memorise contents of the text. The percentage of

teachers who has a different view is meagre (14%). This defect in the pattern of the question as well as the structure of the text books needs to be changed at the earliest.



Question pattern of one of the two Common Courses at the UG level, A02, completely neglects the application level of the English language by merely including comprehension type questions. A student who appears for the exam on A02 can score good marks if he has a better capacity to memorise and reproduce. Unfortunately, the complete omission of skill based questions and scoring high in such exams point to the skill score mismatch, which is one of the issues pondered over in this study. Constraining the students to byheart the content like any other subject makes them move away from the skill oriented significance of the English language. Majority of the teachers (77%) support the idea that the present assessment system, which is highly memory based, has, in fact, affected the learning process of the students. Students coming from various streams other than English, especially science stream, consider the Common English merely as one of the Courses that they are supposed to qualify in order to procure a degree in their core subjects concerned. Hence, the pattern of the test does not play any significant role

in their whole process of study or they do not bother much either. Though a minority, the respondents (23%) communicate the fact that there are teachers who still support the conventional test pattern. The majority of the teachers handling classes in self-financing colleges, who have enough exposure to the recent trends in English language assessment worldwide, are optimistic regarding the skill based assessment implemented, though only for one Common Course in English by the University of Calicut.



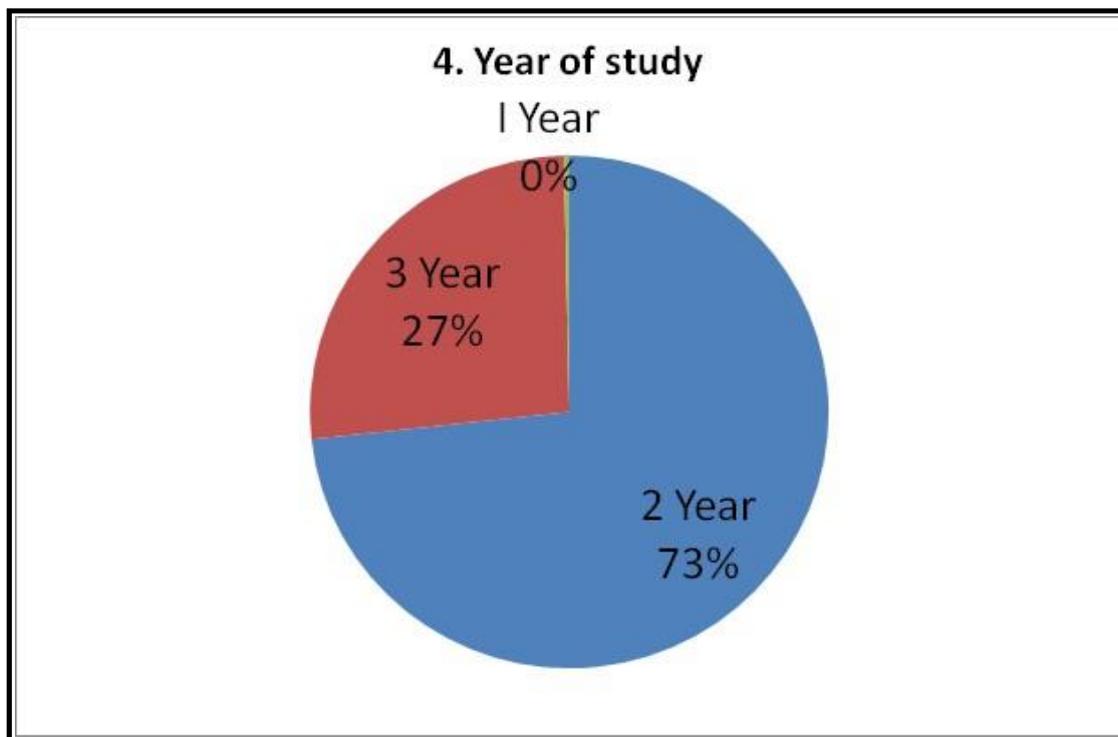
Teachers frame the strategy of their teaching, keeping in mind the goals to be achieved. It has been a practice by the teachers of English for a long period to simply give the meaning of the content and prompt their students to byheart it. This trend led to the complete omission of the application aspect of the English language. Even such textbooks, unfortunately, were not included in the curriculum so far. Students too were not exposed to such content books or classrooms, where they made themselves apply the language they have learned. Hence, they follow the same methodology that they adopt for other subjects also, namely memorising the content. This question (TQ 20) strives to know the viewpoint of the teachers on the impact of

the Memory based testing system on the teaching process. The majority (73%) of the respondents accept that the type of assessment, in fact, adversely affects the teaching process. Teachers are made to move away from the application level of teaching the English language, since questions never fall into such a category. The conventional pattern followed in assessment is, in no way, opens a new scenario of testing and teaching as well. Hence, an option to advance and adopt the latest trends followed across the world is closed for the teaching community. A minority (27%) is of the view that the conventional method of assessment has no negative impact on the teaching process. The smaller group may be feeling comfortable with not moving away from the sheltered space which they have been enjoying for quite a long period.

Investigation of the questionnaire provided to the students

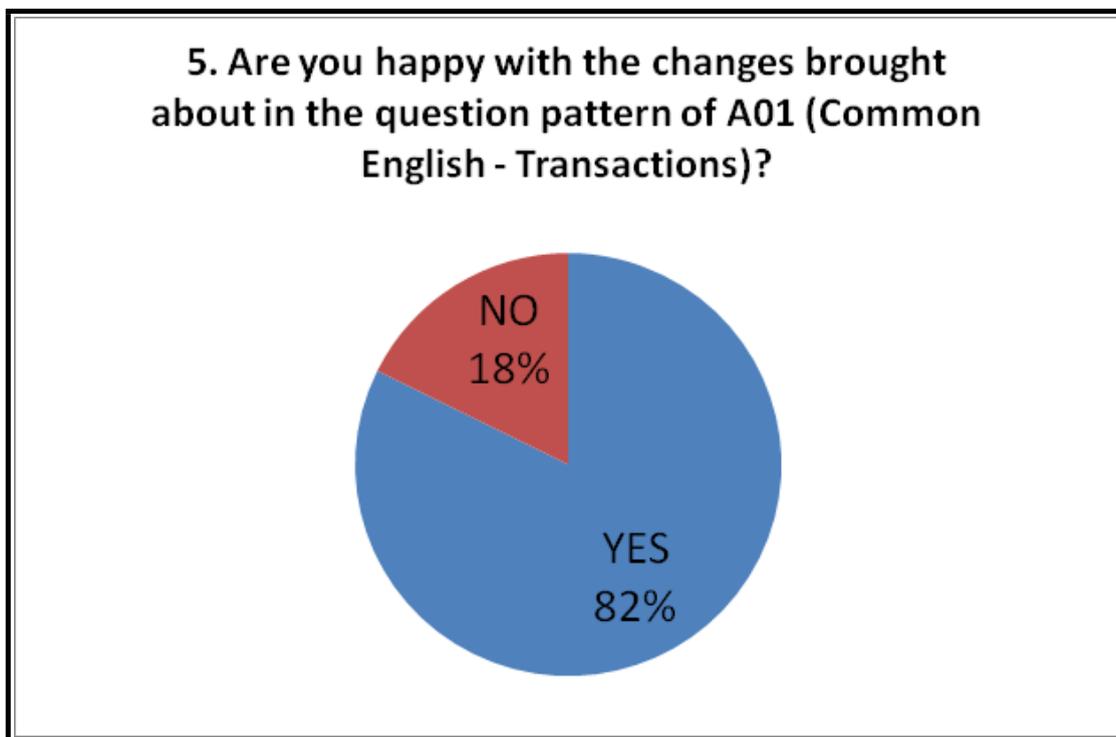
The questionnaire provided to the students, similar to that of the teachers, consists of three parts, beginning with the instructions, followed by furnishing the personal details including the name of the institution, Programme with year of study and the final section, of nineteen questions demanding their responses on various aspects of the research problem. Out of the nineteen items included in the questionnaire, seven were 'Yes/No' in nature, two with a provision to tick more than one answer, two long answer questions and the rest, to collect the perspective of the students on the necessity of skill based assessment and a need to remould the present educational system of English language learning. The students, through various responses, are requested to leave their observations on the pattern of assessment, feasibility to incorporate application level questions, scope of implementing skill based testing at a lower grade and convey their observation in general on the present system practised in Common English classrooms at UG level. The questionnaires were provided to the UG students of all the districts that come under the jurisdiction of University of Calicut. For availing an inclusive and wide-ranging variety of responses by procuring data from the entire strata of the society, irrespective of financial, social or other yardsticks, comments were collected from the students of Government, Aided as well as Self-financing colleges.

The first three questions (SQ.1) (SQ.2) and (SQ.3) are related to the personal and academic background of the students. These questions are on their Name, College and Programme. As the teachers of Government, Aided and Self-financing sectors are included in the study, students too from these three quarters are considered. These basic details are for the purpose of categorising them into three.



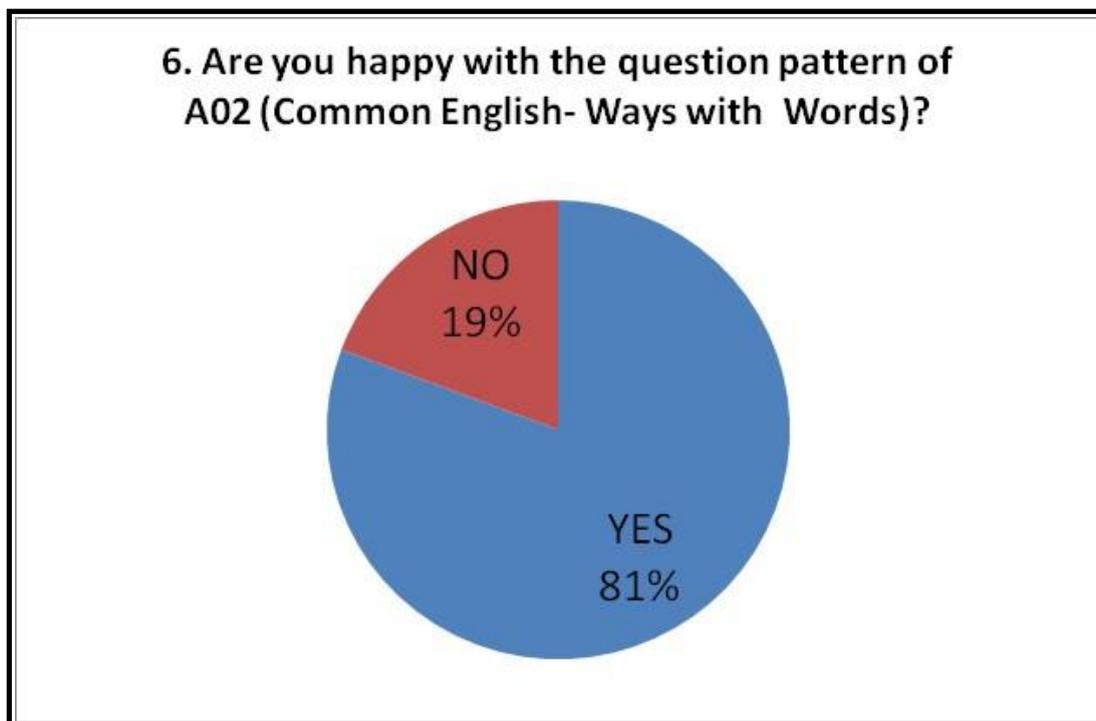
The third question in the student questionnaire (SQ.4) is on the year of study of the respondents. Since the activity oriented textbook, *Transactions- Essential English language Skills* was introduced two years back, the questionnaire tried to collect the response from the first batch onwards. So, 27% of the respondents are from the first batch (3 Year) and 73% from the second batch (2nd Year). The students are from all types of colleges i.e., Government, Aided and Self-financing. Hence the response in total is expected to be a comprehensive one. This not only increases the probability for an objective and realistic result, but also the credibility of the study. The learning experience of the students from colleges of various sectors may vary. The passing of the year too may bring some kind of a change in their

learning experience. Hence, to address all batches and sectors, the questionnaire is supplied to these students.



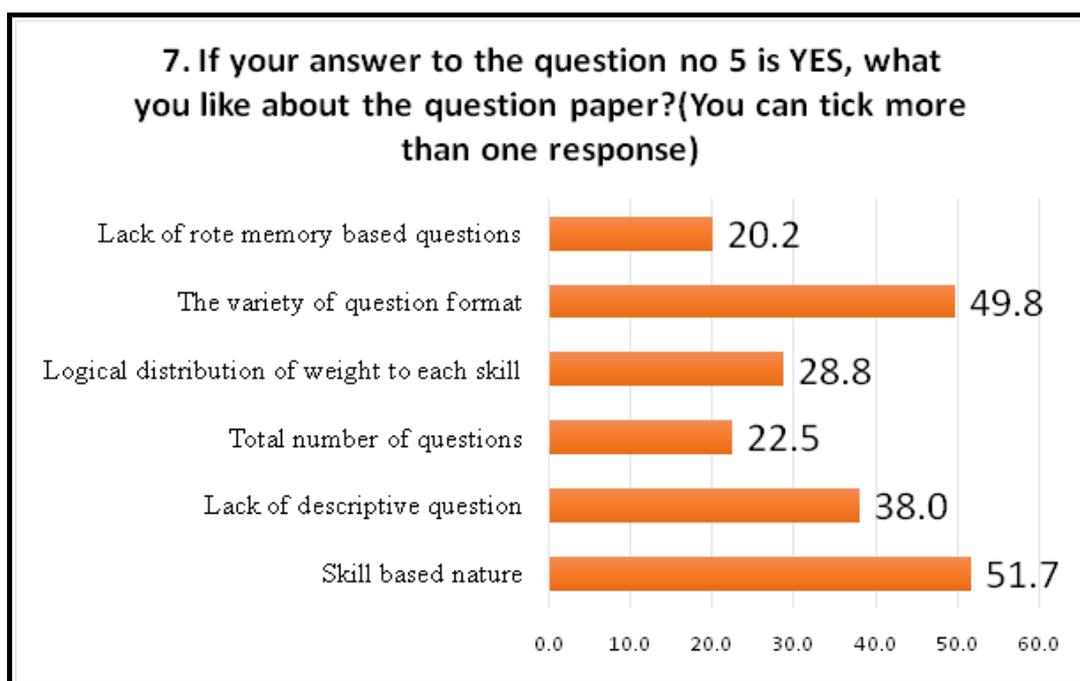
The second research question is to trace out the stakeholder's views on the existing English language assessment in practice. This question (SQ. 5) collects the feedback on this inquiry. It is engrossing to find that the majority (82%) is happy with the latest changes brought in the question pattern of A01. It shows that the student community at large is willing to move along with the changing world as far as the acquisition of the English language is concerned. The pattern, with a versatile bunch of questions, is convenient for the students since it has less long answers. The question pattern of the first batch (2017 admission) was for eighty marks, with three hours duration. But there were some alterations later by way of reducing both the total marks as well as duration along with the number of questions. For the 2017 admission, there were 87 questions while in the 2019 pattern; the number reduced to 22 with sub questions under most of the sections. Then, it became easier and more comfortable for the students, while A02 followed the conventional pattern in which students were demanded to attempt essay questions as well as short paragraphs. In A02 also, the same kind of reduction of time, marks and questions was done. For the

2017 admission, there were 32 questions in the three hour question paper, which was for eighty marks. In the 2019 admission pattern, the number of questions was reduced to 21, while the time was changed to two hours and the marks, sixty. The minority of the respondents (18%) shows that those who prefer the conventional pattern are becoming lesser and lesser.



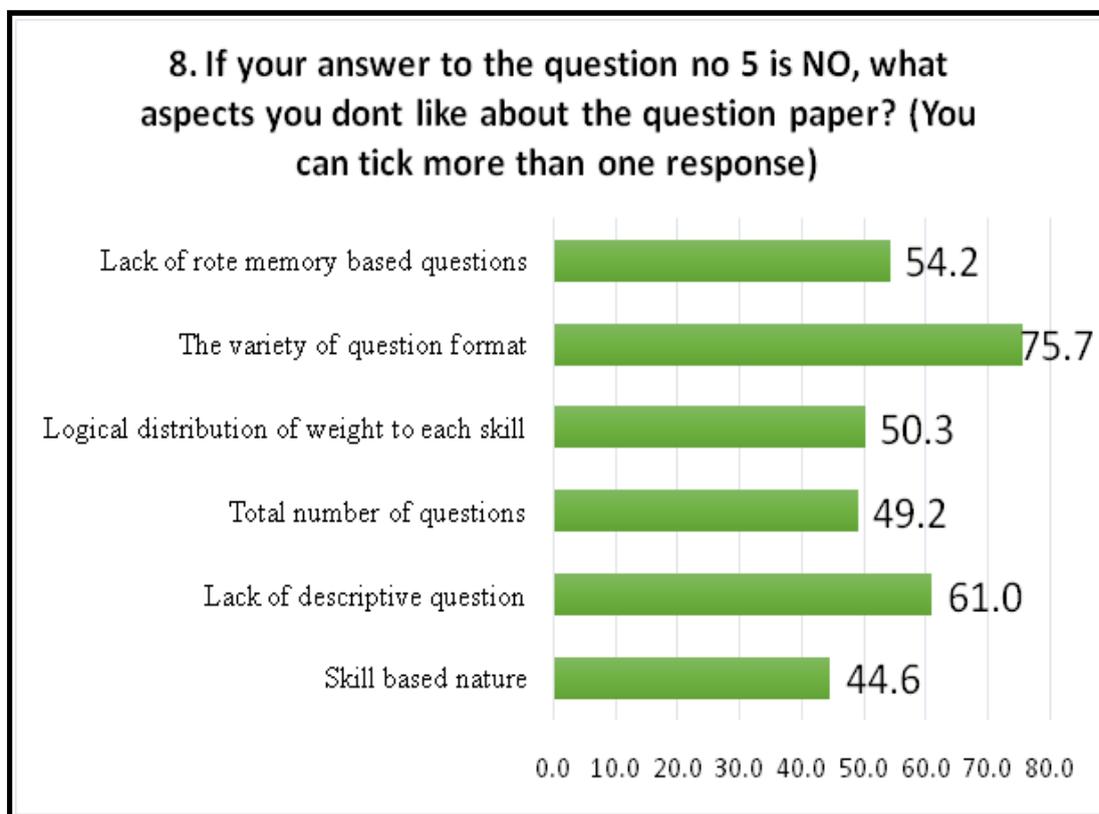
This questionnaire (S Q 6) on the second Common Course, A02, *Ways with words*, attempts to gather the students' level of comfort on the assessment experience. Here also, like the previous response, the majority supports the idea that they are comfortable with the pattern of A02, of course, a conventional one. The students who join the UG programme are coming to the college after their language experience at the higher secondary level. At the schools, the entire question papers, whether on languages or on any other subject are alike that merely demands information and rote memory. Hence, students who step into a college, definitely feel comfortable with a pattern which they have experienced in the previous years. It is only A02 that follows the conventional pattern similar to higher secondary or school level. Subsequently, the students, for no particular reason, are free to support

the pattern. The percentage of respondents who are dissatisfied is not a minute or nominal one. A better exposure to the language learning experience can definitely put a student in an uncomfortable situation. This disturbed mind can lead them to go for an assessment which is skill oriented. Being the beginning, this can be considered a stage of evolution from conventional pattern to skill based. Hence, the response and outlook too may change in due course. The unfamiliarity of the students because of their disoriented higher secondary experience related to the ideal goal of English language learning and the advanced trends of English language teaching at the international level might have contributed to their support of the conventional assessment pattern at the UG level.



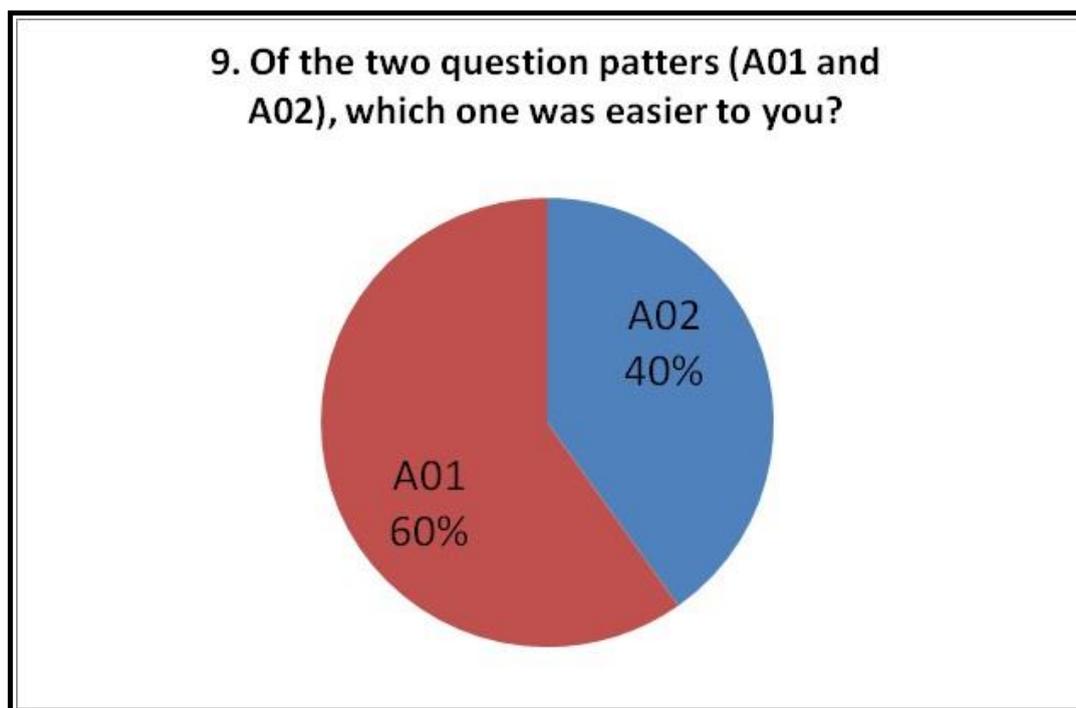
S Q 7 is an elaboration of S Q 5, which tries to collect a detailed opinion regarding why they welcome the new pattern of A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills*. As for the teachers, for the students also, six options were given and asked to select any number of responses. Of the total respondents, 51.7 % found ‘Skill based nature’ of the questions as the most preferred feature. While 49.8% consider ‘The variety of question format’ as a good component, ‘Lack of descriptive questions ’is welcomed by 38 %. ‘Logical distribution of weight to each

skill', 'Total number of questions' and 'Lack of rote memory based questions' come in the list below. It is curious to note that 'Skill based nature' is the integrant opted by the majority of the teaching community too. The graph underlines that the present skill based testing strategy for UG English Common Courses is opted by the students as well as the teaching community at large. The response justifies this study also that checks the feasibility of Skill oriented testing over Content based.



S Q 8 attempts to have feedback on why there is displeasure over the changed pattern of A01-*Transactions: Essential English Language Skills*. As per the question paper of 2017 admissions, there were five sections. They were- Speaking Skills, Pronunciation, Grammar, Reading and Vocabulary. This variety of question format is cited by 75.7 % of the respondents as a major drawback with this question pattern. There are no essay or paragraph type questions in A01. Instead, most of them are multiple choices, one word and reading comprehension. Scoring marks will be a challenge for those who don't have a proper idea at the conceptual level. While in A02- *Ways with Words: Literatures in English*, there are enough descriptive type

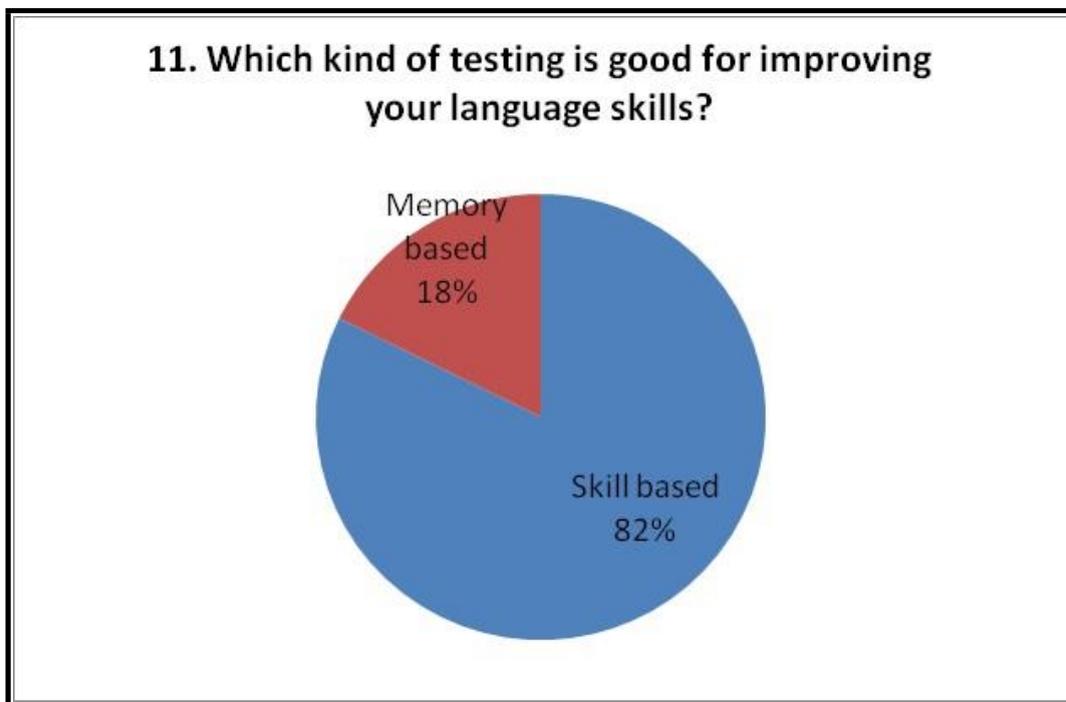
questions that would help an average student to score moderately. Hence, 'Lack of descriptive questions' comes in the second position (61 %) as the reason for not opting the skill based assessment pattern of A01. 'Lack of rote memory based questions', 'Logical distribution of weight to each skill', 'Total number of questions' and 'Skill based nature' come as insignificant reasons. Here also, 'Skill based nature' is the component of displeasure by the minority (44.6%), which otherwise proclaims that it is not objected even by those respondents who prefer the conventional type of questions.



A comparison regarding the levels of experience is represented by this diagram. The ninth student questionnaire (SQ9) prompts the students to go for their personal experience in writing both the Common Courses of I Semester UG. Majority found, as the response shows, A01 easier compared to A02. A passing glance at the response adds credibility to the notion that the student community in general is discontent with the lack of questions to check the higher order skills or they feel more comfortable with skill oriented testing. Since the majority supports A01, the skill oriented testing pattern, it is high time to revamp the existing structure of assessment so as to provide a better experience of writing the exams for the

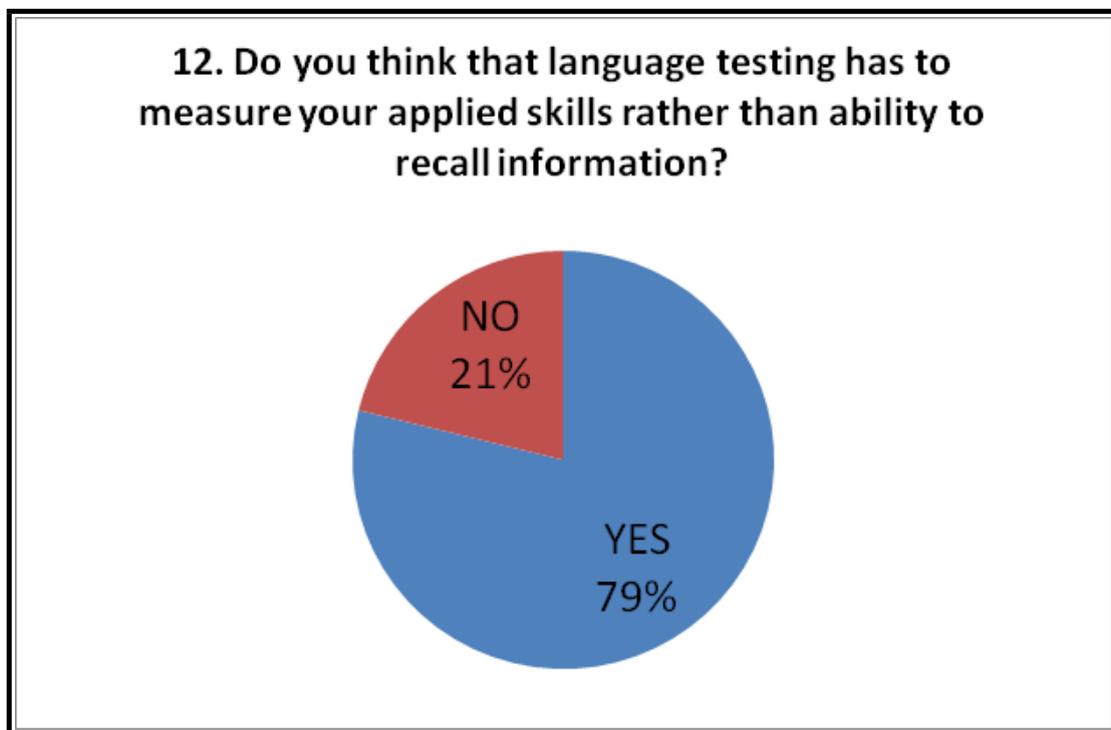
students. (SQ10) is an elaboration of (SQ9) which tries to collect a detailed opinion regarding the level of easiness experienced in writing the examinations of A01 and A02. The majority found A01 easier compared to A02. The easiness is based on various aspects. The variety of questions including one word answers is one among them. Some found A01 easy to score marks. Since it is not descriptive and there are no essay questions, there comes no issue of shortage of time. For most of the students, this type of pattern is the most attractive feature. Learning the text with concepts made the exam, for a few, very easy. The inclusion of skill based questions is the advantage according to some other students. The question paper was made to measure the skill of the student rather than memory.

Those who found A02-*Ways with words: Literatures in English*, easier mainly highlight the nature of its content in the form of their preference of literature over language. One can express one's personal opinion in answering questions on literature, compared to language. An element of interest is an important component as per many students. For some others, grammar is slightly difficult, which is one of the segments in A01-*Transactions: Essential English language Skills*. A02 is giving more chances for individuals' creativity and imagination skills. It contains a smaller number of application level questions. As there are more descriptive questions, it is easy to score. All the questions are from the text book itself. Hence, learning the text would help one to answer easily, unlike A01, which includes questions outside the text book since it is skill based.



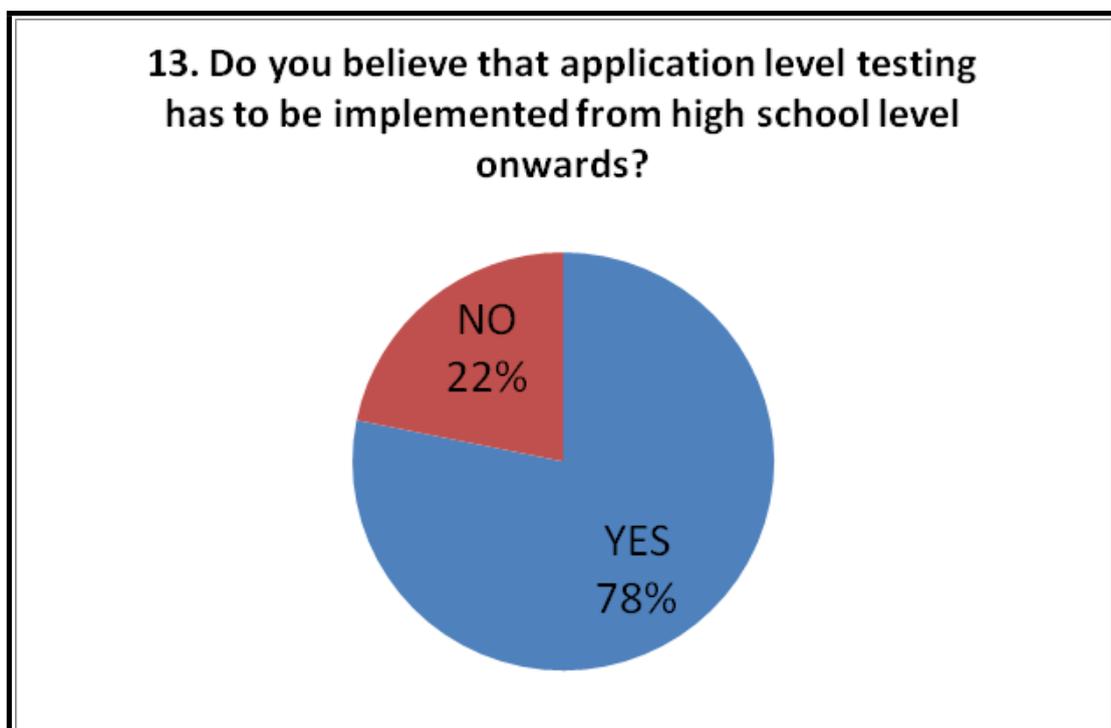
The third research problem is to detect whether the stakeholders believe that the skill based assessment system can promote better language acquisition. This question (S Q 11) directly addresses this research problem and tries to collect the opinion from the stake holders. A lion's share (82%) upholds, as this study proposes, the opinion that skill based testing is ideal for improving or enhancing the language skills of the students. Even though majority does support this pattern, unfortunately, it is not practised in most of the sectors, especially at the school level. Language as a skill has to be developed at an early age for a better competence. So, the ideal time to acquire expertise is the early stage of one's studies, i.e. at the school level. But the educational practice here is so outdated that English as a language is not learned by giving proper significance to it. The students are taught to byheart words or sentences and are asked to reproduce it for exams. The ultimate result is, they lack the competency in using the language at different life situations. Whereas, if English language is taught as a skill and the assessments are conducted to test the skill, definitely, the acquisition of language will help the students to use it at the time of need. It is only because of this faulty system practised at school level, the students who appear for the university examinations fail to score moderate marks/score. Such

a realisation might have led the respondents to reach a conclusion that skill based assessment is the need of the hour. A minority (18%) still supports the conventional pattern of rote memory, which, in the coming years, may change to support the skill based assessment. This response by the majority supports the relevance of this study which centres around the scope of implementing skill based assessment for English language testing at the undergraduate level.



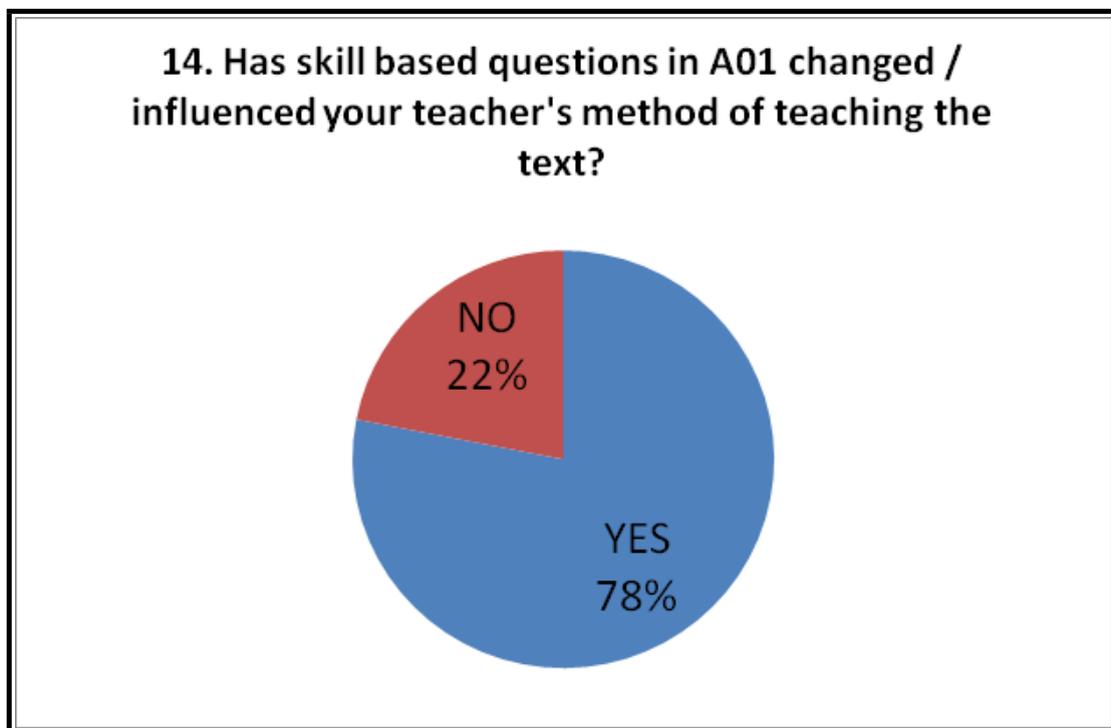
This question (S Q 12) is a continuation of the previous one since it tries to elaborate the response of S Q 11. Any assessment which is skill based aims at measuring the applied skills in a language. So, any testing pattern that follows the conventional structure is insufficient in measuring the higher order skills of language. This realisation might have prompted the majority (79%) to respond positively. It also hints at the better exposure of the student's community to the current trends of English language teaching and learning. Assessment pattern associated with language tests like IELTS follows the standardised test of English language proficiency. Since, byhearting the content of English language textbooks, only for reproducing in examination papers, does not serve the purpose of an ideal English language teaching. This fact is reflected in the response of the majority. To

be in the comfort zone is preferred by some people in any group. The minority (21%) learns English language textbooks only for the sake of writing the exams, as the response says, merely treats the language texts as that of any other subject. They concentrate on the content rather than the language part which has prominent significance. Since this question answers one of the research questions, similar to the previous S Q, the huge number of responses supporting the question underline how an ideal language testing needs to facilitate the assessment of applied skills rather than the capacity to recall information.



The fourth research question is to list out the major changes to be brought about in the present system for ensuring better performance competence. Any change in academics cannot be materialised within a short period. As far as language proficiency is concerned, continuous training or practice leads to better performance competence. The early stages of one's education are the ideal period to acquire language. Hence, language, being a skill, has to be mastered at the lower grades/ classes. Majority of the respondents (78%) to SQ13 support the opinion that the application level testing has to be implemented from high school level onwards. But,

unfortunately, this is not the reality. English classes at the schools provide merely a word to word explanation and translation of the content. The question papers that do not demand any kind of skill oriented knowledge from the part of the students, prompt the teachers to follow the conventional Grammar Translation method. The ultimate result is, students suffer from poor language when they reach the higher education institutions or seek any employment.



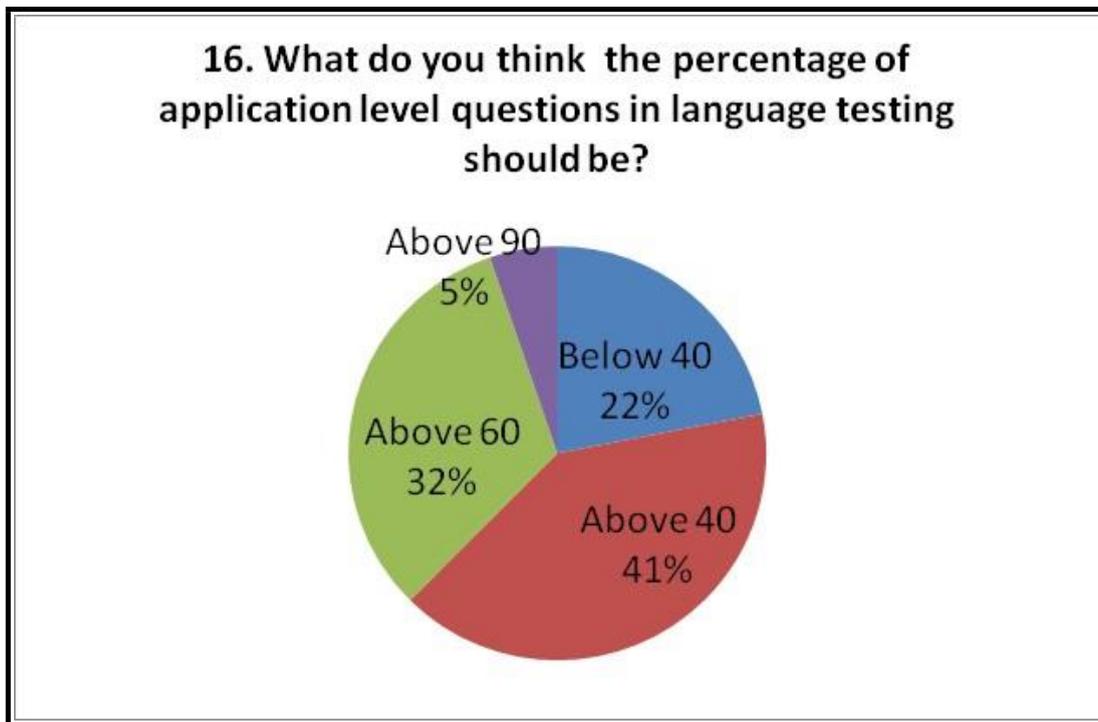
Majority of the respondents (78%) of the student community found out a change in the instructional pattern in their teachers, catering to the skill based questions of A01. Unlike A02, *Ways with Words; Literatures in English*, teachers showed different ways to learn, especially by showing multiple examples and exercises. Some teachers conduct group discussions to promote language skill, namely communication. Varieties of day to day examples, group work, demonstration, showing the application level of language rather than explaining the theory, making students solve the questions by their own instead of simple lecturing and activities like conversation and presentation, all were used in the Common Course classrooms of A01. This response makes us infer that the teaching community is ready to adapt to the new pattern where language is taught as a skill

rather than a mere subject. Deliberate attempt from the part of teachers to enhance the performance competence of the students is a positive step to materialise the first objective of the course A01, i.e. to transmit the required macro and micro skills of English language so as to make the students communicate their emotions, perspectives with enough fluency in multiple life situations. Giving options to present various topics in the classroom as seminars, the teachers are attempting to attain another objective of the Course, i.e. to equip the students to take part in academic deliberations and enable them to present in academic seminars with particular focus on peculiar words and its usages. There are teachers, as the response says, though a minority (22%), who are reluctant to bring about any change in the style of teaching. From the response, it seems, the students are not so happy with the conventional pattern of teaching followed by their teachers, though the text demands an entirely skill oriented approach.

(S Q 15) is the amplification of (S Q 14). Respondents are given a chance to express the details on the changes observed/not observed in the method of handling the text due to the skill based nature of A01 *Transactions: Essential English language Skills*. Those who admit that the method of teaching has been influenced by the skill based nature of A01, unlike A02, teachers have started to make the students solve problems by giving enough questions and organising group discussions. Language practice sessions were also conducted in the classroom. They include a variety of examples from daily life. They concentrated on increasing student's skills rather than reading textbooks only. Teachers explain not just the theory but shows its applications of when and where and how to use it. More student involvement was promoted. Teachers are giving a wide range of activities including teaching more application level questions.

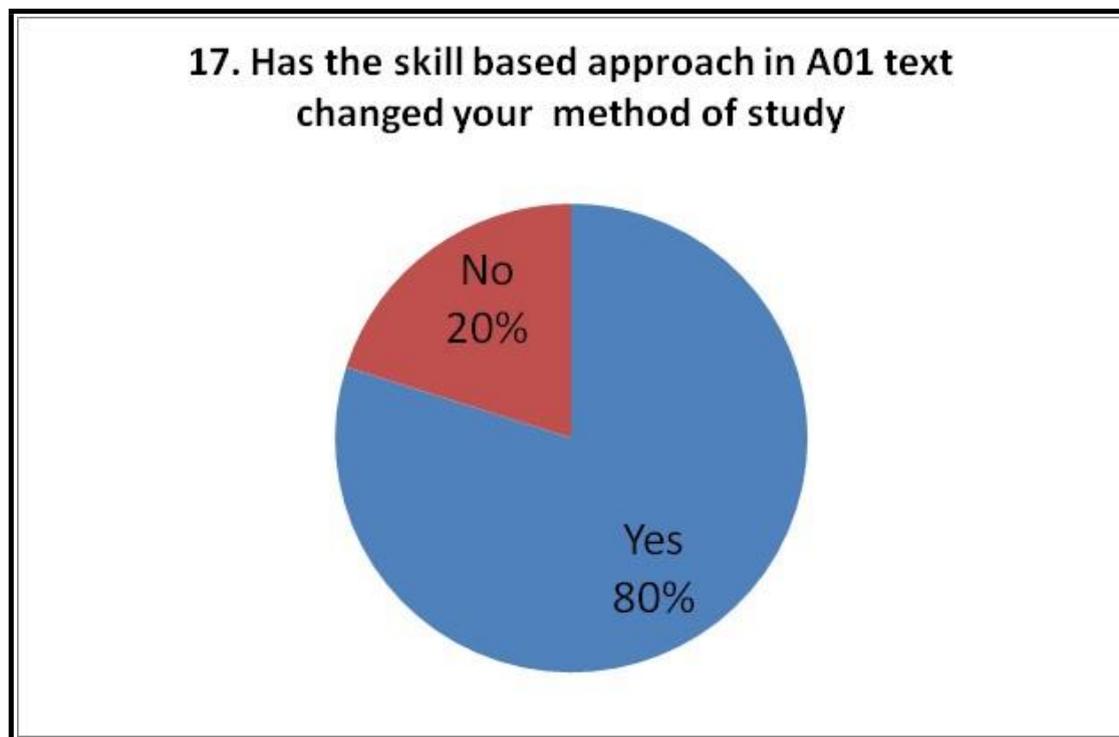
For some teachers, as the students report, the method of teaching has remained the same even after finding a skill oriented text in the syllabus of Common Course in English. Some teachers have increased the time spent on explaining concepts, but followed the same pattern. They merely taught what is in the textbook. Some students support their teachers by stating that there is no need to change the

method of teaching. As usual, some others opine that teachers instruct theoretically without testing the skills of students.



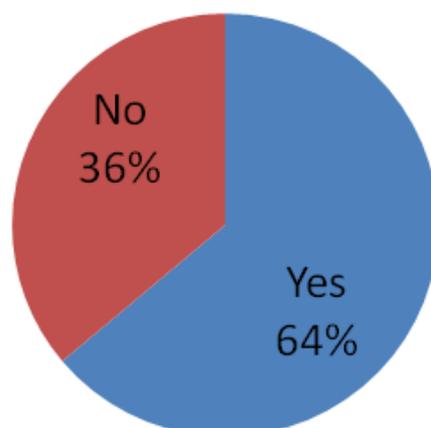
This question (SQ16), aimed at gauging the opinion of students pertaining to the percentage of application level questions to be included, provides a variety of options. Below 40, Above 40, Above 60, Above 90 are the four choices given as answers. The majority (41%) of the respondents opined that above 40 is the ideal percentage of application level questions in language testing. At present, as per the conventional pattern, application level questions are rarely found. A proposal for Above 40% itself can bring a paradigm shift in the present system of assessment. While 32% of the respondents visualised Above 60 percent, 5% of the responses supported an inclusion of Above 90 percent of application level questions. Compared to the 72% of the total respondents, who preferred 40% and above, only a minority (22%) voted against this move by suggesting the inclusion of application level questions, below 40 percent. As a whole, the support to a higher number of application level questions underlines how academic excellence in the form of skill development is preferred by the student community. They are eager to welcome a change towards the trend practiced at the international scenario. This response of the

majority is enough to back up this study which revolves around a scope for a shift from Content based to Skill oriented testing.



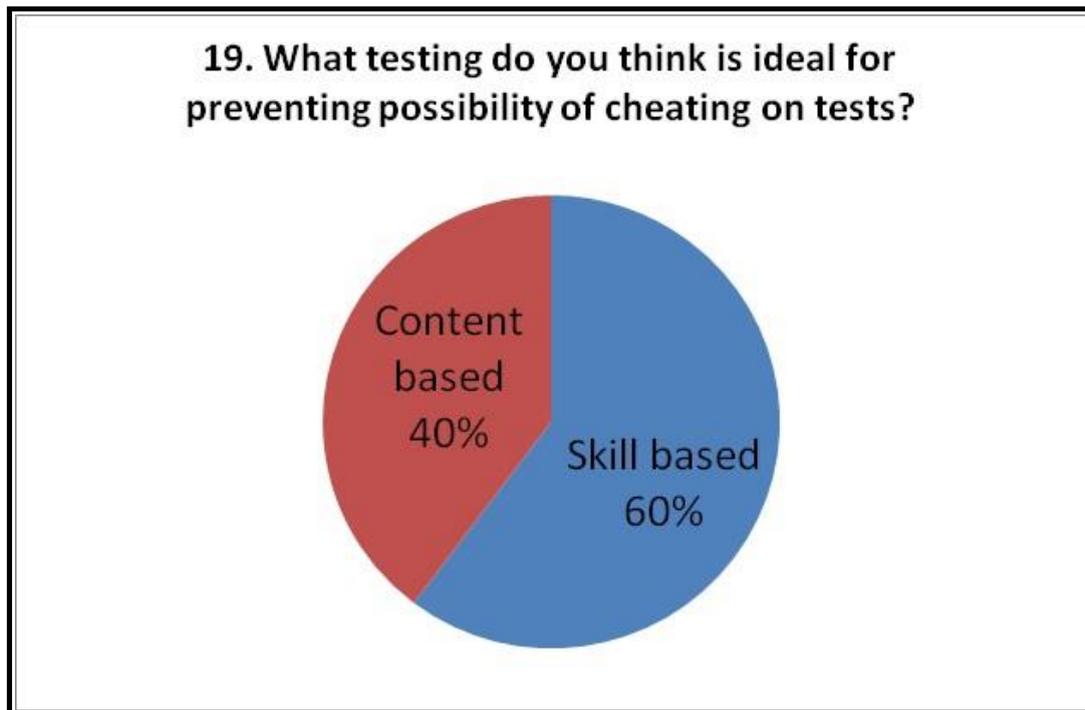
The nature of textbooks definitely influences the style of learning. The need for a change is triggered by the content, especially if it happens to be entirely new material. The novel pattern as well as the content of A01, *Transactions; Essential English Language Skills* has, as the response shows, affected/influenced the method of study. The majority of the respondents (80%) in S Q 17 admit the fact that they have made adequate changes in the pattern of learning suitable for a skill based text. Any change could be materialised if the affected party is ready to embrace it. This response by the majority gives an optimistic picture of the student community who welcomes this latest change and is ready to adapt to the new circumstances and learning practices. The readiness to accept the skill oriented text as well as assessment by the student community supports this study since it ponders over the scope of switching over to Skill oriented from Content based. The group which is reluctant to accommodate any sort of change, comparatively, is a minority (20%).

18. Do you believe that even A02 should have some application level questions targeting the higher order skills?



SQ18 is on the scope for including application level questions in the second Common Course of first semester UG, A02 *Ways With Words: Literatures in English*. The question pattern as per 2017 admission consists of section 1, five multiple choice and five one word questions, Section 2, ten one or two sentence questions, Section 3, four paragraph questions and Section 4, two essay questions. Total marks are 80 and the Time is Three hours. There are slight changes in the question paper of 2019 admissions. Section One, 12 two or three sentences questions with a Ceiling of 20 marks, Section 2, seven paragraph question with a Ceiling of 30 marks and Section 3, one essay question with 10 marks. Total marks are 60 and the Time, Two Hours. Even though there were some slight changes, the style of questions has not changed. All the questions demand recollection of information or rote memory of the student. The response by the majority (64%) shows that the student community is eager to have application level question in A02 also, similar to A01. Though the text A02 is on Poems, Short stories, Prose and Drama, it is possible to have questions targeting the higher order thinking skills. The response by the majority underlines the fact that application level questions are the backbone of language testing. A generic scrutiny of testing practices adopted at global level for

language skill assessment shows that performance ability of learners is preferred to content memorisation ability. Here also, the students by and large prefer a change to be implemented not merely in A01, but in A02 also.



Cheating on the tests by the students, in fact, leads to undeserving scores. The probability increases if the exam is content based. The faulty invigilation in the examination halls may pave the way for cheating on tests. This question (S Q 19) tries to collect the opinion of the students on the ideal assessment pattern that can prevent the possibility of cheating on the test. Majority of the respondents (60%) support Skill based test while a minority (40%) believe in Content based pattern. The peculiarity with the Skill based assessment is that one cannot have readymade answers in advance since it never demands reproducing the knowledge, but application of what one has learned in a variety of situations. This trend can lead to each student equipping oneself with the skill to apply in order to solve the questions, instead of keeping the answers hidden with them while entering the examination halls. It is not the ability of the student to deceive the examiner that decides the scores, but the application of learned knowledge. Hence, the question of cheating on

the tests, to a large extent, is impossible which could lead to awarding deserving scores to the students.

Analysis of the responses given during the structured interviews

In order to revalidate the responses collected through the questionnaire from teachers as well as students, personal interviews were conducted. Teachers from Government, Aided and Self-financing colleges with rich teaching and research experience were the interviewees. The five questions, which demanded elaborate answers, were the modified version of the queries included in the questionnaire. The thrust area of the interview was the skill oriented testing of English language teaching at the UG Common Course, its feasibility and the necessity to revamp the existing assessment pattern in the current scenario of higher education. Six teachers from various colleges were consulted for this purpose. Their views were recorded for future analysis. The purpose of the interview was to add credibility and validity to the data collected.

The interviewees were asked to express their perspective and justify their views on the necessity of implementing the skill oriented language testing of English at the university level. All the teachers, for various reasons, support the proposal. It is stated that modern English is widely considered to be the lingua franca of the world and is the standard language in a wide variety of fields, including computer coding, international business and higher education. As English is a mandatory Common Course for students enrolled in undergraduate programmes, it is essential to conduct skill oriented language testing so as to enable the students to set learning goals for themselves and to facilitate the teacher to gauge the potential of a class at large and address the issues/difficulties of slow learners. A student enrolling for an undergraduate program should have more than the basic knowledge of English grammar and phonetics. At the university level, students should be taught higher skills required for national and international tests for higher studies or careers. Since there are IELTS and TOEFL aspirants even in rural areas, an undergraduate student should undergo learning and testing of English. There are some deficiencies identified in the present system. Unfortunately, there is no provision to test the skills

of the students particularly with respect to speaking. What the employers are looking for in a graduate is their skill rather than mere information they possess about the language. In the era of Outcome Based Education, rather than conducting conventional mode of evaluation with traditional methods of questioning on the basis of prescribed course books, learners must go through the skill based evaluation tools so as to ensure the standards of higher education. Unlike any other core courses, testing a language competency must be skill based. It helps in opening many national and international level opportunities too. The skill oriented language testing of English helps the students to improve their communication and basic knowledge in grammar. Students are always facing the problem of acquiring any language other than their mother tongue. Continuous skill oriented language testing helps them to improve their skills. The language teaching and testing at University level should be designed so as to develop self-awareness, self-confidence and social, interpersonal, organisational, professional and leadership skills as well as social and professional etiquette. Hence, it must be implemented at the earliest, because it involves a mechanism that evaluates the hidden, otherwise unexplored talents of the learners.

To know how far the current system of testing for Common English Course is ideal for improving language skills of learners, has formed the next question. The interviewees in general expressed their dissatisfaction over the present methodology followed at the UG Common Course level, since they discovered it far removed from the expected goal of an ideal language teaching strategy. They observed that the current system of testing for Common and Core Courses is more or less identical, consisting of internal test papers, seminars and assignments followed by end-semester examinations. Students are hampered by too many tests within the span of a semester, components like assignment and seminar in Common Courses are treated as 'mere formalities' for the attainment of internal marks. Language courses are generally relegated to a secondary status as the importance is more on Science subjects. Like in any other languages, in English too, apart from the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, other skills such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and spelling, all play a role in effective English

communication. The end semester examinations are neither conducive to skill enhancement nor appropriate for a qualitative assessment of students' aptitude. There is no provision to test the listening and speaking skills of the students. Hence, the current system of evaluation followed in the case of Common Courses is incomplete if not preposterous. The current course A01- *Transactions: Essential English Language Skills* envisages skill based learning which is oriented in giving ample chances to cater LSRW through various modules. But at the same time, the traditional evaluation system is never in accordance with the skill based learning and evaluation. The current system of testing in English Common Course is far from improving language skills of the learners since it is confined to testing only the learners' ability to reproduce the content and not comprehensive enough to develop various skills essential for a successful life and career. The teachers also opined that there is an immediacy of unveiling the full potential of a learner whose multi dimensional talents in using soft skills need to be tested effectively so as to enable him / her to enter into the job market such as communication and marketing techniques, debating skills, resolving conflicts and broadcasting abilities, to mention a few.

The feasibility of carrying out English language teaching and testing in Common English classes comparable with international standards formed the area of inquiry. Multiple novel suggestions based on their teaching experience were shared by the respondents. The student strength of Common English classes at present ranges from 75 to 130 (for a duration of one hour/ period). In the Common classes, the proficiency levels of students are markedly heterogeneous ranging from the poor to outstanding. So, in such a situation, language teaching and language testing cannot be tailored to suit the requirements of individual students. Global standards of teaching and testing are geared to enhance and evaluate all parameters of language skills. Hence, the pedagogy hinges on student specific methodology incorporating the latest technological infrastructure available for the purpose. The teachers have to be specifically trained for undertaking such a task. Moreover, only a small percentage of academic or career oriented students opt for international learning and testing. Such students already possess a higher level of English

language expertise. Therefore, the current 'structure' of a Common English classroom i.e. the highly disproportionate teacher student ratio and lack of appropriate technical infrastructure impedes the realisation of quality upgradation of teaching and testing. It is observed that a lot of relaxations and effect dilutions are made in the standard and quality of the syllabi that the university prepares for the Common English, often with the vested interest of the mediocre English teachers and the lazy and mediocre students. The basic principle to be followed in preparation is the gradation of materials.

Unfortunately, what is taught in the UG classes is just a replica of what is found in the Secondary and Senior secondary English textbook. Students at the UG level should be made to encounter and face something more challenging than what they do at lower classes. Moreover, what is done here in the University is that the same syllabus is prescribed for the programs falling under different disciplines. The idea of ESP (English for Specific Purpose) should be suitably accommodated. It means the kind of materials taught for BA students may be essentially different from the materials taught for Commerce stream, and further, for Science stream. It is also remarked that the teaching, learning and evaluation in the field of higher education is the result of continuous research and studies. The hindrance in acquiring the desired skills by a student of graduation does not lie in lack of good syllabus, quality teaching materials and quality teachers. But the big number of students in Common Course classes is a major obstacle in implementing experiential quality based teaching learning and evaluation tools. In order to reach international standards, there must be some means to reduce teacher student ratio in higher education institutions, especially in Common Courses at the undergraduate level. The feasibility lies in the fact that testing for Common Courses determines the paradigm shift that occurred from the wake of globalisation and market economy which made devastating changes in the arena of modern education. If sea changes are not occurring in the conventional model of assessment and evaluation, the very purpose of introducing this Course becomes a meaningless exercise. Improving language skills directly makes an impetus on the education system, research, mass and social

media, start ups, small scale industry, business management, institutions of political governance and bureaucracy.

In the interview, suggestions and recommendations to make the Common English classes more student- oriented and effective, from the side of teachers, based on their classroom experiences, were sought. Language acquisition is a complicated process of gaining the competence to manoeuvre skill fully through linguistic nuances. It is a comparatively long term dedicated learning activity. A student requires time to digest the various components of language. The syllabus should not be too cumbersome for the teacher and student. Classroom discussions and activities should be given priority. Common classes should be treated on par with the Core classes in terms of student strength and academic significance of the Course. This will enable the teacher to cater to the academic needs of individual students and design appropriate classroom group activities. There should be only a year- end examination for Common English Courses, thereby easing the pressure on students from a 'perpetual test' mode to a less hasty and a more rewarding learning process. In the name of teaching English, most teachers end up summarising the story or translating the story into vernacular. Many of them are not keenly interested or inclined to teach English as a skill subject and help the learners acquire it. Hence, the teachers should be given training in teaching English as a skill subject and the tenets of Communicative Language Teaching should be utilised. While framing the syllabus, the priority has to be the interest of the students and their educational and career requirements rather than maintaining the status quo and comfort zone of the teachers. The alleged vested interests of the Board of Studies members and the lucrative enticement of the textbook, if any, should be done away with. The teachers of English may attempt to periodically undergo training and their performance with respect to their ability to handle English as a skill subject. Teacher- student ratio must be scientifically reintroduced, say 1: 25. There must be activity oriented pedagogy at the UG Common Course. Classrooms must be equipped with all the digital teaching tools like, projector, mic, speaker, computer and recorder. There must be a language lab in the institution. Teachers must be given sufficient in-service training in Outcome Based language teaching, English teaching methodology

and effective teaching and evaluation tools. The lack of proper pre- service training for higher education teachers is to be addressed effectively. Participatory learning by the students may be promoted. Replacing the Grammar Translation method with more interactive methods, collaborative learning and role play models by using skills based methods for the rapidly changing demands of the public and professional life may be promoted. Instead of answering a set of questions, passages or unknown texts could be used for testing practical criticism, analysis or framing questions, or even stylistic tools for teaching language and literature and vice versa. Moreover, ESP could be effectively used for achieving a better outcome of the Common Course.

At the end of the interview, the interviewees were requested to specify the type of changes they would like to suggest or bring about in the current testing and assessment pattern. Innumerable ways and strategies to apply in the classroom, to make the teaching learning process highly skill oriented and productive, were collected from the teachers. Currently, there are six Courses across four semesters for Common English. The number of Courses should be reduced to two, one at the end of each academic year (even semesters). All the registered undergraduate students do not go for higher studies, research or seek careers in the corporate sector; therefore in the second year only those who aspire for the above mentioned learning or career options need to take the Course. It would transform the Common Course from a mass to class format which will result in a more productive and participative teaching learning experience. Students' development of the four skills can be unbalanced; e.g. a learner could be strong in reading, but weak in listening or writing or speaking. English being a foreign language, Indian learners often have strengths or weaknesses in particular skills and in some cases can achieve high levels in, for example, reading and writing, while not being able to speak or listen at a comparable level. The present one size that fits all testing system is inadequate for assessing listening and speaking skill. The second year should focus more on testing these aspects as well as nuanced appreciation of literature. The semester exams (odd semesters) should be replaced with creative projects in English undertaken by students. Above all, as most national and international tests are internet based (IBT),

students need to be familiarised with this mode of taking exams at university level. Students should be encouraged to use software applications which enable them to test their reading abilities and improve their skills. The intake of the students admitted in a Common Class should be downsized, say, to a level of 25 students in a class. The stress should be more on teaching functional English rather than orienting them towards the chunks of English literature. The Ipsative and Formative assessments should be given equal importance along with Summative evaluation. The materials and modules should be evolved through workshops rather than imposing from the above. Skill based teaching and evaluation must be implemented. There must be ample chances to improve LSRW at UG level and evaluation must be an extension of the classroom activity where students are to be tested on the basis of skills rather than traditional content based exam. Learning activities must be implemented in the classroom and as part of testing, activity based assessments also to be ensured.

Advanced digital tools can be used for testing language competency too. Teachers should change from the role of grade provider to grade receiver like the students in the class. It will change students' approach to their teachers and consider them as guides. Apart from testing the learners' ability to reproduce the content, the project for teaching and testing English language should focus on the learners' ability to use language in real life situations along with giving them training in social and professional etiquettes and skills. Testing and assessment patterns must address the oral skills of the learners along with writing quality works / materials such as creative writings, content writings, copy writings and drafting texts for different occasions that are based on needs in the employment sectors. Communication and problem solving skills could be introduced without sacrificing literature portions. While bringing more short stories, One-act plays, selected scenes or dialogues from popular literary pieces (past and present), the learners' conversational abilities, acting skills, role play in a changed atmosphere, could be given to the comparative analysis or situations, instead of carrying on with the same old, dead mutttons of Shakespeare and Milton (echoing *The English Teacher* of R. K. Narayan).

Scrutiny of the University results

As part of the study, first semester results of UG Common Courses, both A01- *Transactions; Essential English Language Skills* and A02- *Ways with Words; Literatures in English*, of November 2017 and November 2018 sessions were collected. It consists of the results of the students from Government, Aided and Self-financing colleges, of various streams to ensure credibility, objectivity and reliability of the conclusion. There are 462 results collected, the details are enclosed in the tables below.

SESSION- NOVEMBER 2017								
<i>A01- Transactions; Essential English Language Skills</i>								
Stream	Grade							
	A+	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
B Sc Tourism and Hotel management	0	0	0	0	14	7	0	21
BA Multimedia	0	0	1	7	15	15	2	40
BA English Language & Literature	0	1	0	3	9	10	7	30
BA Mass Communication & Journalism	0	0	0	4	13	23	0	40
BA History	0	1	2	7	9	8	1	28
B Com	0	0	1	3	5	2	0	11
B Sc Physics	0	5	11	1	4	0	0	21
Total	0	7	15	25	69	65	10	191

A02- Ways with Words; Literatures in English								
Stream	Grade							
	A+	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
B Sc Tourism and Hotel management	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21
BA Multimedia	0	0	0	1	3	6	30	40
BA English Language & Literature	0	8	10	6	5	1	0	30
BA Mass Communication & Journalism	0	0	0	1	1	5	33	40
BA History	0	1	9	5	7	5	1	28
B Com	0	1	6	2	2	0	0	11
B Sc Physics	4	12	3	2	0	0	0	21
Total	4	22	28	17	18	17	85	191

The results of the November 2017 session show a clear distinction between A01 and A02 as far as the performance of students is concerned. Total 191 results of the November 2017 session were collected. As a whole, the performance is better in the case of A01 as the number of students who lost the exam is very less compared to A02. While 10 out of 191 students failed in A01-*Transactions; Essential English Language Skills*, 85 students lost A02-*Ways with Words-Literatures in English*. The number of students who scored the average grade is also higher in the case of A01. The percentage of failure in A02 is 45 while in A01, it is merely 5. The data in the table shows that students as well as the teachers or the academic community in

general find it comfortable with A01, its content as well as assessment method which is skill oriented.

SESSION- NOVEMBER 2018								
<i>A01- Transactions; Essential English Language Skills</i>								
Stream	Grade							
	A+	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
B Com	0	1	0	2	12	21	2	38
BA English Language & Literature	0	2	7	13	13	2	0	37
BA Economics	0	0	10	12	12	9	0	43
BA Functional English	0	7	12	5	6	5	0	35
BA History	0	12	23	4	5	1	0	45
B Com (Travel & Tourism)	0	0	1	1	9	23	4	38
B Sc Chemistry	0	0	2	15	7	10	1	35
Total	0	22	55	52	64	71	7	271

A02- Ways with Words; Literatures in English								
Stream	Grade							
	A+	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
B Com	0	0	3	16	11	5	3	38
BA English Language & Literature	0	8	13	7	5	2	2	37
BA Economics	0	2	15	11	9	5	1	43
BA Functional English	0	0	6	12	8	7	2	35
BA History	0	1	20	14	4	5	1	45
B Com (Travel & Tourism)	0	0	0	6	20	4	8	38
B Sc Chemistry	1	6	13	9	2	3	1	35
Total	1	17	70	75	59	31	18	271

The November 2018 session follows suit as the data reflects the trend found in 2017. Out of the 271 results, better performance is displayed by the students in A01- *Transactions; Essential English Language Skills*. A minor group, 2% only failed in A01, almost 7% lost A02. As this data also maintains the trend, it turns out to be almost a reality that it is time to initiate a change in the pattern of the text books and assessment system. Since the academic community approves a practice oriented text and skill oriented assessment, in the scenario of English Common Course, an overhaul is very much needed to enhance the quality of teaching learning process.

Conclusion

The main method to collect data was questionnaires given to the teachers and students using Google forms. There are twenty two questions for teachers and nineteen for students that are included in the respective forms. The responses show that teachers support the implementation of a skill oriented assessment pattern for all the literature texts. Majority, as the responses underline, stand for a novel method that would assess the linguistic capacity of the students by reducing the skill-score mismatch. As per the survey, most of the teachers prefer to enhance the number of skill based questions than testing rote memory. There should be a balance between the testing of skill and knowledge. Moreover, the size of the class, being a grave issue, has to be reduced and maintained at a ratio of 1:25. Some teachers opine that there should be provision to test the Oral as well as Presentation skills. As a whole, the academic community suggests that a global assessment pattern has to be followed at the UG level Common Course.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The present century is witnessing unheard changes in the sector of teaching and learning. Artificial intelligence and machine assisted mechanisms are going to replace human beings in many sectors. In such an environment, a workforce having multidisciplinary abilities will be of high demand. Hence, the structural pattern of the present educational system has to be overhauled. To meet the present demand of the employment sector, students have to opt for a novel methodology and strategy where they learn how to learn a subject. Problem solving, critical thinking and creative writing are some of the faculties that a student has to acquire. Moreover, on par with international standards, curriculum must undergo a transition to make the academic transaction much more learner centred, flexible, holistic and experiential so as to leave a permanent impact in their minds to equip them to meet the latest challenges. A serious attempt to bridge the gap between what is expected and what is the outcome of the existing education system must be addressed. Reforms of any kind must always aim at providing the best for the learners in their attempt to make themselves the highest quality product. Conceptual understanding rather than rote memory has to be insisted and along with that, specific skills required in the subjects concerned too must be seriously taken care of. The process of education should enhance life skills like teamwork, communicative competence and problem solving.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has insisted on the necessity of shifting from rote memory to skill based learning. This will support the learners by inculcating competencies to face the challenges of the present century with vigour. Competency Based Education (CBE), according to NEP, has to be implemented in order to attain the goal. The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) by the Government of India aims at developing an active learning capacity of children below 6 years and focuses on activity oriented and inquiry based learning process which is multi faceted and play based. It is a result of the realisation that

early childhood development will have a lifelong impact on an individual. Its focus is on care and early learning of children and aims at education for all, since learning begins at birth. It targets holistic development of children.

NEP ensures a student teacher ratio of 30:1 at each level and 25:1 in an area of socio-economically disadvantaged students. Unfortunately, at present, no such restrictions are set in the Common English classes at the higher education level where teachers find themselves in trouble by facing a huge number in a language classroom that is clubbed unlike the classes of any other subjects. Opting for an activity oriented method to teach the language skills, in such a situation, will not be feasible for the teachers. In order to tame this grave concern of the teaching community, reducing the number to a manageable one has to be done at the earliest. Otherwise, the very purpose of the language instruction will be at stake. The ideal concept of a classroom can be materialised only if the Common English Classrooms are handled separately. The present crowded structure of the Common English classes belittles the significance of English as a global language. This study prefers to recommend the bifurcation of the Common English classrooms as a step towards attaining the outcomes of language learning and teaching.

Today's classroom is exemplified with student diversity. Hence, teaching methodology has to be modified in order to accommodate such diversity. Teachers have to use innovative teaching methodologies and learning strategies to deal with the present demand and have to replace subject centred approach with learner centred and problem centred approaches. This shift will enable the learning process to leave a permanent impact in the mind of the student. Moreover, considering the demands of the 21st century, there is a greater trend of formation of a common space to share knowledge or a convergence. Hence, standardisation in the acquisition of knowledge across the countries will be of utmost significance in future. Even education provided in a local space has to be on par with the international standards. There should be variety, flexibility and diversification too. Flexibility is a key factor in effectively catering to the learning needs of diverse students (Yorke and Thomas 2003). In order to extract the maximum potential of the student, various types of student activities like practical or even close to real life situations must be

implemented. The teacher may initiate independent search for knowledge by the students by creating problematisation of the concepts from the syllabus, to make the learning process productive and creative, thereby facilitating the students to achieve mastery in language proficiency. The teacher should be very cautious in selecting tasks for the students since pupils may vary in their capacity and talent. Teachers can promote self learning and practicing by the students through providing enough materials to work upon. Runco and Albert (1990) say that the thinking of the children at all levels of ability is significantly influenced by the type of opportunities they are given. So, while designing the curricula, providing the students an opportunity to enhance their cognitive and constructive capacity should be of prime importance.

The assessment pattern followed at present has to be revamped and in its stead, a novel model in which rote learning is not encouraged should be implemented. The questions should promote thinking and application and also demonstrable skills in language that fall under the higher order skills of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Research findings

The analysis of data, collected through the modes of questionnaire and structured interview, was done question by question and the major findings, based on their relevance and priority, are listed as follows.

- The Teaching community prefers changes brought about in the question paper of A01 because it is largely skill oriented.
- The skill based nature and the lack of rote memory questions are the preferred features of questions in an ideal test design.
- The teaching community believes that the pattern of A01 (Skill oriented) is ideal for Common Courses in English.
- Skill based testing is good for improving language capacity of students.

- The teaching community recommends that application level testing has to be started from schools onwards.
- The teaching community opines that the structure and the nature of the contents in a text influence the methodology of instruction.
- The skill based approach followed in a text or testing influences the learning style of students positively.
- The question paper of A02 (Literature text) should have some questions that assess the higher order English language skills of learners.
- Cheating on tests can be effectively prevented by the skill oriented assessment pattern.
- The current testing system has negative impacts like teacher-centredness, poor learner autonomy on the learning as well as teaching process.
- The student community welcomes the changes effected in A01 because of the skill based nature of questions and the variety of question formats that measure the applied English language skills.
- In the current testing pattern, there is no provision to test the listening and speaking skills of the students.
- The idea of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) has to be suitably accommodated to cater to the diversity of learner needs.
- The big number of students in Common Course classes is a major obstacle in ensuring quality of English language education and efficacy of implementing multiple evaluation tools.
- Teachers need more orientation and effective training in teaching English from a skill based perspective.

Educational implication of the findings

Language testing has undergone drastic changes in its structure, content and mode of administration across the world over the years. Language testing, once deeply rooted in lower order skills like recalling, remembering and reproducing, has moved to skill orientation in which the learners' ability to create, produce and construct is largely assessed. Unfortunately, the English language testing system at the university level remains by and large resistant to this global change. To cope with the growing and changing demands of the industry and the job market, it is necessary to bring about productive changes in the traditional method of testing.

Reducing the number of questions that demand rote memory and enhance skill oriented types is the initial step in this endeavour. Upgrading the language skills of the students by improving the performance competence has to be the ultimate goal of such a change. It is advisable, for a better result, to implement this from school levels onwards as acquisition of language is a process that begins from one's birth. As a part of this move, when a change is effected in the structure of a text, the teaching community adapts to this novel situation by making necessary changes in their strategy of teaching. Moreover, a change in assessment pattern which reduces the learner's scope for memorising the contents word by word can reduce the chances of cheating on tests. Hence, the teaching as well as learning process takes a positive turn in due course. It is interesting to note that the student community, similar to the teachers, wished for a change in the existing pattern. They have an opinion that skill based testing leads to betterment of communicative competence. The biggest drawback in the existing English language testing practice is the exclusion of Speaking and Listening. This has to be compensated by accommodating the four language skills, with due weightage for each, in the revised pattern. Though changes are optimistic, obviously there are various threats in the achievement of this goal. One of the reasons why the present process is not effective is the lack of proper trained teachers. Hence training to equip the teachers to face the new challenges is the need of the hour. The study tries to put forward the suggestion that it is time to initiate a change in the pattern of the text books and assessment system.

Suggestions and recommendations

A close analysis of the responses from students and teachers shows that the present test patterns need comprehensive changes to incorporate professional needs and better employability skills of learners. The researcher, in the light of feedback from the study and first hand experiences in classrooms proposes a revised test design with a blend of offline and online mode. The design has been devised giving due weight to all the macro skills of English. (Reading 20, Writing 40, Listening and Speaking 20 each).

Proposed Test Design

METHODOLOGY	MODE	WEIGHTAGE	SKILL WISE WEIGHTAGE
END SEMESTER (UNIVERSITY)	OFFLINE	60	Reading – 20
			Writing – 40
COLLEGE LEVEL	ONLINE	40	Listening - 20
			Speaking - 20

End semester–Offline

The end semester offline mode test pattern recommended by the study has four question types. The first one is ‘Multiple choice’ that assesses the language skill, ‘Reading’ and the order of skill as per Taxonomy ‘Remember’ and ‘Understand’, carries 1 mark each. The second question type is ‘Reading comprehension’ which also tests ‘Reading’ while the questions are of ‘Application’ level. Each question carries 2 marks. ‘Paragraph’ type questions of 5 marks assess ‘Writing’ skill of students. It targets the cognitive level ‘Analyse’. The last two question types are ‘Essays’ for 10 marks. It measures the language skill ‘Writing’ and addresses the higher order thinking skills in Bloom's Taxonomy, i.e. ‘Evaluate’ and ‘Create’.

Blueprint of the Model Question Paper

Question Type	Learning Objectives	Language Skill Assessed	Order of Skill as per Taxonomy	Marks
Multiple Choice	Understanding general idea of the Chapter	Reading	Remember & Understand	10X1=10
Reading Comprehension	Learn to apply the information in new situations	Reading	Apply	5X2=10
Paragraph	Draw connections among ideas, differentiate, relate, compare, contrast	Writing	Analyze	4X5=20
Essay	Justify a stand or decision. Argue, defend, critique	Writing	Evaluate	1X10=10
Essay	Create a new text or original work	Writing	Create	1X10=10

College level–Online

Online mode of test design proposed by the study incorporates all the six levels of the cognitive domain in Bloom's Taxonomy. It tests 'Listening' and 'Speaking' skills of students which are not found in the current assessment practice. There are six question types. 'Multiple choice', 'True or false', 'Match the following' and 'Single word fill in' measure the listening skill of students. All questions under these four types carry one mark each while accommodating the five levels of Taxonomy, i.e. from 'Remember' to 'Evaluate'. The last two question types are 'Conversation' and 'Narration' that test 'Speaking' skill. These questions are of 10 marks each.

Blueprint of the Model Question Paper

Question Type	Learning Objectives	Language Skill Assessed	Order of Skill as per Taxonomy	Marks
Multiple Choice	Understand the idea of the Chapter	Listening	Remember & Understand	5X1=5
True or False	Understand the idea of the Chapter Use knowledge in new situations.	Listening	Remember, Understand & Apply	5X1=5
Match the following	Use knowledge in new situations. Draw connections among ideas. Differentiate, solve, interpret	Listening	Apply & Analyze	5X1=5
Single word fill in	Select, weigh, judge and argue	Listening	Evaluate	5X1=5
Conversation	Create a new text	Speaking	Create	1X10=10
Narration	Create a new text	Speaking	Create	1X10=10

Model Question Paper

END SEMESTER - OFFLINE MODE

FIRST SEMESTER BA/BSc DEGREE EXAMINATION

English

ENG1 A01: LITMOSPHERE: THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

Time: Two Hours

Maximum: 60 Marks

Section A Reading

1. Read the following questions and select the right answer from the given options.
 1. How would you define 'blue fire' in *The Rocking Horse Winner*.

(a) Hot Climate	(b) Imagination
(c) Desire for mother's love	(d) Jealousy on neighbour's success
 2. Identify the translator of *Memoirs of Madman* into English

(a) William James	(b) Andrew Brown
(c) Patrick	(d) Cornelia
 3. Name the poem dealing with poetic inspiration

(a) <i>The Thought Fox</i>	(b) <i>To Posterity</i>
(c) <i>Poetry</i>	(d) <i>To a Reason</i>
 4. "If you demand on the one hand, in/defiance of their opinion"--. Where **defiance** means.....

(a) Terror	(b) Resistance
(c) Fear	(d) Death
 5. What is implied in *Half a Day*?

(a) Passage of time	(b) An interval
(c) Childhood	(d) Hardships of life
 6. The word used for 'an aristocrat' in *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman*.

(a) Quack	(b) Sullen
(c) Patrician	(d) Vicar

7. What does Mr Hale mean by 'queer'?
- (a) Rough (b) Strange
(c) Lazy (d) Crooked
8. What did you observe in the poem *The Sleeping Fool*?
- (a) Expression of identity (b) Domestic violence
(c) Racial discrimination (d) Life after death
9. Which dish becomes a bone of contention in *The Cockroach*?
- (a) Pizza (b) Mutton
(c) Salad (d) Soup
10. Why does the writer opine that Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram is a foolish concept?
- (a) It is not found in any books (b) There is no truth and beauty in the world
(c) It is told by a stranger (d) It is difficult to understand

(10X1=10 Marks)

II. Read the passage and answer the questions, each in one or two sentences:

The weather phenomenon called El Nino was first recorded in the 1500s when fishermen in South America noticed that near Christmas some years the water was noticeably warmer than others. They named this El Nino, or the infant, as it happened near the celebration of the birth of Christ. Only in recent years have there been any serious investigations into the causes and results of El Nino. The 1997 – 1998 El Nino was the first to be studied extensively. Scientists from France, Japan, Korea and Taiwan combined the various readings they had from satellite and surface measurements of wind speeds and water temperatures to make the Tropical Atmosphere Ocean Array. This combined information allowed them to see the overall patterns of an El Nino and helped them predict when one was starting. Weather patterns rely heavily on the operation of the “planetary heat engine”. Essentially, this means that because the sun is closest to the equator the seawater in that region is the warmest. The warm water evaporates and forms clouds, which move toward the poles powered by their heat. These atmospheric loops, which move heat from the tropics to the poles, are called “connective cells”. Without this process

the equatorial regions would be hotter than they are and the north and south would be much colder.

The wind in the central Pacific tends to blow from the east. This pushes water from South America towards Australia and Indonesia. As a result, sea levels have been found to be up to 60 centimetres higher in the west. The water that is pushed westward from the South American coast is replaced by colder water, which has a high nutrient level that consequently attracts fish. This makes the waters off Peru and Ecuador good fishing grounds. An El Nino happens when the winds weaken and sea levels drop. The warmer water moves east and less water evaporates to form clouds. The results of this are twofold. The warmer water in the east reduces the number of fish and the lack of rain causes droughts. This can cause problems such as the forest fires that have plagued Indonesia and Australia in recent years. Additionally, El Nino is thought to be one of the causes of hurricanes that have devastated Central and North West America (“IELTS Reading Passages.” Sample 6, *IELTS Buddy*).

11. Sum up the central idea of the passage in a single sentence.
12. Given below are the four statements related to the passage. State which is True or False.
 - a. The term ‘El Nino’ implies the time it was discovered.
 - b. Blowing air seldom influences the sea levels.
 - c. High nutrient level is congenial for fish to grow.
 - d. Geographical phenomena in the ocean lead to weather changes on land.
13. Find out synonyms for the following words from the passage.

a) forecast	b) dry up	c) trouble	d) depend
-------------	-----------	------------	-----------
14. Pick out antonyms for the following words from the passage.

a) repulse	b) separate	c) protect	d) cold
------------	-------------	------------	---------
15. Match Column A with the correct options from Column B

Column A	Column B
a. El Nino	i) Planetary heat engine
b. Weather Patterns	ii) hurricane

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| c .Equator | iii) temperature |
| d .Atmospheric loops | iv) infant |
| | v) warm |

(5X2=10 Marks)

Section B Writing

III. Answer the questions in a paragraph:

16. Suppose you were asked to summarise the central idea of the poem *To a Reason* in the form of a dialogue. Write an imaginary conversation with five exchanges.
17. Analyse the statements in *About Dalit Literature* and draft a speech for the inauguration of Dalit literature club on the topic 'untouchability'.
18. Compare and contrast the motives of The maitre d' and the Customer in *The Cockroach*.
19. How would you explain that *Trifles* is a feminist play? List any five points.

(4X5= 20 Marks)

IV. Answer the following in an essay.

20. What criteria would you use to elucidate *The Rocking Horse Winner* as a story of greed and its destructive consequences.

(1X10=10 Marks)

V. Answer the following in an essay.

21. If you were asked to rewrite *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman* with a different ending, how would you do it? Justify the changes you made.

(1X10=10 Marks)

Model Question Paper

COLLEGE LEVEL - ONLINE MODE

FIRST SEMESTER BA/BSc DEGREE EXAMINATION

English

ENG1 A01: LITMOSPHERE: THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

Time: 30 Minutes

Maximum: 40 Marks

Section A Listening

1. Listen to the audio and pick out the correct answer from the given options

1. Identify the central character in *The Rocking Horse Winner*.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| (a) Uncle Oscar | (b) Paul |
| (c) Bassett | (d) Daffodil |

2. The language in which *Memoirs of a Madman* was originally written.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| (a) Spanish | (b) Latin |
| (c) Russian | (d) French |

3. Identify the poem

*Through the window I see no star:
Something more near
Though deeper within darkness
Is entering the loneliness:*

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) <i>Poetry</i> | (b) <i>To a Reason</i> |
| (c) <i>The Thought Fox</i> | (d) <i>Body Without the "d"</i> |

4. A child challenging the idea of schooling is found in

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) <i>Half a Day</i> | (b) <i>To Posterity</i> |
| (c) <i>Memoirs of a Madman</i> | (d) None of these |

5. What is identified as a recurring theme in Trans poetry?

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| (a) Death | (b) Animals |
| (c) Rain | (d) Body |

(5X1 =5 Marks)

II. Listen to the audio and tick the correct answer- *True or False*

6. *The Rocking Horse Winner* is set in a Gothic ambience.

- (a) True (b) False

7. The main idea in the poem *Poetry* is creative writing

- (a) True (b) False

8. *Half a Day* is presented as a symbol for an entire life of an individual.

- (a) True (b) False

9. The poet uses 'You' as a metaphor in *To a Reason*.

- (a) True (b) False

10. *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman* begins with the phrase "A treacherous friend and a fickle wife".

- (a) True (b) False

(5X1 =5 Marks)

III. Listen to the story. Understand the ideas and match column A with the options from column B

- Click to listen

A	B
11 The swallow was in love with	a) Seamstress
12 Ruby was given to	b) Egypt
13 The poor match girl gets a	c) Cyprus
14 The swallow was willing to go to	d) Playwright
15 Unable to buy food and firewood	e) Reed
	f) Sapphire

(5X1=5 Marks)

IV. Listen to the audio and fill out the missing word. You may type the answer in the space provided

16. By reading *To Posterity*, we can conclude that the writer expressesabout the future.

17. The writer exposes the cliched expectations of the reader in the first chapter of

18. The line “it enters the dark hole of the head” signals the collision of the animal and

19. “You must create your characters for yourself” explains the whole process ofwriting.

20. The work.....addresses someone who can create a new world order.

(5X1=5 Marks)

Section B Speaking

V

21. Role play a conversation for any one of the following situations. Say at least TEN exchanges.

- a) Restaurant
- b) Hospital
- c) College
- d) Shopping Mall
- e) Bank

(1X10 = 10 Marks)

VI

22. Choose any of the following topics and give a short description narration about it. Say at least TEN sentences.

- a) A tourist place
- b) Your village
- c) A sad incident
- d) A memorable event
- e) A historical monument

(1X10 = 10 Marks)

Further scope of the research

The primary aim of learning a language is to equip oneself with the competency to use it. The acquisition of such a skill is not materialised in the UG Classrooms at present. As a consequence, students who pursue advanced programs or employment in foreign countries have to attend special coaching classes to get

through international English language proficiency tests like IELTS. To overcome this barrier, students at the university level should be taught higher order thinking skills. Since there are IELTS and TOEFL aspirants even in rural areas, an undergraduate student should undergo learning and testing of English. So a study of the feasibility of such a change in the present system can open new vistas in the area of English Language Teaching.

In schools, students learn prescribed textbooks for specific purposes. But in Undergraduate levels, textbooks of English are created by compiling literary pieces from various sources, sometimes completely irrelevant for the purpose. So a possibility to develop customised texts at the UG level, considering the scope of ESP, which supports the declared aims of language learning to cater to the needs of students from different streams or disciplines, can be another area in which further research is possible.

Conclusion

The overall interest of the academic community shows that skill oriented testing is preferred over rote memory. Teachers as well as students support the reduction of the number of questions in the question paper. Moreover, enhancing the number of application level questions too is a demand by the academic community. The greatest threat for the teachers at present, especially in the UG Common Course classrooms, is the higher number of students which is due to clubbing various batches. It creates a problematic situation for the teachers who find it difficult to implement experiential learning. So, reducing the number of such classrooms to a manageable one is a pressing demand by the teaching community. To sum up, the general trend in the study shows that an overhauling of the existing system is mandatory to attain the aims and objectives of language learning and also to put an end to the skill-score mismatch.

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APPENDIX 1

Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Questionnaire- Skill based testing https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqVLTmny5MgrizL...

Teacher Questionnaire- Skill based testing

This questionnaire intends to collect, as part of a PhD study, the perspectives of teachers on the implementation of skill-based testing for Common Courses in English and also their views on the existing testing mechanism. Your responses and personal data will be used only for the research purpose (AFSAL JAMAL, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN ENGLISH, PTM GOVT COLLEGE, PERINTHALMANNA)

 **afsaljamal@gmail.com** (not shared) [Switch account](#) 

* Required

1. Your name *

Your answer

2. College *

Your answer

3. Are you happy with the changes brought about in the question pattern of A01 *
(Common English - Transactions)?

Yes

No

1 of 6 
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4. Are you happy with the question pattern of A02 (Common English- Ways with * Words)?

Yes

No

5. If your answer to the question No.3 is YES, what you like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

- Skill based nature
- Lack of descriptive question
- Total number of questions
- Logical distribution of weight to each skill
- The variety of question format
- Lack of rote memory based questions

6. If your answer to the question No.3 is NO, what aspects you dont like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

- Skill based nature
- Lack of descriptive question
- Total number of questions
- Logical distribution of weight to each skill
- The variety of question format
- Lack of rote memory based questions

7. Of the two question patterns (A01 and A02), which one is ideal for Common Courses in English? *

A01

A02

8. Please comment; why *

Your answer

9. Which kind of testing is good for improving the language skills of students? *

Skill based

Memory based

10. Do you think that ideal language tests have to assess the applied skills of learners rather than their ability to recall information? *

Yes

No

11. Do you believe that application level testing has to be implemented from high school level onwards? *

Yes

No

12. Has skill based nature of questions in A01 changed/influenced your method *
of teaching the text?

- Yes
- No

13. If your answer is YES or NO to question no 12, briefly explain *

Your answer

14. In your views, what should be the percentage of application level questions *
in a test for assessing English language abilities?

- Below 40
- Between 40-50
- Between 50-60
- Between 60-70
- Above 70

15. Do you believe that the skill-based approach in text books or testing (A01) *
has positively influenced the learning style of your students?

- Yes
- No

16. Do you believe that even A02 should have some application level questions targeting the higher order skills? *

Yes

No

17. What testing do you think is ideal for preventing possibility of cheating on tests? *

Skill based

Content based

18. Do you believe that Common English tests at UG level mostly assess the learner's ability to memorise contents of the text? *

Yes

No

19. Do you think that the current testing system, being largely memory based, has negative impact on the learning process? *

Yes

No

20. Do you think that the current testing system, being largely memory based, has negative impact on the teaching process? *

Yes

No

21. What do you think the major differences between a test in language and a test in a subject are? *

Your answer

22. What are your suggestions to improve the current test patterns of Common English Courses at UG level? *

Your answer

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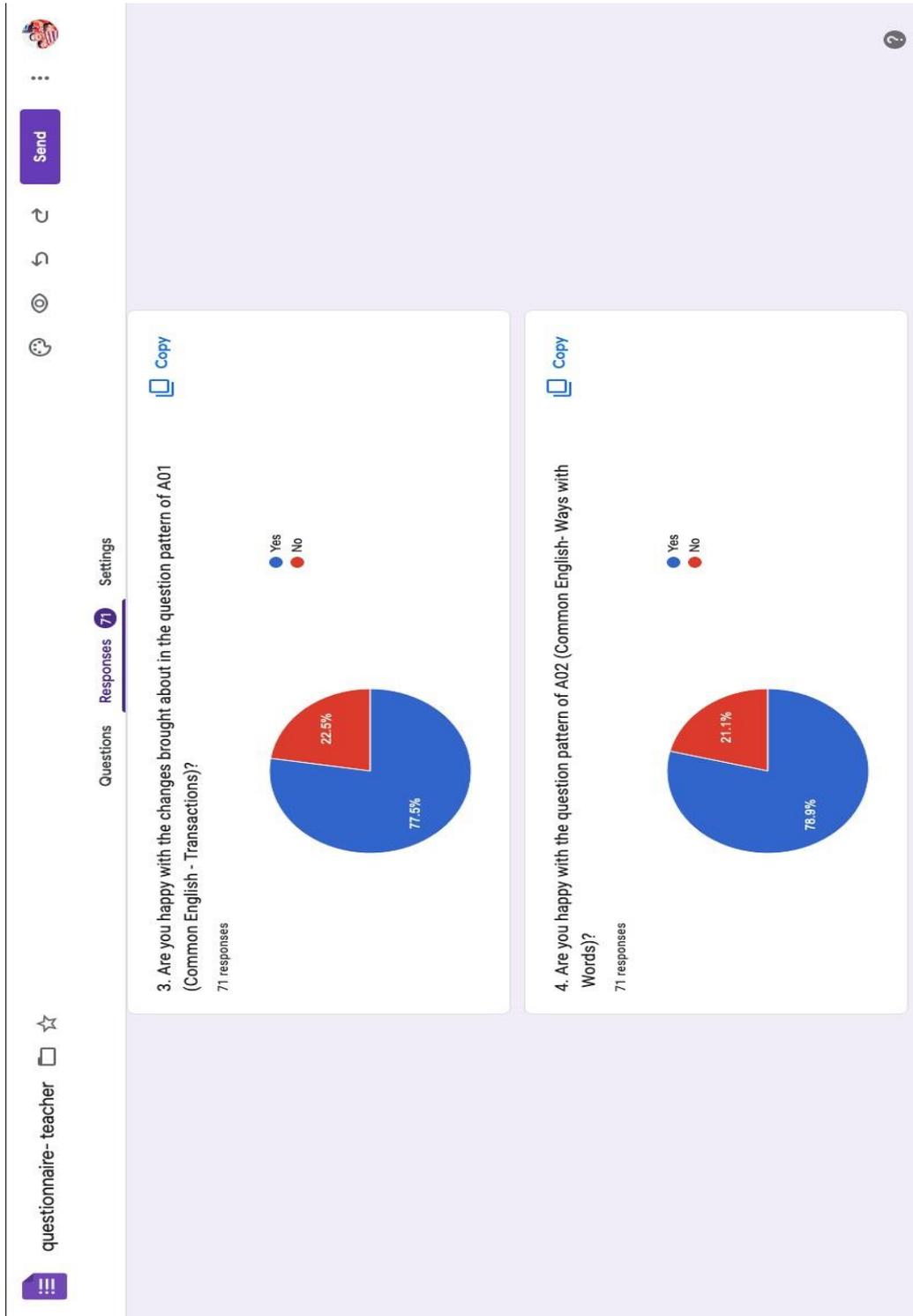
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APPENDIX 2

Responses to the Teacher Questionnaire





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Questions Responses 71 Settings

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5. If your answer to the question No.3 is YES, what you like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

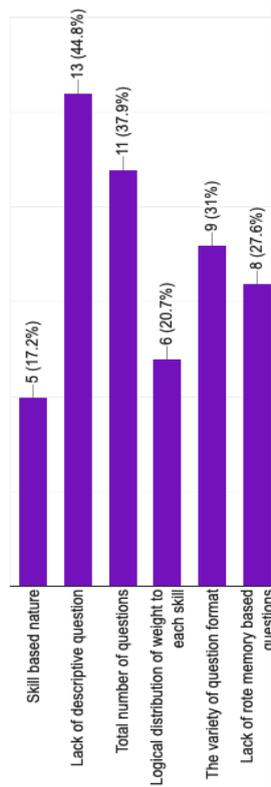
56 responses



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6. If your answer to the question No.3 is NO, what aspects you dont like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

29 responses





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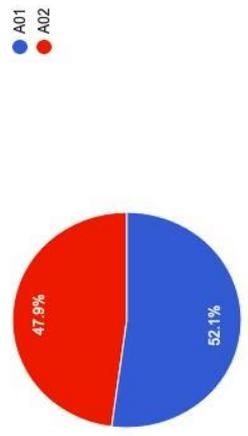


Questions Responses 71 Settings

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7. Of the two question patterns (A01 and A02), which one is ideal for Common Courses in English?

71 responses



8. Please comment; why

71 responses

- Good Syllabus
- It encourages the learning of the functions of grammar
- Better model to test language
- I am not able to select A01 . Skill based questions are ideal for testing language acquisition.
- Descriptive pattern is necessary for English common course
- Students should get a atleast a taste of literature

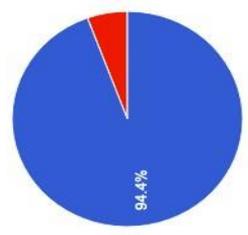


9. Which kind of testing is good for improving the language skills of students?

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71 responses

● Skill based
● Memory based

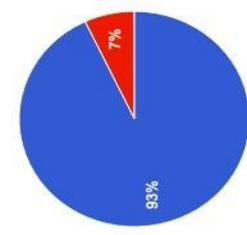


10. Do you think that ideal language tests have to assess the applied skills of learners rather than their ability to recall information?

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71 responses

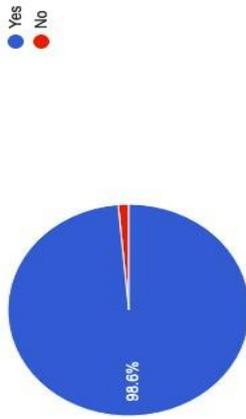
● Yes
● No





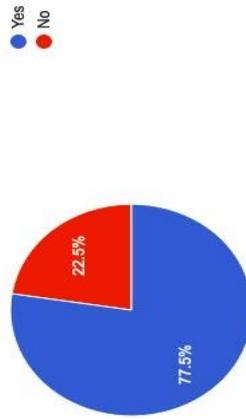
11. Do you believe that application level testing has to be implemented from high school level onwards?

71 responses



12. Has skill based nature of questions in A01 changed/influenced your method of teaching the text?

71 responses





13. If your answer is YES or NO to question no 12, briefly explain

71 responses

It has become more learner centered

Yes. I have started making Students do more excercises

Nature of questions definitely requires a change in nature of methodology of teaching. I became specific about skills.

Need to spend more time for practices in the classroom. It's ideal for interactive class rooms.

Students give more concentration on this subject because of the fact that they cannot score marks by memorising. There is an active participation in the class too.

Students get more acquainted with the skills of reading and understanding a text rather than mere memorising

I can inculcate texts from newspaper articles and reviews

Traditional method of teaching such as lecture method is rarely used

14. In your views, what should be the percentage of application level questions in a test for assessing English language abilities?

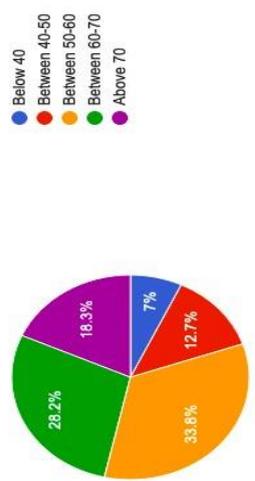
71 responses



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14. In your views, what should be the percentage of application level questions in a test for assessing English language abilities?

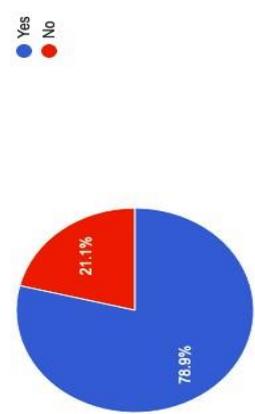
71 responses

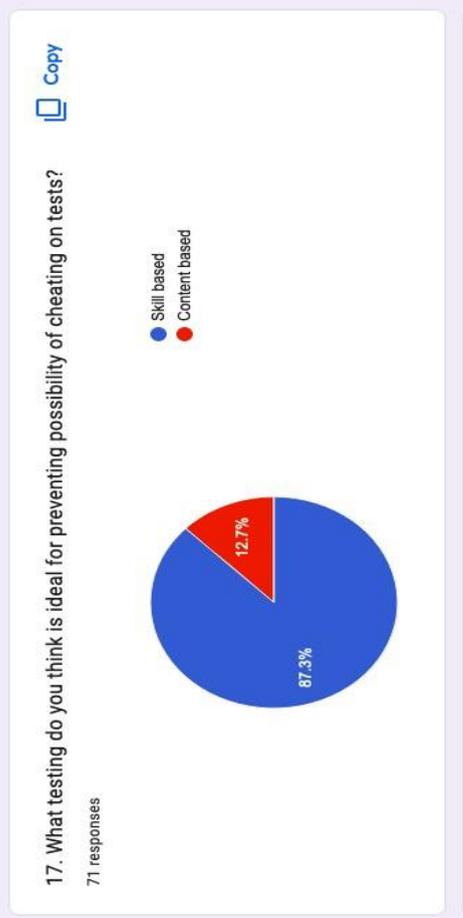
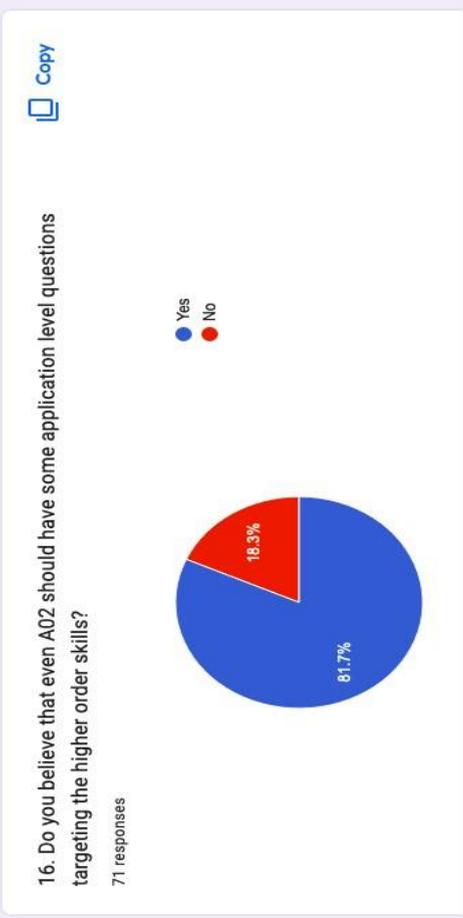


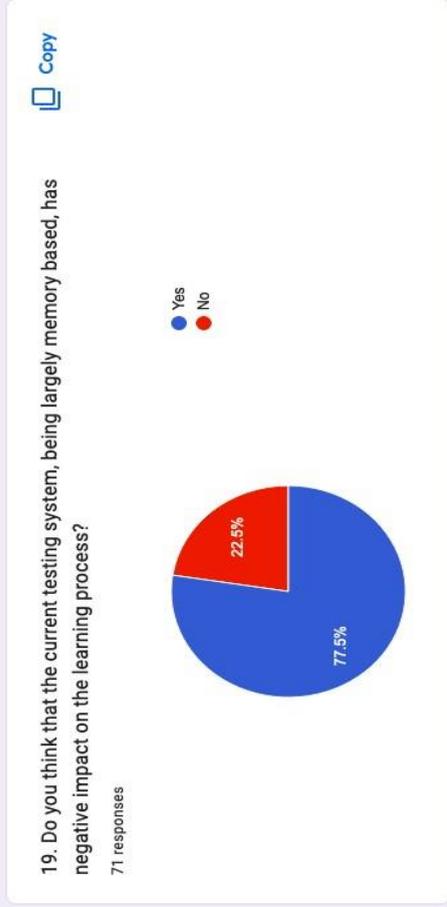
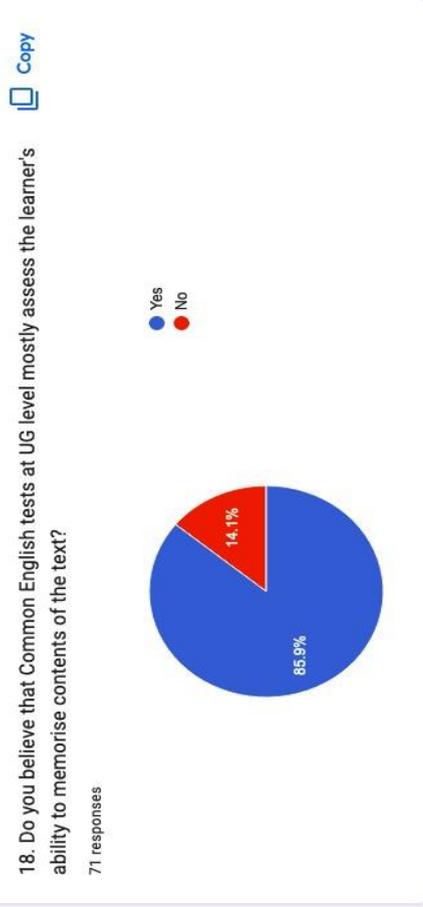
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15. Do you believe that the skill-based approach in text books or testing (A01) has positively influenced the learning style of your students?

71 responses



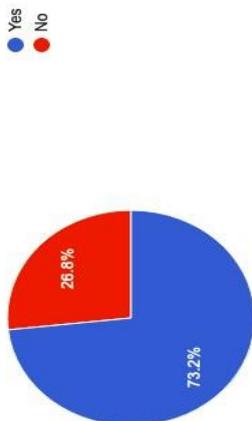






20. Do you think that the current testing system, being largely memory based, has negative impact on the teaching process?

71 responses



21. What do you think the major differences between a test in language and a test in a subject are?

71 responses

- ... subject gives more importance for the content, and language of the student is considered secondary
- A language paper must assess the ability of a student to read, analyse and express his/ her thoughts creatively which gives language testing an application realm. Subjects whereas must have a greater weightage on content or principles learnt and its application.
- skill based and content based respectively
- One is based on the skills and the other is on content knowledge
- Tests in a language is based on the four skills(LSRW), and higher thinking skills like critical thinking, problem



Send



questionnaire- teacher



Questions Responses 71 Settings

ENSURING ADEQUATE IN-CONTEXTS FOR PRODUCTION PURPOSES, WHERE AS THE TESTS IN SUBJECTIVE ASSESS THE CURRENT knowledge of the student and the application of the knowledge to solve specific problems.

22. What are your suggestions to improve the current test patterns of Common English Courses at UG level?

71 responses

It seems that there should be a judicious combination of skill based activities augmented by sufficient number of celebrated works . Unfortunately many of the works selected for the common course remain dull and insipid. Furthermore, as far I could discern, there is a lack of a concise and reliable text which might enable the students to get themselves familiarised with the syntactic structure of English. Actually nothing productive or creative does take place in class rooms except the mechanical paraphrasing of the works and had it been not for the study aids ,with Malayalam translation incorporated in them, nearly 60% of the graduates would not have pulled through the exams. Based on nearly 11 years of experience what I feel is that the whole first semester should be spared to teach the basics of English grammar and usage right from the parts of speech onwards, of course some 5 or 6 interesting woks covering all genres may be included.

There are too many exams / papers in this course. Students are over burdened therefore, they do not get time to ingest the content or enjoy their classes. It is not possible for teachers to spend class hours for discussing areas/topics/books outside of syllabus.

Reading habit is missing and teachers are unable to persuade students to read or guide them to authors or works, this could be fruitfully achieved in annual system of examination,

Includes skill based questions

No ceiling mark is needed. Students will be confused and try to answer the questions in a hurry as they are free to answer every questions.



APPENDIX 3**Student Questionnaire**

Student Questionnaire- Skill based testing <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScbxZb7EjQt5Wn8..>

Student Questionnaire- Skill based testing

This questionnaire intends to collect, as part of a PhD study, the perspectives of undergraduate students on the implementation of skill-based testing for Common Courses in English and also their views on the existing testing mechanism. Your responses and personal data will be used only for the research purpose

 **afsaljamal@gmail.com** (not shared) [Switch account](#) 

* Required

1. Your name *

Your answer

2. College *

Your answer

3. Programme *

Your answer

4. Year of study *

2 Year

3 Year

1 of 6  

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Student Questionnaire- Skill based testing <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScbxZb7EjQt5Wn8...>

5. Are you happy with the changes brought about in the question pattern of A01 *
(Common English - Transactions)?

Yes

No

6. Are you happy with the question pattern of A02 (Common English- Ways with *
Words)?

Yes

No

7. If your answer to the question No.5 is YES, what you like about the question
paper (You can tick more than one response)

Skill based nature

Lack of descriptive question

Total number of questions

Logical distribution of weight to each skill

The variety of question format

Lack of rote memory based questions

Skill based

Memory based

2 of 6 

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8. If your answer to the question No.5 is NO, what aspects you don't like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

- Skill based nature
- Lack of descriptive question
- Total number of questions
- Logical distribution of weight to each skill
- The variety of question format
- Lack of rote memory based questions

9. Of the two question patters (A01 and A02), which one was easier to you? *

- A01
- A02

10. Please comment: why *

Your answer

11. Which kind of testing is good for improving your language skills? *

- Skill based
- Memory based

12. Do you think that language testing has to measure your applied skills rather *
than ability to recall information?

Yes

No

13. Do you believe that application level testing has to be implemented from *
high school level onwards?

Yes

No

14. Has skill based questions in A01 changed / influenced your teacher's *
method of teaching the text?

Yes

No

15. If your answer is YES or NO to question no 14, briefly explain *

Your answer

16. What do you think the percentage of application level questions in language * testing should be?

- Below 40
- Above 40
- Above 60
- Above 90

17. Has the skill based approach in A01 text changed your method of study *

- Yes
- No

18. Do you believe that even A02 should have some application level questions * targeting the higher order skills?

- Yes
- No

19. What testing do you think is ideal for preventing possibility of cheating on * tests?

- Skill based
- Content based

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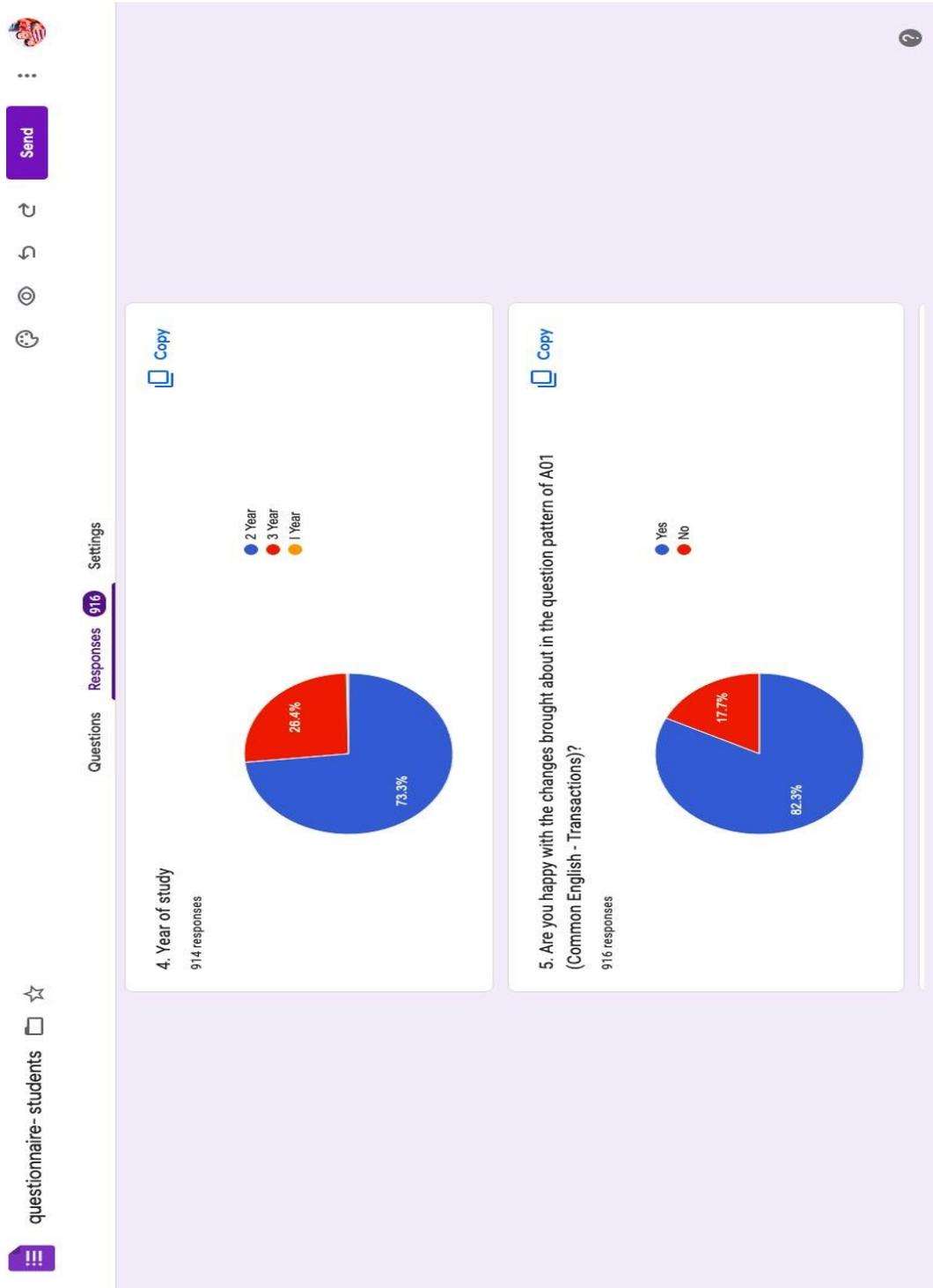
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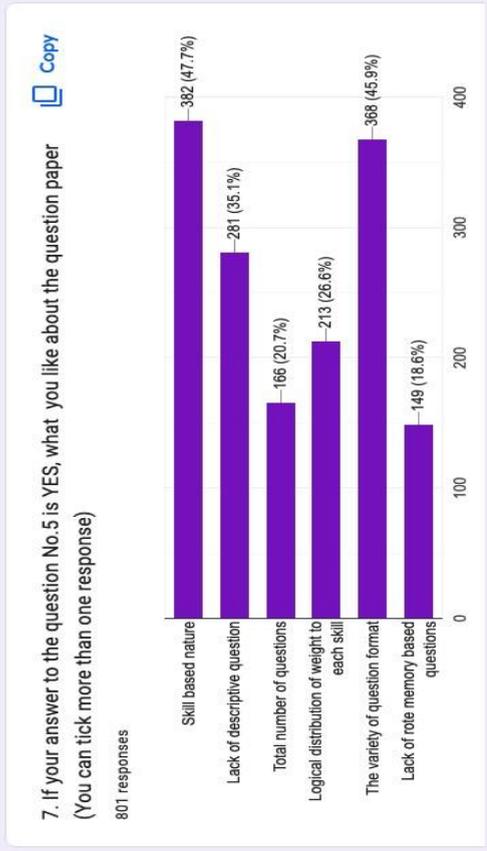
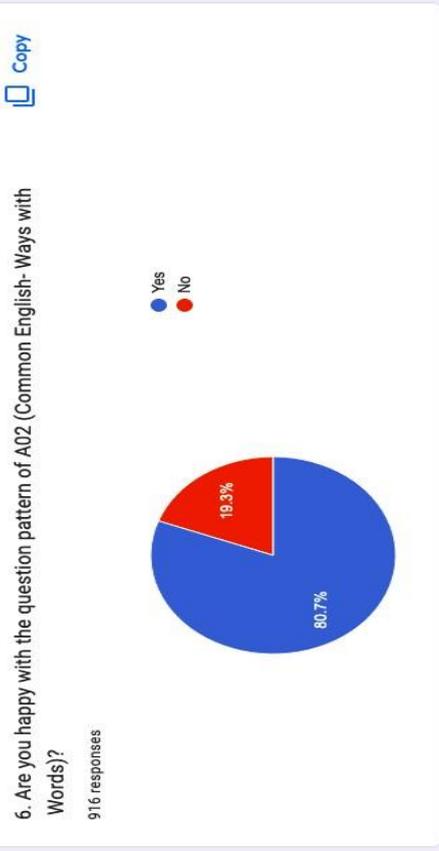
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APPENDIX 4

Responses to the Student Questionnaire

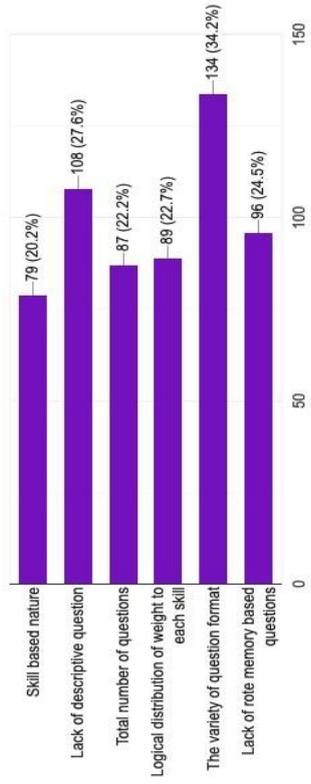




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8. If your answer to the question No.5 is NO, what aspects you don't like about the question paper (You can tick more than one response)

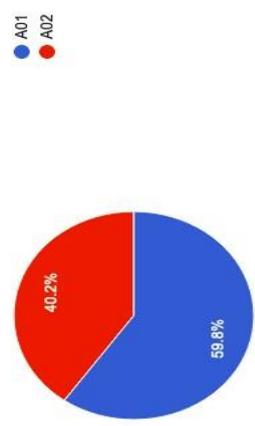
392 responses



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9. Of the two question patters (A01 and A02), which one was easier to you?

916 responses



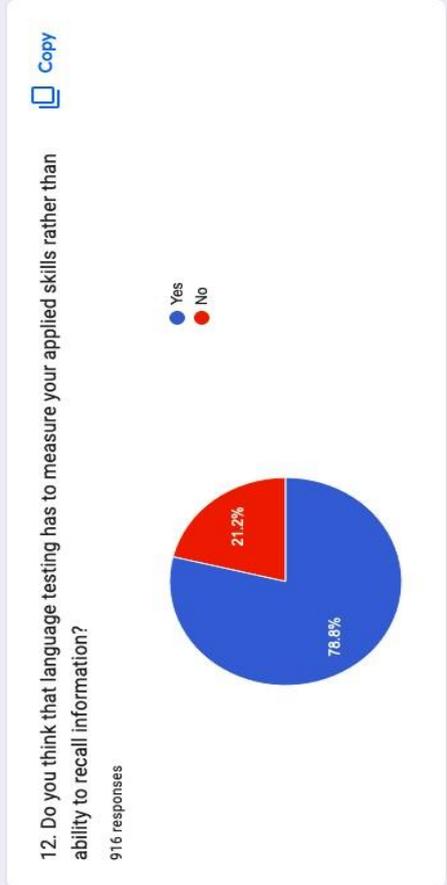
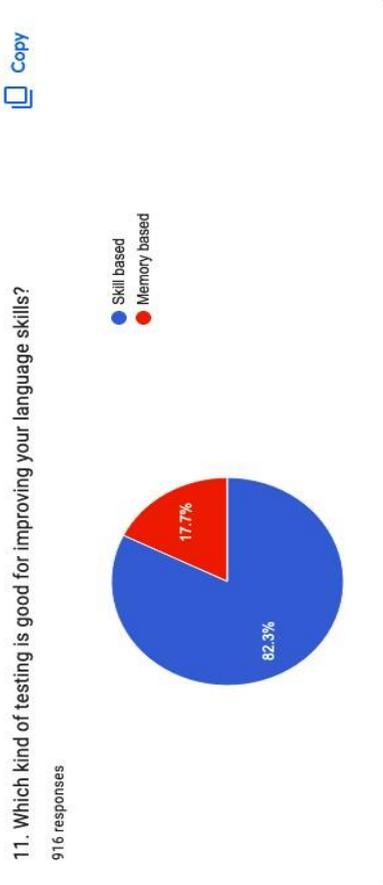
10. Please comment: why
916 responses

- Lack of discriptive questions
- A01 seems to be skill based
- I could gave logical answers
- It is more easier than A02
- Interesting to study
- It's more easy
- Because I like Stories
- Easy to understand
- A02 full of poems and stories, that more impressed me.

11. Which kind of testing is good for improving your language skills?
916 responses

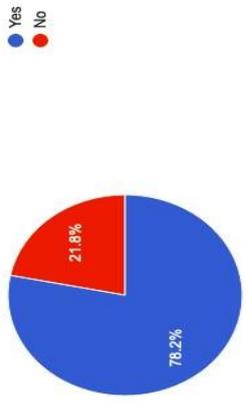
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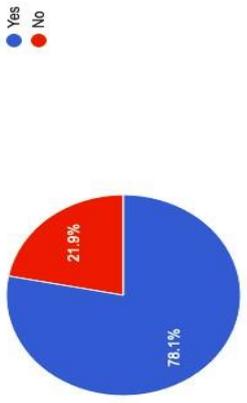
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13. Do you believe that application level testing has to be implemented from high school level onwards?
916 responses



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14. Has skill based questions in A01 changed / influenced your teacher's method of teaching the text?
916 responses



15. If your answer is YES or NO to question no 14, briefly explain

9/16 responses

- In our book ,each things has more examples. that teachers were compared with our daily life, so we can think it perfectly and that improved our language skills.
- Because my teacher 's method is simple and easily accessible to me.
- They started to concentrate more on the concept.
- Method of teaching is good
- We didn't experience that much of a change in the teaching patters and methods
- Because,they deeply explain the thing and they will adopt the simple way of teaching to make us understand.This helped us to learn about the same easily.
- Our teachers always try their best to teach us using different methods. So it is very helpful for us to pass the exam.

16. What do you think the percentage of application level questions in language testing should be?

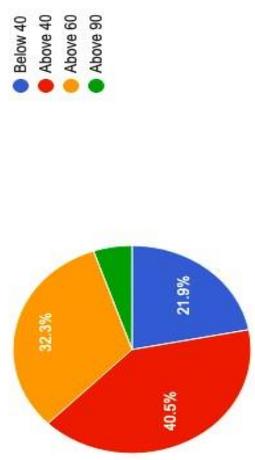
9/16 responses

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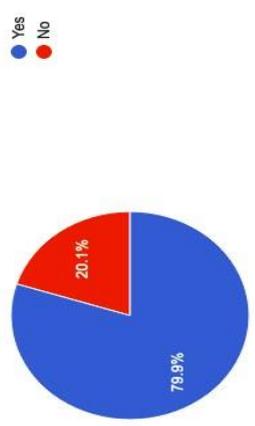
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16. What do you think the percentage of application level questions in language testing should be?
916 responses



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17. Has the skill based approach in A01 text changed your method of study?
916 responses





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questionnaire- students

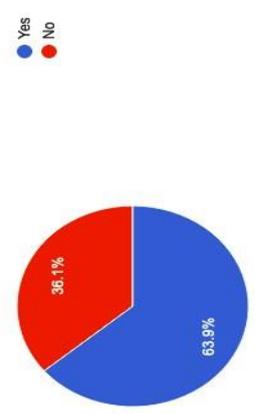


Questions Responses 916 Settings



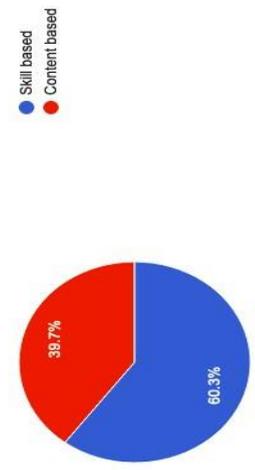
18. Do you believe that even A02 should have some application level questions targeting the higher order skills?

916 responses



19. What testing do you think is ideal for preventing possibility of cheating on tests?

916 responses



Appendix 5

Questions- Structured Interview

1. Do you think the skill oriented language testing of English is to be implemented at university level, if so why, if not why not?
2. Do you think the current system of testing for Common English Courses is ideal for improving Language skills of learners? Please justify your answers.
3. How far, do you think, is the feasibility of carrying out *English language teaching and testing in common English classes * on par with international standards?
4. What are your suggestions/recommendations to make the common English classes more students oriented and effective, with respect to promoting better language acquisition?
5. As an English teacher, what sort of changes would you like to suggest or bring about in the current *testing and assessment * patterns?

Appendix 6

Responses- Structured Interview

1. Do you think the skill oriented language testing of English is to be implemented at university level, if so why, if not why not?

Yes. I don't feel it should be implemented at the university level because, unfortunately, in our present system, there is no provision to test the skills of the students particularly with respect to speaking. What the employers are looking for in a graduate is their skills in the language rather than mere information they possess about the language.

2. Do you think the current system of testing for Common English Courses is ideal for improving Language skills of learners? Please justify your answers

Not at all. As I have mentioned, there is no provision to test the listening and speaking skills of the students. Hence, the current system of evaluation followed in the case of common courses are incomplete if not preposterous.

3. How far, do you think, is the feasibility of carrying out *English language teaching and testing in common English classes * on par with international standards?

I think we make a lot of relaxations and effect dilutions in the standard and quality of the syllabi we prepare for the Common English often with the vested interest of the mediocre English teachers and the lazy and mediocre students. The basic principle to follow in preparing materials is the gradation of materials.

Unfortunately, what is taught in the UG classes is just the replica of what is found in the Secondary and Senior secondary English textbook. Students at the UG level should be made to encounter and face something more challenging than what they do at lower classes.

4. What are your suggestions/recommendations to make the common English classes

more students oriented and effective, with respect to promoting better language acquisition?

In the name of the teaching English, most teachers end up summarising the story or translating the story in to vernacular. Many of them are not keenly interested or inclined to teach English as a skill subject and help the learners acquire it. So, the following suggestions are mooted.

- a) Teachers should be given training in teaching English as a skill subject and the tenets of Communicative Language Teaching should be utilised.
- b) While framing the syllabus, the priority should be to the interest of the students and their educational and career requirements rather than the maintaining the status quo and comfort zone of the teachers.
- c) The alleged vested interests of the BOS members and the lucrative enticement of the text book, if any, should be done away with.
- d) The teachers of English should periodically undergo training and their performance with respect to their ability to handle English as a skill subject should be properly monitored by competent body of academicians not politically nominated.

5. As an English teacher, what sort of changes would you like to suggest or bring about in the current *testing and assessment * patterns?

- a) The intake of the students admitted in a Common Class should be downsized, say , to a level of 40 students in the class
- b) The stress should be more on teaching functional English rather than orienting them towards the chunks of English literature
- c) The ipsative and formative assessment should be given equal importance along with summative evaluation.
- d) The materials and modules should be evolved through workshops rather imposing from the above.

Q 1 Do you think the skill oriented language testing of English is to be implemented at university level, if so why, if not why not?

Modern English is widely considered to be the lingua franca of the world and is the standard language in a wide variety of fields, including computer coding, international business and higher education.

As English is a mandatory Common Course for students enrolled in undergraduate programmes, it is essential to conduct skill oriented language testing so as to enable the students to set learning goals for themselves and, to facilitate the teacher to gauge the potential of a class at large and address the issues/ difficulties of slow learners.

A student enrolling for undergraduate programmes should have more than the basic knowledge of English grammar and phonetics. At the university level students should be taught higher skills required for national and international tests for higher studies or careers. Since, there are IELTS and TOFEL aspirants even in rural areas, an undergraduate student should undergo learning and testing of English.

Q 2 Do you think the current system of testing for Common English Courses is ideal for improving language skill of learners? Please justify your answer.

The current system of testing for common and core courses is more or less identical comprising of internal test papers, seminars and assignments followed by end-semester examinations. Students are hampered by too many tests within the span of a semester, components like assignment and seminar in common courses are treated as 'mere formalities' for the attainment of internal marks. Language courses are generally relegated to a secondary status as the accent is more on science subjects.

Like in any other language, in English too, apart from the 'four skills' of listening, speaking, reading, and writing other skills such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and spelling all play a role in effective English communication. The end semester examinations are neither conducive to skill enhancement nor appropriate for a qualitative assessment of students' aptitude.

Q 3 How far, do you think, is the feasibility of carrying out English language teaching and testing in common English classes at par with international standards?

The student strength of Common English classes range from 130- 75 (for a duration of one hour/ period). In such a class the proficiency levels of students are markedly heterogeneous ranging from the poor to outstanding. So, in such a scenario language teaching and language testing cannot be tailored to suit the requirements of individual students.

International standards of teaching and testing are geared to enhance and evaluate all parameters of language skills, hence, the pedagogy hinges on student specific methodology incorporating the latest technological infrastructure available for the purpose. The teachers too are specifically trained for undertaking such a task. Moreover, only a small percentage of academic or career oriented students opt for international learning and testing. Such students already possess a higher level of English language expertise.

Therefore, the current 'structure' of a common English classroom i.e. the highly disproportionate teacher student ratio and lack of appropriate technical infrastructure impedes the realisation of quality upgradation of teaching and testing.

Q 4 What are your suggestions/recommendations to make the common English classes more student- oriented and effective, with respect to promoting better language acquisition?

Language acquisition is a complicated process of gaining the competence to manoeuvre skillfully through linguistic nuances. It's a comparatively long term dedicated learning activity. A student requires time to digest and ingest the various components of language.

The syllabus should not be too cumbersome for the teacher and student. Classroom discussions and activities should be given priority.

Common classes should be treated on par with the core classes in terms of student strength and academic significance of the course. This will enable the teacher to cater to the academic needs of individual student and design appropriate classroom group activities.

There should be only a year- end examination for common English courses, thereby easing the pressure on students from a ‘perpetual test’ mode to a less hasty and a more rewarding learning process.

Q5 As an English teacher, what sort of changes would you like to suggest or bring about in the current testing and assessment patterns?

Currently there are six papers across four semesters for common English courses.

a) The number of papers should be reduced to two, one at the end of each academic year (even semesters). All the registered undergraduate students do not go for higher studies, research or seek careers in corporate sector, therefore in the second year only those who aspire for the above mentioned learning or career options need to take the course. It would transform the common course from a **mass to class** format which will result in a more productive and participative teaching learning experience.

b) Students’ development of the four skills can be unbalanced, e.g. a learner could be strong in reading, but weak in listening or writing or speaking. English being a foreign language, Indian learners often have strengths or weaknesses in particular skills and in some cases can achieve high levels in, for example, reading and writing, while not being able to speak or listen at a comparable level.

The present one size fits all testing system is inadequate for assessing listening and speaking skill. The second year should focus more on testing these aspects as well as nuanced appreciation of literature. In semester exams, odd semesters) should be replaced with creative projects in English undertaken by students.

c) Above all, as most national and international tests are internet based (IBT), students need to be familiarised with this mode of taking exams at university level.

d) Students should be encouraged to use software applications which enable them to test their reading abilities and improve their skills.

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Afsal Jamal <afsaljama@gmail.com> to me

1. Of course, the language teaching and testing at University level should be designed so as to develop self- awareness, self - confidence and social , interpersonal, organisational professional & leadership skills as well as social and professional etiquette.
2. The current system of testing in common course English is far from improving language skills of the learners since it is confined to testing only the learners ability to reproduce the content and not comprehensive enough to develop various skills essential for a successful life and career .
3. Common course English language teaching and testing can be carried out at par with international standards only after effecting a thorough transformation in the attitude of both the teachers and the learners. This can be achieved by ensuring certain pre- requisites including infrastructure and proper pre- learning and teaching training
4. Common English classes can be made more student- oriented if the curriculum is destined so as to promote the learners' multiple skills along with language acquisition .
5. Apart from testing the learners ability to reproduce the content, the project for teaching and testing English language should focus on the learners ability to use language in real life situation along with giving them training in social and professional etiquettes and skills

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Interview Response - afaaliamul x

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Fri, Sep 3, 2021, 9:49 PM

Interview Response

to me

1. The skill oriented language testing of English helps the students to improve their communication and basic knowledge in grammar. Students are always facing the problem of acquiring any language other than their mother tongue. Continuous skill oriented language testing helps them to improve their skills.
2. The testing for Common English Courses is ideal for improving Language skills of learners. It will be more feasible for students if the teachers approach their classes as per the provided system.
3. Students should acquire the basic level of English language at the school level. Fortunately university level teaching keeps their standards but students could not accept such level of standard teaching due to lack of basic grammar and situational speech. Common English classes with international standards are possible only after nurture at the root level.
4. The best way to make the common classes more student oriented is to make the classes English speech oriented. It helps them to acquire the tendency to speak English more fluently and wind up the system of teachers oriented and bring students oriented classes, that is teachers also decorate the role of a participant.
5. The current testing and assessment patterns are effective. But teachers should change from the role of grade provider to grade receiver like the students in the class. It will change students' approach to their teachers and consider them as guides.

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Sat, Sep 4, 2021, 11:13 PM

to me

1. Definitely, in the era of outcome based education, rather than conducting conventional mode of evaluation with traditional methods of questioning on the basis of prescribed course book, learners must have gone through the skill based evaluation tools so as to ensure the standards of higher education. Unlike any other core courses, testing a language competency must be skill based. It helps in opening many national and international level opportunities too.
2. Not exactly. The current system envisages skill based learning which is oriented in giving ample chances to cater listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) through various modules. But at the same time, the traditional evaluation system is never in accordance with the skill based learning and evaluation.
3. Well, teaching, learning and evaluation at the higher education scenario is the result of continuous research and studies. The hindrance in acquiring the desired skills by a student of graduation doesn't lie in lack of good syllabus, quality teaching materials and quality teachers. But the big number of students in common course classes is a major obstacle in implementing experiential quality based teaching learning and evaluation tools. In order to reach international standards, there must be some means to reduce teacher student ratio in higher education institutions, especially in common courses at the undergraduate level.
4. I would like to put forward the following suggestions for better student oriented teaching and learning, at the UG level in the common English classes.
 - a. Teacher-student ratio must be scientifically reintroduced, say 1: 50
 - b. There must be activity oriented pedagogy at the UG common course.
 - c. Classroom must be equipped with all the digital teaching tools like, projector, mic, speaker, computer, recorder, etc
 - d. There must be a language lab in the institution
 - e. Teachers must be given sufficient in-service training in outcome based language teaching, English teaching methodology and effective teaching and evaluation tools.
 - f. Lack of proper pre-service training for the higher education teachers is to be addressed effectively.
5. Skill based teaching and evaluation must be implemented. There must be ample chances to improve LSRW at UG level and evaluation must be an extension of the classroom activity where students are to be tested on the basis of skills rather than traditional content based exam. Learning activities must be implemented in the classroom and as part of testing, activity based tests also to be ensured. Advanced digital tools can be used for testing language competency too.

Thankyou sir

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Sat, Sep 4, 2021, 8:27 AM

Afsal Jamal <afsaljamil@gmail.com>

to me

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Sat, Sep 4, 2021, 8:27 AM

1. It must be implemented at the earliest, because it involved a mechanism that evaluates the hidden, other wise unexplored talents of the learners.

2 . Not enough. There is an immediacy of unveiling the full potential of a learner whose multi dimensional talents in using soft skills need to be tested effectively so as to enable him / her to enter into the job market such as communication and marketing techniques, debating skills, resolving conflicts and broadcasting abilities, to say a few

3. The feasibility lies in the fact that testing for common courses determines the paradigm shift that occurred from the wake of globalization and market economy which made devastating changes in the arena of modern education. If sea changes are not occurring in the conventional model of assessment and evaluation, the very purpose of introducing this course becomes meaningless exercise. Improving language skills directly makes an impetus on education system, research, mass and social media, start ups, small scale industry, business management, institutions of political governance, and bureaucracy, and ? what not

4.Replacing grammar_ translation method with more interactive method , collaborative learning, role play models by using skills based methods for the rapidly changing demands of the public and professional life. Instead of answering a set of questions, passages or unknown texts could be used for testing practical criticism, analysis or framing questions, or even stylistic tools for teaching language and literature vice versa... Moreover, ESP could be effectively used for achieving better out come of the common course

5 Testing and assessment patters must address the oral skills of the learners along with writing quality works / materials such as creative writings, content writings, copy writings and drafting texts for different occasions that are based on needs in the employment purposes. Communication and problem solving skills could be more introduced without sacrificing literature portions. While bringing more short stories one _ act plays, selected scenes or dialogues from popular literary pieces (past and present) the learners' conversational abilities, acting skills, role play in a changed atmosphere.. (for instance, Othello of a college boy and Desdemona of today, Getrude of modern lady, new young gen Hamlet, division of property within three boys of these days' King Lear, reaction of Mrs. Bennet in the dowry death cases, etc could be given to the comparative analysis or situations, instead of carrying on with the same 'old, dead muttuns of Shakespeare and Milton (echoing The English Teacher of R. K. Narayan) ..

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