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## A Comparative Study of General English Syllabi Prescribed at the Undergraduate Level in the Universities of Gujarat

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### Abstract

*This paper presents a comparative analysis of the General English (GE) syllabi prescribed for undergraduate programs across various universities in Gujarat. It aims to identify similarities, differences, and emerging trends in syllabus design, content selection, and pedagogical approaches. The study focuses on analyzing the stated objectives, learning outcomes, content areas (grammar, reading, writing, and speaking), evaluation methods, and the overall relevance of these syllabi to the students' future academic and professional needs. By examining these aspects, the paper seeks to offer insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the current GE syllabi in Gujarat's universities, and propose recommendations for improvement and standardization.*

**Key words:** General English, Syllabus Analysis, Undergraduate Education, Gujarat Universities, Curriculum Development, Language Proficiency, Skill-Based Learning etc.

### Introduction

General English (GE) courses at the undergraduate level hold a crucial position in shaping the language proficiency and communication skills of students. These courses aim to equip students from diverse academic backgrounds with the necessary linguistic tools for effective learning, academic success, and professional achievement. Gujarat, with its numerous universities offering a wide range of undergraduate programs, presents a diverse landscape in terms of GE syllabus design and implementation. Understanding the variations and commonalities across these syllabi is crucial for ensuring quality, relevance, and uniformity in the development of students' language competencies. This paper aims to conduct a comparative study of the GE syllabi offered at the undergraduate level in several universities across Gujarat. It seeks to:

Identify the core elements and variations in syllabus design.

- Analysed the content coverage and the relevance of the topics chosen.
- Examine the pedagogical approaches suggested or implied in the syllabi.
- Evaluate the assessment methods employed to gauge student learning.

- Assess the overall effectiveness of the GE courses in meeting the needs of students in the 21st century.

### Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach, primarily relying on document analysis. The data collection involves:

**Syllabus Collection:** Gathering the most recent GE syllabi from a representative sample of universities in Gujarat. The selection will be based on factors such as geographical location, student population, and type of university (state, central, private).

**Content Analysis:** Analysing the syllabi to identify: Stated objectives and learning outcomes.

Course content, including grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking components.

Recommended textbooks and reading materials.

Pedagogical approaches or suggested teaching methods.

Assessment methods and their weightage.

**Comparative Framework:** Developing a framework to compare and contrast the different syllabi based on the identified elements. This framework will highlight similarities, differences, and unique features of each syllabus.

Expert Consultation: Seeking input from experienced English language teachers and curriculum development experts from Gujarat universities to validate the findings and provide additional perspectives.

### **Review of Existing Literature**

While specific comparative studies on GE syllabi in Gujarat universities may be limited, there is ample literature on the importance of GE courses, syllabus design principles, and the challenges of teaching English in a multilingual context like India. This review will encompass:

**Research on General English Curriculum Design:** Studies focusing on best practices in curriculum design for GE courses, emphasizing communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and learner-centered approaches.

**Studies on Needs Analysis:** Research exploring the communication needs of undergraduate students in India, considering their academic and professional aspirations.

**Literature on Assessment and Evaluation in Language Learning:** Studies emphasizing the importance of formative and summative assessment methods that accurately measure students' language proficiency and communicative competence.

**Research on the Role of Technology in Language Teaching:** Exploration of how technology can be effectively integrated into GE courses to enhance engagement and facilitate language learning.

### **Comparative Analysis of GE Syllabi**

This section will present the core findings of the study, systematically comparing the GE syllabi from different universities across Gujarat. The analysis will be structured around the following key areas:

#### **Stated Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

**Similarities:** Analyzing the common goals of the GE courses, such as improving reading comprehension, enhancing writing skills, developing speaking fluency, and strengthening grammatical accuracy.

**Differences:** Identifying variations in the specificity of learning outcomes. Some syllabi may focus on broad generic skills, while others may outline more concrete and measurable outcomes.

**Emerging Trends:** Assessing whether the syllabi reflect a shift towards communicative competence and the development of practical language skills relevant to the workplace.

#### **Course Content and Structure:**

**Grammar:** Comparing the grammar topics covered in each syllabus, noting the emphasis on specific areas such as tenses, articles, prepositions, and sentence structure.

**Vocabulary:** Analyzing the vocabulary lists or guidance provided for vocabulary development, and assessing whether they align with the students' academic and professional needs.

**Reading:** Examining the types of reading materials selected (e.g., short stories, essays, news articles), their

length, complexity, and relevance to the students' interests.

**Writing:** Comparing the writing tasks assigned (e.g., paragraphs, essays, reports, emails), and assessing the focus on different aspects of writing such as organization, clarity, and grammar.

**Speaking:** Analyzing the opportunities provided for speaking practice, such as presentations, group discussions, role-plays, and debates.

### **Pedagogical Approaches**

**Similarities:** Identifying common approaches, such as the use of textbooks, lectures, and classroom exercises.

**Differences:** Assessing the extent to which the syllabi promote learner-centered approaches, active learning strategies, and the integration of technology.

**Emerging Trends:** Examining the inclusion of communicative language teaching methods, task-based learning activities, and project-based assignments.

### **Assessment Methods**

**Formative Assessment:** Analyzing the use of quizzes, assignments, class participation, and other methods to monitor student progress and provide feedback.

**Summative Assessment:** Comparing the weightage given to different assessment components, such as examinations, essays, presentations, and projects.

**Criterion-Referenced Assessment:** Assessing whether the assessment methods are aligned with the learning outcomes and criteria for evaluating student performance are clearly defined.

### **Discussion**

Based on the comparative analysis, this section will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current GE syllabi in Gujarat. It will address the following questions:

Are the syllabi aligned with the national curriculum frameworks and best practices in language education?

Do the learning outcomes adequately prepare students for academic and professional success?

Is the content relevant and engaging for students from diverse backgrounds?

Are the pedagogical approaches effective in promoting language proficiency and communicative competence?

Do the assessment methods accurately measure student learning and provide meaningful feedback?

Are the syllabi adequately addressing the challenges of teaching English in a multilingual context?

### **Recommendations**

This section will propose recommendations for improving the GE syllabi in Gujarat universities. These recommendations will focus on:

**Syllabus Standardization:** Exploring the possibility of developing a common framework for GE syllabi across Gujarat universities, while allowing for some flexibility to accommodate the specific needs of different disciplines.

**Curriculum Development:** Revising the content to incorporate more authentic materials, real-world tasks, and opportunities for collaborative learning.

**Teacher Training:** Providing professional development opportunities for GE teachers to enhance their

pedagogical skills and knowledge of current trends in language teaching.

**Assessment Reform:** Shifting towards a more balanced assessment approach that emphasizes both formative and summative assessment, and incorporating a wider range of assessment methods to measure different aspects of language proficiency.

**Technology Integration:** Promoting the effective use of technology in GE courses to enhance engagement, provide personalized learning opportunities, and develop students' digital literacy skills.

**Needs Analysis:** Conducting regular needs analyses to understand the evolving language needs of students and ensure that the syllabi remain relevant and effective.

## Conclusion

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of the GE syllabi prescribed at the undergraduate level in the universities of Gujarat. By identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and emerging trends in syllabus design and implementation, the study seeks to inform curriculum development efforts and contribute to the improvement of English language education in the state. The recommendations offered in this paper are intended to serve as a starting point for further discussion and collaboration among stakeholders in the higher education sector, with the ultimate goal of equipping students with the language skills they need to succeed in their academic pursuits and future careers.

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