

Identifying Fit between Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the *Samacheer Kalvi* English Syllabus and CEFR Illustrative Scale

V.Pugazhenth, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Scholar

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 13:10 October 2013

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to find equal level of Illustrative scale of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for *Samacheer Kalvi* English Syllabus Classes for Listening Skill. In addition to that, it tried to find out the items included in the listening skill of the English Syllabus.

Keywords: CEFR, Competency Based Syllabus, English Syllabus, Illustrative Scale, Listening Skill, and *Samacheer Kalvi*.

Introduction

In 2011, the Government of Tamilnadu introduced *Samacheer Kalvi*. There were voices for and against *Samacheer Kalvi* syllabus among parents, teachers, educationists, and private school administrators. Historically, students in Tamilnadu went through various systems of education such as Oriental, Matriculation, State Board and Anglo-Indian. The *Samacheer Kalvi* program intends to provide quality education to all children without any discrimination based on their economic, social or cultural background. This is a landmark achievement in school education system in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Karunaanantha, a retired Head of the Department of History, Vivekananda College, Chennai, points out a valid point in his speech on *Samacheer Kalvi*, "There can be, there must be unity in diversity. But there can never be unity in disparity in diversity." He also expresses that *Samacheer Kalvi* does not mean filling in the gaps that exist between the syllabuses followed under various Boards of Education. But it is an

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effort to end educational inequality existing in society in terms of caste, economics and social status, etc. (Uraththa sindhanai)

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus as a Competency Based Syllabus

The English Syllabus was designed based on National Curriculum Framework 2005. The Broad Objectives of the learning of English is to facilitate effective transaction in day-to-day situations, communicative competence, participatory learning frame, English as medium for other subjects. (Common Syllabus, 1). It is Competency Based Syllabus.

Competence-Based Syllabus is teaching which defines what a learner is able to do (in terms of specific skills) as result of instruction. Competencies (or skills) here refers to observable behaviors that are necessary for the successful completion of real-world activities (Richards, 2001). With Competence-Based Syllabus the starting point of curriculum design is a specification of the learning outcomes in terms of ‘competencies’ – the knowledge, skills and behaviors learners involved in performing everyday tasks and activities and which learners should master at the end of a course of study. (CLB, 69)

Common European Framework

The Common European Framework is a reference tool for language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc., across Europe. It also describes in a clearly way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively in the society. The CEFR is designed to promote the multilingual and multicultural Europe. It also aims to overcome language and cultural barriers among European countries and it intends to help partners to describe the levels of proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications. For this purpose the Council of Europe has developed a European Framework with common reference levels (CEFR, 1).

The Common Reference Levels

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The common reference levels divide learners into three categories. Each category has two sub divisions. Basic User (A) has been divided into A1 Breakthrough or Beginner, A2 Waystage or Elementary. Independent User (B) has been divided into B1 Threshold or Intermediate and B2 Vantage or Upper intermediate. Proficient User (C) has been divided into C1 Effective Operational Proficiency or Advanced C2 Mastery or Proficiency (CEFR, 23).

Figure: 1 Reference Level of CEFR

Proficient	C2	Mastery
	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency
Independent	B2	Vantage
	B1	Threshold
Basic	A2	Waystage
	A1	Breakthrough

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This is an observation study based on non-probability method. The data for study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data obtained through competency list of Listening skill prescribed in Samacheer Kalvi English syllabus. From the competency list, learning outcomes of each skill were chosen for correlating from Class-I through Class-X. CEFR material is the source for secondary data. The entire syllabus from Class-I through Class-X was considered for the study. Through judgement, the correlation was made between Samacheer Kalvi and CEFR.

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Definition of Listening Skill

Listening is a very important skill for learning a language whether it is first or second language. Hearing sense is the first step of Listening Skill. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of US give information about hearing: “Hearing loss can affect a child’s ability to develop speech, language, and social skills.”

Sheila Steinberg says "**Listening** is more complex than merely hearing. It is a process that consists of four stages: sensing and attending, understanding and interpreting, remembering, and responding. The stages occur in sequence but we are generally unaware of them." Dr John A. Kline, senior executive and Academic Provost for Air University defines “listening as the process of receiving, attending, and understanding auditory messages; that is, messages transmitted through the medium of sound. Often, the steps of responding and remembering are also included.”

Correlating Competencies of Listening skill from Class I through Class X Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with reference back to CEFR Illustrative

Table1 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class I Listening Competencies	Listening and responding in Words/ phrases/ fragments of utterances	Relating to sound and letter.	Listening to simple instructions	Listening and responding Greetings	Listening and responding to Questions
CEF	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1

The table 1 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus were correlated with A1 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 2 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class II Listening Competencies	Listening to Longer instructions	Listening to Dual Directions	Listening and responding to Questions
CEF	A1 & A2	A1 & A2	A1

The table 2 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class II of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus were correlated with A1 and A2 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 3 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class III of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi Class III Listening Competencies	Listening to dual instructions	Listening to dual directions	Listening and responding to questions.	Listening and responding in peer group discussion.
CEF	A1 & A2	A1 & A2	A1 & A2	A2 & A1

The table 3 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class III of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus were correlated A1 and A2 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 4 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class IV Listening Competencies	Listening and responding in discussions.	Listening and responding to questions
CEF	A2	A2

The table 4 shows that all the listening Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class IV of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus were correlated with A2 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 5 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class V Listening Competencies	Participating in discussion	Following sequence and locating the main and the supporting ideas in listening	Listening and responding to correct pronunciation, stress and intonation
CEF	A2	A2	A2.1

The table 5 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class V of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with A2.1 and A2 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 6 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi Class I Listening Competencies	Listening and comprehending instructions imperative statements.	Listening short audio pieces (Radio play, TV, CD's).
CEF	B1	B1

The table 6 shows that all the listening Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class VI Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with B1 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 7 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class VII Listening Competencies	Understanding oral instructions.	Listening to a report
CEF	B1	A2

The table 7 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class VII of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with B1 and A2 level of CEFR.

Table 8 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class VIII Listening Competencies	Listening to sport commentary	Listening to stress and inflections.	Listening and Appreciate poetry. (Rhyme, Meter)
CEF	B1	B1	C2 (reading)

The table 8 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class VIII of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with B1 and C1 level of CEFR.

Table 9 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class I of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class IX Listening Competencies	Listening to Public Address System	Following instructions and executing the given instructions (decode/ Filling in tables, forms etc)	Listening and Appreciate poetry(Rhyme, Meter)
CEF	A2	A2	C1

The table 9 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporate in Class IX of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with A2 and C1 level of CEFR.

Table 10 Correlating Competencies of Listening Skill Incorporated in the Class X of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus with CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus Class X Listening Competencies	Listening to summarize.	Listening to a dialogue and responding to or reporting the dialogue (For day-to-day life.)	Listening and interpret
CEF	B2	B1	B2.1

The table 10 shows that all the Competencies of Listening Skill incorporated in Class X of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus have correlated with B1 and B2.1 level of CEFR Illustrative Scale.

Table 11 Overall Listening Skill Correlation of Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus English Syllabus with Reference back to CEFR Illustrative Scale

Samacheer Kalvi Classes	CEFR Illustrative Scale
Class 1	A1
Class 2	A1 & A2
Class 3	A1 & A2
Class 4	A2
Class 5	A2.1 & A2
Class 6	B1

Class 7	A2 & B1
Class 8	B1 & C2
Class 9	A2 & C1
Class 10	B1,B2 & B2.1

Conclusion

Illustrative scales of CEFR for Listening skill level from A1 through B2 almost accommodate all the Competences of Listening Skill incorporated in Samacheer Kalvi English Syllabus English syllabus from Class I through Class X. Listening sub-skill in Class VIII and Class IX (Listening to appreciate poetry) falls in the level of C2.

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V. Pugazhenth, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Scholar
210-B Nochinagar

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46 Pudur (Post)
Erode 638002
Tamilnadu
India
evpugazh@gmail.com

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