



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**An Evaluation of Existing Gap between the Needs of Social Sciences' Students and the Goals of English Language Intermediate Students in Punjab**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The significance of the subjects of social sciences is acknowledged in every part of the world. This is the reason that majority of the students get admission in these subjects which prepare them for successful and bright future. Nowadays, English Language is an integral part of social sciences because almost majority of the research papers and books of social science are being published in English Language which needs a lot of concentration from the authorities and the teachers. The present research examines the gap between the needs of social science students and the goals of English Language syllabus for these students. Evaluation of a syllabus is a continuous and perpetual process which is quite natural in academic process. It is realistically speaking, linked with the finding of the suitability of the syllabus with the needs to be met in a given piece of time. The study concluded that there is an existence of strong gap between the needs of social sciences' students and the goals of English language syllabus which needs to be fulfilled.

**Introduction**

The present research has been designed to evaluate the present syllabus of English for the student of social science and at the same time puts forward the needs of the students. This research will answer the question whether the present syllabus is fulfilling the requirements of the students or a gap between the syllabus and the needs of the students is existed. The eminent linguists Fullan 2016' Bently and Cazaly 2015 have pointed out the educational problems faced by the students due to the short comings in the syllabus. Zundans-Fraser, 2014' Levin and Marcus 2010 have also highlighted the challenges for the teachers because of the syllabus which does not cater the needs of the students.

The term evaluation has been defined by Butt (1966) as describing something in terms of selected attributes and judging the degree of acceptability or suitability that has been described. In fact and certainly, it is an attempt to assess the suitability of the

stipulated course contents in accordance with some instrumental factors which may be enlisted as the needs of the learners, objectives of an ESL Programme, proficiency level of the taught, age and interest of the learners. Brown's definition (1986) of evaluation further strengthens this statement. He has very impressively defined evaluation as a "systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within the context of the particular institution involved". Hence it is a fact that no curriculum model is complete without an evaluation component therein. The basic aim of it is to overcome the deficiencies of the existing syllabus. It does not intend only to indicate the fallacious points of the syllabus so designed and presented for implementation but it points out the favourable and conducive features also. Majority of the writers agree and second the view that evaluation is essentially and imperatively about making wise judgment, impressive assessing the value and quality of what is being done and executed because nothing is perfect in itself. They all opine that, material once selected after consideration of many issues and bottlenecks, can lack things concerning the factors involved in it. There is always a room and fair space for improvement and refinement if examined minutely for the purpose. The main reason as to why, the process of evaluation is conducted and got executed. It serves a number of purposes at the same time as it is related to the improvement of educational practice that would yield fruits at the end. It serves an essential and instrumental diagnostic function to identify the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the textbook. According to Nunan (1993), "Evaluating and selecting material is not an easy task". He further says, "use of systemic procedure in the evaluation of the materials is necessary". Gronlund, (1981) says, "Evaluation may be defined as a systemic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils". There are two major and important aspects of the presented definition. Firstly, an evaluation implies a systematic process, which does not take into consideration, the casual and the uncontrolled observation of the pupils of course the target population. Secondly, evaluation reflects the reality that instructional objectives have already previously been identified. Without taking the previously determined objectives in mind, it is very difficult to judge clearly the nature and extent of learning.

Having discussed and highlighted the needs of the students, crucial objectives of the syllabus and the valuable opinions of the students and teachers regarding the syllabus which are pre-requisite to syllabus evaluation, the researcher has emphatically evaluated the compulsory syllabus of Social Sciences of English for the classes ranging from Grade 11 to 12 as prescribed by the different Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education and various universities in Pakistan. The teaching methodology and the pattern of examination for this group of student has also been evaluated and minutely examined because evaluation of the syllabus in question is incomplete without the evaluation of these factors related to the syllabus.

The present syllabus of English for Social Sciences for grade 11 to 12 is a syllabus which was handed over to the English teachers with instructions to follow it as it was. In the Higher Education Department's public sector colleges, the teachers are

instructed to make lesson plans in accordance with the academic calendar issued for the whole year before the beginning of the actual class sessions. This is applicable only to the Grade 11 to 12 Classes. The teachers brain storm and prepare the lesson plans based on the present approved syllabus for the whole year. The teachers and the students for both the grade 11 to 12 are constantly and meticulously aware of what has to be studied or covered for examination purposes and any other change into it is usually viewed as a deviation from the standard already set up by the Government. The teachers of Higher Education Department's and public sector colleges are required to keep the lesson plan and the academic activity into their attendance registers. It is ironical to note that unnecessary steps are being taken for improvement in educational standards except the reforms in the syllabus which is much more needed and is the backbone of all the instructional activities in the colleges. The researcher in the beginning of his service in this department, tried his level best to teach English language skills, but the immediate higher authority told the researcher that it was a mere waste of time and an utter deviation from the approved syllabus to be covered in the session. The researcher was advised just to complete the syllabus for which the students shall be evaluated for the grant of degrees and better result both of the teacher and the institution. The present compulsory English syllabus for the social sciences ranging from grade 11 to 12 of Intermediate in the Province of the Punjab, was enforced in August 2020 and the Part-II Grade 12 Novel Mr. Chips in the year 2000 respectively by the different Boards of Intermediate & Secondary Education and the Universities of the Province. It is an amalgamation of literature-based texts and applied grammar at the same time. The inclusion of the components of literature especially Poetry, Drama and Novel in the syllabus of English language for the students of Grade-11 & 12 is questionable. The students are more in need of a working knowledge of functional English being used in day to day conversation and needs thereon hence it is not imperative to let them have acquaintance with abstract literary ideas of different writers at the academic stage. Before the students are linguistically competent, they cannot and should not be expected to benefit from the study of literature which seems unrealistic and impractical. Carefully selected literary texts can serve to reinforce language teaching points in both the segments ie the Grade 11 and 12 at the same time. But, the present syllabus does not seem to consider this important point. This requires a detailed re-evaluation of the contents of the syllabus particularly that of Grade 11 to 12 to make it compatible with the real needs of the students studying the General Education from the Public Sector Colleges and Universities of the Higher Education Department.

### **Material and Methods**

In the present research, descriptive method was employed. The questionnaires for the teacher and the students were prepared and the circulated to the teachers and students of social sciences teaching and studying in the Divisions of Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. The interviews were also conducted form the teachers and the students.85% teachers showed dissatisfaction over the present syllabus of English while 10 % in favour of present syllabus and 5% teachers give no opinion. In the same way 92 % students inform the researcher through the tools of data collection that the

present syllabus should be changed language skills should given importance in the future syllabus of English language. After the collection of data, the researcher deemed it necessary to evaluate the text books which are being taught for the students of social science. For this purpose different models for the evaluation were consulted. The researchers adopted multi-dimensional modal so that all the aspects of evaluation of text book and material may be covered.

### **Material of the Syllabus from Grade 11 To 12**

A syllabus is implemented through its selected, considered and chosen material, which is the only and crucial link between the syllabus and the teacher. In the province, the term material is restricted to text books, prescribed either by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education or the Universities of the Province only.

In Punjab, at Grade 11 to 12 level of the social sciences syllabus of English, the only available material consists of the following four textbooks:

- Intermediate English Book-I
- Intermediate English Book II
- Intermediate English Book-III
- Novel Good Bye Mr. Chips (James Hilton)

These textbooks make up the first part of the syllabus and 'grammar books written by eminent writers make up the second part of the syllabus. Before evaluating the material of grade 11 to 12 of the compulsory English of social sciences being taught in the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education in the Province, different criteria of evaluation by different writers can be kept in mind for facilitation and guideline to be exact in evaluation. The present evaluation follows an eclectic model based mainly on evaluation design presented by McDonough and Shaw (1993), along-with some items added by the researcher himself on the basis of his own experience and judgment. The criteria for evaluating textbooks is given below:

1. Layout
2. Illustration
3. Availability
4. Cost
5. Presentation of material
6. The Coverage of contents/subject matter
7. Teaching points

8. Suitability for level of learning
9. The Teacher's manual
10. The Vocabulary/structure
11. The given Language exercises
12. The Examination requirements
13. The involved Psychological factor

### **Evaluation of Intermediate Book-I, Book-II, Book-III & Novel Of Grade 11 & 12**

The students of Intermediate (Part-I & II) of the Punjab province have to study, first of all, intermediate book-I in Part-I (11 Grade) and then Book-II (Grade-12) Modern prose and heroes, Book-III poems and a Novel in the Part-II (Grade-12) prescribed by Punjab Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Lahore that comprises of short stories, . The researcher according to the criteria mentioned above has evaluated this book, the main features of the book are enlisted as under:

### **Layout Plan of Book-I, Book-II, Book-III & the Novel Mr. Chips**

The colors used at the title page of Book-I (Grade-11) are brown, yellow, green and white. The book does not attract the attention of the students due to unimpressive title page which contains picture of books in a muddle along with an open unattended book. The Book-II contains the same images with blue, white and green colors. The Book-III is just like the Book-I. Moreover, the quality of papers and printings create no good impression at all. However, at the back side of the title page of each book, however, Quid-e-Azam's advice to the students may motivate them for doing their studies whole-heartedly, diligently and devotedly.

Quaid-i-Azam Said, "Education is a matter of life and death for Pakistan. The world is progressing so rapidly that without requisite advance in education, not only shall we be left behind others but may be wiped out altogether". Another significant point of the back side of the title page of all books is the "National Anthem" that would keep every Pakistan knit up in a love and compassion bond for the country and for themselves.

### **Illustration of the Books (I, II, III & THE NOVEL)**

It is said that "a picture is worth than a thousand words" but unfortunately, the books contain no visual images which can help the students in comprehending the text, its spirit, the culture and the surrounding of the people to which the literature belong to in its core. These images can clarify different things which are complex for students are the pictures and images help them make easy to understand. The inside of the back title page of all the books contain two very impressive and constructive messages and they are:

- (a) Corruption leads to destruction.
- (b) Join hands to eliminate corruption

The novel contains the information about Dengue Fever on the inside back page of the novel. Definitely, it informs the younger generation about the precautionary measures to save them from the Dengue fever. However, the Novel Mr. Chips has some images that create interest among the students.

#### **Availability of the books (I, II, III & THE NOVEL)**

These books have been published by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, Lahore, which produces copies of this book in large numbers for the facilitation of the students. These books are easily available in all big and small cities of the province and also at the main book shops. The libraries of colleges have multiple copies of these books on the directions of the Higher Education Department and the students can also get these textbooks from the libraries of their respective colleges.

#### **Cost Involved Books (I, II, III & THE NOVEL):**

The books are not costly at all keeping in view the present days of income disparities as there prices are Rs.52 (Book-I), Price Not mentioned of Book-II, Rs.40 of Book-III and Rs.40 of the Novel Good bye Mr. Chips only. The first edition of the book-I was published in August 2020, Book-II on August 2018, Book-III on August 2020 and that of the first publication of the Novel is May 2013. The books can easily be purchased by all and sundry of the student sections.

#### **Presentation of Material of Books (I, II, III & THE NOVEL)**

The books have a total no of fifteen short stories from No.1 Button, Button to The Angel and the Author-and Others (Book-I), 10-Modern Prose Essays and six heroes (Book-II), three plays and twenty poems are there in Book-III. The books have theme of the story, essays, poems, plays, reading notes, Exercises, MCQs, True False, Short and Long Questions, matching practice, correct forms of the verbs, punctuation practice, grammatical works and direct and in direct narration for the guidance of the students at the end of each story, essay, one act play, poems etc.

#### **Coverage of Contents of the Books**

The short stories included in book-I are written by English and American writers along with Pakistani writers including Sheikh Saadi, Ghulam Abbas and Ahmad. No preface has been scratched in, in the Book-I which is quite surprising and astonishing. The Book II has been written by all foreign writers and no Pakistani writer has been included in the list of the writers. Book-III however, has the amalgam of writers ranging from Pakistanis to American and the British as well. The novel has been written by James Hilton of course a foreigner.

### **Subject Matter of the Books**

Some short stories have appropriate length and easy language. The modern prose and heroes have typical foreign language with difficult vocabulary due to the subjects being topic specific. The language of the poems is quite simple and easy to understand. The Novel has been written in typical foreign taste and flow. The students take interest in them. Some stories, modern prose essays, heroes, poems are difficult for the students due to their length and complex vocabulary, for example, *The Reward*, *Over Coat*, *God be praised*, *The Angel and the Author* are complex to understand. The stories like *A Mild Attack of locusts*, *The Piece of String* are boring and uninteresting for the students. Furthermore, the modern prose essays like *The Dying Sun*, *End of Term* are typical in nature and may pose some difficulties for the students. These in comprehensive literary pieces are of no use for those students who have to study arts subjects besides English. For example, a passage a modern prose essay named "The Dying Sun" is as under:

"Life can exist only in a narrow belt surrounding each of these fires at a certain distance where the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold. Outside these belts life would be frozen, inside it would be burnt up. A rough calculation shows that all such temperature belts, within which life is possible, all added together, make up less than a thousand million millionth part of the whole of space."

This paragraph puts the students in difficult situation. This has no interest for the students. Before comprehending this essay, the students must have some knowledge about the scientific terminologies. How will the knowledge about these writers give benefit to the Intermediate Part I-II Arts students?

### **Teaching Points of Books**

After the evaluation of these books, it becomes clear that the books have been compiled without considering the teaching points. The books lack variety in different genres of language which learners may use in their real life situations and which are more practical rather than theoretical. Another significant point is that the selection of stories, modern prose essays, heroes and the poems have not been done carefully.

### **Suitability for the Level of Learning through the books**

The selection of stories, modern prose essays, heroes and the poems is inappropriate considering the proficiency level of students whose age is only fifteen to sixteen years. These pieces of different genre are difficult both conceptually and linguistically, for example, *The Reward* is difficult for the students. The following paragraph is given as an example:

"Never mind what country it was," said Jorkens. "And as a matter of fact its customs weren't so silly as you suppose. They had no post of Court acrobat, and never had had. But that didn't stop young Gorgios. That was his name. He was a good

athlete when he came by his wild idea at about the age of sixteen, and had won the high jump and the hurdles and the hundred yards at his school."

And another paragraph is taken from "The Novel Mr. Chips" to illustrate this point.

How will the students understand this paragraph? When they are unable to comprehend this passage, they will lose their interest in the Novel.

"She had no parents and was married from the house of an aunt in Ealing. On the night before the wedding, when Chips left the house to return to his hotel, she said with mock gravity: "This is an occasion, you know-this last farewell of ours. I feel rather like a new boy beginning his first team with you."

Another paragraph has been extracted from the play "The Oyster and the Pearl"

"You're just like the children. They don't take me seriously, either. They think I'm nothing more than a pretty girl who is going to give up in despair and go home. If you give me a poodle haircut I'll look more, well, plain and simple. I plan to dress differently, too. I am determined to teach here. You've got to help me".

### **Cultural Relevance in Books**

With the exception of "The Gulistan of Saadi, God be praised Over Coat", the contents of the lessons are not based in reality on local culture. Many stories have culturally alien references altogether. For example, in the lesson "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King, the following sentences are based totally on foreign culture:

"Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair"

Similarly, the paragraph from the modern prose "China's Way to Progress" also indicates the culture being alien to the student of our country, read the paragraph:

"China is now the fashion around the world, and in no uncertain terms. Everywhere politicians of the most conservative and bourgeois kind are attempting to rebuild for themselves a compromised career by singing the praises of Mao Tse-Tung"

The extract from the Poems too may authenticate the alien culture here too. Read the following example taken from the book III poem named "A Tale of Two Cities" where the poet writes as under:

"The flowers, flavours all smashed

Burnt, crushed and all dashed



And all passed through the grind

Leaving there nothing behind.

### **Vocabulary Structure present in the Books**

The level of vocabulary at this stage is too complex for the students. They are unable to understand the meaning of difficult words mostly used in all the books i.e. Book-I, Book-II, Book-III & Book IV during the lecture while reading all these books.

The words like Gadget, Bandanna, Cuttly, dumpcarts, gigs, public prosecutor, coaxed, culinary, prodigious from the Book I and the words, Acropolis, Anno Domini, Boers, Cello, Choir, Cecero, from the Novel, from Book-III hysterically, rattles, viciously, nondescript sort of person, piercing are difficult to understand same is the case with the Book-II where the following words pose serious threat to the learners like radiation, organism, planetary, milky way etc. are completely new to the students. These words are incomprehensible for those students who have come from Urdu medium system. However, the sentence length seems appropriate.

### **Exercises in Books**

In these books, exercises are given at the end of each story, modern prose essays, poems and one act plays. But these exercises are not useful in enriching their knowledge about language. These exercises do not make any contribution to increase the proficiency level of students. The exercises of "Using the Scientific Method" are given here:

The most unfortunate thing is that this book lacks language exercises. The language skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking are the basic requirements of the students. The students of D.Com are supposed to be proficient in these skills for their future professional life. We do not find any exercise to improve their written skill e.g. creative writing spelling, dictation, free composition. The compiler seems to stress on the development of reading skill, but we are unable to find reading exercises that contain skimming and scanning, the most important aspects of reading. No attention has been given to increase efficiency in oral work. In addition to this, subsidiary skills like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and punctuation have not been given any importance.

### **Psychological Factor found in the Books**

While reading the books, the students feel hesitation in accepting the ideas presented in them. It has been revealed in the survey that students wanted to see topics related to their field for sake of interest in their subject.

### **Teacher Manual relating to the Books**

The textbooks coupled with a teacher's manual are useful for the teachers in understanding the objectives, teaching methodology, Pedagogical guidance and other

information contained in the books under reference. In developing countries like India and Sri Lanka, teachers are provided teacher manuals to make their work more comprehensive and suitable for the students to succeed in an efficient manner. But, these books do not offer any teacher's manual.

### **Conclusion**

It is proved that the present syllabus of English for the students of social sciences is not meeting their needs and requirements. Neither, it is helpful in present situation nor in future it may be beneficial for them because language skills have not been given importance. The students of social sciences need improvement in spoken skill but not ever a single component of spoken skill is included in the syllabus. Even other skills are neglected badly. Although, questions are available at the end of each and every lesson i.e. Poem, Modern Prose Essays, One Act Plays, and Short Stories, majority of the students cram the summaries of the lessons altogether. They feel no need to prepare the answers of the questions given at the end of each lesson because in the examination, the students are asked to write short answers put on the lesson. Moreover, guide books and easy notes are available in the markets. Majority of the students buy these books and notes before the exam and get through the exam with good marks. These books have solved answers with Urdu translation as well.

The close analysis and scrutiny of the above mentioned Books of Intermediate Part-I & Part-II are sufficient enough to form a fair idea that as to what is being taught to our students and with what results. Hopefully this research on the syllabus under question would definitely make ways for improvements and betterment. Without keeping in mind, the needs and the requirements of the students of social science, no syllabus of English will be fruitful. The syllabus of English should be designed in such a way that the students may be able to develop their language skills because majority of social science students wish to appear in competitive exams are obtain attractive jobs in multinational companies where effective language skills are required. The authorities must concentrate on this significant issue while designing or modifying the present syllabus for social science students.

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