




RESEARCH ARTICLE

English as Core Major Under NEP 2020: Structural, Cultural, and Pedagogical Transformations

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 Accepted version published on 25 September 2025

 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17200101>

ABSTRACT

English faculties are aware that English is undergoing significant changes as a Core Major Subject, in view of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The researcher has marked evolving changes in BA with Special English (now Core Major in NEP: 2020) of S P Pune University. The paper mainly discusses changes in academic structure, curriculum content, and assessment methodology. In all, with the implementation of the NEP 2020, the content and methodology have undergone significant changes. Both the 'Theory and Practical' modules have been stipulated in the college timetable. The researcher believes that the positive implementation of NEP: 2020, with special reference to BA with Major Core English means not only structural changes but also a cultural shift in how education is perceived and delivered, i.e., a shift from fixed content delivery (through lecture method) to flexible and skill-based, student-centric learning (experiential, collaborative teaching and learning). NEP: 2020 demands the academic, administrative, infrastructural, and cultural changes and emphasises interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary exposure for holistic education. The researcher analyses the earlier (Pre-NEP) English syllabus alongside the NEP-based syllabus and finds that the role of a professor of English (Core Major) has undergone significant changes. Therefore, the evolving changes as observed to date are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Core Major; NEP: 2020; structural changes; cultural shift; skill-based education; student-centric learning

FULL PAPER

The BA (Core Major/Special English) Programme at SPPU is being reshaped by NEP 2020 through a flexible academic structure, revised curriculum content, and updated evaluation/assessment methodologies. The insertion of skill-building, experimental components and an outcome-based framework are a few glaring characteristics of the BA Special English Programme. The researcher, as an Assistant Professor of English and a language/soft skills trainer, has studied the NEP-driven changes in the BA Special English Programme at S P Pune University and thus contemplated the evolving role of a professor of English for the effective implementation of NEP 2020. The researcher, thus, endeavours to address evolving changes in the said Programme by discussing his own observations and experiences in his workplace.

Objectives and Rationale of the Study:

In view of NEP: 2020, the BA Special English Programme of S P Pune University has faced many changes. Therefore, this research paper examines the evolving changes that are shaping the future of English as a subject and also investigates the evolving role of an English professor.

Research Approach and Methodology:

The research methodology is of Conceptual Research Methodology, which is based on a Qualitative Research Approach: QRA. In the context of the present research paper, the QRA focuses on personal, academic perceptions, and logical reasoning to elucidate the evolving changes in English as a special or primary subject of the BA. Theoretical Research Methodology, also known as Conceptual Research Methodology, is used to understand the relationships between ideas/ variables (e.g., NEP: 2020 implementation and changes in English as a subject) through logical reasoning. It enables the researcher to elucidate his personal observations, and therefore it is employed.

Discussion: Evolving Changes in BA (Special English):

This section lists the overall significant changes that occurred in the BA Programme in view of NEP: 2020. These are:

1. Four-Year Degree Structure: Extension of BA Special English to a 4-year Programme with flexibility for exit points.
2. Flexibility and Exit options: Students can leave/exit after the first, second, third or fourth years with a certificate/diploma/degree/honours.

3. Academic Bank of Credits (ABC): Flexibility to transfer credits from or to other institutions/courses as part of a student's journey to a degree.
4. Major and Minor Combination: Students can pair Special English/Major Core with a Minor.
5. Outcome-Based Syllabus: Learning objectives clearly aligned with competencies, Programme and Course Outcomes are provided.
6. Introduction/Addition of Skill/Ability Enhancement Courses, General Elective (GE)/ Open Elective (OE) and Vocational Skills Courses in the syllabus.
7. Introduction of Practical Components/ Field Projects/ Internships/On-Job Training/ Community Engagement Program, etc.
8. Mandatory Course in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

In total, the academic structure comprises a 4-year degree program with a major and minor system. Further, with the multidisciplinary approach, the 'Curriculum' is designed while including Skill/Ability Enhancement, Vocational Skills, IKS Courses and GE/OE electives. The evaluation/ assessment is shifted to continuous and holistic methods.

These changes can be seen in the Syllabus Structure as given by the S P Pune University for the BA in Special English/Major Core Programme. The extensive changes strongly indicate the incorporation of vocational skills, open electives, significant-minor flexibility, and practical components/projects into the said Programme. The University has decided to introduce a B.A. based on the NEP. English syllabus as per the following details:

1. First Year UG – 2024-2025 (Level 4.5)
2. Second Year UG – 2025-2026 (Level 5.0)
3. Third Year UG – 2026-2027 (Level 5.5)
4. Fourth Year UG – 2027-2028 (Level 6.0)

The following tables provide year-wise details of curricula (available to date) in brief. The NEP-based syllabus for FYBA, introduced in the academic year 2024-2025, is analysed in the following tabular format.

Sr. No.	Verticals	Semesters and their Credits (T= Theory and P= Practical)	Titles of the Courses
1	Major Core Discipline Specific Course (DSC)	Semester I- (2T)	English for Beginners (Optional/ General English)
		Semester I- (2P)	English for Beginners (Optional/ General English)
2	General Elective / Open Elective (GE/OE)	Semester I- (2T)	Mass Communication through English-I
3	Skill Enhancement Course (SEC)	Semester I- (2T)	Soft Skills through English- I
4	Ability Enhancement Course (AEC)	Semester I- (2T)	Developing Communicative Competence in English -I
5	Major Core Discipline Specific Course (DSC)	Semester II- (2T)	English for Beginners (Optional/ General English)
		Semester II- (2P)	English for Beginners (Optional/ General English)
6	General Elective / Open Elective (GE/OE)	Semester II- (2P)	Mass Communication through English-II
7	Skill Enhancement Course (SEC)	Semester II- (2P)	Soft Skills through English- II
8	Ability Enhancement Course (AEC)	Semester II- (2P)	Developing Communicative Competence in English -II

(Table 01: NEP-based syllabus of FYBA)

The following table summarises the syllabus of SYBA, introduced from academic year 2025-2026.

Sr. No.	Verticals	Semesters and their Credits (T= Theory and P= Practical)	Titles of the Courses
1	Major Core	Semester III- (4T)	Appreciating Poetry
		Semester III- (2P)	Appreciating Poetry
		Semester IV- (4T)	Appreciating Drama
		Semester IV- (2P)	Appreciating Drama
2	Vocational Skill Course (VSC)	Semester III- (2T)	Introduction to English Language: Phonology and Morphology
		Semester IV- (2P)	Introduction to English Language: Phonology and Morphology
3	Field Project, On-Job Training, Community Engagement Program (FP/OJT/CEP)	Semester III- (2)	Field Project
		Semester IV- (2)	Community Engagement Program
4	Minor	Semester III- (2T)	English for Competitive Examination
		Semester III- (2P)	English for Competitive Examination

		Semester IV- (2T)	English for Competitive Examination
		Semester IV- (2P)	English for Competitive Examination
5	Generic/Open Electives (GE/OE)	Semester III- (2T)	Business English (for Commerce Faculty)
		Semester IV- (2P)	Business English (for Commerce Faculty)
		Semester III- (2T)	English for IT (for Science Faculty)
		Semester IV- (2P)	English for IT (for Science Faculty)
6	Skill Enhancement Course (SEC)	Semester IV- (2P)	English for Advertisement
7	Indian Knowledge System (IKS)	Semester III- (2T)	Etymology of Indic Languages

(Table 02: NEP-based syllabus of SYBA)

In view of the above syllabus, the following are observations made by the researchers regarding the Pre-NEP (earlier) and the NEP-based English Syllabus:

Observations: Comparison of Pre-NEP (earlier) with NEP-based English Syllabus:

In this section of the paper, the researcher mainly notes his observations regarding the NEP-based new syllabus of English. The key changes and observations in the Special English (NEP-based: English Major Core) syllabus, as compared to the earlier (Pre-NEP-based) syllabus and pattern, are noted in brief. These are:

1. The emphasis has shifted from survey-based literary history to genre-based study with theory and ample scope for practice. However, the earlier Special English Paper I (Appreciating Drama: 4 Credits) and Paper II (Appreciating

Poetry: 4 Credits) are clubbed together under the major heading English: Major Core (4 T + 2P = 6 Credits) for each Semester. The syllabus is configured in such a way that the theoretical foundation of these two genres and the analytical skills necessary to appreciate the craftsmanship of poets and playwrights can be achieved.

2. Hence, Semester III (Appreciating Poetry) deals with Theory regarding concepts of poetry, elements (rhythm, meter, imagery, figures of speech), and types (ode, sonnet, ballad, elegy, dramatic monologue). 07 poems from British Poetry, 04 from American Poetry and 03 from Indian Poetry are introduced.
3. The Practical Components regarding poetry recitation, critical appreciation writing, group discussions, PPT/presentations and maintaining a practical journal, whereby professors are expected to assign tasks based on the poems for writing in the practical journal.
4. Further, Semester IV (Appreciating Drama) deals with Theory regarding the elements of drama (literary + theatrical), types (tragedy, comedy, absurd drama, etc.). Accordingly, British Drama (Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*) and Indian Drama (Girish Karnad's *Naga-Mandala*) are introduced.
5. The Practical Components regarding the review writing, role play, soliloquy recitation, recitation of important speeches, staging/preparation of short performances, to understand voice modulation, tone, dialogue delivery, stage directions, lighting, costumes, props, makeup, etc., are expected to be comprehended practically.
6. Thus, there are new additions to the Syllabus, such as the introduction of Practical Credits; both Papers of Poetry and Drama now have two credits for practical (performance, journal, and viva) in addition to 4 credits of theory.
7. Hence, the evaluation/assessment pattern too has changed. Exams (Theory and Practical) include recitations, role-plays, review writing, PPTs, group discussions and tasks, unlike the older pattern, which was purely written. Earlier, it was dominated by theory.
8. Therefore, the researcher thinks that effective implementation of the above changes can lead to experiential and student-centric learning.
9. Furthermore, the addition and integration of Field Project, Community Engagement Programme (2 credits each) are made compulsory. The Skill-based Papers, such as Vocational Skill: *Phonology & Morphology*; SEC: *English*

for Advertisement; GE/OE: Business English (for commerce) & English for IT (for science); Minor: English for Competitive Exams; and IKS (Indian Knowledge System): Etymology of Indic Languages, are also the finest additions to the present syllabus.

10. Consequently, this new NEP: 2020-based English syllabus has shifted towards practical, performance-based learning with genre-focused study (Poetry and Drama). The integration of skill-oriented courses and experiential projects enables the interdisciplinarity/ multidisciplinary that are the characteristics of this syllabus.
11. By and large, the teaching and learning approach has also changed a lot. Earlier, the pedagogy was primarily 'classroom-based lectures' and 'text-based' (minimal student activity beyond classroom assignments). At the same time, the NEP-based new syllabus addresses soft skills, communication, mass media, and digital literacy, thereby demanding the integration of theory and practice, with a greater emphasis on oral presentations, practical assignments, viva voce examinations, fieldwork, and research projects.
12. Considering the two major factors – the 'orientation' and 'outcomes', the earlier syllabus focused on the knowledge of language and literature, reading/writing competence, and appreciation of culture whereas the NEP based syllabus concentrates on communication & employability focus, research aptitude, analytical skills, soft skills, mass communication, digital applications, human values, and allows broader scope for interdisciplinary exposure and for experiential learning.
13. Overall, the researcher has observed that there is a shift from a literature-centric to a skill-centric syllabus. The earlier syllabus had a strong focus on literary studies (knowledge of poetry, drama, criticism, prose, grammar and language competence). In contrast, the NEP-based syllabus strikes a balance between language, skills, employability, and values. The syllabus is interdisciplinary in nature and has a practical orientation. The outcome-based approach is evident in the syllabus, where clearly defined programme outcomes (POs), programme-specific outcomes (PSOs), and course outcomes (COs) are provided, unlike in the earlier syllabus.
14. In view of the above observations, the introduction of the NEP-based English syllabus is a significant change from the earlier content-heavy, exam-

oriented syllabus. The NEP-based new syllabus is largely skill-based and has the following key characteristics:

- Literature appreciation is retained (Poetry and Drama).
- Stronger linguistic foundation is provided (phonology, morphology)
- Scope for employability orientation (Competitive exams, business English, IT English, advertising, etc.).
- Interdisciplinary and experiential learning (Practical components, IKS, fieldwork, community projects).
- 21st-century skills, e.g. communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, etc., can be developed.

The University's Board of Studies (BoS) in English expect the Course Outcome (COs) of Major Core Paper as 'acquire essential creative and analytical skills that will support further academic research, literary critique, and artistic endeavours in poetry and drama'. Hence, the role of a professor of English in the implementation is not only crucial but also multidimensional. Further, the forerunners of change, the professors, must have a positive mindset that can help to adopt these changes/observations.

Thus, the researcher has attempted to analyse the Pre-NEP and NEP-based syllabus of English at the BA/Undergraduate level and accordingly recorded his observations in order to adjust or change the conventional role of the professor.

Conclusions:

NEP 2020 reshapes a vision, highlighting flexible, multidisciplinary, research-oriented, value-based, and skill-based higher education. NEP 2020 emphasises a shift in the content and structure of undergraduate teaching and learning processes. The earlier, Pre-NEP syllabus of English was literature-focused, traditional and with limited skill / practical application. However, the new NEP-based English syllabus is skill-oriented and employability-driven. The new NEP-based syllabus integrates literary study, language/ linguistics, and applied English (career-oriented) with ample scope for practicals and experiential learning. In view of this, the Professor of English has a very significant role to play. This role can be played effectively once the individual understands the discussed observations regarding the changes between the Pre-NEP and NEP-based English syllabus. The NEP-based syllabus of English aligns with the goals of NEP: 2020. It can be considered a holistic, flexible, outcome-driven, value and skill-based syllabus.

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