

## Developing Writing Skills in the Context of Teaching English as a Second Language for the Professional Course Students

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### Abstract

This paper reports a study of the language needs of the Professional students. The problem selected for this study was to identify the methods and materials required for training in writing skills for professional students at advanced levels. In particular, the study seeks to examine the significant differences if any in the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components in English due to variation in community. Findings of the study shed light on the specific set of competencies for teachers of English at engineering colleges in the state of Andhra Pradesh and inform the strategies for the development of writing skills components of the students.

**KEYWORDS:** Grammatical components, strategies, English language teaching, communication skills

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### INTRODUCTION:

English has acquired the status of a collaborative language, and it is considered as the most significant language of India. After Hindi it is the most commonly spoken language in India and probably the most read and written language in India. English is used not only for communication with the outside world but also internally for inter-state and intrastate. Because of the great ethnic and linguistic diversity found within our nation, English serves as an essential 'link language'. English epitomizes in Indians' minds, superior education, greater culture and higher intellect. English also acts as the communicator among Indians who speak different languages.

There are abundant books and articles on the place of English in the Indian education system, job competition and culture, and on its socio-linguistics aspects, pronunciation and grammar, its effect on Indian languages and Indian literature in English.

The main objective of the present study is to '*develop writing skills in the context of teaching English as a second language for professional course students*'. Professionals at JNTU asserted that 'knowledge of the traditional 'grammar form' and 'communicative function' are both necessary ingredients for success in the scientific-technical field.'

*The survey was conducted with the following objectives in view:*

- To find out the language needs of the Engineering students.
- To develop Diagnostic Tests to identify their skills in different writing components.
- To identify a specific set of competencies for teachers of English at Engineering colleges in the state, based on the needs survey.

- To find out the significant differences if any, in the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components in English due to variations in their Sex and Community.

The study was conducted in three phases. In phase I Pre-test was conducted, Phase II Post-test was conducted and Phase III questionnaire was administered to elicit data from the teachers who were teaching to professional students. Findings of the study helped to shed light on an important facet of developing writing skills in the context of teaching English as a second language for professional course students.

#### **REVIEW:**

Vivian Zamel (1983) looked at the composing processes of six advanced ESL students. Among the six, there were both skilled and unskilled writers. Zamel found that the least skilled writer in her study, like native-English speaking counterparts, ‘paused so often and between such short chunks of discourse that the overall relationships between ideas seemed to suffer’. She concludes that some composing problems transcend language factors and hence, are shared by both native and non-native English speakers.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

This section introduces data about the profile of the respondents involved in the research, community of the respondents and the influence of these on the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components of English.

#### **SAMPLE:**

The place chosen for research is Joginpally B.R. Engineering college located at Yenkapally, Moinabad . For the purpose of research purpose a sample consisting of 180 students who got registered 60 each in EEE, CSE, IT branches has been taken.

#### **VARIABLES:**

The variable taken into consideration is Community of the students (SC/ ST/ BC/ OC).

**The research tool used:** The following tools were used to facilitate the research.

#### **Phase I –Pre-test:**

A Pre-test was conducted to one hundred and eighty students at the beginning of the study who belonged to EEE, CSE, IT students in the college. It consisted of twenty items in the form of Part-A and Part-B separately. Part A consisted of ten questions through which the researcher tried to gain information about the learners and their awareness of writing English. Part B consisted of 50 questions based on grammar components.

#### **Phase II: Post Test:**

A post test was conducted to the same set of students after completion at the end of the academic year to test whether there was any improvement in the performance of the students in the grammar components. Comparison was made between the pre-test and the pre-test.

**Phase III: Teachers' Questionnaire:** This tool was used to get an insight into teacher's views regarding writing skills.

**Interpretation: Frequency distribution of the student's performance in the Pre-test for total score.**

The mean and standard deviation scores of students are 25.02 and 5.02 respectively. Out of the 147 students selected for the study, 53 students have got their tests scores very close to the mean of the sample. There are 26 students who have scored less than the mean scores of the distribution; where as 68 students have scored more than the mean score of the distribution of the total sample. This indicates that there is difference in the student's performance.

S. No	CI	MP	F	CF	C Percent
1	10-15	12.5	6	6	4.08
2	15-20	17.5	20	26	17.69
3	20-25	22.5	53	79	53.74
4	25-30	27.5	51	130	88.44
5	30-35	32.5	15	145	98.64
6	35-40	37.5	2	147	100.00

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of Pre-test score for Total Sample:**

S. No	CI	MP	F	CF	C Percent
1	20-25	22.5	11	11	7.48
2	25-30	27.5	21	32	21.77
3	30-35	32.5	38	70	47.62
4	35-40	37.5	53	123	83.67
5	40-45	42.5	24	147	100.00

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Post-test for Total Sample:**

The mean and standard deviation scores of students are 34.95 and 5.85 respectively. Out of the 147 students selected for the study, 38 students have got their tests scores very close to the mean of the sample. There are 32 students who have scored less than the mean scores of the distribution; where as 77 students have scored more than the mean score of the distribution of the total sample. This indicates that there is difference in the student's performance.

		OC			SC			ST			BC			
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	F Ratio
Voc	Pre	61	6.56	1.85	20	5.25	2.19	4	3.25	1.30	62	5.82	1.88	5.600**
	Post	61	8.61	1.78	20	6.65	2.61	4	4.50	2.60	62	8.00	2.23	7.736**
	Pre	61	7.43	1.50	20	6.50	2.18	4	5.25	1.09	62	6.79	1.71	3.521*

<b>Gram</b>	Post	61	9.87	1.70	20	8.65	1.77	4	7.75	1.48	62	8.98	1.77	4.719**
<b>Coh</b>	Pre	61	2.92	1.16	20	2.25	1.41	4	2.75	0.83	62	2.76	1.19	1.508@
	Post	61	4.28	1.19	20	3.00	2.07	4	3.25	2.05	62	3.84	1.60	3.685*
<b>Orgn.</b>	Pre	61	9.62	2.46	20	8.65	2.13	4	7.25	0.83	62	9.35	1.89	2.209@
	Post	61	14.39	2.17	20	13.30	2.74	4	11.00	2.45	62	13.60	1.67	4.527**
<b>Total</b>	Pre	61	26.52	4.72	20	22.65	6.33	4	18.50	2.60	62	24.73	4.16	6.220**
	Post	61	37.15	4.97	20	31.60	7.27	4	26.50	3.04	62	34.42	5.03	9.387**

**Table 3: Influence of Community on Vocabulary, Grammar, Cohesion, Organization and Total.**

**Table 3.** shows the mean and standard deviation scores of students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization in Pre and Post test and the calculated f-values based on their community.

The table reveals that caste has significantly influenced the performance of the students in vocabulary and grammar in Pre-test; vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization in Post-test. Further it is observed that there is a tremendous improvement in the performance of the students in the post-test in comparison to the Pre-test.

The obtained mean values show that the students of OC category performed better than SC, ST and BC category. Further BC category student's performance was better than the SC and ST students' performance. SC category student's performance was better than ST category.

Contrary to this, the obtained F-values for cohesion and organization in Pre-test are not significant. But in the Post-test the performance levels of the students increased in cohesion and organization components.

Hence the formulated hypothesis, 'there exists significant difference in the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, organization performance put together by the students due to the variation in community is accepted' with regard to vocabulary and grammar in Pre-test and vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization in Post-test.

Further, there was an overall tremendous improvement of about (3.167) in Post-test in comparison to the Pre-test. It is assumed that after a year teaching the students have shown significant improvement in post-test.

From the above, it can be summed up that community of the students has significant impact on their performance in vocabulary and grammar in Pre-test and vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization in Post-test; where as it has not shown any influence in the performance level of the students in cohesion and organization in Pre-test.

#### **Implications of the study:**

The problem selected for this study was to identify the methods and materials required for training in writing skills for professional students at advanced levels. It was considered essential for counseling the lecturers and plan a suitable schedule for skill development in general and writing in particular.

There was development after one or two sessions of teaching. Drilling of correct sentences to the professional students in their tasks is helpful in developing their writing. Mere writing practice is inadequate and the data has proved that there are interfering factors such as listening ability, general interest in expressing technical details in lay terminology. Ambition for their career was also a decisive factor

### **Findings:**

At the end of the study the following observations have been recorded.

Community of the students has no significant influence on the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar components in English in Pre-test; whereas it has no significant influence in cohesion and organization components in English. Community of the students has significant influence on the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components in Post-test. OC student's performance was better than backward, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe students.

The findings in the present study suggest that more efforts need to be made by the teachers to develop the writing skills of the students. In conclusion it would seem imperative that appropriate measures be taken to improve the linguistic competence. The measures, among others, could be in the form of greater emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization as well as remedial language strategies.

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