

“A study of the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) General English curriculum in relation to the development of speaking skill.”

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Abstract

Introduction of General English at G.C.E. (A/L) is given much emphasis since there is a great demand for school leavers with a sound English Language competency to cope up with the 'world of work'. Even though English was taught for A/L students in the past, it had been neglected as the students mainly concentrated on their academic subjects for which getting a good grade enabled them to enter the university.

At present, much focus is laid on the students who would be joining the work force just after their A/L for which the competency of English Language has become a dire necessity due to 'globalization'. Hence General English was introduced at A/L in 1999 with the objective of developing communication skill, which is needed for transactional and interactional purposes. The main objective of this study is to find out how far the G.C.E.(A/L) General English curriculum caters to develop the "speaking skill" of the students.

This research study has identified the needs of the students in three schools situated in Colombo and Negombo in learning English Language, found out that the classrooms don't much provide the opportunity for the students to develop the speaking skill even though the syllabus and the learning materials consist of topic based and theme based speech lessons which could cater to the development of speaking skill.

Another significant factor revealed through this research is that the three schools have not been provided with the audiocassettes, which are part of the learning package. Further, the schools also lack infrastructure facilities in the classrooms due to which there was hardly any exposure to the audiocassettes. Hence, the listening

skill is totally neglected by the teachers of the three schools, which is very essential to develop the speaking skill.

Thus this research reveals that in spite of a satisfactory syllabus, learning materials and a teacher's guide, the aims and objectives of the curriculum are hardly achieved by the students who study in the three schools, which come under the scope of this study. Hence the researcher has suggested some recommendations to improve the textbook and the teacher's guide, which would enhance the development of speaking skill.