

PROBLEMS IN THE TEACHING OF PROSE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TELANGANA STATE: A STUDY

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Abstract

Prose teaching plays a significant role in developing students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, communication skills, writing ability and critical thinking. However, effective teaching of English prose at the secondary-school level continues to face several challenges. The present study examines the major problems involved in teaching prose to secondary-school students in Telangana State and suggests appropriate pedagogical measures. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach based on relevant literature, language-teaching principles, educational policy and Telangana State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) curricular and textbook materials. The major problems identified include varying levels of English proficiency, vocabulary difficulties, inadequate reading comprehension, limited speaking opportunities, teacher-centred teaching, examination-oriented instruction, large classrooms, insufficient exposure to English, rural-urban differences and limited use of supplementary teaching-learning resources. The study emphasizes the need for learner-centred, interactive and competency-based prose teaching. Pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities, collaborative learning, contextual vocabulary teaching, discussion, creative responses and appropriate digital resources can make prose lessons more meaningful. The study concludes that effective teacher training, formative assessment, supplementary reading and appropriate classroom use of technology can contribute significantly to improving prose learning among secondary-school students in Telangana.

Keywords: *Prose Teaching, English Language Teaching, Secondary Education, Telangana, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Learner-Centred Learning, SCERT*

1. Introduction

English has an important role in Indian education because of its relevance to higher education, employment, technology and communication. At the secondary-school level, English teaching should develop students' ability to read, write, speak and understand the language rather than focus exclusively on examination performance.

Prose is an important component of English teaching. Stories, essays, biographies and narratives provide meaningful contexts for developing vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking, writing, imagination and critical thinking. A well-planned prose lesson can therefore function as an integrated language-learning activity.

In Telangana State, SCERT provides English textbooks and curricular resources for school education. The textbook approach encourages student participation, interaction, discussion,

group work and critical thinking. However, classroom practice may sometimes remain dominated by explanation, translation, reading aloud, word meanings and memorization of textbook answers.

Telangana's multilingual context also creates additional challenges. Students differ in their linguistic backgrounds, English exposure and educational opportunities. Rural and urban learners may have different levels of access to English-language resources and digital media.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes competency-based, learner-centred and technology-supported education. In this context, examining the problems of prose teaching and identifying practical solutions is important.

2. Objectives of the Study

The study aims:

1. To identify major problems in teaching English prose to secondary-school students in Telangana.
2. To examine students' difficulties in vocabulary and reading comprehension.
3. To identify major pedagogical challenges faced by teachers.
4. To examine the influence of examination-oriented teaching.
5. To suggest effective strategies for improving prose teaching.

3. Methodology

The study follows a **descriptive and analytical approach**. It is primarily a conceptual and literature-based study. Relevant literature on English language teaching, reading pedagogy and educational psychology was examined along with national educational policy and Telangana SCERT curricular and textbook materials.

No fabricated field-survey data or statistical results are presented. The study analyses the major problems in relation to established principles of language pedagogy and the secondary-school context of Telangana.

4. Major Problems in Teaching Prose

4.1 Limited English Proficiency

Students in a secondary classroom often possess different levels of English proficiency. Some have greater exposure to English through private education, media and digital resources, while

others have limited exposure outside school. Excessive use of English may make weaker learners feel excluded, whereas excessive translation may create dependence on the mother tongue. Teachers therefore need to provide suitable scaffolding while gradually increasing meaningful English use.

4.2 Vocabulary Difficulties

Unfamiliar vocabulary is a major barrier to comprehension. Students may struggle with new words, idioms and expressions. Providing direct Telugu meanings for every word may be convenient but does not encourage independent vocabulary learning. Teachers should promote contextual guessing, dictionary use, word formation, synonyms and practical sentence construction.

4.3 Reading-Comprehension Problems

Some students can read a passage aloud but cannot identify its central idea, infer meaning or understand the author's purpose. Prose teaching should therefore focus on reading for meaning rather than oral reading alone. Questions should include literal, inferential and critical comprehension.

4.4 Teacher-Centred Teaching

Traditional prose instruction may involve teacher reading, sentence-by-sentence explanation, translation and dictation of answers. Such a method can reduce opportunities for student participation. SCERT's emphasis on interaction and active learning suggests the need for greater use of discussion, pair work, group work and independent interpretation.

4.5 Examination Orientation

Examination pressure often encourages memorization of important questions and expected answers. Although examination preparation is necessary, excessive emphasis on memorization can restrict creativity and critical thinking. Students should first understand the text and then develop examination-oriented responses.

4.6 Large Classes

Large classrooms make individual attention and interactive teaching difficult. Pair activities, group discussions, peer teaching and collaborative tasks can nevertheless increase student participation.

4.7 Limited Speaking Opportunities

Students may hesitate to speak English because of lack of confidence or fear of errors. Prose lessons can provide opportunities for narration, character description, dialogue, prediction and discussion. Such activities integrate reading with speaking.

4.8 Rural-Urban and Resource Differences

Students' exposure to English varies according to geographical location, school type and family circumstances. Schools can reduce these differences by providing reading corners, English clubs, audio materials, supplementary texts and digital resources.

5. Effective Strategies for Prose Teaching

A prose lesson can be organized into three stages.

Pre-Reading

The teacher may introduce the topic through pictures, questions, brainstorming or prediction. These activities activate prior knowledge and generate interest.

While-Reading

Students may identify key ideas, underline important information, infer vocabulary meanings, predict events and find evidence for answers.

Post-Reading

Students may summarize the text, discuss its message, write character sketches, conduct dialogues, rewrite the ending or relate the text to real-life situations.

This three-stage approach can transform students from passive listeners into active readers.

Collaborative Learning

Group activities can be used to analyse characters, vocabulary, themes and main ideas. Students can present their findings to the class. Such activities promote cooperation, communication and independent thinking.

Technology

Audio recordings, educational videos, digital dictionaries and presentations can supplement prose teaching. NEP 2020 recognizes technology as an important resource for improving teaching and learning. Technology, however, should support active learning rather than replace teacher-student interaction.

6. Assessment

Assessment of prose should move beyond memorization. Teachers can assess:

- **Reading:** main ideas, details and inference;
- **Vocabulary:** contextual meaning and usage;
- **Speaking:** narration, presentation and discussion;
- **Writing:** summaries, paragraphs and creative responses;
- **Critical thinking:** interpretation, comparison and justification.

Formative assessment can help teachers identify learning difficulties and provide timely support.

7. Suggestions

The following measures are recommended:

1. Adopt learner-centred and interactive prose teaching.
2. Teach vocabulary in meaningful contexts.
3. Encourage independent and supplementary reading.
4. Provide regular opportunities for speaking and discussion.
5. Use pair and group activities in large classrooms.
6. Integrate reading, speaking and writing.
7. Provide additional support to students with limited English exposure.
8. Use digital and audio-visual resources appropriately.
9. Strengthen teacher professional development.
10. Reduce excessive dependence on memorized textbook answers.
11. Establish reading corners and English clubs.
12. Use formative and competency-based assessment.

8. Discussion

The central challenge in prose teaching is the gap between curricular expectations and classroom implementation. Telangana SCERT materials encourage interaction, participation, discussion and critical thinking. Nevertheless, traditional explanation and examination-oriented practices may continue to dominate.

Effective prose teaching requires a shift from **teacher explanation to learner participation**. Teachers should act as facilitators who encourage students to question, interpret, discuss and respond to texts.

Learner diversity must also be recognized. Students have different levels of language proficiency and exposure. Differentiated activities and appropriate scaffolding can help weaker learners while providing extension activities for advanced learners.

Technology can provide additional exposure to English, but its value depends on purposeful pedagogical use. Teacher training should therefore focus on practical classroom strategies, reading pedagogy, vocabulary development, communicative activities, formative assessment and digital resources.

9. Conclusion

Effective prose teaching is essential for developing secondary-school students' overall English language competence. In Telangana State, major difficulties include varying English proficiency, vocabulary limitations, reading-comprehension problems, teacher-centred instruction, examination pressure, large classes, limited English exposure and inadequate supplementary resources.

These problems can be addressed by making prose teaching interactive, contextual, participatory and competency-oriented. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to read independently, discuss ideas, interpret texts, speak confidently and produce creative responses.

The Telangana SCERT approach provides a strong foundation for such learner-centred teaching through its emphasis on participation, interaction, group work and critical thinking. Effective implementation, supported by teacher professional development, appropriate assessment and adequate resources, can significantly improve prose learning.

Ultimately, the purpose of prose teaching should extend beyond producing correct examination answers. It should help learners become **independent readers, confident communicators and critical thinkers**.

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