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# THE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL

Developing L2 Academic Writing: Going Beyond CLT and TBLT  
– Direct Teaching of Vocabulary? – One-on-One: Interview with  
S. Mohanraj – A Note on Comprehension Checking – Using Sports  
Vocabulary to Strengthen English Language Skills of Engineering  
Students – The Role Motivation and/or Exposure Play in the Learning  
of English: Interview with Shreesh Chaudhary – The Master Teaching  
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## The Journal of English Language Teaching (India)

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The English Language Teachers' Association of India was founded on August 7, 1974 by the late Padmashri S. Natarajan, a noted educationist of our country.

### Periodicity

The Journal of English Language Teaching (The JELT) is published six times a year: in February, April, June, August, October and December.

### Contributions

Articles on ELT are welcome. Share your ideas, innovations, experiences, teaching tips, material reviews and resources on the net with your fellow professionals.

Length : About 1500 words for theoretical articles and for others about 450 words.

There should be an abstract in about 100 words at the beginning and all the necessary information about all the references quoted.

The JELT carries a brief note on professional details about each contributor. Please send a short note about yourself. You may give your name as you want it to appear in the Journal.

Articles should be sent only as an email attachment – **AS A WORD DOCUMENT** to

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A photo of the author should also be sent in the jpg file format as an email attachment along with the article.

It will be assumed that your article has not been published already and that it is not being considered by any other Journal.

The views expressed in the articles published in The JELT are the contributors' own, and not necessarily those of the Journal.

### Objectives of the Association

- ◆ To provide a forum for teachers of English to meet periodically and discuss problems relating to the teaching of English in India.
- ◆ To help teachers interact with educational administrators on matters relating to the teaching of English.
- ◆ To disseminate information in the ELT field among teachers of English.
- ◆ To undertake innovative projects aimed at the improvement of learners' proficiency in English.
- ◆ To promote professional solidarity among teachers of English at primary, secondary and university levels and
- ◆ To promote professional excellence among its members in all possible ways.

We bring out "The Journal of English Language Teaching", a bi-monthly, and it is given free to all the members of the Association. Our Literature Special Interest Group brings out a free online quarterly journal-Journal of Teaching and Research in English Literature.

Our consultancy services offer Teacher training packages and organize bi-monthly meetings on current ELT themes relevant to the Indian context.

We host annual conferences and regional conferences on specific areas relevant to the ELT scenario today. Delegates from all over the country as well as the world outside participate in them, present papers and conduct workshops.



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**Padmasree S. Natarajan**

Our Founder Editor and Publisher

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Dear Reader

Good news! Soon we will have a dedicated website for the Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT). Steps are being taken to put *JELT* back on the list of UGC-approved Journals. Our journal was earlier listed in the UGC approved journals. Unfortunately, some prestigious journals, including JELT, were removed from the list and the move drew a lot of flak from the academia. Now the UGC has decided to treat all peer-reviewed journals at par with its own list of approved journals. This will help teachers earn points to enhance their research score.

The current issue of JELT carries a range of articles focusing on different aspects of language learning. It carries two interviews. The regular feature One-on-One by Albert P'Rayan features an interview with S Mohanraj who served as Professor in the Centre for Training and Development and Dean, School of English Language Education, at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. Mohanraj answers a wide range of questions and shares his experiences in his areas of specialization including Teacher Development, Curriculum Design, Materials Production and Educational Technology. I am sure, novice as well as experienced teachers will find the interview interesting and useful. In the second interview Shreesh Chaudhary, former professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Madras, interacts with Robert Bellarmine who served as British Council's Manager of English Studies programmes & ODA/DFID projects and Teacher Educator at CIEFL (EFLU), Hyderabad. The interview is focused on the two most important factors for second language learning: motivation and exposure. Chaudhary shares with Bellarmine the role motivation and exposure have played in his learning of English.

For the past three years, Stephen Krashen, well known for his theory of second language acquisition, has been contributing regularly to our journal. In this issue we have two articles by Krashen and his co-author Beniko Mason. The article titled 'Direct Teaching of Vocabulary?' discusses direct teaching of vocabulary using a skill-building approach and aiming at rapid mastery. The second paper is 'A Note on Comprehension Checking' which focuses on comprehension checking while the teacher is telling the class a story.

There are also two interesting research papers by two young scholars. In the article 'Developing L2 Academic Writing: Going Beyond CLT and TBLT' Rajeshwari emphasizes the importance of developing academic writing skills in students at the tertiary level through employing pedagogical instructions for the same in all areas: arts, humanities and sciences. Smitha Chandran, in her paper 'Using Sports Vocabulary to Strengthen English Language Skills of Engineering Students' reports on a small study she took up to examine whether using sports vocabulary in classroom assignments could influence and motivate undergraduate engineering students to take more interest in their English.

Hope you will find the articles interesting. Happy reading. Do write to the editor at [JELTIndia@gmail.com](mailto:JELTIndia@gmail.com)

Dr Albert P'Rayan

# Developing L2 Academic Writing: Going Beyond CLT and TBLT

R Rajeshwari

Research Scholar, English and Foreign Languages University, Lucknow

## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims at emphasising the importance of developing academic writing skills in students at the tertiary level through employing pedagogical instructions for the same in all areas: arts, humanities and sciences. The limitations in the existing pedagogy at the primary and secondary levels have been analysed so as to suggest necessary pedagogical instructions at the tertiary level. Emphasis has been laid on the establishment of writing centres in India, as Academic Writing finds little importance in college syllabi, except in some language courses. The analysis of primary and secondary level language syllabi and teaching methodology has been done based on research done by means of tutoring school students up to XII standard (CBSE) in Delhi. Statistical analysis of IELTS score of 2017 has also been done so as to show that writing skills require explicit instructions.*

**Keywords:** *ELT in India, developing academic writing, writing centres at tertiary level.*

## Introduction

The Institutionalisation of English Studies in India, chiefly by Thomas Macaulay, Trevelyan and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, has travelled far since the period of Imperialism; in the post-independence era through the Radhakrishnan Commission, the Kothari Commission and the Ramamurti Commission to its present status as a second language; from Raja Rao's opinion, "it is to convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own", to it (English) occupying one's mind and heart. India is a country of the 'outer circle' wherein English has attained the status of second language (Kachru, 1985).

After globalisation, English has made its way as an important language not only in pedagogy, but it has also become a communicative language in India. As it is required everywhere – schools, colleges, jobs etc., people have realised that for keeping themselves well informed about the worldwide knowledge, they need to become proficient in the global language which is English. Hence, English medium schools are the most opted for in India.

## Prevailing Language Teaching Methods

It is important to understand the methods followed till date for language teaching (L2). Various researches in language teaching in

the 'inner circle' countries have provided many methods (for us). As is well known, Grammar Translation Method was followed earlier, wherein students were encouraged rote learning. As there was lot of dissatisfaction in teaching the forms of the language instead of the function, Communicative Language Teaching found precedence. It was based on Dell Hymes' theory of 'Communicative Competence' (1966) which was propounded by him in resistance to Chomskian theory of Linguistic performance and Competence (1965). CLT plays an important role in teaching language as (according to Hymes) it is based on 'ethnography of Communication', i.e. it is socially determined. In India, the importance attached to 'spoken English' and the mushrooms of institutes offering classes for the same are evidences to show that it is more important to know the functional aspect of the language than learn its forms. (Hymes).

Similarly, N.S.Prabhu's Task Based Language Teaching (1987) has gone a long way in teaching language as it is based on tasks which the learners are expected to perform following instructions provided therein. His tripartite model of information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap was instrumental in changing pedagogical instructions at the school level in India.

TBLT has found a potential place in pedagogy. The CBSE position paper (2006) is a case in point, wherein the importance of teaching English through Comprehensible Input has been given prime importance. It also prescribes Teachers'

Proficiency (TP) and organising Teachers' Training programmes for this purpose. It also emphasises the importance of Task Based Language Teaching.

The increasing importance and role of digital technology in language learning and teaching (CALL – Computer Assisted Language Learning) has seeped in India too. In school pedagogy it has taken the form of Educomp and FlipLearn which are digital applications provided by schools to all the students. It is quite well known by such students and parents that these portals provide pre written answers to questions and exercises under the guise of providing the students with Comprehensible Input. This is hampering and hindering the writing creativity of the students to such an extent that it has turned out to be a substitute to the rote learning in the earlier Grammar Translation Method; and we are regressing instead of progressing. Comprehensible Input (CI) (Stephen Krashen, 1981) is fundamental in language learning; but the role of Comprehensible Output (CO) and Feedback (by the teachers) (Swain, 1985) is irrefutable. Hence, production of language, oral or written, is essential for developing that aspect of language. It will be apt to refer to Nicky Hockley (2013) at this juncture. In his research he has studied the effect of Interactive White Boards in a language classroom. He has also called upon earlier researches on the use of technology in a similar context. He surmises that the mere introduction of technology in a classroom does not guarantee an enhanced learning environment.

CLT and TBLT have played their part in inculcating 'awareness and understanding' of the (second) language in India. It is time to go further and realise the importance of developing the writing skills in English as a Second Language.

### **Importance of Writing**

Writing is an essential tool for the manifestation of thoughts which will prevail and not fly away as speech does. Therefore, writing finds an important place in the life of human beings, whether in curriculum or otherwise. Education, the ability to read and write, transforms lives and societies; being numerate and literate gives advantages to human beings.

In education too, the measuring scale of any exam, whether language or any other skill, is the writing ability of the student. If the student is unable to exhibit his or her knowledge through his/her writing, it does not find recognition. Hence the ability to write is important for first language as well as for second/foreign language learners.

### **Literature study**

Second language writing attained the importance and status for research since the 1950s and 60s with the aim of developing pedagogical instruments for the teaching and learning of second language writing for international students who started enrolling in vast numbers in English speaking countries; but it derives from studies and research in L1 writing.

Since beginning, the main aim of a writing

task has been the product obtained thereof; but lately the focus has shifted to the process involved in writing. According to Jeremy Harmer (2004), process involved in a writing task is more important than the product obtained. She observes that to encourage an L2 learner to write, the product should be considered only as an impetus to develop the process. There has been a shift from grammar and spelling to coherence, cohesion, sentence structuring, organization of ideas, etc. Researches in academic writing have refuted the claim of Jeremy Harmer, as in the following study:

Figuerola et al(2018) , in their research on Academic Language and Academic Vocabulary on Chilean VIII graders have quoted Graham and Sandmel that the latter, in their research, found the process approach insufficient in developing writing quality. Hence Figuerola et al opine, "Therefore, the process approach appears to be explicitly overlooking the contextual dimension of writing, both at the level of writer diversity—according to their performance—and of writing as a situated practice." They also observe that writing, especially academic writing, requires high cognitive and linguistic efforts. For analysing the argumentative and explanatory essays of the students, they considered the following epistemic markers to be important: Syntactic structure, vocabulary, genre knowledge, idea development and discourse organisation

Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy has been instrumental in analysing writing. In

'Cohesion in English' (1976), they have established the important role played by cohesion in the 'texture' of the text. They have used 'texture' synonymously with coherence. Coherence and Cohesion studies attained great importance in assessing writing tasks. Carrell (1982) acknowledges the importance of cohesive devices and coherence in a writing task; but she rejects Halliday and Hasan's claim and observes that a text can be coherent even without employing cohesive devices.

Ruegg and Sugiyama (2013) consider the importance of organisation of ideas in establishing the coherence of a writing task. Their research studies what raters are sensitive to while evaluating the writing tasks. They observe that organisation of ideas may be assessed at two levels- physical aspects of organisation such as paragraphing and the existence of organisation markers; and deeper textual aspects such as coherent flow of ideas. They have surmised that both cohesion and coherence are assessed while rating a text.

Hinkel (2013) has foregrounded the importance of teaching Grammar to L2 writers. According to him, L2 writers need to be taught such rules of Grammar which are required in academic writing; and not the entire range of grammatical rules which seldom find a place in use. He has also provided certain features which academic writers should refrain from using, e.g. subjunctives or noun clauses as subjects etc.

Hinkel has acknowledged the vital role

played by grammatical structures in academic writing. "In recent years, in ESL pedagogy, the research on identifying simple and complex grammatical structures and vocabulary has been motivated by the goal of helping learners to improve the quality and sophistication of their second language (L2) production and writing." Many researches have established that grammatical accuracy is an essential component of academic writing and speaking (for L2 learners). It demands both instructions/teaching as well as intensive learning. Hinkel is critical of the methodology adopted for enhancing the communicative competence of the L2 learners as it focuses on personal experiences which is more fun instead of inculcating formal techniques of academic writing. Students are exposed to conversational language so much that they fail to differentiate between formal and informal register. In this article, Hinkel has given certain prescriptions for grammatical accuracy so as to improve L2 academic writing.

### **Developing Instructional Design at the Tertiary Level**

The existing pedagogical pattern in schools imparts either a 'copy-book-ideal' environment or an informal language, owing to CLT, to students; hence when students go to colleges and universities they face the risk of plagiarism or the register in their lexicon is not complex and academic. There is a strong need of formation of 'writing centres' in India. Other than a few language courses, colleges and universities seldom



offer a course in Academic Writing in India, be it arts or social sciences or life sciences or technical sciences. To show that development of writing skills requires exclusive instruction at the tertiary level, statistics of IELTS band score of students who attempted the exams throughout the year 2017 has been taken. (Retrieved from <https://www.ielts.org/teaching-and-research/test-taker-performance>).

This score is of the students from all over the world. IELTS is assessed on a 9-band scale and reports scores both overall and by individual skill. Academic and general training test takers (2017) split between these two categories are as follows:

Academic – 78.10%

General Training – 21.9%

For this paper, the statistics in the category of Academic exam have been shown.

Table 1 shows Academic test takers' mean performance (overall and individually in all the four skills) by gender. (See Appendix A)

This indicates that both in male and female categories, the band score of writing skill is much less than the other three skills.

Table 2 shows the mean of overall and individual skill score of academic test takers from top 40 places of origin. (See Appendix B)

In this table, Indian students' test performance shows a lower score in writing as compared to the other skills. If we look carefully, this problem persists not only with

Indian students, but other than one or two exceptions, this problem (of writing) persists with students of all the countries (as given in the table).

Table 3 shows the mean of overall and individual skill scores of test takers based on their first language. (See Appendix C).

Here, the writing performance of test takers with one of the Indian languages as the first language, again shows lower values as compared to the scores of other skills; other than the exception of Punjabi, wherein there is not much difference in the score of writing and the scores of other skills; because in their case, the score for Reading is lower than Writing. As for students with Marathi as the first language, their score for Listening has exceeded 7 band score, but the score for writing is quite low.

In fact, the writing score of students with English as the first language too shows a remarkable lower value as compared to the scores of their other skills because of which their overall mean has come down below 7 band score, in spite of the fact that their scores for Listening and Speaking are above the 7 band score which is not very easy to procure (as the statistics show).

It can be inferred that Genre based instructions can go a long way in developing the writing skills of students at the undergraduate and masters level. This will enhance the overall development of all the elements of writing. Studying through the different genres will provide the students with practical situations simultaneously

with improving their academic vocabulary and grammar. Thus it is essential to develop both the macro and micro properties of the writing elements, namely:

Cohesion

Coherence (organisation of ideas)

Syntactic structures

Triad of CAF (complexity, accuracy, fluency)

Lexical density

Academic Language

Earlier researches in assessing academic writing have considered all these properties for evaluating the quality of academic writing. Therefore, it is inferred that college students in India need to be instructed for enhancing these elements in their writing tasks, so that the quality of their assignments/journal articles/research papers improves.

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# Direct Teaching of Vocabulary?

Stephen Krashen

Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California, USA

Beniko Mason

Faculty member, Shitennoji University Junior College in Osaka, Japan

The goal of this paper is to discuss direct teaching of vocabulary using a skill-building approach and aiming at rapid mastery. This includes pre-teaching vocabulary before a story or reading a text, interrupting the reading or listening with vocabulary lessons, and post-story vocabulary instruction.

Most skill-building vocabulary teaching methodology begins with a list of words that will appear in the story or text, with translation into the first language, followed by vocabulary building activities that could come before, during or after the story. Here are some examples.[Numbers 1,2 and 3 are from Mason and Krashen, 2004 and were used in their study, described below), Numbers 4, 5 and 6 are activities included in a Spanish text (Ray, Ray &Coxen, 2016.)]:

1. Comprehension questions (both yes/no and wh-questions) with target words used in questions and required in answers.
2. The students read a written version of the story. They are then asked to underline the words they want to learn
3. The students tell the story they just heard to another student, and are encouraged to use words from the list story.
4. Draw a line from the word to the definition.
5. Work a crossword puzzle with target

words.

6. Work a word search puzzle.

The use of these activities assumes thatvocabulary development from reading or hearing stories is either impossible or isinefficient.It is, however, both possible and efficient.

## ***Vocabulary Development Without Skill-Building***

Those with large vocabularies rarely report doing or having done vocabulary study. Smith and Supanich (1984) tested 456 company presidents and reported that they had significantly larger vocabulary scores than a comparison group of adults did. When asked if they had attempted to increase their vocabulary since leaving school, 54.5 percent of the presidents said they had. When asked what they did to increase their vocabulary, however, about half of the 54.5 percent mentioned reading. Only 14 percent of those who tried to increase their vocabulary (3 percent of the total group) mentioned the use of vocabulary books.

Clearly, the value of commercial vocabulary programs should be empirically tested. (for an interesting methodology, see McQuillan, in press).

## ***Vocabulary Development is Gradual.***

We don't acquire vocabulary all at once. We



build up the full meanings of words gradually. Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) concluded that each time readers encountered a new word in a comprehensible context they acquired about five to ten percent of the meaning of the word. This may not seem like very much, but Nagy et. al. point out that with enough comprehensible input, this is more than enough to account for what is known of vocabulary development.

Ku and Anderson (2001) found very similar results for 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Taiwan reading in Mandarin, their first language. Each time they encountered an unfamiliar character in context, there was modest increase in recognizing the character on a test, similar to the increase found for reading unfamiliar words in English by native speakers of English.

Twadell (1973) anticipated the idea of gradual acquisition of vocabulary, pointing out that “we may ‘know’ a very large number of words with various degrees of vagueness .. in a twilight zone between the darkness of unfamiliarity and the brightness of complete familiarity.”

### ***The Relative Efficiency of Skill-building and Acquisition via Comprehensible Input.***

The results of two studies of the impact of Story Listening (Mason and Krashen, 2004; Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch and Krashen, 2009) on vocabulary development are highly relevant.

In Story Listening, the teacher assembles “prompts,” prepared before telling the story. The prompter is a list of words and phrases that appear in the story that the teacher needs to use to tell the story. Some

of the words are already known to the students and some are unknown. When the teacher suspects that a word, phrase or structure is unknown, the teacher tells the story using already known language and inserts the unknown one while telling the story, providing help in making the new items clear by drawing when possible, and sometimes using the students’ first language. In this way, the story becomes more comprehensible. The additional language also serves to make the story more meaningful, adding detail and depth.

At no time are students told that they are responsible for remembering the words; rather, the goal is to understand and enjoy the story.

In other words, Story Listening uses Comprehension-AidingSupplementation, designed to help comprehension and thus language acquisition, as contrasted with Form-Focusing Supplementation, designed to help language learning (Krashen, Mason and Smith, in press).

In Mason and Krashen (2004). two groups of first year EFL students in college in Japan heard a story in English. As described above, the teacher used prompts to make the story more comprehensible as well as more meaningful.

A second group heard the same story but also had supplementary vocabulary learning activities, including comprehension questions, retelling the story, and underlining the vocabulary they wanted to learn while reading the story. Table one presents the results of a surprise vocabulary test given five weeks after the groups heard the story.

**Table 1: Delayed test = five weeks later**

	Gain	Time	Efficiency
Story only	3.8	15"	0.25
Story+study	11.4	70"	0.16

At first glance, it seems that the extra study paid off. The “story+study” group made larger gains. But they also spent a great deal of extra time doing the exercises. Considering vocabulary gained per minute of study, the story-only group did better. They were more efficient.

Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, and

Krashen, (2009, study II) also informs us about the lasting effect of study versus acquisition from context, a study of Japanese students acquiring German as a second foreign language. The students had had no exposure to German in their secondary schools, unlike their previous experience with English.

**Table 2: The long-term effect of skill-building**

	post test	delayed test	Time	Efficiency
story only	12.4 (36%)	4.5 (13.2%)	20"	0.23
list only	22 (65%)	4.6 (13.6%)	35"	0.13

As in Mason and Krashen (2004), one group heard a story told in Story Listening fashion. The story included 36 words considered to be unknown to the students (this was confirmed on a pre-test: mean score = 1.9/36).

(Unlike more recent Story Listening procedures, described above, the words were written on the board, and students wrote a summary in Japanese after hearing the story while looking at the word list. )

In the “study” condition, subjects were exposed to 36 different words, also mostly unfamiliar to them (mean score on pre-test = 2.4/36). They did not listen to a story but instead received explanations of each word both in English and Japanese (20 minutes) and were then told to memorize the words

“in any way they wanted to” (p. 5) for 15 minutes.

On the post-test, the “list” group did better (table 2). But on a delayed test, after only a two-week delay, gains were equivalent, and the “list” group was less efficient. In other words, the comparison group showed more forgetting after two weeks.

Taken together, these studies strongly suggest that direct teaching of vocabulary is not as efficient as acquiring vocabulary via listening to stories, and that the effect of direct instruction is more fragile: it fades more with time. The time dedicated to skill-building would have been better spent listening to stories and reading, a decision that would probably have been greeted with pleasure by students. For other studies

reaching similar conclusions, see McQuillan, 2016, in press; Mason and Krashen, 2010).

### ***The Case Against Context: Is Context “Misleading”?***

Context, it has been argued, is unreliable: without a clear explanation or translation of new words, it is possible for acquirers to arrive at the wrong meaning. The classic example is a language acquirer seeing a picture of a hand pointing, but doesn't know if the word describing the picture means “finger” or “pointing.”

More comprehensible input, however, if there is enough of it, will help the acquirer come to the right conclusion, or one reasonably close to it; information provided by additional input will narrow the meaning down.

Most contexts are not “deceptive,” or “misleading”; they do not lead the acquired in the wrong direction. Beck, McKeown and McClaslin, (1983) examined contexts in basal readings: 61% provided at least some clues to the meanings of unfamiliar words, 31% were of no help, and only 8% were “misdirective.” Similarly, Perry (1993) asked an advanced acquirer in English as a foreign language to list words she didn't know while reading an anthropology textbook and guess their meanings. She was able to guess 37% correctly, and was partly correct on another 40%. She was completely wrong on only 22% of her guesses.

Once again, we don't expect full acquisition of the meaning of a word from one exposure;

rather, meaning is built up gradually, a little at a time, as we encounter the word again and again in comprehensible contexts. Acquiring vocabulary from context is the way we have acquired nearly all of the thousands of words we know in our L1 and L2(s), not direct instruction. Taking advantage of context is not “cheating” but a part of how we understand input and acquire language.

### ***Conclusion***

The arguments presented here are consistent with those presented by McQuillan and Tse (1999). Seely and Ray (1999) claimed that “the pre-teaching of vocabulary helps students comprehend and acquire language” (p. 5). They report that in their experience “comprehension is far worse when vocabulary is not thoroughly taught before a story is presented” (p. 5).

But McQuillan and Tse conclude that input “can be made comprehensible without isolated vocabulary teaching, through techniques such as visuals, gestures, and intonation. Moreover, studies indicate that most vocabulary acquisition is incidental and incremental. Students pick up new words while otherwise focusing on a meaningful activity, getting a bit more of the meaning each time they encounter the word in context ... Explicitly teaching words thoroughly is not necessary and may even be undesirable” (p. 6).

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## One-on-One: Interview with S. Mohanraj

Albert P'Rayan

Professor of English, KCG College of Technology, Chennai

Email: rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

*Dr S Mohanraj served as Professor in the Centre for Training and Development and Dean, School of English Language Education, at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. His areas of specialization include Teacher Development, Curriculum Design, Materials Production and Educational Technology.*



**Professor Mohanraj, you have been a teacher, teacher educator, teacher trainer and materials writer for over four decades. What inspired you to become a teacher in general and English language teacher in particular?**

My ambition in life was to become a medical practitioner. After I graduated with a degree in science, my attempts to get into medical school were not successful. I got a seat in MA English on the strength of my marks in language English paper and soon I paid my fees and joined the course. A month later I was offered a seat in MSc but I could not take it for the fee once paid could not be refunded or appropriated. So having done my masters degree in English, I became a teacher of English, and I have no regrets since. A teacher who taught us phonetics (Dr L Vishwanath) greatly impressed me and motivated me to go to CIEFL for further education, and this shaped me as a teacher educator.

**You have taught in different states in India and abroad. Can you share with the readers your most rewarding teaching experience?**

After obtaining PGDTE and M Litt degrees from CIEFL, I got a job in an ELTI at Vallabh Vidyanagar. This helped me shape my career as a teacher educator. This Institute used to offer training programmes both at the pre-service and in-service level. In-service teacher training took me to different corners of the state and beyond. While here, I taught in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Goa. Teacher training is different from teaching. It is more challenging for the students are mature and scope for discussion is a greater possibility. I began to develop tasks for helping the participants on the programme grapple with concepts in language teaching and materials

development. The experience across all the states was more or less similar. In Goa, the state decided to develop its own course books for teaching English. I was a resource person to train a group of teachers to develop the new books Gomantha Bharathi. This was a very enjoyable experience as the results of training were seen in tangible form. Subsequently, when I was chosen by the UGC to work as a Resource Person on a refresher course meant exclusively for the Method Masters of English from Colleges of Teacher Education from across the country (at the Central Institute of Education, New Delhi in October 1985) my outreach as a teacher educator expanded.

Having worked in Gujarat for over a decade, I moved to CIEFL in 1993 and this gave me an opportunity to visit different states of the country to train teachers as part of the ELTI Support Scheme as well as the District Training Scheme. This helped me gain a first hand knowledge of the syllabuses used in different states and the course books used for teaching English at different stages of school level. I consider this a valuable learning experience.

**In 1996, when I was your student at CIEFL you said that you love interacting with school teachers and teaching school students. Do you still have the interests?**

Yes. Being a teacher educator, I have always felt that it is essential to keep in touch with the ground realities. Hence, I have maintained a good rapport with schools, and whenever I get an opportunity, I go to a school and teach the children with some of

the new techniques that need to be disseminated.

**According to the Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, the four most important skills that one should possess are: 4Cs – Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking. Does it imply that English language teachers' role as mere teachers of English has changed / has to change in the twenty-first century?**

Teachers of English have been endowed with the responsibilities of teaching 4Cs from a long time. I remember this happened way back in mid 80s. I was in Anand (Gujarat). National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) started a new department of Human Resource Development (HRD) and the concept was still new. Some of the members of the faculty in our Institute (H M Patel Institute of English Training and Research) were drafted in to train the personnel. We designed the course on communication skills including interpersonal skills, presentation skills, and a bit of persuasion skills required by marketing personnel. We went to sources available and learnt these skills ourselves using peer teaching as a strategy.

Today, in most of the Engineering colleges a special paper has been introduced in the VII semester of the course which has a focus on 4Cs including confidence building strategies, facing interviews and participating in group discussions. This course is managed by the teachers in the department of English. This suggests that



a change in role has already been in place, and it is right that we brace ourselves for the same.

**You spent over a quarter century as a faculty at CIEFL (EFLU). It is said that the premier institute of English language education should have contributed much more to the development of ELT as a specialized field than it has done. Your comment.**

Sadly, what you have said is at least partly true and many of us should take the responsibility for this. The Institute was set up with a specific mandate to train teachers to teach language English at all levels. This was at a time (1958) when Indian ELT was in its infancy. There were plenty of opportunities to develop an Indian brand of ELT. But sadly that did not happen. I do not like to blame anyone for this. Perhaps, the teachers those days were trained in Britain and had lofty ideas which were not very practical in the existing Indian context. Hence, no concrete contribution could be made and sustained.

But this is not the whole truth. In terms of materials development, CIEFL has contributed substantially. *Let's Learn English* was a course book produced by CIEFL and published by NCERT for use in Kendriya Vidyalayas and other CBSE schools. These were qualitatively different from course books available around the same time (mid 70s). The structure of these course books gave rise to similar books by private publishers – *Gul Mohar* series being one of them. This book is popular to this

day thirty years after it was published for the first time.

One person who is a product of CIEFL and gave the world of materials an excellent course book was Prof Prabhu. In collaboration with Prof W W S Bhaskar he designed *English Through Reading*. Often, I have said and with conviction, that I am yet to see a course book which is better than this.

Another contribution CIEFL has made to the promotion of ELT in India is monitoring two major national projects – The ELTI Support Scheme and the District Centre Scheme. These schemes were funded by the Central Government and have helped several thousands of teachers across the country to receive good training in teaching methodology as well as materials development. Some of the teachers trained under these schemes have attained senior positions both at the national and international levels.

Unfortunately, there are no records maintained and continuity of work is missing in the Institute. This gives an impression that the contribution of CIEFL has been almost minimal. The statement is just partially true.

**Almost a quarter century ago, you experimented with educational technology in ELT and introduced the course “Computer-Assisted English Language Teaching” at the CIEFL. I was fortunate enough to be one of your students on the course. I must say that**

**you inspired me to get interested in technology-integrated language teaching. Are you still interested in education technology?**

I had a basic training in using computers in 1985. The NCERT organised a master trainers programme in line with the recommendations of MHRD to introduce CLASS (Computer Literacy And School Studies) programme. Those days we had very basic models of desktop computers which worked on DoS environment. These were called AT and XT systems with very low memory (compared to today's systems). In those days, such memory (64 MB) was thought to be elephantine. However, the CLASS programme was shelved due to certain political reasons. It is not appropriate to discuss the details of it here.

When I joined CIEFL, I proposed a course in CALL as an optional course in the second semester of PGDTE. The Academic Council gracefully accepted the proposal and I was happy to offer the course with meagre facilities. You are a witness to it. Luckily for me, we had Professor Keiser visiting us from Lucerne, Switzerland. He literally held me by hand in offering the course. I am always grateful to him. Today, the course has developed itself substantially, we are able to provide hands on experience to our students and become fairly proficient in using the available software for teaching English. They also undertake projects in CALL which are classroom based. I am happy that a course that began in a modest way has developed itself wonderfully well.

Some of my students who are now on the faculty are handling this course.

My personal interest in educational technology has not waned, but I am not able to keep pace with the recent developments. I am happy using my PPTs, and Web2 Tools to a certain degree when I am asked to teach.

**Gary Motteram, in his book *Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching* argues that “digital technologies are ideally placed to help teachers working with learners, and learners working independently, to do the necessary ‘languaging’ (M. Swain) that makes their language development possible.” What is your take on it?**

In response to this question I would like to go back a little in terms of time and look at the original objectives of ET. ET had four basic objectives:

- a. Promote self-learning as best as possible
- b. Provide every learner with a teacher
- c. Promote learning at one's own pace.
- d. Maximise learning by reducing wastage in teaching inputs.

Programmed learning was supposed to achieve all these objectives. Today, these objectives are seen as more pragmatic in relation to ICT. I am reminded of what one of my teachers (Prof Devidas, who was a pioneer in using Radio for language teaching) said, ‘with the use of media (read technology) a teacher can also learn with the learner. Learning becomes

participatory'. There cannot be anything more true than this statement when we use technology to teach our learners.

Technology has made individualised learning a reality. To give a simple example, an exercise in print can be put on a system and the same exercise when administered on a system (in soft form) can be used by different learners in different formats. The exercises lend themselves to better exploitation. You would remember some of the exercises like London Adventure, Cloze, Text Salad etc which we used on the CALL course with their inbuilt feedback mechanism providing an opportunity for constant improvement. Prof. Keiser used to often emphasise on this aspect of computer based exercises. With a lot of advancement in programming materials, we have today Web based exercises which provide for independent learning.

**What is your response to the criticism that in India not much has been done to promote the use of technology in language teaching?**

Unlike CLT, Technology has not spread very widely in our education system. It is still confined to urban pockets and perhaps better used in schools of medicine, technology, management and to a certain extent in some institutes of teacher education. Several international schools and rich private schools have harnessed technology but their number is far below the desired levels. Technology will reach across the country if and only if this is

introduced in all government schools with proper training given to teachers. The government in many cases has provided the hardware, but the schools have little or no resources to cope with the maintenance and also buy the required software and consumables. This, I find as the major reason for technology not picking up in the Indian education scene.

**Some language researchers and ELT professionals say that methods are dead and we are in the post-method era. Kumaravadivelu (2006) talks about facilitating “the growth and development of teachers’ own theory to practice” and “postmethod pedagogy”. What is your view on methods?**

I would prefer to take a slightly different path in responding to this question. Many scholars have said ‘there is no best method’. Prof Prabhu’s definition of teaching is ‘Teaching is hoping for the best.’ (This is largely because, we as teachers are blissfully unaware of what is happening in the learners’ brains.) When we look at these statements, we may need to change our perspective on teaching. For long scholars have advocated ‘eclectic approach’ as the best approach. There are ever so many definitions of this term. One I like most is ‘best method suitable for my learners at a given point of time’. I like this because of its flexibility and the autonomy it provides to the teacher.

A teacher knows his/her students and their needs best. Hence, a teacher should be given the liberty to do what he/she thinks

is best. In fact, Kumaravadivelu does suggest this in his book *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*.

**Your PhD research was on materials. You have written over a hundred course books and you have been quite successful as a materials writer. Stephen Krashen says that input must be not just interesting but compelling and when it is compelling the learner forgets that it is in another language. According to him, “Compelling input appears to eliminate the need for motivation, a conscious desire to improve”. What is your response to Krashen’s Compelling Input Hypothesis?**

The term ‘compelling input’ is not a new one. We have been talking of need based materials. Let us look at it from a different perspective. Littlewood held ‘Language cannot be used without a purpose’ as the basic tenet of language teaching. If we take this seriously, we can accept Krashen without any argument. To relate this point to materials, let us cite a few examples. Building exercises with sufficient amount of information gap, framing comprehension questions that are not factual but inferential, testing comprehension in a variety of ways such as information transfer etc. which will help in creating a purpose for using language. Compelling input helps us develop what I call ‘copy proof’ materials/ exercises. A learner provides a response based more on his/her experience and understanding rather than copy a part of the text. Such materials are available today in Indian course books both at school and college levels and are labelled HOTS –

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exercises that promote Higher Order Thinking Skills.

**Most English language teachers depend on the course books prepared by experts like you and this over dependence kill their creativity as teachers. Don’t you think that English language teachers should be trained to become materials writers too?**

I cannot agree more with you on this point. All teachers should be basically materials producers to some extent. Therefore in our courses on teacher education, we obviously provide sufficient practice in analysing syllabus and the course book. For this we may use the framework provided by Cunningsworth or we may develop our own framework. A detailed analysis of either of these documents helps them understand their structure. With such understanding they are able to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses in these and also find ways of overcoming the weaknesses. This is what I call basic introduction to materials development. A teacher who can look at the textbook prescribed, cull out the syllabus based on the course book, understand the needs of the learners and appropriately supplement the textbook is a materials producer in his own right.

**You have been involved in English language teacher education for many years. You taught at HM Patel Institute for 13 years and at CIEFL for 25 years. Pre-service training is very important for novice teachers. How effective are the BEd and MEd courses offered by different**

### **education institutes for teachers of English?**

Pre-service teacher training course [BEd, BEd (Elementary)] have undergone a revision as recently as 2016. Unfortunately, the changes have not happened the way they were envisaged by the NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education). A draft curriculum was framed in the year 2009 called NCFTE (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education). A team of very senior teacher educators (mostly retired from NCERT) went round the whole country disseminating the broader objectives of the new teacher training curriculum envisaged. A period of five years was given to prepare a good curriculum for the two year programme which was to be introduced in the year 2016. However, the new syllabus was a recap of the old syllabus divided into four parts to cover the four semesters. A few additional value based courses were added and the duration for teaching practice was increased from 40 days to 120 days. Many details that should have been spelt out with these changes were not properly spelt out and hence the B Ed programme has remained what it was.

All teacher education programmes whether they are in-service or pre-service should aim at providing adequate content knowledge. The two year period was thought to provide for improving content proficiency. This has not happened. (The four-year integrated programmes offered by Regional Institutes of Education – NCERT have been successfully doing this for over five decades now.) Another reform is likely to happen

soon. The nation is planning to come out with new curriculum at the tertiary level 'Learning Outcome Based Curriculum' with choice based courses made available to the learners. With this the structure of B Ed programmes is also likely to change for the better.

M Ed is not a teacher training programme as conceived by the NCTE. It is a trainer training programme and the curriculum here also needs to be revised in line with contemporary societal needs.

**Though the communicative language teaching continues to be the dominant ELT method in many countries where ESL/EFL is taught, most ESL teachers in India seem to be obsessed with traditional methods. As an ELT educator, how do you see this issue of resistance to change by teachers?**

I am not sure if this is really true today. There are strong reasons to support what I say. I consider the years 1990 – 1992 as very significant in the history of ELT in India. Earlier to this, there had been attempts in smaller pockets to introduce CLT but without much follow up. To cite a few examples, experiments conducted by SNDT experiment (1975), Loyola College Experiment in Chennai (1975), West Bengal Secondary Education Board experiment (1983), Bangalore Project (1979-81) etc. In 1990, the CBSE took up a major project to develop new type of materials, build new strategies of teaching and evaluation. This was a bottom up process in true sense of the term. 50 practising teachers from



different CBSE schools in the country were selected to undergo a sustained training programme in Marjons College, Plymouth. They were trained to develop course materials, train teachers and also develop question papers. The three teams worked in coordination and trained secondary school teachers across the country. Two new course books called *Interact in English I and II* were prescribed for use in classes IX and X respectively.

This caught the attention of teacher educators across the country. Several teacher educators volunteered to become trainers and trained teachers on 10-day inset programmes before the course books were put to use. To help children cope with the new materials, several schools took the initiative to develop similar course books and give the learners an early start. This has picked up in a big way with all the CBSE schools.

Looking at the success in such schools, several state board schools have also developed new materials, trained their teachers and the CLT has come to be accepted. There may be a few small pockets where traditional methods are still in use. But by and large, CLT is the in-thing today. Not only in schools but also at the tertiary level similar course books are produced and used. This is especially true of colleges of Engineering and Management studies.

**How important is professional development for teachers of English? What should be the role of premier institutions like EFLU in contributing to**

### **teachers' professional development?**

The concept of Professional Development (CPD) has picked up in the recent years in an obvious manner. This boils down to teaching ethics and its importance cannot be ignored. We have had teachers of exceptional quality in the past. Some of their working qualities have been systematically abstracted and offered to the teachers in training as a course. This is really necessary.

Professional development is an awareness rising (conscientization) programme and should be an essential component in teacher education. Lack of professionalism can be deterrent to one's career and also to the general goals of education at large.

**You have been actively involved in teacher development activities since retirement. You have been playing a vital role in strengthening the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI). What should be the role of ELTAI in promoting English language teachers' professional development in the days to come?**

My involvement in teacher development programmes was for two reasons. It gave me my bread and secondly, it became a passion with me. Perhaps there is yet another reason, it helped me build a better rapport with teachers who were closer to the learners and thus they formed a bridge between me and learners in school. I could access the school learners easily because of my involvement in teacher development

programmes. As time progressed, I had to retire, and with a long standing request from Dr. Elango, I accepted to offer my help.

ELT@I has been engaged in certain activities related to teacher development, conducting seminars for updating knowledge and also publishing a few journals both in print medium and online.

This is good work in itself. But being a premier association and at that being a very large body of teachers, it has potential for lot more work. I for one feel, that ELT@I can harness its strength in publishing quality books. There is a dearth of good books in ELT with a focus on Indian situation. ELT@I has adequate human resource to deploy to produce quality books.

An index of all the articles published in the Association journal (over 50 years and 300 issues and nearly 3000 articles) can be made available to the readers in soft form. Some of the best articles can be published in the form of anthologies of good writings in ELT and this can be a good source of reference and also bring in some revenue for the Association. I had briefly mentioned this in the Conference at Cochin (2017) and this is reiterated by Prof Robert Bellarmine.

The Association has now started

establishing chapters. The chapters can be provided with some autonomy to design their own programmes and earn some revenue to maintain themselves well. There can be a system established to bring about collaboration among the chapters and the Central body. This will help in providing necessary motivation for some of the chapters which have not been active.

**Name one ELT book that you found very useful. Would you recommend the book to other teachers of English?**

Ray Mackay's book *Basic Introduction to English Language Teaching*. This is a book published based on Dr. Mackay's experience of working with teachers of English at different levels in the state of West Bengal. Though the book provides examples from Bengal and teaching at the primary level, the book is relevant to all the teachers of English across India.

**Thank you Professor Mohanraj for sharing your experience and views on different aspects of ELT with the readers of the *Journal of English Language Teaching*. I do appreciate your contributions to the growth of ELTAI .**

Thank you, Albert for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts with all of you.

# A Note on Comprehension Checking

Stephen Krashen

Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California, USA

Beniko Mason

Faculty member, Shitennoji University Junior College in Osaka, Japan

The focus in this note is on comprehension checking during aural/oral interaction, e.g. interrupting the telling of a story and asking students if they understood. There are two kinds of questions used for this kind of comprehension checking: Global, eg. “Did you understand?” and Local, focused on a particular item used in the story or discussion, e.g. What does “vicarious” mean? To simplify discussion, the focus here is on comprehension checking while the teacher is telling the class a story.

The goal of comprehension checking during a story is to inform the teacher if input is comprehensible. We must ask whether comprehension checking is necessary.

Students generally (but not always, see below) know when they have not understood a message. If students feel that they have not understood, they should be able to communicate this to the teacher. In other words, if students know when they have understood, there is no need for comprehension checking.

Certain conditions must be met for this to happen: Most important, students must feel free to interact with the teacher.

Teacher-imposed comprehension checking (e.g. “tell me what I just said”) is only necessary when students will not indicate lack of comprehension, that is, when they feel they have no control over the

situation.

## **When comprehension checking is Interpreted as a test**

Whether comprehension checks are aimed at global or local comprehension they can be interpreted as a test, raise anxiety, and take the focus away from understanding. Instead, the focus will be on preparing for the comprehension question, which often means having a translation ready to demonstrate comprehension. Also, local comprehension checking sends the message that students should fully understand every word and understand each word well enough to give an accurate translation, which is counter to what we know about vocabulary acquisition.

## **Reducing the need for comprehension clarification requests**

Students need to be informed that they do not have to understand every word: Even optimal input will contain a little “noise,” a little incomprehensible input (unknown vocabulary, unacquired grammar). This is normal and harmless if it does not seriously impair comprehension.

When there are comprehension problems, in many cases, comprehension of the story will improve with more input; even the very next thing the teacher says may help listeners understand the flow of the story

and lead to more language acquisition. Students need to know this. Similar advice applies to reading as all.

### **Arguments in favor of comprehension-checking.**

There are two arguments used to support teacher-initiated comprehension checks:

First, students sometimes think they understand but they don't. But errors in comprehension, as noted just above, often work themselves out with more input. Of course, when input is impoverished, when it consists of only a few sentences, one cannot be sure. But with longer, more natural input, we generally arrive at the correct interpretation.

A second justification for comprehension checks is that they force students to pay attention to input they would normally not pay attention to. Knowledge that a comprehension check is coming acts as an incentive to attend to a text or presentation that is difficult or boring. Surely a better way is to provide more interesting and more comprehensible input.

Nearly all language acquisition proceeds quite well without external comprehension checking. If we make sure input is interesting and comprehensible, are sensitive to students' indications of lack of comprehension, and make sure that students feel comfortable indicating lack of comprehension, there will be no need for a great deal of comprehension checking. Even shy students will not hesitate to ask for clarification when necessary; with truly compelling stories, students will really want to know what is taking place.

We have arrived at the same conclusions McQuillan and Tse (1999) did. Seely and Ray

(1999) argued that "it is impossible to know whether every student is ... understanding unless further steps are taken." Moreover, it must take place "early in the process of vocabulary acquisition...(and be) nearly instantaneous..." (p. 5).

But McQuillan and Tse point out that there should be "no expectation that students will understand every word of the story, nor [should they be] held accountable for such a standard ... Freed of this burden, students are much more likely to be engaged. As real listeners, students feel more comfortable asking questions or indicating a breakdown in comprehension when they do not understand. If that atmosphere is absent, then the problem is with the teacher, not the students. We believe that putting students on the spot with constant comprehension checking is counterproductive because it may raise student anxiety and certainly will break the flow of the storytelling itself" (p. 6).

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# Using Sports Vocabulary to Strengthen English Language Skills of Engineering Students

Smitha Chandran

Ph.D. Scholar, NIT Rourkela, Rourkela, India

E-mail : rcksmitha@gmail.com

Seemita Mohanty

Professor, NIT Rourkela, Rourkela, India

E-mail : seemita@nitrkl.ac.in

## ABSTRACT

*This paper reports on a small study that was taken up to examine whether using sports vocabulary in classroom assignments could influence and motivate undergraduate engineering students to take more interest in their English learning. Culturally Indians are observed to be very sports loving. One hundred and twelve 2<sup>nd</sup> year electrical engineering students were considered for the study and were divided into two groups, group 1 comprising the experimental group, and group 2 comprising the control group. Specific language tasks based on sports were given to the experimental group to ascertain their level of interest. A pre and post-test method was applied, in addition to obtaining qualitative feedback from group 1 students. The results reveal that there was a marked improvement in the interest level and in the score level of the students who were subjected to the intervention process.*

**Keywords:** ESP, sports, sports vocabulary, classroom assignments, motivation

## Introduction

A sport is not merely an institution with various sporting practices, coaches, players, spectators, sponsors, etc. Sport is also an activity that 'communicates a large variety of ideas' (Hill 2006, p.15). In today's times sport is very informative and can even fashion the ideological underpinnings of a society. As once noted by an American novelist, Thomas Wolfe wrote to Arthur Mann in February 1938:

"Is there anything that can evoke spring?

The first fine days of April? Better than the sound of the ball smacking into the pocket of the big mitt, the sound of the bat as it hits the horsehide..." (Wolfe, 1983)

Arguably, what else can be more motivating than sports? Let us give a thought to this, as to how many Indian teenagers were glued to their televisions for the full schedule of cricket world cup 2015? Probably numerous! Youth is a time of burgeoning independence and overflowing energy. So sports are fun and perceived to develop young people's skills and talents to the



fullest. That is the one thing that they do not carry out to please their parents or satisfy their school obligations. Sports sometimes become a vehicle to stimulate interest in those students who are uninterested in academics (Gentile, L, 1980). Culturally Indians are observed to be sportive people. At National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela, where the study has been conducted, the sporting environs are observed to be exceedingly dynamic with the majority of the students indulging in sports either as players or as spectators. Taking into account this high level of interest in games and sports among the students, it was decided to introduce tasks based on sports to harness the ample learning potential sports as a field had to offer. This was validated once the task was introduced to the students in their Language lab sessions. When the topic of the presentations on sports was given to the students, it was observed that they showed great enthusiasm to work on the task and complete it successfully.

### **The rationale of the Study**

Nowadays educational climate being diverse, language lab sessions play a significant role in learning language skills in a happy atmosphere. In this experiment, it was intended that students who were not that confident about their English skills, develop an interest, and learn the language in a relatively relaxed atmosphere, while at the same time students with better English skills feel motivated to work toward a higher level of proficiency. It was made explicit from the outset that the objective of the task was

to improve the students' English communicative skills that included fluency and confidence, and not grammatical accuracy per se.

### **The Present Study**

At NIT Rourkela, the basic idea behind the lab course is to give the engineering students practical, hands-on experience on English language skills, at the end of which they would be able to give formal presentations, face an audience, and generate enough confidence to face the placement interviews. Thus, while designing each task teachers have to be careful that they do not make the sessions boring for the students or else it becomes difficult for these students to concentrate continuously for three hours on a subject that has no connection to their area of study. The two sections experimented with consisted of 57 and 55 2<sup>nd</sup> year electrical engineering students respectively who had completed their school exposure to the language. The students had all successfully cleared the strict pan-India engineering entrance examination, and were ranked more or less similar in the test, as a result of which they were able to get into the much sought after the electrical branch. The section with 57 students was named as group 1, the experimental group, and the section with 55 students as group 2, the control group. These individuals use English essentially for wider communication alongside the native languages they speak, so for them achieving native-like competence is often not necessary or desired (Lee McKay, S, 2015). In such a background it becomes a massive

challenge to the teacher to design assignments that can challenge and at the same time interest the students for three hours.

## **Procedure**

### ***Pre-test***

The experiment consisted of a pre-test for both the groups, intervention in the form of vocabulary practice and PowerPoint presentation for group 1, and again a post-test for both groups. The pre-test comprised of a list of hundred and ten terms relating to eleven different sports, ten words for each different sport respectively. The words were all carefully selected. Special care was taken to see to it that each term in addition to being related to sports, was also a part of either our daily vocabulary or of official communication. No prior information was given to the students regarding the test. The test was conducted in order to understand the students' previous knowledge of sports vocabulary. The second phase of this experiment was the classroom presentation for group 1. Group 2 being the control group was not assigned with the task. Group 1 students were divided into eleven groups each representing a different sport. The same sports that were selected for the pre-test were chosen by the students for the presentation.

### ***Classroom Presentation by Group 1***

Scaffolding was provided to the students through the following guidelines so that slides preparations for their presentations became easier.

- | Prepare a short, exciting presentation.
- | Start with an attractive introduction that will make your presentation stand out from the rest.
- | Then give the necessary details of the sport. Speak about the equipment used, tools and techniques, rules and regulations of the sport, number of countries the sport is played in, worldwide popularity of the sport, basic requirements for that particular sport, etc.
- | Talk about life-changing events in the life of its famous players. Motivate your friends with interesting short incidents and narratives about those players.
- | Along with your closing comments encourage as well as motivate your friends into playing that sport.

One week was provided to the students to prepare their slides. The final presentation including all the eleven groups continued for four weeks. The students were given half an hour to present, and another half hour was consumed in the post-presentation discussions.

**Table 1: Example of the sports vocabulary used by the students along with their meanings and daily usage**

Game	Word /Phrase	meaning of the word relating to sports/ other meaning	The sentence made with the term on the basis of daily usage.
Swimming	Dive into	Plunge one's body into something/ Start doing something immediately without hesitation	The swimmer <u>dived into</u> the flowing river/ The students of the dance academy <u>dived into</u> their practice as soon as their course started.
Basketball	Dribble	To bounce the ball repeatedly with one hand while running or walking / fall slowly or in thin streams.	He dribbled past a swarm of defenders / Rain dribbled down the window.
Athletics	Front runner	One who is leading in a competition or a race/ Someone who is expected to win	He is the <u>front runner</u> and he will win the next match too/ Sunitha is <u>afrent runner</u> for the new faculty position.
Boxing	Bout	Organized fight in boxing or wrestling/ a short period of some specific activity of some intense kind.	The next bout is between Mary Kom and Nicola Adams/ It was also revealed the 31-year-old suffered severe bouts of depression.

Table 1 shows a small glimpse of the actual words used by the students. E.g. the group that represented swimming used the word 'dive right into' in their presentation, which means, start doing something immediately without hesitation. They used it in a sentence while talking about Michael Phelps, the famous American Olympics swimming champion. The sentence mentioned, 'Michael Phelps dives right into for practice as soon as his day starts.' Here 'dives right into' is a phrase that can be used in our daily life. So the above table explains some of the words that the students used in their presentations.

### **Post-test**

same list of vocabularies given in pre-test was

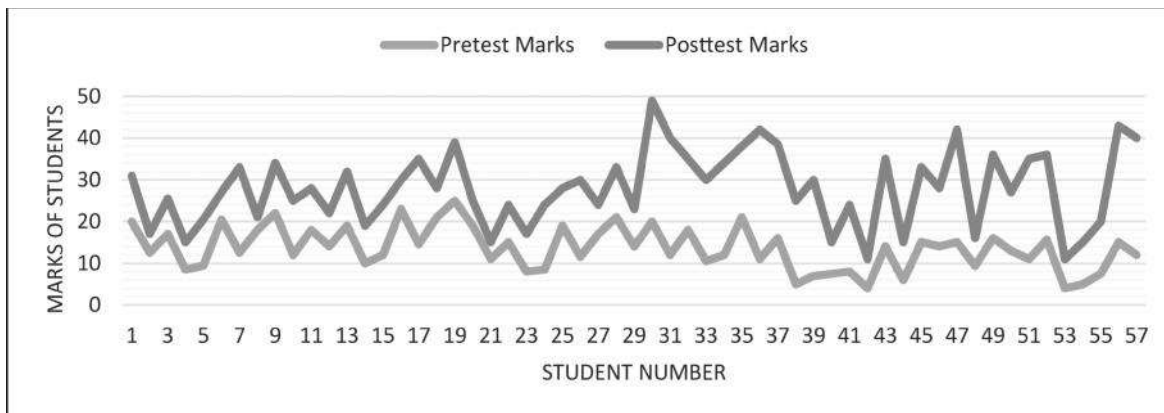
provided to the students of group 1 as well as group 2, and the post-test was conducted. These were then evaluated, and the result is represented in the following graphs.

Figure 1 shows the marks obtained by each student in group 1. A considerable level of increment can be seen in post-test when compared to pre-test. Some students have a high percentage of increase, while others have low. The low percentage of increment is perceived to be for the students who were observed to be not much interested in the presentations due to their lack of interest in sports. It can be seen that most of the students have shown an increment above average. This is because the majority of the class showed interest in presenting their

topics for which they willingly spent time for study and preparation. Moreover, the high increment is by the students who

showed interest as well as had a high level of proficiency in English speaking and writing skills.

**Figure 1: Pre and post-test marks obtained by the students in group 1**



**Figure 2: Pre and post-test marks obtained by the students in group 2**

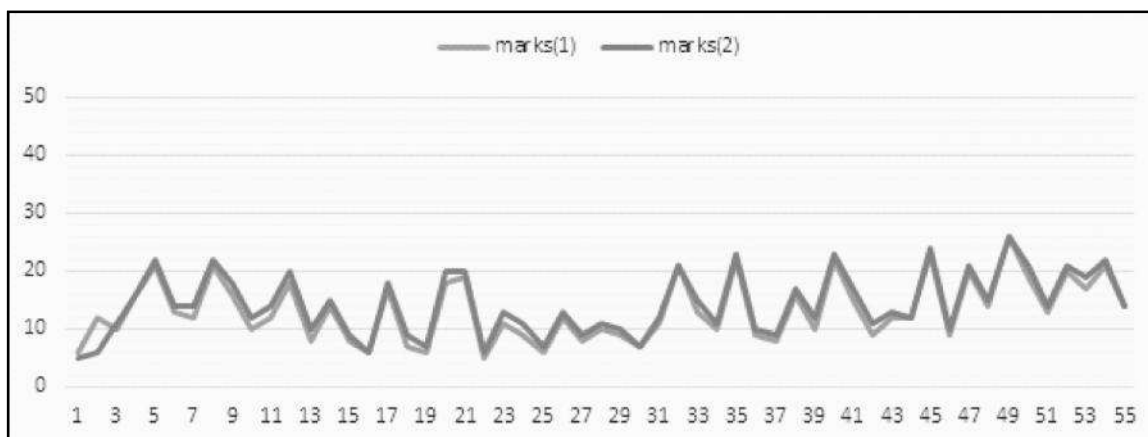


Figure 2 shows the marks obtained by each student in group 2. When compared to group 1 results there is only a marginal increment in the marks obtained in the post-test when compared to the marks obtained in the pre-test. Without any assignment practice being given to them as given to the group 1 students, no notable improvement is noticed in their post-test results.

## Results

### Student Feedback

#### Table 2: Feedback Form

**Write (Yes/ No/ Not Sure) against each question.**

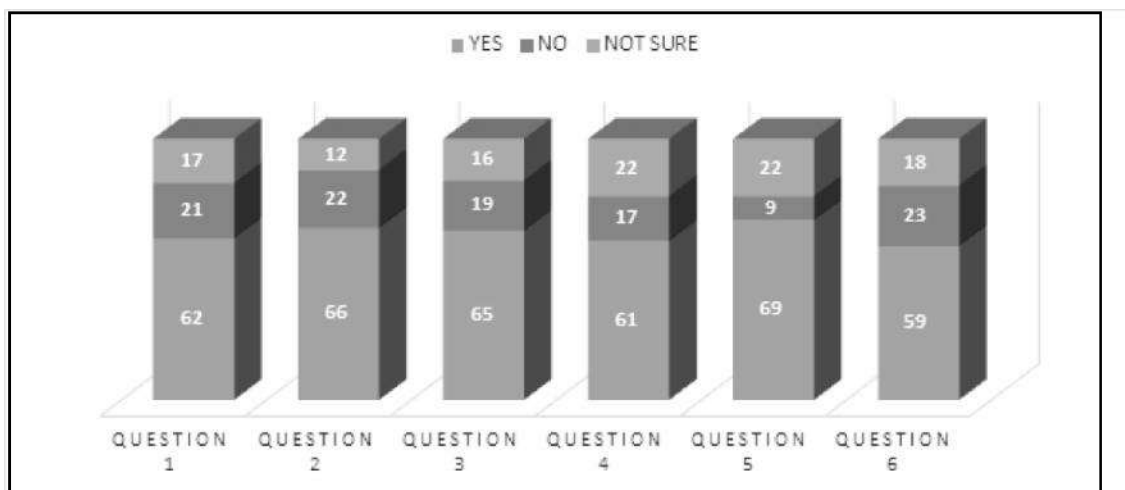
- 1) Was the task interesting?
- 2) Was the task interesting because the focus was on 'sports'?
- 3) Has your interest level in the language lab sessions increased?
- 4) Were you motivated towards

exploring more into the vocabulary of English?

5) Has your confidence level improved in order to face an audience?

6) Was the task useful? 7) In what way has the task been useful to you and what suggestions would you like to give to improve the course?

**Figure 3: Graph showing the responses given by the students in the feedback form in percentage**



#### *Analysis of the Feedback*

Figure 3 above represents the responses given by the students in the feedback form. The response to the first question clearly shows that quite a high percentage (62%) of the students found the task to be interesting. The second and third question forms the crux of this task justifies the argument put forward in this paper. (66% and 65%) Agreed with the fact that the task was interesting because the focus was on 'sports.' The fourth and the fifth questions show that a good percentage of students (61% and 69%) had accepted that they were motivated towards exploring more into the vocabulary of English and that their confidence level had increased when it came to facing an audience. And the 59% positive

reply to the sixth question suggests that a majority of the class found the lesson to be useful, yet at the same time we cannot ignore the fact that almost one fourth of the class, i.e., 23% of the class did not find the task useful, while some others were unsure about the usefulness of the task. Thus more effort is still required from the instructors to address the concerns raised by these groups of students, and encourage them towards taking more interest in classroom tasks and ultimately towards better English learning.

The open-ended question in the feedback form reveals the perceptions of the students towards the task that has helped us in better understanding the attitude of students towards such classroom tasks. The following



statements are some of the actual responses received from the respondents to the seventh question in the feedback form.

1. This task has improved my confidence to face an audience.
2. Yes, it has increased our interest in the language lab classes but if only we have to talk about our favourite sport.
3. We came to know the nuances of different sports.
4. Since I have come to know some new words, I use it while chatting with friends.
5. I come from a regional medium school which made me struggle with English in the presentation and hence could not speak all that I wanted in the limited time provided to me.
6. Some of the presentations were not very interesting.
7. Yes, I could improve my vocabulary, but the task was too short to bring a credible change in vocabulary intake.
8. I was very inquisitive to research about the sport and later present it before our friends which increased my self-confidence.
9. I have never been into sports, so it was difficult for me to get involved in the presentations fully.
10. The presentations were very fast for me, so I could not grasp much vocabulary from the presentations.

11. I am afraid of speaking before an audience but was able to present in a better manner as I had researched about the topic and was quite excited to convey it to my friends.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Second language researchers continue to debate how acquisition and learning relate to each other and how both might function in the language classrooms. Ellis (1997) specifies that SLA research findings may not provide straightforward guidance for the teachers, but it offers a wide range of concepts that teachers can interpret and make better sense of their own classroom experiences. At the end of the course analysing we can say that the reasons for the improvement of the vocabularies of the students are the presentations itself. Thus it can be concluded that young people find such tasks meaningful and motivating when the task involves an area that is a centre of their focus and forms a part of their immediate context like sports. The figures depicted above inform us that students have added some new vocabulary to their dictionary, and this has aided towards an increase in their confidence level while using the English language.

One notable drawback of this exercise is that students who are not into sports do not find the task stimulating and motivating enough. This category of students, even though a minority, is a part of the class and need to feel included in classroom tasks. A different problem that was observed was that in some presentations students became so much

engrossed in the sports stories that they got diverted from the real task of focusing on the vocabulary aspect.

The conclusion is not only derived from their test results but also our observations and interactions with the students. Students responded assertively about the increase in confidence level and vocabulary. However, they regretted that as the time provided for the presentation was thirty minutes, i.e., approximately six minutes to each student in the group, many of them were not able to convey all the information that they had gathered regarding the particular sport. Although the time spent in these classes is not enough for the students to become fluent in English, the results show that there were positive gains for the students at the end of the course. We perceive that the students left this language training lab with a new technique for learning and organising vocabulary. This can subsequently help them in increasing their lexical repertoire even outside the formal instructional setting. This was a small experiment conducted within a designated time-frame with a limited number of words at our disposal. Similar classroom tasks, taking into account universal youth interest areas like music, cinema, food, fashion, travel etc.

can be designed to address the needs of ESP students. More time can also be given to the assigned tasks to generate better results among the students. What is proposed in this paper is just an idea and its application suited to these engineering students, but the idea can very well be customised and extended to a different set of students in any other context.

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# The Role Motivation and Exposure Play in the Learning of English

Interview with Shreesh Chaudhary

Robert Bellarmine

Former English Studies Officer, British Council

Robert Bellarmine served as British Council's Manager of English Studies programmes & ODA/DFID projects and Teacher Educator at CIEFL (EFLU), Hyderabad and currently he is Consultant & Trainer, English Language Communication and Success Skills.

Shreesh Chaudhary served as Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Madras and currently he is Professor at GLA University, Mathura.

The main purpose of the interview is to discover the role Motivation and/or Exposure have played in the interviewee's learning of English. What do the terms 'exposure' and 'learning' mean? Influenced by Dr NS Prabhu, the interviewer uses the word 'exposure' in an inclusive sense. It denotes not only exposure to the target language data but also to the method used to teach the language, that is, to both material and method. Unlike in Krashen's, "learning" is not to be contrasted with "acquisition".

Robert: All in all, what do you think has been the sole or most important factor in your learning of English: Motivation or Exposure? (You can choose both, if that's closer to reality.)

Shreesh: Both, but motivation has been



more important. Students getting good marks in English were looked upon favourably by all even at my village. Though I attended a Hindi medium school and college, there was a lot of English in the form of books and journals all over MY home. My father, Govind Chowdhary(1909-2002), was a lawyer and avid reader of books in Bengali, English, Hindi, Maithilli and Sanskrit. Even before I realised what they meant, I had titles of these books staring into my face. But a still greater factor was the sense of prestige attached with English. Anyone, even with a modest proficiency in English, had no difficulty finding a job. Like others, I also wanted one.

Robert: What was the earliest time when you became aware of this?

Shreesh: I entered high school at the age of eleven and began learning English there. I saw that those good at English, i.e. good at spelling and meaning of words, were looked

upon favourably by all. It was a pastime with elders at my village, for those who knew any English to frequently embarrass young students by asking them to spell a relatively difficult word or to test their students knowledge of meaning of these words. Those that answered correctly rose in public esteem.

Robert: Was the integrative aspect of Motivation part of your Motivation? In what ways did it originate? How has it been strengthened or weakened?

Shreesh: Not quite. I did not want to belong to any group other than my own in the village. But within the village, and in the town of Darbhanga nearby, there were people who used English comfortably. I did not want to become exactly like them, some of them were seen as snobs, and a few of them affected a strange pronunciation; but, even if involuntarily, I wanted to speak like them or even better than them.

Robert: “Machiavellian” motivation is the opposite of integrative motivation. For example, the Indian leaders of our struggle for independence learnt English to fight against the English, to argue with them, and in various ways, use English in their struggle for freedom. In some ways, was this one of the aspects of your Motivation? Can you please explain and illustrate this?

Shreesh: No, I had no such designs. I did not learn English to fight or oppose anyone. For that and for me, even Maithili was enough. But English definitely opened more doors, than any other language, even in that

small town. If I was late taking a relative for a hospital appointment, then, I found, speaking in English helped.

Robert: In your high school and college days, what ELT methods did your teachers use? (Please note: Although the “Language through Literature Method” has not been as well known as the Grammar Translation, Structural, Direct, Communicative and Communicational methods, it was certainly recognized as a method by CIEFL.)

Shreesh: My teachers used what generally has come to be called Grammar Translation Method (GTM). We were taught basic structures of English along with frequently used words of this language within two years of starting. I started learning English, as I have already said, at the age of eleven.

Robert: Can you recall the teachers, both in your school and college days, who contributed to the increase and decrease of your Motivation? In what ways did they increase or decrease your motivation? Were the materials and techniques and personal rapport some of the aspects of what affected your Motivation?

Shreesh: I remember a few teachers, both at school and college, who were great motivators. They convinced me and my friends that learning English was easy and enjoyable, that regular work gave power and prestige, and that we could approach them for help and advice anytime we needed it. They sustained our motivation across our school and college careers. All of these teachers were, perhaps, not equally great

scholars, but none was less loving than the others.

Robert: Apart from the prescribed texts, what did you use as sources of your Exposure to **written** English?

Shreesh: As I said above, I found illustrated books and journals all around me, though in a limited quantity at my home in the village, and far too many more at my father's residence in the town nearby which I was allowed to visit during school vacations. By the time I reached senior school class, I had begun reading stories and newspapers in English on my own.

Robert: Apart from the prescribed texts, what did you use as sources of your Exposure to **spoken** English?

Shreesh: I had little exposure to spoken English. Hardly, anyone spoke in English at my village, where I stayed until I was sixteen. Even today that situation hasn't changed much. Those that speak in English to members of the family or community in the village are seen as utter snobs. Even in the town, where I studied for college, hardly anyone spoke in English. Even English teachers, very often, used Hindi or Maithili even in the class. But my father had a radio set at his home in the town, and he listened to the English news on radio every morning and evening. That, I remember as my first exposure to the spoken English. I still remember the opening words of the new broadcast every morning, "This is all India radio giving you news read by Lotika Ratnam."

Robert: Approximately, from what age to what age do you think you learnt English, irrespective of the levels of mastery? Are you still learning it? During this period, have Motivation **and** Exposure played the same role with the same intensity and vivacity? Can you explain or illustrate it?

Shreesh: I began learning English alphabet when I was eleven, and have continued learning the language ever since. Of course, I am still learning it. I continue to be unsure of pronunciation, spelling and meaning of many words. Motivation and exposure have played an important part in my career with English. I still take a lot of time to write; I have to do several drafts even for an ordinary mail, and many more drafts for anything more formal. I still commit errors of pronunciation, particularly of those words, that have clusters of consonants at the beginning of the word, such as, split, school, strike, street, etc. Only recently, did I learn the meaning of words like "sinecure". Many technical terms from other fields, such as medical and engineering, continue to tell me how much more one dozen know yet.

Robert: Pit Corder said, "Given motivation and exposure, second language learning is automatic". But I believe that given motivation, exposure is automatic and therefore second language learning. In contrast, Dr N S Prabhu said in the eighties that the only thing we can be sure of in second language learning is Exposure, Exposure in an extended sense to include methods and materials. What do you think?

Shreesh: Both exposure and motivation are



important. I am motivated to learn Persian, but I cannot learn it because it is not easily available to me. On the other hand, I was in Andhra Pradesh, now Telangana, together for over ten years, and in Tamil Nadu for almost thirty years, yet, I could learn neither Telugu nor Tamil. To learn a language, in my opinion, one needs both motivation and exposure; no matter how they are defined. Actually, one also needs a third thing without which neither of the above could be useful. One needs “aptitude” to learn a language. I know that current theories of language learning do not recognize this factor, but there are a lot of overwhelming data such that the significance of this factor in language learning cannot be denied.

One set of evidence to support this claim comes from human biology. In no aspect of creation any two human beings are exactly and totally alike. Even cattle and other animals are not totally alike. They differ in many ways including in aptitude for things, just as they differ in height, weight, looks and other attributes. God, or Nature, has a mass production factory where each piece is customary.

There is yet another piece of evidence in support of this claim that aptitude is a significant factor in language learning. There are some celebrated examples. Srinivasa Ramanujan was a genius at Mathematics but not in languages. On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore was great at languages, including English, in spite of being a school dropout, though he was no great guns at Mathematics. There are many

other examples. Even within the same family, and within same classroom, where a number of factors are identical, children differ in learning a variety of things in a variety of ways. Some write beautiful handwriting but cannot spell entirely correctly, just as some spell quite correctly but can hardly write legibly. There are people who write well, like Gandhi ji, but cannot speak; just as, there are those who can speak well, like Kabirdas, but cannot write. Some are good at sports, but not in academics – Sachin Tendulkar, M S Dhoni; some are good at acting, but not in academics – Amitabh Bachchan, Rajni Kant; some are good in academics, but in nothing else – a whole lot of academicians in universities and colleges. We have similar examples from sciences, business, politics, arts, crafts, music and sports. Similarly, some people are good at all of these things. I have had the good luck to know some who are good at music, sports, literary arts, sciences and languages. Who can deny the power of language of Stephen Hawking, whose book on astrophysics, *A Brief History of Time*, sold more copies than any other published in English since the King’s Bible. Hawking was otherwise barely able to do anything with his body. Aptitude is a huge factor, given this factor, all else, including motivation and exposure, can be created; without this neither will help.

Robert: In the ELT contexts, do you think creating, arousing and maintaining motivation is partly the responsibility of the classroom teacher(s)? What about syllabus writers, textbook writers, and question-

paper-setters? Alternatively, is it solely the responsibility of the learner and their parents?

Shreesh: No. No learner is born motivated. Motivation to learn anything, other than answering the biological necessities, such as sleep, hunger, sex, fear, etc, is a cultural influence. We learn not all, yet only those skills or ways of life for which we have motivation. This applies as much to children learning how to pick pockets, how to tell lies, as to how to learn English or Mathematics. Motivation is provided by the community. It is, therefore, teacher's job to create and sustain motivation. By this same yardstick, it is also the job of the syllabus designer and materials producer to create methods and materials such that would interest and benefit the learner. A lot of failures in learning languages, or Mathematics and Sciences, can be directly attributed to unimaginative methods and boring materials and to insensitive teachers. Families are as much duty bound to create and sustain motivation as schools and colleges are. Many grandparents and some parents, as well have made history by helping their wards learn beyond what was ordinarily possible.

Robert: If Motivation is of paramount importance, why have the editors of professional journals not included a permanent section on it? Will ELTAI's **JELT**

one day do this?

Shreesh: There is no need of special section for essays and articles on motivation. Any success story in any field is a saga of motivation. I would much rather have my children, my students and colleagues read the biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Akio Morita, Dhirubhai Ambani, Henry Ford, JRD Tata, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, etc. than read my article on motivation in any journal. Our problem is that we have lots of theories but limited data. I would much rather have ELTAI journal to publish success stories, like it did of Robert Bellarmine (ELTAI Journal, Vol... No... Pp...) himself, than have very generalized articles.

Robert: Can English or any L2 be learnt without any motivation? Is such a situation imaginable or plausible?

Shreesh: Nothing can be learnt without motivation.

Robert: On the theme of this interview, Motivation and Exposure, what are your final comments?

Shreesh: I seriously believe that motivation and exposure both are equally important. Neither would help without the other, but both of these would produce fabulous results when combined with aptitude.

*The Master Teacher Training National Workshop*  
on **The Use of Digital Tools for Learner Autonomy in Communication Skills**  
(A HornbyTrust (UK)-funded project)  
at **The Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi, India**

15 -16 February 2019

**A REPORT**

Project Head: Dr. S. Rajagopalan

Resource Persons:

1. Dr. P.N.Ramani
2. Dr. Revathi Viswanathan
3. Dr. Pradeep Singh
4. Dr. Joycelin Shermila

The workshop, exclusively meant for our Chapter Heads or their nominees, was attended by 17 of them. Dr.A.Joycilin Shermila, Principal, Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi welcomed the gathering and inaugurated the workshop.

**Day 1:**

**Session 1:** The workshop began with session - 1 by Dr. P. N. Ramani on *Learner Autonomy– What, Why and How*. He dealt with the concept of Learner Autonomy and the need for making students autonomous learners. He reiterated the importance of encouraging students to take up responsibility for their learning in order to develop autonomy. He introduced a few classroom practices and highlighted the learners' and teachers' role in introducing autonomy in institutions.

**Session 2:** In the next session on Listening and Speaking Skills, Dr Revathi Viswanathan introduced various strategies presented by O'Malley and Chamot and

discussed the importance of training students in various strategies for developing listening skills among students. In this session, her focus was on designing self-*instructional materials relating to speaking and listening skills*. She insisted that teachers need to prepare worksheets through self-instructional modules in order to encourage students to take up responsibility for their learning. Dr.Revathi elaborately discussed the various components of the self-instructional tasks and also provided a sample material for the benefit of the participants. She also introduced the *software*, 'Audacity', which could be used for developing speaking skills. The speaker stressed the need for setting up a *Self Access Centre* in every institution to help students learn and practice each communication skills themselves.

**Session 3:** Dr Xavier Pradheep Singh handled the use of digital tools for developing Writing skills among students. He introduced tools used by NextGen Z Learners and provided hands on experience to participants in using tools like *Nearpod, Tricider, Padlet, Trello, Google Docs, and Grammarly*. He reiterated that teachers need to use various digital tools in order to encourage students to use the language skills even beyond the language classroom.

**Day 2:**

**Session 4:** This session focused on

'Developing Autonomy in Reading Skills' and was handled by Dr P. N. Ramani and Dr.Revathi Viswanathan. Dr.Ramani spoke on the basics of reading skill, the relationship between reading ability and learner autonomy and its concepts. Aspect of reading and its process were introduced with examples. A sample for measuring text difficulty and level of readability through *Lexile* software was given. Dr. Revathi Viswanathan encouraged the participants to prepare a self-instructional module for reading. She divided the participants into groups and provided a self-instructional material template for each group to prepare a task assigned to it. In the end of the session, the tasks were collated and made into a single file.

**Session 5:** Dr. Revathi Viswanathan discussed the strategies for developing lifelong learning skills and *listed a few the self-evaluation rubrics for students to use while self-directing their learning*. Dr. M.S Xavier Pradheep Singh introduced a few learning platforms for encouraging students to do online courses.

**Session 6:** Dr.M.S Xavier Pradheep Singh introduced resourceful websites on vocabulary like *visuwords*, *lexipedia*, *vocagrabber*, *lexical lab*, *your dictionary*, *lingro*, *word hippo*, free collocation and vocabulary (as a tool) and demonstrated the way of using them in detail. Dr. Ramani introduced a few online resources on grammar.

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*lab*, *your dictionary*, *lingro*, *word hippo*, free collocation and vocabulary (as a tool) and demonstrated the way of using them in detail. Dr. Ramani introduced a few online resources on grammar.

During the feedback session, a few participants shared their views about the sessions handled for two days. Then, with the aim of disseminating the knowledge gained from the workshop, the participants were instructed to conduct a similar type of workshop for teachers in their respective regions.

After the feedback session, Dr. S. Zahira Banu, Assistant Professor of English, Sri Meenakshi College, Madurai proposed vote of thanks.

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After the feedback session, Dr. S. Zahira Banu, Assistant Professor of English, Sri Meenakshi College, Madurai proposed vote of thanks.

In conclusion, it should be said that no words are adequate for thanking Dr. A. Joycelin Shermila, Principal, Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi for having made excellent arrangements for the conduct of the workshop.

Revathi Viswanathan

# Report of the Action Research Project on Essay Writing

Joyceline Sharmila

Convenor, ELTAI Thoothukudi Chapter & Principal, Annamalai College of Education, Thoothukudi

The proposal of the Action Research Project on Essay Writing submitted by Thoothukudi chapter was approved and the project work started from September 2018. Twenty four prospective teachers studying in I BED at Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi were chosen to get training in Essay Writing. Causes for the problems in essay writing are poor vocabulary, lack of ideas and lack of writing in logical sequence. The investigator believed if systematic training is given the students' essay writing skill can be improved.

A one-day workshop on essay writing was arranged with a view of giving exposure to expert training. On 14/09/2018 Dr.Revathi Viswanathan, Professor & Head, Department of English, BSA Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai served as a resource person and all the participants were oriented on the different kinds of essays and how to write an essay in an inspiring way. Problems in essay writing were identified to be due to poor vocabulary, lack of ideas and lack of writing in a logical sequence. She gave models of best essays to the participants. In the workshop basic sentence structures and how to use key words effectively in different essays were taught.

Followed by the presentation Dr.A.Joycilin Shermila, Convenor of the ELTAI Thoothukudi Chapter, conducted a brain storming session on the topic 'My Concept

of a Good Teacher'. Students were asked to write an essay on 'My Concept of a Good Teacher' and that was the first essay they wrote.

Each student was helped to create a blog and they uploaded their essays in their blogs. It was planned to post an essay every month. Following are the essays students have posted in their individual blogs –

- |          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| October  | - | My Concept of a Good Teacher   |
| November | - | My Childhood Experiences   |
| December | - | Significance of ICT in Teaching and Learning                               |
| January  | - | Is Social Networking Necessary for Students?                               |
| February | - | Every person is an Architect of his own Future (Essay writing competition) |

Following are few sample URLs of the blogs –

1. [priyadharshini1114.blogspot.com](http://priyadharshini1114.blogspot.com)
2. [Snega1997.blogspot.com](http://Snega1997.blogspot.com)
3. [Ayswarya97.blogspot.com](http://Ayswarya97.blogspot.com)
4. [lavijit9.blogspot.com](http://lavijit9.blogspot.com)
5. [prafina21.blogspot.com](http://prafina21.blogspot.com)

In February, a competition was conducted among the participants and the topic "Every person is an architect of his own future" was given. Students were made to write the essay in the class under the supervision of a teacher. Duration for writing the essay

was 40 minutes. Papers were collected and were valued by the following two members of ELTAI Thoothukudi chapter: Dr.V.Chanthiramathy, Associate Professor, PG & Research Department of English, VOC College, Thoothukudi, and Dr.S.Rasul Mohaideen, Associate Professor of English, VOC College of Education, Thoothukudi.

They valued all the 24 papers and finalized the winners of the essay competition. Following are the three students who won

prizes:

1. P.Thriveni (Books worth Rs.1500)
2. K. Sharone Snowfana (Books worth Rs.1000)
3. S.Sweetlin Mercy (Books worth Rs.500)

As planned the first three participants will be given prizes during the 57<sup>th</sup> College day of Annammal College of Education which is planned to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

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### Journal of English Language Teaching (Survey)

Dear readers

The 5Ws and the H will be handy to enhance the skill to question and arouse curiosity. The *Journal of English Language Teaching*, published by the English Language Teachers Association of India, is the oldest ELT journal in India. Launched in 1965, the journal has been a platform for teachers of English and scholars to publish their research work. Of late, globally well-known ELT experts and researchers including Stephen Krashen and Richard Smith contribute regularly to the journal. We need to constantly improve the quality of the journal in order to serve the ELT community in India better. We would like to get your feedback on the journal and your suggestions to make it a reputed journal. We do appreciate your feedback and suggestions. Please send your responses to the Editor at [JELTIndia@gmail.com](mailto:JELTIndia@gmail.com)

1. Are you a member of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)?  
i) Yes                      ii) No
2. Type of membership  
i) 1 year                      ii) 3 years                      iii) 10 years
3. How long have been subscribing to the Journal of English Language Teaching?  
i) More than 10 years    ii) 6-10 years    iii) 1-5 years    iv) Less than a year
4. Do you read ...?  
i) All the articles  
ii) Only the articles that you find interesting/relevant/useful  
iii) Undecided
5. What type of articles do you find very useful?  
i) Research-based articles                      ii) Reports of action research  
iii) Interviews with experts                      iv) Reading /Writing activities  
v) Book reviews                      iv) App reviews  
vi) Any other
6. Have your articles been published in JELT?  
i) Yes    ii) No
7. Are you interested in getting your articles published in JELT?  
i) If 'yes', why?  
ii) If 'no', why?
8. How would you rate the timeliness of the articles published in the journal?  
i) Excellent    ii) Good    iii) Fair    iv) Poor v) Don't know
9. How would you rate quality of the articles?  
i) Excellent    ii) Good    iii) Fair    iv) Poor v) Don't know
10. What are your suggestions for improving the quality of the journal?

# Report of Action Research Project on Library Centered Teaching of English

B ZulaihaShakeel

Convenor, ELTAI Ramanathapuram Chapter & Head, Department of English, TBAK College, Kilakarai, Ramanathapuram

## Reading Club

A Reading Club was inaugurated for all the PG students of the college as an initiative of the ELTAI Action Research Project Scheme. All the students were enrolled as members of the club that is functioning effectively even after the project period. An hour a week was given exclusively to encourage and enhance the reading habit of the students through several reading activities. A separate rack in the department library is maintained for reading club books.

Google forms and sheets were created for the following entries: Membership Enrolment and Issue of Reading Club books.

Issue of reading club books and review submission were maintained. Students were taught to make entries of their progress themselves. This helped them to learn how to use Google sheets.

## Details about the club

No. of students and classes involved: 25  
(2 Classes)

Duration of the Project: 8 Months  
(03.01.2018 - 01.09.2018)

No. of books purchased: 31

No. of books read on average by students:  
2 to 3

## Action Plan - Reading Activity

Sl. No.	Activity	Type of Reading
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>looking at main ideas versus details (10 minutes)</li><li>understanding what is implied versus stated (10minutes)</li><li>making inferences (10 minutes)</li><li>looking at the order of information and how it effects the message (5 minutes)</li><li>identifying words that connect one idea to another (10 minutes)</li><li>identifying words that indicate change from one section to another (10minutes)</li><li>Review (5 minutes)</li></ul>	<b>Intensive reading (3 weeks)</b>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reading may be combined with a speaking and writing component (10 minutes)</li><li>Students may set their own goals for their next session (5 minutes)</li></ul>	<b>Extensive reading (3 weeks)</b>

Sl. No.	Activity	Type of Reading
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students may progress from reading graded reading material to authentic text. It should be expected that students will “slow down” in their reading then, it becomes more challenging (15 minutes)</li> <li>Summarize the concepts (5 minutes)</li> <li>Students assumes total responsibility for developing reading ability (10 minutes)</li> <li>Students reads without the use of a dictionary(5 minutes)</li> <li>Students recollect all the materials (10 minutes)</li> <li>Review (10 minutes)</li> </ul>	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skimming is used as part of the SQ3R method of reading, often for speed reading (10 minutes)</li> <li>This method involves the student in surveying, questioning, reading, reviewing and reciting (10 minutes)</li> <li>Students must locate facts that are expressed in sentences, not single words.(15 minutes)</li> <li>Although speed is essential and the teacher often sets a time limit to the activity, skimming should not be done competitively (10 minutes)</li> <li>Students should be encouraged individually to better themselves (5 minutes)</li> <li>Review (10 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Skimming (3 weeks)</b>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read slowly and pause occasionally to think aloud about a story (15 minutes)</li> <li>But keep the story flowing as smooth as possible (10 minutes)</li> <li>Talking about stories they read, develop their vocabularies, link stories to everyday life, and use what they know about the world to make sense out of stories (15 minutes)</li> <li>Share their experience (10 minutes)</li> <li>Review and summarize the whole concept (10 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Story talk (3 weeks)</b>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask friends, neighbours, and teachers to share the titles of their favourite books (15 minutes)</li> <li>Check the book review section of the newspapers and magazines for the recommended new books(10 minutes)</li> <li>Keep in mind that your reading level and listening level are different (20 minutes)</li> <li>When you read easy books, beginning readers will soon be reading (5 minutes)</li> <li>When you read more advanced books, you instill love of stories, and you build the motivation that transforms into lifelong readers(5 minutes)</li> <li>Through the story identity motivational speech (5minutes)</li> <li>Review (5 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Look for book (3 weeks)</b>



<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type of Reading</b>
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Read the story and get an idea with clear (15 minutes)</li> <li>  Think individually about a topic or answer to a question; and share ideas with classmates (10 minutes)</li> <li>  The teacher asks questions to elicit meaningful responses from the students that would lead to optimum understanding of the poem, short story, fiction(25 minutes)</li> <li>  Review and summarize the whole concept (10 minutes)</li> <li>  How to evaluate what's being said (10 minutes)</li> <li>  Give their feedback about the story (10 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Think-Pair-Share (TPS)</b> <b>(3 weeks)</b>
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Work in pairs, the students read and analyze the given paragraph (20 minutes)</li> <li>  They write their interpretation on the sheets of paper(15 minutes)</li> <li>  Frame questions on their own</li> <li>  Through that students write their own story in effective way (20 minutes)</li> <li>  Review (5 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Thought-Unit Paraphrasing</b> <b>(3 weeks)</b>
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Enhance the pronunciation, stress, intonation ,speed and accuracy of your reading which are extremely important (55 minutes )</li> </ul>	<b>Loud reading</b> <b>(3 weeks)</b>
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Teacher has to instruct the readers about the activity and the reading material (poem) (10 minutes)</li> <li>  Readers have to create a mind map about the read material(poem) (25 minutes)</li> <li>  Readers have to produce tune for the poem. (reader have to sing the poem in their favourite tune) (25 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Tuning after reading</b> <b>(3 weeks)</b>
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Try reading first with just a paragraph, then gradually expanding your selection to include more paragraphs or whole sections or sub-sections of text (20 minutes)</li> <li>  Set realistic goals for the amount of time and number of pages to be read (10 minutes)</li> <li>  Think, interpret, and analyze the first time you read, to avoid unnecessary re-reading (10 minutes)</li> <li>  Examine and re-examine the answers to your questions(20 minutes)</li> </ul>	<b>Practicing Active Reading</b> <b>(3 weeks)</b>

#### **Review Seminar:**

Reading Club seminar was held for the members on 01.09.2018 and prizes were given from the sanctioned amount of the action research project for the best presentation. All the members of the club were given bookmarks and pens as complement.

#### **Winners of the Review Seminar**

Ms NiloferNisha R	(II MA English) -	I Prize [Rs. 1000]
Ms Muneeswari K	(II MA English) -	II Prize [Rs. 500]
Ms Pargavi K	(II MA English) -	III Prize [Rs. 300]

***The Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT) – ISSN-0973-5208***  
[A publication of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)]

**Submissions**

*The JELT* is an international, **peer-reviewed journal** published by the English Language Teachers' Association of India based at Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, but with over 55 chapters in different parts of India. **Please see the front inner cover for details of the establishment and objectives of the association.**

*The JELT* is published **six times a year** – February, April, June, August, October and December. The overall aim of the journal is to promote the professional development of its readers, namely English teachers teaching at all levels, researchers and teacher trainers around the world. The journal, therefore, accepts submissions on all aspects and issues relating to the teaching and learning of English in ESL settings.

**Criteria for Evaluating Submissions**

Each submission will be evaluated for its suitability for publication in terms of the following criteria. The article should:

- Reflect current theories and practices in English language teaching.
- Be relevant and appeal to the wide readership of the journal.
- Be well written and organized, with sufficient explanation and examples to enable readers to apply the ideas and insights in their own classes.
- Discuss the topic in the context of other work related to the topic.
- Be written in clear and concise language, making it easy to read.

**Guidelines for Submissions**

Each issue of the journal addresses a specific theme. Authors should send submissions related to the theme before the deadline indicated for the issue. *See the ELTAI website and the journal for the themes (if any) and deadlines for the subsequent issues.*

Authors should follow these guidelines while preparing their articles for submission:

1. The article should not have been published previously in any form (print or online).
2. The maximum length of the article should be 2000 words (excluding an abstract in 150 words).
3. All pages should be double-spaced with a clear margin of 1 inch on all sides.
4. The title should be brief and focused, not broad or vague.
5. The article should carry only the title, abstract and the main paper.
6. The title, author(s)' name(s) [the last name first], affiliation [i.e., the name of institution(s) the author(s) belong(s) to; city, country] and email address should be provided on a separate cover sheet for the article, along with author(s)' photo(s) [.jpg].
7. Only sources cited in the article should be listed as references at the end of the article.
8. The article should use the author-date format for citations and references (e.g., Anderson 1997; Anderson 1997, p.17). *See the Chicago Manual of Style (15<sup>th</sup> edn.) for more details and examples.*
9. A list of all the references cited in the text should be given at the end of the article.  
In each reference, only the author's last name and initials are to be provided.  
The year is placed after the author's name.  
Only the first word of the title and the sub-title (after a colon) are capitalized along with proper nouns.  
Titles of books and journals should be in *italics*.  
Quotation marks are not to be used in the title.  
For electronic sources such as websites, the date of accessing the source should be given in brackets after the URL.
10. The filename of the article (in MS Word format) sent as an email attachment should contain key words from the title and the (lead) author's name.

**Padmashri S.Natarajan**  
**(Dr. S.S. Rajagopalan, Educationalist, Chennai)**



My father was a member of the South Indian Teachers' Union and even as a student, I used to accompany him to the Annual Conferences of the Union. I was fairly familiar with leading personalities. At one gathering, Shri G.Krishnamurthi of Trichirappalli made a fiery speech attacking the office-bearers on several counts. His oratory fascinated the entire gathering. Then S.Natarajan, General Secretary rose to answer the accusations made. For an hour the members were spell-bound not only by his arguments, but his diction and fluency of speech. No wonder I became his instant disciple. I became a member of SITU the very

day I became a teacher.

S.Natarajan started his career as Science teacher in St Gabriel's High School, Broadway, Chennai. As was the wont, he also took classes in English. He was a devoted teacher, much loved by his students, colleagues and the Headmasters. His involvement in Teachers' Union in no way affected his school duties. In a rarest of rare happenings, the catholic management made a non-catholic S.Natarajan Headmaster in the twilight of his career. It was a recognition and appreciation of the dedication of Natarajan to the school.

Natarajan was synonymous with SITU. M.S.Sabesan of the Madras Christian College was the President when Natarajan was elected the Secretary. It was a wonderful team. The South Indian Teacher, the official organ of the Union was edited by Natarajan for many years. It was published monthly without any break. In addition to Union affairs, it used to contain matter to improve the professionalism of teachers. Natarajan firmly believed that teaching should be as good a profession as medical. He developed close contact with teachers' unions in other countries. On exchange basis, he was getting the magazines published by the National Union of Teachers (NUT), UK, National Education Association (NEA), US and the American Union of Teachers (AUT). He was surprised to find that the Unions there went far to address to the other needs of teachers, in addition to their pay and rights. Though Madras Teachers' Guild, the first Teachers' Union in India started a Housing scheme exclusively for teachers called Teachers' Colony, it was Natarajan to take it to higher levels. The Union promoted a life insurance company in the name of SITU Teachers' Protection Fund. When insurance was nationalized, SITU Protection Fund was adjudged as the best managed insurance company and for every Rs 1000 insured, it was converted into Rs 1600 of LIC. It was a bonanza for the teachers. A model school named after Sabesan was started to cater to children in the area.

He was basically an academician. He had close contact with the Education ministers, both at the State and Union levels. He was so much respected that in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, no important decision would be taken without involving him. He

had direct access to the first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, It was on Natarajan's persuasion that the Directorate of Educational Projects(DEPSE) was formed to encourage action research by teachers. SITU Council of Educational Research, founded as an adjunct to the Union made the fullest use of DEPSE. Natarajan served as Honorary Director of DEPSE. No wonder that DEPSE blossomed into NCERT.He also founded SITU Publications as a public limited company to publish books for students for extra reading. Shares were taken mostly by teachers. Teachers were encouraged to write books on themes not generally found in the traditional syllabuses. It is sad that it was not continued after the demise of Natarajan who used to travel to all parts of Tamilnadu carrying the publications all alone.

Natarajan's opinions were crucial to decision-making on issues. He tendered evidence before the Secondary Education Commission headed by Dr A.L.Mudaliar and the Kothari Commission. Actually he was a member of several sub-committees formed by the Kothari Commission. No wonder he was the convenor of the Sub-committee on teachers' service conditions. He was an active member of the World Confederation of the organizations of Teaching Profession. He rose to become its Vice-President. But for his demise, he would have been the first and only Indian to be its President.

Natarajan was dismayed that most teachers stopped reading the day they completed their teacher education course. Even schools did not subscribe to educational journals. A look at the visitors to the school library showed that very few teachers used it. At the same time during his interaction with teachers he found every teacher faced some problem or other in their professional life. His interaction with the National Union of Teachers, UK prompted him to provide help to teachers in their classroom problems. He first founded the Society for promotion of Education. Under its auspices several subject teachers' associations were started. Their main objective was to improve the classroom teaching. Of them, only two are alive. One is the Association for Mathematics Teachers of India and the other is the English Teachers Association of India. Though primarily intended to cater to the needs of school teachers, over the years the associations have lost track of their objectives.

Natarajan was a fearless fighter for the rights of teachers but he was against any direct action. When the Association of non-gazetted officers of Madras Presidency went on a strike in 1947 to demand pay revision, many teachers wanted to join the strike. Natarajan vehemently opposed the strike move and he had his way to keep teachers away from it.

Natarajan was selected to the Madras Legislative Council representing the teachers' constituency. The membership gave him a status which he used to promote teachers' causes. He was highly respected for his sedate comments. It was unfortunate he lost the reflection. After independence a large number of schools were opened in rural areas and a new crop of young teachers who joined the profession had no acquaintance with the SITU. But Natarajan continued to serve the teachers and their profession.

The crowning contribution in his illustrious professional career was his deep involvement in the drafting of the UNESCO document on the Rights, duties and responsibilities of the Teaching Profession. He represented WCOTP on the drafting committee.

## READING ACTIVITY

### Intertextual Reading (comparing & contrasting for ongoing discourse)

**Dr. K. Elango**

National Secretary, ELTAI & (Formerly) Professor of English, Anna University. elangoela@rediffmail.com

- Objective** : Facilitating readers to read a text in relation to other texts to form a web of textual relations, a network of texts to become critical readers
- Participation** : Individual
- Material** : Any text. Example - Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*
- Preparation** : While reading a text, constantly referring it to other texts of similar kind or totally contradictory to identify their proximities and differences.

**Procedure :**

- Start with a writer of your choice and one of his/her works. For instance, Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, to be read after familiarizing oneself with her feminist leanings as reflected in her essay, *A Room of One's Own*. One of the dominant themes in *Mrs. Dalloway* is the condition of women in the patriarchal society.
- If one gets interested in the area of feminism and wishes to find out how this gets reflected in the Indian context, they could choose a writer such as Anita Nair and read some of her novels such as, *Ladies Coupe*, to identify the similarities and dissimilarities between these two novelists.
- One could figure out some of the similarities between the protagonists of these two novels: Woolf presents Clarissa Dalloway as the proverbial 'Angel in the house' playing the role of a perfect hostess in the party to be hosted in the evening. But the emphasis is on her private thoughts of her existential crises – she rebels against the wifely duties and rejects the male-dominated sexuality imposed on her and so on. Likewise, Akhila in *Ladies Coupe* is portrayed as a perfect daughter, sister, aunt and provider but she attempts to break free of these responsibilities and buys a one-way ticket to Kanyakumari to start a new life. Both the stories happen in a space of one day in *Mrs. Dalloway* and one night in *Ladies Coupe* and they follow the flashback technique.
- One should focus on dissimilarities as well, following the strategy of contrast. There are several differences between these two novels – although they thematically resemble, the socio-cultural contexts are quite variant. While Woolf situates the events and characters in the post-First World War England, Nair draws them from a conservative Brahmin family moored in totally Indian ethos and so on.
- Reading these two novels as a network of texts throws up innumerable opportunities to compare and contrast them in terms of content, form and style which sharpens readers' comprehension and their critical acumen.

**Learning outcomes:**

- 1) Learners recognize that the strategy of comparison and contrast is a significant means of acquiring new insights.
- 2) Learners realize that intertextuality promotes reading a text not as an independent entity but as an ongoing discourse process.

**Further reading:** Reading any text not in isolation but always in association with other texts which contain certain similarities and dissimilarities.

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**\*Intertextual reading:** This concept is used in the sense of bringing texts together of the same writer or different writers who have similar concerns and styles. These texts are to be read in parallel, so as to identify the textual links and variations. This kind of reading strategy would increase the critical sensibility of readers.

Research in comparative literature often compares writers from different contexts belonging to different time period. For instance, several scholars have compared Shakespeare and Kampan/Ilango Adigal (two important Tamil writers or Margaret Atwood and Jane Austen and so on).



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### Correspondence

Correspondence relating to The Journal of English Language Teaching should be addressed to the editor at [JELTindia@gmail.com](mailto:JELTindia@gmail.com) and that relating to the English Language Teachers' Association of India at [eltai\\_india@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eltai_india@yahoo.co.in)

### English Language Teachers' Association of India

E-mail: [eltai\\_india@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eltai_india@yahoo.co.in)

Web: [www.eltai.in](http://www.eltai.in)

Ph.: 044 - 26172789



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English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)  
16/30, Sowrashtta Nagar II Street, Choolaimedu  
Chennai - 600 094.

E-mail: [eltai\\_india@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eltai_india@yahoo.co.in)  
Web: [www.eltai.in](http://www.eltai.in)  
Ph: 044 - 261 72789

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