



AN EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE FOUNDATION CURRICULA IN U. G. COURSES

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Abstract

UGC's initiatives for the compulsory Language Foundation courses, in the UG programme, are no doubt an important step in the direction of developing self-learning skills. Either Hindi or English or both are offered under such courses. The sample in the study included LF Curriculum of Hindi and English of first two semesters in the UG courses of Guru Ghasidas Vishvidyalaya. To know Language Proficiency level, an English achievement test was conducted on sample of 100 students of UG Courses in G.G.V Bilaspur. For an opinion study, a sample was taken of 15 teachers (7 English and 8 Hindi) G.G.V. Three tools were used in this study. A Check List was prepared for the structural analysis of the LFC. To assess the level of Language proficiency, an English Comprehension test was developed by the Researcher. A Language Foundation Course Evaluation Questionnaire was developed for knowing the input from the teachers teaching the course. It was revealed from the study the entry level behaviour in terms of language proficiency of the first year UG students was found to be poor. Not a single among the 100 students, scored above 11 out of total score of 20 in the simple proficiency test in English



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Language is a medium by which human being communicate to each other. Language is the most abstract, complex and developed system of communication. It shows immense flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and dynamicity in term of both grammatical semantic systems of different linguistic system. While the spoken language plays a fundamental role in social interaction and communication, the written language has contributed to production and accumulation of knowledge and discourses and to the development of social order, institutions, human history and civilization.

Language plays a vital role in the development of mind, the process of thinking and growth of knowledge. It has made a fundamental contribution to human civilization. While it forms the basis for education in all human societies, language education constitutes one of the most significant aspects of educational system. The vital role of language in general and of language education in particular cannot be understood in proper perspective without

characterizing its nature and functions.

Language plays a constructive and constitutive role and representation and understanding of reality and transmission and growth of knowledge. The complex abstract grammatical semantic conceptual system of language along with its socio-cultural world view is internalized by the human mind in the process of social interaction and communication. Thus language acquisition and language internalization creates in the human mind with complex conceptual system and rich cognitive and thinking faculties on the one hand, and a distinctive self with perspective understanding of social reality and culture on the other. They transform the biological man into a socio cultural being.

We shall now consider now consider the special features of the various subject areas of education activity which, in our opinion, should form part of the school curriculum at different stages. We shall take up for discussion only that aspect which needs to be highlighted with particular reference to our national and educational goals as well as the specific objectives of school education.

Three Language Formula—The Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956 examined at length the complex problem of the teaching of the language in relation to the needs of the country and the requirements of the Constitutions.

The suggestion of Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-1949) was that the three language formula for media of instruction should be followed at the university level along with the Regional language or mother language or the Union language. It also suggests continuing the English Language Education upto the University Education level (Das.2003, p.325-326).

Mudaliar Education Commission (1952-1953) suggested two-language formula in the following way:

- During the middle school stage every child should be taught at least two languages. English and Hindi should be introduced at the end of the junior or basic stage subject to the principle that no two languages should be introduced in the same year.
- At the high and higher secondary stages at the least two languages should be studied, one of which being the mother-tongue or the regional language.

EMOTIONAL INTEGRATIONAL COMMITTEE was also in support of ‘Three Language Formula’. (Pathak. 2010)

INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION (1964-1966) also modified this formula in this way, described below.

- 1- 1st _ The mother –tongue or the regional language.
- 2- 2nd _ The official language of the union, Hindi or the association official language of the union so long as it exist, like, English.
- 3- 3rd _ A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under 1 and 2 and other than that used as medium of instruction.

‘**THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION** (1986), emphasizes the adoption of regional language as the media of instruction at the university stage , vigorous effort at implementation of the three language formula, improvement in the linguistic competencies of students at different stages of education ,provision of facilities for the study of English and other foreign language development of Hindi as the link language, as provided for in article 351 of the constitution, teaching of Sanskrit at the university stage as part of certain courses like Indology ,Indian history, archaeology etc .

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: 2005 considers that bilingualism or multilingualism confers definite cognitive advantages (NCERT, p.40-45) to the learners. It also refers that the three language formula is a strategy to address the challenges and opportunities of linguistic situation in India and provides basis for multilingual skills. NCF emphasises its implementation both in letter and spirit to promote multilingualism and National Harmony.

NCF—2005 frames the following guidelines to achieve these aims:

- Language teaching needs to be multilingual not only in terms of the numbers of language offered to children but also in terms of solving strategies that would use the multilingual classroom or recourses.
- Home language of children, should be the medium of learning in school.
- If a school does not have provisions for teaching in the child’s home languages at the higher levels, primary school education must still be covered through the home language.
- Children will receive multilingual education from the outset. The three language formula needs to be implemented in its spirit promoting multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country.
- In the non Hindi speaking states children learn a language not spoken in their area. Sanskrit may also be studied as a modern Indian language (MLL) in addition to these languages.
- At later stages, study of classical and foreign language may be introduced.

As the foundation courses have been introduced by U.G.C. as compulsory for the UG courses to enhance the basic thinking and expression capacity. Either Hindi or English or both are offered under such courses.

University of Delhi (2013) had depicted the objectives to help undergraduate students to:

- **Use language** in a variety of social situations, academic as well as professional contexts.
- Develop their **listening** skills by responding appropriately to spoken language.
- Express themselves confidently and **speak** fluently in a range of social and professional situations.
- Develop **reading skills** / strategies needed to read a variety of texts.
- Improve their **writing skills** in terms of expressing ideas or points of view and organizing thoughts coherently and clearly.
- **Understand** and **appreciate** different kinds of literary genres and expressions.
- Become creative in expression, thought and presentations.
- **Write** and **present** their project proposal and final reports.

Despite such important objectives, there have been ample criticisms of the same at different public forum as reflected by Roy Chowdhury (May 17, 2013). Institutions vary in their format and objectives for such courses; in many cases the whole process is not even well-set. Students generally neglect such courses where only passing is required for getting promotion. This background brings in a perspective to look into the pros and cons of the language foundation curricula, both planned and in operation. Some **Curiosity Questions** bloomed in were as follows:

- How efficiently are the language foundation curricula of the higher education institutions designed to lay sound foundation of thought and expression among the learners?
- How appropriate are the language foundation curricula in operation to fulfil its aims?

Research Objectives

The study aimed to achieve the following research objectives:

- 1:** To study the language proficiency of the first year U.G. students of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya
- 2:** To study the teachers' opinion on the implementation of the *Language Foundation Curriculum* in GGVSU

- 3: To study the structure and content characteristics of the syllabi of *English Language Foundation Curriculum* and *Hindi Bhasha Adhar Pathyakram* for the UG courses of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya.
- 4: To identify the strengths in the structure and content characteristics of the English Language Foundation and *Hindi Bhasha Adhar Pathyakram* for the UG courses of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya.
- 5: To identify the weaknesses in the structure and content characteristics of the English Language Foundation and *Hindi Bhasha Adhar Pathyakram* for the UG courses of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya.

Delimitations of the Study

- The evaluation is delimited to the Language Foundation curricula of GGV.
- The study is conducted on sample of G.G.V. Bilaspur (C.G.) of Science, Social science and Humanities Faculties of male and female students and incidentally found teachers of GGV. Who teaches English and Hindi language according to foundation courses.
- The study has been delimited to the evaluation of (i) planned curricula and (ii) operative curricula through teachers' opinion only, and did not include the experienced and achieved curricula.

Definition of Terms

- **Language foundation curriculum** refers to the language curriculum compulsory for all U.G. students in the Indian higher Education Institutes.
- **U.G. Courses** refer to the courses that confer graduate degree by any recognized university or college of India.
- **Scheme of the Study**
- The concept of curriculum is multidimensional. Most often, we take the curriculum as equivalent to the syllabus, which is nothing but a list of content. A curriculum is a plan as well as an ongoing process. It can also be taken as praxis and a context as well. In another approach, the curriculum can be viewed in four ways: the planned curriculum, the enacted process or ongoing curriculum, the experienced or implemented curriculum and the achieved curriculum. The four views arise from the fact that whatever planned may not be translated into product or implementation. Therefore, none of these aspects provide a complete view of curriculum. Even if the course curriculum remains the same, different teachers teach and transact it

differently. Hence, the curriculum may be operated by the teachers and experienced by the students in a different way as the curriculum was planned, due to many factors coming into it.

- It is, therefore, necessary to view the 'curriculum' as a system, especially for the purpose of studying or evaluating it. In this way, one can study and focus on different components of the curriculum which ultimately result into learners' experience and achievement of broad educational goals.
- *Hence, in the present case, the evaluation of the Language Foundation Curriculum system has been done through the following components:*
- *(i) Syllabus (structure & content): For studying the planned curriculum*
- *(ii) Language Foundation Course Teachers (opinion about curriculum): For studying the probable operative curriculum*
- *A curriculum should be evaluated and developed on the basis of needs of the student population. Hence, to frame a basis of the evaluation, students' proficiency of the language has also been studied.*
- **Population and Sample**
- **Population:** The population for the study consists of (i) all the Language Foundation Curricula, running in different higher education institutions of India, (ii) male and female students of undergraduate level. (iii) Teachers who are teaching in the LFC in any higher education institution.
- **Sampling technique:** To get the sample, **Purposive and incidental sampling technique** was used for all the above population.
- **Sample:** The study involves three kinds of sample as described follow:
- (i) The sample of LF Curriculum of Hindi and English includes that of first two semesters in the UG courses of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya.
- (ii) To know the Language Proficiency level, an English achievement test was conducted on a sample of 100 students of UG Courses in G.G.V. Bilaspur, Koni.
- (iii) For an opinion study, a sample was taken of 15 teachers (7 English and 8 Hindi) of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur.
- **: Tools used**
- [1] A Check List was prepared for the structural analysis of the LFC.

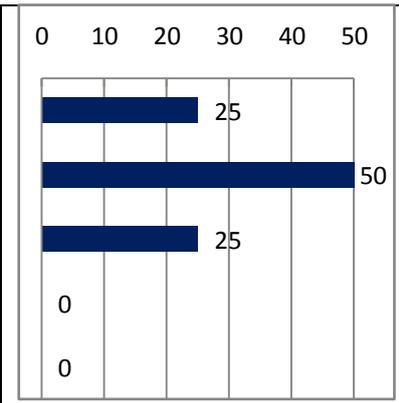
- [2] To assess the level of Language proficiency, an English Comprehension test was developed by the Researcher. With one dictated passage, the test consists of eight questions on grammar and comprehension based on the passage. The distribution of marks was the following: first question carrying 6 marks, second carrying 3 marks, third, fourth, fifth, sixth carrying 1 mark each, seventh carrying 2 marks and the last carrying 5 marks. Grand total was 20 marks. Time given was 30 min.
- [3] A Language Foundation Course Evaluation Questionnaire was developed for knowing the input from the teachers teaching the course. This aims to know in what way they teach in class; what the objective of language foundation curricula is as perceived by them, in what way they develop four skills among the student (Reading, Writing, Speaking, listening) as well as develop vocabulary and literary appreciation. 17 questions were related from L.F.C. and 2 questions were subjective for suggestion of modification and reforms.

Results & Discussion

Findings from the English proficiency test of the Graduation First year students of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya.

For testing the English language proficiency, a simple passage was dictated by the researcher among the students. Some objective questions were asked on that passage, of total 20 marks. The Table-1 shows the results of the 100 students on the test as the following:

Interval of marks	No. of Students	% of students
00-03	25	25%
04-07	50	50%
08-11	25	25%
12-15	00	0%
16-20	00	0%



Out of 20 total Marks, 25 students were found to get 0 to 3 marks, 50 students were obtained 4 to 7 marks and only 25 students were obtained 8 to 11 marks and no students obtained 12-15 marks and 16-20 marks. Poor quality of basic proficiency in English Language can be

easily located here. This shows the lack of simple working English of the graduate level students.

Findings from the opinion expressed by the teachers of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya about the language foundation course, to the ‘Language Foundation Course Evaluation Questionnaire’

The results have been reported below for each dimension of the items:

(I) Reading skills:

Item- 1: Do your language foundation curricula have and objective to develop reading skills among the students?

All 15 teachers have chosen “Yes”. Hence, all of the teachers included in the sample agree that developing reading skills is one of the objectives of their Language Foundation Curricula.

Item- 2: How do you ensure developing reading skills among the students for developing reading skills?

All of the 15 teachers answered positively to the item no. 1. But from the responses to the ways to develop reading skills, Table 2 shows a different and contradictory picture. Only 08 teachers (~50%) expressed that they possibly adopt some practical approach to develop reading skill. Only 06 (~40%) Teachers said that they practice the reading skill development strategies on daily basis. Only 08 (~50%) teachers agrees to take such efforts on weekly basis.

Table–2: Showing the of responses to the Item–02 (a, b, c, d,)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Practically	6	2	0	08
b) Daily	6	4	0	10
c) Weekly	8	1	1	10
d) Other tutorials	2	2	3	09

(II) Speaking skills

Item- 3: Do your Language Foundation curricula have an objective to develop speaking skills among the students?

14 teachers point out “Yes” option i.e. except one all the teachers agree that their language foundation curricula have an objective to develop speaking skill among the learners.

Item- 4: To develop fluent speaking skills in a range of social and professional situation, what does your curriculum permit you to do?

Table-3: Showing the of responses to the Item-04 (a, b, c, d,)

	No. of responses to the options			Total
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	
a) Teach grammar in the class.	9	3	0	12
b) Communication training	7	4	0	11
c) Ask questions and take answers	12	0	0	12
d) Any other				

Though 14 teachers accepted that their LFC had an objective to develop speaking skills, the above Table-3 reveals that total 12 teachers use teaching of grammar to develop a practical skill of fluent speaking. A Theoretical training has been taken as a tool to develop a practical skill which is quite surprising!

Further only the half of the teachers (07 out of 14) mostly use specific communication training approaches for the said purpose.

The Table-3 also shows that asking questions and taking answers were the most preferred way of the 12 teachers to develop the aforementioned skill.

Item- 5: Do you keep specific spoken English classes in your time table?

Only 6 teachers point out “yes” and 5 teachers point out “No”.

Item- 6: How many spoken English class are held in a week?

Table-4: Showing the of responses to the Item-66

No. of responses to the options		
One	Two	Daily
4	2	3

The responses to the Item 06 are contradictory to the responses to the item 05 as the number of teachers confirming specific spoken English classes were only five but as per the Table-4, this should be 09. Hence, a scope of misleading and contradictory information can be identified here.

Any valid conclusion may not be reached from the data. Hence, the researcher matched the time-table of the LFC for the Graduation first year students and found no periods were allotted specifically for the said purpose. Hence, it may be the teachers’ own initiative to allot particular periods for the said purpose, but the overall curriculum plan does not include such provision.

Item- 7: For solving pronunciation problem what do you do?

Table-5: Showing the of responses to the Item-07 (a, b, c, d, e)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Check their pronunciation problem while reading texts in the class.	9	3	1	13
b) By spoken English in the class	7	5	1	13
c) Check their notes given by the teacher in the class.	4	5	3	12
d) Check dictated paragraph.	4	5	3	12
e) Any other				

(III) Writing skills:

*Item- 8: Do your Language Foundation curricula have an objective to develop **writing skills** among the students?*

All the 15 teachers pointed “Yes” option.

Item- 9: To improve writing skills of learners, what do you do in class?

Table-6: Showing the of responses to the Item-09 (a, b, c, d,)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Give scope to write correct words by dictation	9	3	0	12
b) Suggest for quality writing	7	2	1	10
c) Encourage seeing dictionary	8	2	2	12
d) Any other	0	0	0	0

Here we see, all the 15 teachers told that they have an objective to develop writing skills among the students; but at the most 60% of them actually give scope to write correct words by dictation, suggest for quality writing and encourage seeing dictionary. Here is big contradiction to the responses to the previous item.

The responses shown in the above table reveals that only 13 of them take some specific measures as pointed out in the item 10 for the said purpose of developing writing skills. Among these only 7 (i.e. less than half of the teacher sample) seem to be regularly taking such measures as per their given response to the item.

Item- 10: For developing vocabulary strength what do you do in the class?

Table-7: Showing the of responses to the Item-10 (a, b, c, d,)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Use antonyms and synonyms of known words in the class.	7	6	0	13
b) Give them specific exercises to use new words.	7	6	0	13
c) Give them specific task for dictionary.	7	5	0	12
d) Any other			0	0

The responses shown in the above table reveals that only 13 of them take some specific measures as pointed out in the item 10 for the said purpose of developing writing skills. Among these only 7 (i.e. less than half of the teacher sample) seem to be regularly taking such measures as per their given response to the item.

Hence, it is doubtful that the students regularly exposed to the learning situations that offer such tasks (as in options a, b, c) leaving the scope of inadequate practice and acquisition of such skills.

(IV) Listening skills:

*Item- 11: Do your Language Foundation curricula have an objective to develop **listening skills** among the students?*

13 teachers responded in favor of “YES” option and one teacher said “NO”.

Item- 12: For developing their listening skills by responding appropriately to spoken language, what do you do?

Table-8: Showing the of responses to the Item-12 (a, b,)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Give scope of repeating listened speech	8	4	1	13
b) Question-answer exercises in the class	8	4	0	12

To promote listening skills, half of the sample of teachers mostly uses scope of repeating listened speech and question answer exercise in the class. Even half of the above sample uses these approaches sometimes only. So, only half of the sampled teachers take serious measures for achieving these objectives as per their given responses.

(V) Literary appreciation:

*Item- 13: Do your Language Foundation curricula have an objective to develop **literary appreciation** among the students?*

All the 15 teachers opted for “YES”.

Item- 14: To understand and appreciate different kind of literary genres and expression, what will you do?

Table–9: Showing the of responses to the Item–14 (a, b, c, d,)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Teach poetry	8	3	0	11
b) Teach prose	8	3	0	11
c) Teach both	12	13	0	25
d) Teach grammar	07	02	01	10

Of the 15 teachers, having an objective to develop literary appreciation, only half teach poetry, prose and grammar mostly with the aim of developing understanding and appreciation of different kind of literary genres and expression. Others take an average stand they sometimes use such approaches for the said purpose. In the curricula of LFC, literary appreciation is specifically mentioned, but only half of teachers reported to take high initiative in this direction in spite of the fact that they all accept and have identified the said objective in their curricula.

(VI) Identifying grammatical errors:

Item- 15: In which part of grammar, do the students commit mistakes in writing and speaking?

As per the Table-10:, 60–65% of the teachers accepted that most of the mistakes done by the students were related to tense, narration and framing sentences. One third of the teachers reported that mistakes related to the verb and voices are most common.

Table–10: Showing the of responses to the Item–15(a, b, c, d, e)

	No. of responses to the options			
	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
a) Tense	10	5	0	15
b) Verb	5	6	0	11
c) Voice	5	5	0	10
d) Narration	8	4	0	12
e) Framing sentences	9	4	0	13

Suggestions by the teachers:

Item- 16: Please mention some other objectives of the Language Foundation curricula if you have:

Of the 15 teachers, teachers responded to this item. This item got very less response and most of the teachers found the existing curricula to be satisfactory. Speeches, group discussion, practical and language laboratory assignments, regular encouragements were some of the few responses given by the teachers.

Item- 17: How would you like to modify the Language Foundation Curricula to achieve the aim of developing a strong language foundation for facilitating learning in higher education?

All the 15 teachers responded to this item. Besides the teaching of grammar prose, poetry etc., the teachers suggested that teaching through cultural activities may also be incorporated. This, they think, would make learning field based which would be the best experiences in this age. Allotment of Specific teachers for such foundation courses was one of the suggestions. To make the time table to be regular, flexible and time specific was also suggested. Some teachers suggested including the provision of oral presentation and seminar. Some teachers wanted to add some more texts in the course and some wanted inclusion of specific word power development approaches.

Implication of the study

On the basis of the result and interpretation of responses, the study shows the following implications.

It gives an indication and necessity of framing curriculum as per the students need. The analysis of the structure and the content organisation of the syllabi may provide an informed basis to frame suitable curricula of language foundation for U.G. Courses. When the necessity of a need based curriculum is being emphasised in modern theories of curriculum development, this study gives a support to follow such processes. The study also provides a direction in designing how to organise the contents that enhances clarity, gives specific direction, empowers the learners for self-learning and forces the objectives of the course to be aptly realized. To improve language skills, especially among the learners of the low level emerged in the proficiency test, it is necessary to give regular input in the form of a lesson element for every class, regular class as well as home assignments. To make the operative curriculum aligned with the aims, more specific and detailed syllabus structure is needed. The study has an informed input towards this vision.

Moreover, the comparative study of the curricula of the language foundation course of Hindi and English reflects a parallel platform to compare the objectives, structure and the contents of the syllabi. The strengths and weaknesses as compared to each other give an insight to look into the syllabus design of the other related fields to adapt to the emerging situations of multilingual compatibility.

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