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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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CDs and hard copies will not be accepted.

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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Editorial

It is indeed a very proud moment for ELTAI and the English language teaching fraternity in India to witness the successful completion of fifty years of the existence of this professional journal. Its survival and robust growth is all the more amazing when you consider the odds faced in this age in running a print journal for about four thousand members of the association. It's a real feat that needs to be celebrated. I am too overwhelmed to say much except to realize that it was given to me to edit this special number, standing on the shoulders of my great predecessors who were stalwarts among the English teaching community. Let me, therefore, take you to the Silver Jubilee Year Special Number and quote excerpts first from the piece 'Looking Back' written by our present patron Prof. S. Rajagopalan and then from the editorial of that issue by Dr. V. Saraswathi, both of whom have rendered yeoman service to ELTAI, to the journal and to the cause of ELT in India, besides others mentioned in these two pieces.

From the Silver Jubilee Year Special Number (Vol. XXV, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1990)

'Looking Back' – Dr. S. Rajagopalan, Former Professor of Education, Annamalai University

"It was in June, 1965 that the first issue of our Journal came out, thanks to the untiring efforts of the late Padma Shree S. Natarajan and Mr. Duraiswamy, whose contribution to the growth of professional organisations of teachers in our country is well-known. They were ably supported by Professor R. Krishnamurthy, former Principal, Pachaiappa's College, Madras, who continues to guide us in our work even today in spite of his old age and failing health. The first issue contained six articles and it was edited by Mr. Natarajan himself. To quote his own words, 'The principal aim of this journal is to promote efficient teaching of English in our schools. The journal will have a positive and practical approach to the realization of this aim. . . .

". . . . In the words of his great friend and fellow worker in the cause of education, the late Mr. M. Duraiswamy, 'Physically Mr. Natarajan was puny, but intellectually he was sturdy; his eyesight was weak but his insight was keen and correct; his pecuniary resources were meager but he built up monetary reserves for good causes; to personal appearance and attire he was indifferent but in upholding lofty principles he was adamant.' What better tribute could anyone pay to that great departed soul?

"Mr. M. Duraiswamy, who succeeded Mr. Natarajan as the Editor of the Journal and continued to edit it till his passing away on 10.11.1984, was another great figure in the educational field in our State. He was associated with our Journal right from its inception. . . . He was master of the English language and wielded a facile pen. His editorials were always marked by brilliant wit, incisive comments and forthright views.

"Professor R. Krishnamurthy . . . is one of the greatest Principals the country has ever seen, apart from being an illustrious Professor of English. . . .

"Professor B. A. Easwaran of the Guru Nanak College, Madras, was our next Editor and he was also the Secretary of our Association for a number of years. . . . His contribution to the growth of the Journal has by no means been insignificant.

"It is with a great sense of pride and joy that we put in the hands of our readers this Special Number of the Journal brought out to mark the completion of twenty-five years of its existence.

. . . .

“ . . . I make an earnest appeal to all the educational administrators, teachers and students to extend to us their full cooperation in all our endeavours to improve the teaching of English in our country in general and the publication of our Journal . . . in particular.”

What better tribute could anyone pay to the succession of editors and what better appeal to strengthen the journal could anyone make?

‘Editorial’ – Dr. V. Saraswathi

“As we place this silver jubilee issue of our journal in your hands, dear reader, a surge of emotions wells up in our hearts – joy that we have been able to serve you for twenty-five years, admiration for our founder, whose dream has now become a reality, gratefulness to you all for your continued support, and a host of others that the heart feels but fails to find expression for.

“We humbly dedicate this issue at the altar of all those great visionaries who worked with tireless zeal for maintaining and promoting the standards of English Language Teaching in India, and provided a much-needed forum for exchange of ideas relevant to our context. On this red letter day in the history of our journal, we rededicate ourselves to the ideals they stood for – commitment to a cause, sincerity of purpose and perseverance against odds.

“This issue offers you an excitingly rich fare from some of the best thinkers in ELT in the world today – experts of international standing

[Dr. M. L Tickoo, Dr. N. S. Prabhu, Dr. Dr. Marlow Ediger, K. Chellappan, Dr. N. Krishnaswami, Dr. M. N. K. Bose, Dr. V. Saraswathi – some of the brightest stars in the firmament of ELT in India]

This silver jubilee issue has been the outcome of the tireless efforts of the members of the executive committee of ELTAI, the Editorial Board, our many donors, . . . and of course all of you. With your continued patronage we are confident of marching on to our Golden Jubilee.”

The dream has indeed come true. I share the sentiments of both Dr. Rajagopalan and Dr. Saraswathi on this occasion and we are sure we will reach the next milestone, the Diamond Jubilee, and other milestones, too, with your continued cooperation and support.

We would like to point out that this Golden Jubilee Year Special Number is of, for and by teachers, researchers and teacher-researchers – all the articles have been written by researchers and practising teachers. They went through a rigorous review process, as the authors very well know. We profusely thank the reviewers who readily agreed to review the submissions and gave constructive feedback to authors.

This special issue includes not only articles (divided into two sections: ‘From Theory to Practice’ and ‘From Problem to Solution’) but also book reviews and reports from some of our chapters. The humorous tidbits on grammar spread across the pages were compiled by Dr. Saraswathi. You will also be happy to see congratulatory, goodwill messages from two of our ‘good old friends’ and well wishers.

You will not find the list of chapters in this issue – for want of space we could not include it. Members can, however, access the details from our website.

We will be happy to receive your feedback on the contents of this issue.

P. N. Ramani
Editor

Message from Dr. V. Saraswathi



Publishing an educational journal continuously for fifty years on a non-profit basis is an achievement ELTAI can justly be proud of, a marathon feat worthy of a Guinness Record. How was the impossible made possible? In this golden jubilee year, we gratefully remember the sweat and toil of the many office-bearers who have selflessly contributed to this success. The journal has had its ups and downs, heights and depths, but leading publishers like Orient Longman/Orient Blackswan have been helping us year after year. Above all, we should not forget our dear English teachers whose subscriptions have been the mainstay for bringing out issue after issue.

At this proud moment, we congratulate the editor and publisher, and wish the journal a glorious march forward to its centenary.

(S/D) V. Saraswathi
(Former Editor, *JELT*)

Message from Mr. Francis P. Jayachandran

Chennai
16 June 2015



Dear Dr. Rajagopalan,

I wish to convey my greetings and congratulations to you and all the officials and members of ELTAI on this occasion of the Golden Jubilee Special Number of the bi-monthly Journal proposed to be released at the 10th international & 46th National Annual ELTAI conference.

I am privileged to be associated with ELTAI for more than thirty years. I have seen its steady growth in the sense that it has been serving larger and larger community of Teachers of English and more and more number of institutions, through ELT courses, conferences and the bi-monthly Journal.

Your vision, guidance and inspiration have largely contributed to this growth.

May ELTAI continue to serve the cause of ELT for many years to come.

I wish the journal long life of service in the cause of ELT and the conference great success.

Sincerely yours,
(S/D) Francis P. Jayachandran

Teaching Foreign/Second Language Reading: Instructional Guidance to Improve Teachers' Teaching



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Introduction

Reading is perhaps one of the areas in language learning/teaching (the first as well as the second language – L1/L2) that have received a lot of attention in recent years and much light has been thrown on what reading is, what different kinds of reading processes are, and what their implications are for language teaching – particularly in foreign/second language (FL/SL) teaching classrooms¹. Much has also been written about the skills and strategies used by effective readers.

It is said that they:

- Know that both text and context are important to make sense and so read, keeping in mind background knowledge: content knowledge, culture-specific knowledge, formal knowledge about different text types and text-organisations, and general knowledge of the world. They seek this knowledge if they do not have it, or activate it if they have;
- Predict on the basis of their schematic knowledge what the writer might say in the given text and verify whether the prediction is correct; if not, revise the prediction. Expert readers invoke their schematic knowledge and the visual

input is minimal. Reading for them is a linguistic guessing game and so they may not read each and every word;

- Understand what reading means: read silently, varying speed according to purpose and text, guess meanings of unfamiliar words and expressions, read in sense groups also called meaningful chunks;
- Are clear about the purpose of reading and so are motivated to read and know that stress, fear and anxiety can cause 'short-circuit' and hence avoid them;
- Read fast with fluency: have acquired 'speed and accuracy' and 'automaticity' of decoding (Eskey, 1988; Anderson, 2005; Grabe, 2009);
- Have linguistic competence: have vast passive vocabulary and keep learning new words and phrases (Coxhead, 2000; Bromley, 2004; Nation, 2001); new uses of known ones, phrasal verbs, linking devices and discourse markers; grammatical and lexical cohesion; and can process complex constructions;
- Pay attention to how the writer says what he says: logical development of ideas in the text;
- Pay attention to non-verbal information,

if any;

- Make inferences; and
- Have developed sensitivity to language: understand writer's attitude, irony, sarcasm, choice of words and phrases, symbols, imagery, similes and metaphors including orthography of writing: punctuation marks, quotations, italics, capitals, and so on.

This broader concept places reading not merely as a passive but an active – rather interactive – activity, not just decoding but interpreting and making meaning of what is read. This view of reading was applied to L1 reading around 1970 but it was only around 1979 that it started having an impact on L2 situation. Since then much has been written on techniques and methods of teaching reading in ESL (Nuttall, 2005; Mikulecky, 2008; Grabe, 2009).

But despite this, in many ESL classrooms reading continues to be done in the old traditional way: in the elementary classes the attempt is to help students to 'learn to read' and in secondary classes the focus is on 'giving' meaning and on 'testing the product' by asking comprehension questions given at the end of the prescribed text. This practice is content-oriented and not skill-oriented. The focus is on the 'product' and not on the 'process' of reading. In other words, the aim is to 'give meaning' to the learner instead of 'skills' required to 'make meaning' for him/herself.

Even where recent research on interactive models has reached the classroom teacher, it has not yet been assimilated in its right perspective. Teaching of reading has either not changed at all or tilted towards the top-

down model. As Eskey (1988, p.95) observes, "despite the emergence of interactive models, much of the ESL reading literature continues to exhibit a strongly top-down bias." The materials prescribed for intensive reading practice is of little help to the practising teacher.

How Can Material Writers Help

In such ESL/EFL situations where teachers still use old, traditional practices or where there is a bias towards 'top-down' process of reading, the role of material writers assumes great significance in helping teachers impart skills and strategies used by effective readers identified as follows:

a) Reading with a purpose

Effective readers read with a purpose in mind. They are clear why they are reading a given text; what they will have to do after reading it: answer some given questions? Fill in some table/chart? Having a purpose in mind also gives learners motivation to read.

b) Pre-viewing skills

Trained readers survey the text to form a quick general idea of what the text is about by:

- using the title, sub-titles, pictures, diagrams and physical layout of the text;
- predicting and forming a hypothesis using prior background knowledge;
- testing the hypothesis by further reading of the text and reforming it if not proved correct; and
- recognising the text type and the writer's purpose.

c) Text sampling

Trained readers skim for main ideas by going through the text silently and fast without stopping even when they come across a word or phrase they do not know, making sense of such words and phrases by guessing their meaning from the context, form, etc.

Other important traits of effective readers are:

d) Recognizing Text structure

- Recognizing rhetorical organisation of the text as a whole and its layout: whether it is classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, hypothesis to proof, etc.
- Understanding the organisation of each paragraph, identifying focal and support acts, and the function of support acts, that is, how they are related to the focal sentence. Are they meant to expand, explain, exemplify, restate, justify, and so on, the main idea contained in the focal sentence? In other words, they have the ability to spot the sentence containing the main idea, and the sentences, if any, used to develop the main idea, and how this development is achieved. They are also able to spot transitional sentence(s), if any, and the concluding sentences, and how these are indicated.

e) Comprehensive reading

Scanning/re-reading the text but this time slowly and attentively paying attention to details focusing on meaning by:

- reading in sense groups/meaningful chunks;
- making inferences;

- interacting with the writer through the text, critically examining the incoming information and accommodating the new information;
- identifying the writer's point of view, tone, etc.; and
- distinguishing facts from opinions.

Various methods and techniques have been suggested for teaching effective reading skills to ESL/EFL learners. Among these, Carrell (1988: 248), who tries to bring out the common features of these methods, still remains the most popular for guiding classroom teachers. All these methods, it is pointed out, train the learner to *do* something *before* reading the text in order to activate appropriate background knowledge. In addition, all these methods have the reader read the text against the background of the activated knowledge. Finally, they all have the reader *do* something *after* reading to synthesize the new information gained from the text with their prior knowledge. These are popularly called *pre-reading*, *while-reading* and *post-reading* activities.

Pre-reading Activities

Reading with a purpose and pre-viewing texts can be taught through devising pre-reading activities. Material writers can frame tasks and activities to develop these skills and strategies. Tasks can also be framed to give background knowledge (linguistic, conceptual, subject and topic knowledge, and socio-cultural knowledge), if the learner does not have this knowledge, or to activate this knowledge if the learner already has it. These tasks should be stated before the

learners start reading the text so that they read the given text with a purpose in mind and in the light of the background knowledge required to comprehend the text.

Some Examples:

1. Go through the given text silently and as fast as you can. Do not stop even if you come across a word or a phrase you do not know. After you have finished reading, answer the following questions:
 - a) Tick a suitable title for this text out of the four given titles. OR
 - b) You are given two titles. Which of these you think fits the text? OR
 - c) Suggest a suitable title for this text. OR ...

While-reading activities

Understanding text structure and comprehensive reading (skimming and scanning) can be taught by material writers through carefully devised tasks and activities.

Some Examples:

1. Underline the sentence(s) and/or phrase(s) that contain the main idea in each paragraph.
2. Now look at the remaining sentences in each paragraph. Are they related to the parts you have underlined? If so, how (i.e., are they restatements, expansions, explications, modifications, justifications, etc.)?
3. What is the rhetorical organisation of the text you have just read? (i.e., is it classification? comparison and contrast? cause and effect? problem to solution type? etc.).

4. The following types of exercise are useful for teaching text-structure: Rearranging jumbled words/sentences/paragraphs; matching opening sentences with the paragraphs; picking out words/sentences that do not fit in the text; supplying linking devices/discourse-markers/organising devices, or choosing them from the given list; etc.

Scanning: Some Examples

Read the given text once again and:

- a) Think of suitable sub-titles for *each* paragraph. OR
- b) For each paragraph tick the most suitable sub-title out of those suggested (Give 3 sub-titles for each paragraph for learners to choose from). OR
- c) In which paragraph does the author say the following: . . . ? (Give the learners statements for matching with each paragraph.)

C. Post-reading

1. Make notes for future reference; draw a diagram or flow-chart of the text to show how the text is organised. (Transfer verbal information into non-verbal form and vice-versa).
2. Rewrite using a different rhetorical structure.
3. Describe what the author's intention is: To inform? To persuade? To warn? Any other?
4. Students can be asked to make notes on the text they have read for reference in future.

The examples given above are only indicative

and not exhaustive. Teachers can frame more tasks of their own depending upon their situation and level of competence of their learners.

Exercises, tasks and activities can also be devised to develop sensitivity to language: raise awareness about orthographic practices followed in written texts (such as capital letters, italics, quotations, and so on), ability to pick out words and expressions used to lend ironic effect or humour; understand tone and attitude; to give familiarity with devices like metaphors and similes; distinguish between facts and opinions; etc. Writers also very often incorporate in their writing non-verbal information for effective communication. These can be graphs, charts, pictures or other visual media. Learners must be trained to make use of this non-text information to make meaning of what they read. The text can finally be used for teaching other useful language skills, e.g. grammar rules or items difficult for second/foreign language learners; consulting a dictionary for pronunciation or word meanings; and for preparing students for writing a paragraph, an essay, or a critical article depending on students' level of competence.

These activities and tasks have given rise to what is called holistic view of language teaching. Holistic language teaching devises exercises and classroom procedures to teach all the four skills of the target language including study skills and this has to be one of the aims of those writing intensive reading texts for ESL/EFL teaching situations we have described here.

Note:

¹ This article is a sequel to the author's article, "Interactive Approaches to Second/Foreign Language Reading and their Implications", *Language and Language Teaching*, 4 (1), Issue 7 (Jan. 2015), pp.41-45.

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Task-Based Learning for Enhancing Employability Skills among Students

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ABSTRACT

English language learning plays a vital role in equipping students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for employability. The acquisition of linguistic and communicative competence makes a student proficient in achieving all the four aspects of language, such as phonology, pragmatics, semantics and syntax, using it appropriately in all social situations including the workplace. To be an expert in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing is the most challenging task for non-native learners and a systematic approach is essentially needed for language learners to master these skills. The term 'communicative competence' covers all modes of competence including both social and grammatical competence. Communication will also encompass non-verbal behaviour. Grammatical competence can be achieved by mastering the structure of the target language, whereas communicative competence can be achieved by mastering the structure of the language as well as the conventional rules for social behaviour. Task-based learning is very helpful in fostering communicative competence and confidence in students to acquire the language.

Introduction

When there are many approaches to English language teaching, one of the best approaches is the Task-Based Approach, which has been successful over the years. Every language teacher realizes the importance of learner-centered and flexible approach and the demand for Communicative Language Teaching which helps to understand the language in context and to use it in real life situations. The advantage of the task-based approach, according to its advocates, is that during the task the learners are allowed to use whatever language they have, freeing them

to focus entirely on the meaning of their message. This makes it closer to a real-life communicative situation. In a task-based approach, the focus of classroom activities is on tasks, and ultimately on meaning. Task-based learning offers the student an opportunity to do exactly this.

Task-Based Learning

The primary focus of classroom activity is the task and language is the instrument which the students use to complete it. The task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome. The activity reflects real life and learners focus

on meaning; they are free to use any language they want. A traditional model for the organization of language lessons, both in the classroom and in course-books, has long been the PPP approach (presentation, practice, production). With this model individual language items (for example, the present tense) are presented by the teacher, then practised in the form of spoken and written exercises (often pattern drills), and then used by the learners in less controlled speaking or writing activities. The main advantages of TBL are that language is used for a genuine purpose meaning that real communication should take place, and that at the stage where the learners are preparing their report for the whole class, they are forced to consider language form in general rather than concentrating on a single form (as in the PPP model). Whereas the aim of the PPP model is to lead from accuracy to fluency, the aim of TBL is to integrate all four skills and to move from fluency to accuracy plus fluency. The range of tasks available (reading texts, listening texts, problem-solving, role-plays, questionnaires, etc) offers a great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners. Learners who are used to a more traditional approach based on a grammatical syllabus may find it difficult to come to terms with the apparent randomness of TBL (Task based Learning), but if TBL is integrated with a systematic approach to grammar and lexis, the outcome can be a comprehensive, all-round approach that can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

Task is defined as a range of work plans

which facilitates language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as problem-solving and decision-making through activities working in a group. Language in a communicative task is seen as bringing about an outcome through the exchange of meanings. Finally, Ellis (2002) defines task-based learning as follows: A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. The skills almost everyone needs to do any job are the skills that make specific knowledge and technical skills fully productive. Without employability skills, it is highly difficult for an individual to achieve and progress in rewarding jobs.

To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can involve productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

Pre task stage

In the *pre-task stage*, the teacher explores the topic with the class and may emphasize supportive words and phrases, helping students to understand the task instructions. The students may be allowed to see and hear other people doing the same

task. During the Task Cycle stage, the students carry out the task in pairs or small groups while the teacher monitors from a distance. This cycle gives them speaking and writing contact with opportunities for students to learn from each other. The learners then plan how they will tell the rest of the group what they did and how it went, and then they report on the task either orally or in writing, and compare notes on what has happened. The task cycle also gives students opportunities to use whatever language they have, both in private and in public, and makes them free to express whatever arises in their mind even if it has errors. In the language focus stage, the learners observe and talk about exact features of any listening or reading text which they have looked at for the task and the teacher may present some form of preparation of specific language features which the task requires.

Identify	Compare	List
Analyze	Match	Evaluate
Do you know it? Can you use it?		

Performance tasks build on earlier content knowledge, process skills, and work habits and are strategically placed in the lesson or unit to enhance learning as the student “pulls it all together.” They are an integral part of the learning and an opportunity to assess the quality of student performance. When the goal of teaching and learning is to know and use, the performance-based classroom emerges. In the beginning, most performance tasks should fall at the short end of the range. Teachers find that many activities they are already doing can be shaped into performance-learning tasks.



Figure 1: Performance Tasks

Vocabulary is viewed as a major part of language proficiency as it allows learners to use the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Most students lack the vocabulary needed in many real life situations, for example, at job interviews. This may be due to poor motivation, insufficient practice, and ineffective ways of learning vocabulary. It could therefore be argued that the traditional vocabulary teaching technique in use, to some extent, is not an effective way to help students to communicate in English. Hence, it was important for the teachers of English at this college to stimulate students to learn vocabulary to improve the students’ vocabulary gain. A different approach in teaching vocabulary to arouse students’ interest in learning vocabulary needed to be considered.

Task Activity on Vocabulary

Students are advised and arranged in a group to perform a word task and coin new words to learn.

Worksheet 1

Read the following to understand what 'attitude' means.

Our behaviour varies according to time, situation and people. The way we react to situations, things and people is called 'Attitude'. Attitude is an amalgamation of emotions and thought process which may be either positive or negative. To become successful and happy in life, sometimes we may have to change our attitude. This is called life response.

I. Write down nine words to describe you, choosing from the list below.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| optimistic | sensitive | determined |
| pessimistic | distrustful | stubborn |
| sympathetic | kind | competitive |
| unsympathetic | forgiving | broadminded |
| understanding | generous | enthusiastic |
| narrow-minded | jovial | revengeful |
| critical | tolerant | insensitive |
| trusting | intolerant | cheerful |
| appreciative | patient | gloomy |
| friendly | impatient | earnest |
| serious | casual | humble |
| jealous | careful | careless |

Worksheet 1.1

What will you do in the following situations? Choose one of the given options or, if you think your reaction will be different from all of these, write it down in the blank space provided:

- 1.** You present your project work, and two of your classmates criticize it. You will:
- a) Cry, get angry and stop talking to them.

- b) Accept everything they say.
 c) Ignore all that they say.
 d) Examine what they say and review your project.
 e)

2. You are standing in a queue at a cinema house. Somebody jumps the queue. You will:

- a) Tell the person in front of you to fight him.
 b) Tell him firmly and politely to stand in the queue.
 c) Pull the person and put him/her in the queue.
 d) Shout at him at the top of your voice.
 e)

3. You are sitting on a bus, and an old man gets in. There are no vacant seats. You will:

- a) Ask another passenger to get up and offer him a seat.
 b) Turn your face away.
 c) Move a little so that he can share your seat.
 d) Get up and offer him your seat.
 e)

4. You have found a purse with some money on the road. You will:

- a) Pick it up and put it in your pocket if nobody is around.
 b) Ignore it.
 c) Try to trace the owner to hand it over to him/her.
 d) Hand it over to the police.
 e)

Task Activity on Tenses: (e.g., Present tense)

Students are asked to answer these questions:

1. What time do you get up?
.....
2. How often do you exercise?
.....
3. How do you go to classes?
.....
4. What do you do at weekends?
.....
5. Do you live in a house/flat?
.....

(For past tense)

1. Did you come yesterday?
.....
2. How much money did you spend last month?
.....
3. Where did you go on holiday?
.....
4. Did you receive an email from recruiter?
.....
5. Was he a postman?
.....

These questions will be asked by the partner in pairs so that a student can write the answers on the worksheet given; later the answers will be spoken and performed as an activity in front of the classroom.

Task Activity on Interviews

Task Activity 1:

Routine tasks, background and basic needs
Introducing yourself: Your name, place, education (in brief) and family (in brief).

Task Activity 2:

Speaking about people: Favourite teacher; Best friend; Comparing you with a movie star; Interesting sports person.
Interesting books you have read (any 4)

Task Activity 3

Students are divided into 4 pairs forming one group. Any three students among them are given the role of HR personnel and the rest of them are interviewees. Assigning the tasks among the students, as an activity, not only gets fruitful output but also removes fear and builds confidence among them.

- a) What are your career goals?
.....
- b) What is your short-term goal?
.....
- c) What is your long-term goal?
.....
- d) Which is your greatest strength?
.....
- e) Give three adjectives about you.
.....

According to Tobin, “Soft skills give us the tools with which to take stock of our situation, take control of our development, and take responsibility for our future.” Engineering graduates are not industry ready because of lack of communication skills. To prepare students for the best communication practice, and to face the industry needs, it is necessary to involve them through the tasks. Although some students had difficulty with the task, it is suggested that teachers can provide their students with clues also with the best possible chance for them to practise their English skills and help them in attaining a degree of cultural insight. In comparison to a prescriptive approach, where learners practise only the language that has been presented by teacher or found in a textbook, a task-based approach allows the learners

to process and react to language in an unscripted natural way that more commonly reflects what happens in a real communicative event and involves giving the best output.

The teacher/associate teacher should clearly give written feedback forms for self-assessment by students. In this way instructors should try to make the learners autonomous which will not only boost their confidence in English, but also develop their personality. In this entire process they will develop techniques of cooperation, voluntary contribution and leadership qualities. If students are confident in such higher order soft skills apart from competence in their core engineering subjects, employability in

the private sector is achievable.

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Language Games: Effective Tool for Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Second language (English) learning/teaching is a difficult task, particularly when there is little exposure to, and less opportunity for, the use of the target language. The task becomes more challenging especially when the two languages (L1 & L2) differ extensively. Learning a second language is much more than just learning its words. One has to make efforts to understand, and to manipulate the newly understood linguistic items and use the whole range into spoken or written expression. Efforts are required at every step and should be maintained for a longer period for proper development. It is equally challenging to the teacher and to the learner for achieving the desired outcomes. The learning environment demands high motivation to make the teaching-learning process an enjoyable experience for both. Language games prove to be very effective towards this end. Language can be learnt easily through language games, which are primarily aimed at teaching-learning along with helping learners to overcome the confusions in language use. It draws attention to the way language works to prompt a desired response. This paper tries to highlight this aspect of language teaching in a non-native context, by providing learners native-like learning environment.

Second Language Learning Context

Learning a second or foreign language (e.g., English) is a hard task. One has to make efforts to understand, to manipulate newly understood linguistic items and use the whole range into spoken or written expressions. English language, like any other language, poses problems for foreign learners. It is easy to explain some of its points, like framing interrogative sentences, difference between *since* and *for*, etc., but some aspects are trickier, causing difficulty even to the advanced learners and teachers. In a non-native context, one of the practical problems for the teacher is to provide

learners the natural linguistic context for language use in a meaningful way.

In most of the universities, generally English language classes are so designed that they promote imparting pieces of factual information about the language to the learners and the expected outcome demands their recollection. Likewise, learners are supposed to write critical appreciation, long answers, short answers and some of the grammar exercises bereft of their contexts. As a result, it has been observed, that the output of many of the learners is not up to the mark. They cannot handle the language in an efficient manner, creating

dissatisfaction and frustration, which results in poor performance. In reality, learners consider learning English as a profitable business and willing to participate in the learning process. Yet, when full participation is required, due to various reasons, they fall back. It points out the need to make lessons more interesting, meaningful and challenging for enhancing proper language production.

What is a Language Game?

Recent years have witnessed an increased interest in formal pragmatics and especially in the establishment of game theory as an area in new methodology for the teaching/ learning of language use particularly in second language. Game theory and decision theory (GDT) are the natural components that form the theoretical foundation for linguistic pragmatics on which language games work. Over the last decade, a firm research community has emerged with a strong interdisciplinary character, where economists, philosophers, and social scientists meet with linguists. Within this field of research, three major currents can be distinguished: one is closely related to the Grecian paradigm and aims at a precise foundation of pragmatic reasoning; the second originates in the economic literature and is concerned with the role of game theory in the context of language use; and the third aims at language evolution seen either from a biological or from a cultural perspective.

Very often it is presumed that “language game” means “word game” (in the sense of people playing word tricks on each other).

But Wittgenstein (1965) helps in understanding the meaning of the term “language game”. Language game is a key term in his work and forms the foundation for much of his later work, which challenges classical as well as many modern notions about language and psychology. Wittgenstein says that people are trained to “react in this way” to the words of others. While working with language games, learners use language to prompt people to do some specific things. In any language, words and phrases have multiple purposes and, accordingly, listeners must interpret the context to know what to do. But in Wittgenstein’s view, in simple situations, there is just the word and a single, correct response. These correct responses are not being thought of as inherited reflexes; rather they are simply the responses which the listener has decoded into communicative messages. Language games support this aspect of second language teaching/ learning. They can be effectively used in the foreign language class.

Language games are supported by various language learning theories as per the requirement of the learner group. Cognitive theory of language learning forms the basic underlying constituent that uses the techniques of information gap and putting challenges while working with the task. Many of these games are based on cooperation and focus on accepting the learning task as a challenge and searching for solutions. Challenges put before them are used as reinforcing elements and motivate learners. They compel them to think critically over the problem.

Discussions, on the basis of clues given, direct them to find out the solution and help them finally to arrive at a decision. Most importantly, learners are exposed to a native-like learning experience/ environment, which helps them to understand the communication as a native speaker in a natural environment.

Language games may be broadly classified in terms of their function, or on the basis of language structures, or types of communication involved. The characteristic features and the spirit of the game make it more extensive and appropriate for different levels of learners with varying levels of language achievement. Yet, its effectiveness and enjoyment depends much on the appropriateness of the game and roles of the players participating in that particular game. Its range could be made wider from controlled practice either through guided or free practice. As guided language activities demand a teacher-supported environment, it is least in interaction games, and especially aimed at listening or repeating type of activities. While guided practice is partly supported either by teacher or content, or partly provided by the learner himself, free activities depend on independent and full language support from the learners themselves.

Why Language Games?

Language games provide meaningful and contextual language practice that is enjoyable and applicable at all levels and for all age groups. Wittgenstein finds language games primarily to dispel language confusions and make learning easy and

muddle-free. They refer to multiplicity of language practices that happen in the first language as well. They also refer to games that children play and enable them to learn language.

In the context of second language learning, the word 'game' has a specific connotation that highlights certain dimensions of language, which very often pass unnoticed.

It draws one's attention to the fact that learning a language is much more than just learning its words. It directs the attention of the learner to the way language works to prompt a desired response from the listener/ reader. It helps teachers to focus attention on the way in which learners can learn from these language games. By supplementing the concepts used in the game, before learners have mastered the language, individual learners could be provided necessary help to cope with the system.

It is a common perception that learning should be serious and solemn in nature and that there is no place for fun; if there is any, then it is not really learning. This is a misconception. It is possible to learn a language as well as have enjoyment at the same time. In reality, language games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. In the easy, relaxed atmosphere created by the games, students learn faster and better (Wierus and Wierus, 1994; cited in Uberman, 1998). Silvers (1982) has observed that many teachers use games as "a teaching device," yet very often they perceive games merely as time-fillers or frivolous activities. He claims that many teachers often overlook the importance of the relaxed atmosphere provided by the

games that promote a real learning environment (cited in Uberman, 1998). Zdybiewska (1994; cited in Uberman, 1998) believes games are a good way for practising language, as they provide a model to learners to use in real life, in future.

Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato, language games “add diversion to the regular classroom activities,” and break the ice, “[but also] they are used to introduce new ideas” (1988; cited in Uberman, 1998). Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They may be used to practise all language skills and various types of communication. Language games help teachers to create contexts in which language is learnt in a useful and meaningful way. Learners have to participate in the process where they need to understand what others are saying or have written. In response, they should speak or write in order to express their own viewpoint or give information. They must respond to the content in a definite way. In that process, if they are amused, intrigued, surprised or angered, it suggests that the content is clearly meaningful to them. The language which they listen to, speak, write or read will be vividly experienced and help them to remember the learnt item properly.

Learners can learn the lessons on their own or with little help from the teacher. It will be effective even for poor learners without feeling humiliated. The real aim of a language game is to make learning an enjoyable experience supported with real life experience. Games have the key features of drills added with a sense of achievement while getting opportunity for

real life communication, which is central to the language learning process. When language is vividly experienced, it will be properly assimilated in to the linguistic system of the learner. The games help learners in the learning process and encourage sustaining their interest. Active participation in the task compels learners to understand and use the language in a meaningful way. Many of the games provide more meaningful practice than conventional drill exercises. They provide the key features of drill with the opportunity to look at the working of the language in real life contexts. Games can thus provide practice in all the skills, at all levels and in all aspects of language learning.

When to Use Language Games

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is time left at the end of a lesson. But Lee (1979:3) opined that a language game “should not be regarded as a marginal activity just filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do.” Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Rixon (2001) suggests that games can be used at all stages of the lesson, provided they are suitable and carefully chosen. Games may also be used for revision exercises helping learners recall items in a pleasant and entertaining way. When students are paying attention to and using meaningful language in the classroom, it motivates learners, promotes their communicative competence and generates fluency.

How to Choose Games

Tyson (2000) suggests that while choosing language games the following factors must be kept in mind. The game should:

- Be more than just fun.
- Inculcate “friendly” competition among learners.
- Keep all of the learners involved and interested.
- Encourage learners to focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself.
- Provide learners a chance to learn, practise, or review a specific learning item.

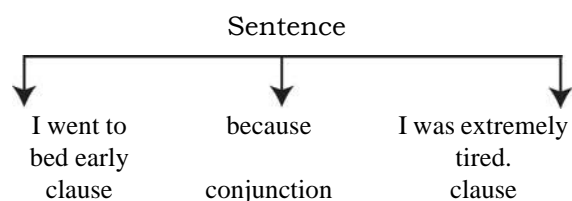
Let us play

Grammar games can be used effectively for teaching the use of conjunctions learners have a lot of problems with. One such game is ‘It’s my sentences – That’s your paragraph’. It requires 20-30 minutes and is meant for intermediate level learners. It is based on linking words, i.e. conjunctions. It will be helpful to provide learners the meaning of the term ‘linking words’. A conjunction is a word which merely joins together words and sentences, as in the following sentences:

The man is poor, but he is honest.

The man is poor, but honest.

Conjunctions are words that join clauses (group of words) into sentences. They not only join clauses together; they also show how the meanings of the two clauses are related.



We brought the food and they supplied the drink. (Addition)

She was poor but she was honest. (Contrast)

We can go swimming or we could stay here. (Alternative)

People dislike here because she was rude. (Cause)

I'll ring you when I arrive. (Time)

Examples of conjunctions:

1. Coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or.
2. Subordinating conjunctions: because, when, that, which.
3. Some conjunctions made up of two or more words:

I stayed an extra night so that I could attend the marriage.

Let me know the moment that you arrive.

4. Relative pronouns also join clauses like conjunctions: who, which, that.

There is the girl who works with my sister.

I've got a friend who works in a canteen.

It's my sentence – That's your paragraph

This grammar game provides opportunity to write a paragraph on any topic. It is a mind-boggling exercise, which leads to effective writing. Below are given a few general sentences around a theme:

I love travelling in the countryside.

Looking around, I realized, I was the only passenger left on the bus.

*This is as far as we go.
I sat in front of the bus to get a good view of
the countryside.
I'm going to Church Gate, I said to the
conductor as I got on the bus.
I don't like losing my way.
The bus stops after some time.*

Now these sentences should be arranged in any order the learners want, linking them together into a paragraph of two or more sentences. The learners are then asked to read the paragraph they have written and compare it with other learners' paragraphs in groups. This will give them insight into how differences in word order and linking words cause differences in meaning.

Conclusion

Grammar games are effective tools to learn a foreign language in an efficient manner. They challenge the learners and promote language learning in a fun-filled way. Learners reach the target level without facing any inferiority complex or shyness. The games also facilitate self-learning with great ease.

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Digitizing the Text (Poem): An Interesting Way to Improve Listening and Speaking Skills



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ABSTRACT

Digitization, e-content, technology-aided learning and digital teaching have all captured the educational scene of the 21st century. The present generation is more into tweets and social networking. The teachers face a lot of challenges as the classroom of today has changed drastically with students equipped with a lot more information than ever before. Now opportunities to convert traditional print texts into multisensory, appealing documents are greater. Information highway is flooded with recitation of poems in the voice of the native speakers and even by the poets themselves. The poem can also be digitized in the voice of the learner for teaching purposes thereby making the classroom experience more exciting for learners and teachers. The aim of this paper is to show that the text can be made alive by effectively putting audio, image, graphics and text together and turning these into an i-movie. Once the poem has been explained thoroughly in class, then as a post-activity, learners can be encouraged to digitize a poem with the help of technology in pairs or in groups. Classroom presentations by learners of these movies help in improving their LSRW skills. In a way, asking learners to recite, record and re-create a poem in their own voice is like encouraging them to learn by doing and creatively put together IT-enabled resources.

Keywords: *Digital texts; Interactive learning; Teaching literature; Teaching a poem.*

Introduction

Change is inevitable and innovations with enhanced technology have transformed the entire field of teaching and learning. Education now is not just limited to classrooms but the very moment we Google our questions the answers are there for us readymade. Teachers of today fall between the old and the new orders, and their students already seem more than comfortable in the New Age, but aliens in

the physical classroom (Kress, 1997). According to Goodwyn (2000), "An age of technology that seems to threaten many stabilities also serves to remind us that literature is a great source of wisdom, not solely about the past but equally about the future" (p. 3). In order to be appealing and convincing to this generation, a teacher needs to be updated and aware of the nuances of this tech-savvy generation and make the entire process of learning relevant.

In this digital age, digitizing the piece of information or a text into audio gains significance, “[n]ot just digitizing the text, but digitizing the whole experience” (Farman, 2013) is what is encompassed in this entire process.

Review of Literature

Cotton and Oliver (1992) have argued that though the written word has had a central authority in society and our notions of rationality and valid argument are also bound up with thoughts derived from writing as a medium, the development of hypermedia represents a return to richer, pre-print modalities of expression and provides opportunities to speculate, to debate and to learn in more concrete, multi-sensory terms, which have a deep significance. In engaging for a while with the images on screen, the student is going beyond simple background study and it is imperative now to reject the historical approach which advocated simple repetition of safe and received opinions about texts, to personal and demanding encounters with them, and with their difficulties and ambiguities (Goodwyn, 2000:108). A lot has been said about the pedagogical practices resulting from the changes in technology and “Audio is an important part of any ... project. It adds personality and customization through music, narrative, and sound effects” (Bech, 2012).

There is an urgent need to impart knowledge in a novel way to motivate students to attend classrooms. According to Bull and Anstey (2010), “The concept of text including semiotic systems other than just the

linguistic is relatively new. In the past, text has been seen from a more cognitive viewpoint. However, now when reading text conveyed through digital-electronic technology (such as the internet), reading and writing go beyond simply interpreting the linguistic text to making connections between other semiotic systems including images, symbols and sounds etc.” (p. 9). In tune with Thacker and Webb’s (2002:157) suggestion that “The reader is consistently active as the maker of meaning” and further “The postmodern reader has to be active, and adaptable to the demands of the narrative” (2002:162), it is necessary to point out that a teacher needs to guide the students towards becoming aware of the nature of text as multimodal (cited in Bull and Anstey, 2010). Ruth and Richard (2011: 179) have, through their research findings, suggested that in many cases, and especially for less experienced learners ‘personalization’ works best. Their own voice and narration fills them with a sense of satisfaction (cited in Bull and Anstey, 2010). Bell and Bull (2010, p. 2) have observed that the youth have caught the fancy for making movies and videos and that the average length of each video is about three minutes, and 80% of the digital video clips are created by the users who post them. So teachers dealing with youth need to understand this psychology and the changing scenario. Wagner (2008, p. 188) has said that today’s students and young workers want to be “interactive producers, not isolated consumers.... They long to interact,” and they “long to learn and to create in a collaborative, collegial environment.”

Research done by Goodwyn (2000) shows that it is possible for a student to put the text back together, re-animate it and give it a new lease of life because as a living reader it 'lives' in them.

The time is ripe for teachers to guide intelligently and thought provokingly in an indirect way today's learners who enjoy blogging and googling and are hooked on to social networking sites and use of mobile applications. Teaching is now not just a routine activity of the classroom but it has extended beyond its walls. Teaching now is more interactive, which depends on discussion, interaction and orientation, and more than the end product it is the process which has gained importance. Due to the use of technology, the teachers can now make use of the learners' potential to the maximum. Their work is to guide them towards a path of discovery. Out of the loads of information already existing on the NET, they need to be guided to select, align and apply this information to their own situations. It is essential to motivate them to be creative and put them to use. Rather than just orally and verbally discussing the text, digitizing the textual content or, in other words, converting the content into e-content and that too by the learners themselves can be quite interesting and exciting.

Indian Context, Literature and Digitization

In the Indian context where the classrooms are big and even if the presentations of every student cannot be shared in class, they are free to share them on social networking sites

and generate interest. They would even realize the importance of acknowledging the sources and not being guilty of plagiarism. This is quite effective and stimulating for further research. In the traditional classroom, lecture is the best mode to reach out to learners, but now the teacher is merely a facilitator who encourages learners to enter the realm of self-learning and self-discovery. The abysmal scene of the Indian education system is that learners are actually not reading much but are merely doing 'copy and paste' for their assignments. So, why not make them more active? Why not tune their abilities into skills? Why not involve them rather than make them passive recipients?

Text as a Context to Generate and Create Technology-Aided Content

Poetry is a genre of literature which has been discussed at length right from its content to its form. It has been aesthetically enjoyed and stylistically dissected. It has been taught right from school days to learners who opt for literature as their major subject. "All texts, but most vividly those with a literary or imaginative role in the culture, are multi-dimensional in the sense that they prompt innumerable performances, ongoing rereading and reinterpretations, but also in the sense that their potential meanings can be accessed from many different (sometimes contradictory) perspectives" (Jones, 2013, p. 60).

In this age of Digital Humanities where there is research on the use of technology and its multiple implications within the periphery of interdisciplinary areas: be it

research, literature, cultural studies and the way everything is available on the NET, teaching a poem is and will always be a challenge for teachers as it involves a combination of lexical sets, figures of speech, form which could vary from free verse to a well defined sonnet and so many other configurations which require a thematic study and also a critical study. Sometimes the cultural difference also makes it difficult for the learners to comprehend the poem. Considering all this, while teaching the undergraduate students of Commerce, the idea of placing the text in the hands of the learners and asking them to put all resources to their use and

convert the text into digitalized content was appealing, and the result was astonishing. A lot has been said and written about the digital divide. However, in the present decade, three generations (i.e., Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z) are working together. This decade is marked by increasing number of 'Digital immigrants' and 'Digital natives' and therefore this method can really work now.

In teaching a poem there has to be a paradigm shift from comprehension to expression. The change has to come, keeping in mind recent trends and approaches to learning, and the current educational set-up.

Table 1: Paradigm Shift Needed for Teaching a Poem

From	To
The poem as a text for comprehension	The poem as a means of expression for the reader
The text at the centre and the historical background working as ingredients	The text at the centre but the learner as the modulator
The absence of digital technology	Digital technology becoming a tool in the hands of both the teacher and the learner
The poem working merely as a vehicle for the development of literary appreciation and, to a certain extent, of linguistic competence	The poem working as a medium for translation of one's own expression, helping to develop communicative competence and also driving the learner to appreciate the nuances of language
The teaching of the poem being restricted to the classroom	The teaching of the poem becoming a novel blend of classroom teaching and technology-enabled learning

Hypothesis

With digital technology language learning can be promoted to a larger extent. It is based on the principle that if learners are made active participants, they learn more

effectively. The study hypothesis is as follows:

Digitizing the text into audio by learners encourages self-learning. The multisensory technology generates an

environment where learning takes place indirectly.

Channelizing Text and Technology to Appreciate a Poem

In order to communicate effectively, learning the basics of language skills is a must. 'Skill' is generally defined as "a particular ability, or expertise." Technology promotes this natural development of skills. Now there is less focus on instruction in the classroom. Assignments and tasks have replaced instructions. Due to the change in the mode of instruction, learners get a chance to plan, prepare and participate. They master the skills without their knowledge. If learners improve their listening skill, it has a direct effect on their speaking skill. Appreciating a poem has always been a challenge and in order to make learners participative and interactive, it is important to motivate the learners to pick up cues and guidelines from the internet, mobile, books, e-books and audio-visual aids. "The internet provides the authenticity and diversity of material and stimulus (which should, where possible, remain minimally edited); second-language pedagogy provides the tools for maximizing the communicative and acquisitional benefits for the learner" (Evans, 2009, p. 204).

Case Study

Whenever there is talk of digital technologies, many teachers are quite hesitant and even feel that it is a waste of time and that it will divert the young minds from the core text; the immediate reaction is, "Oh, this won't do any good. You can't have all students do what you wish to do." The basic challenge of a teacher in teaching English is that learners do not freely speak

in English though they do have the linguistic competence. Some of the other challenges faced in relation to the teaching of a poem are:

- Helping learners to overcome their apprehensions regarding their speaking skill;
- Equipping learners with the right tone, accent and pronunciation;
- Helping learners realize the way the text has to be read;
- Providing the right resources for them to be able to comprehend the right pauses and tones;
- Equipping learners with knowledge of the 'word' and the way to put it to use in the right context;
- Providing synonyms and antonyms;
- Enriching learners' word-building ability;
- Helping learners to appreciate the use of figures of speech and the way words are used in different contexts;
- Making learners familiar with collocations, idioms and phrases, which enrich language; and
- Enabling learners to understand the context, content, form and theme.

The author's own experience helped in realizing the possibility of blending text and technology to help learners listen to and speak in English.

Along with classroom teaching, NET resources like YouTube, Google Search engine and Movie Maker were used to analyze the experience of teaching a poem and then asking the learners to convert the text into their own audio-visual production through the use of mobile/PC.

This was implemented using multiple techniques:

- Using NET resources, especially poems

recited by the poets available on YouTube;

- Using Google Image Search to supplement the movies with images;
- Using recording device, be it through mobile or Camera; and
- Using the i-movie or the Movie Maker software.

Implementation

This model was initially used only with the third year undergraduate students and it was not made compulsory. The fast and bright learners were encouraged to work in groups, but later it was found that the same could be used even at the lower level. This model of 'text to technology' was tried with students of B.Com. The model was implemented in three stages:

Kick-Off → Detailed Explanation → Class Presentation

1. To kick off the project, a lecture was delivered in class to create an environment of expectation and enthusiasm, and the following slogans were shared:
 - *Try, Try and Try, and not let your creativity Dry*
 - *Improve your Listening Skill and Speaking Skill with Us.*
 - *Recite, Record and Read, and let the words dance on your tongue and in your ears*
 - *Play with words and discover Your Strength*

This generated interest and the time was ripe to motivate further a few learners to take up the challenge and create the right environment.

2. The second step was to explain the process, which was done in two stages:

Class activity & Home activity.

Class activity

One pre-recorded recitation of the poem was played in class. The learners then had to read the text (Poem). Explanation and discussion were initiated on the poem. The learners had to try to comprehend the meaning. In the process they got a better grasp of the words and could listen to the native speaker and also the teacher. The learners were allowed to copy the recorded presentation. General information was also given about the pronunciation dictionaries available on the NET.

Home activity

At home, the learners had to listen to the text again. They had to recite, read the poem in their own voice and record it. They had to select images and graphics which could blend well with the theme of the poem. They had to put together all the resources and make a movie.

This entire process enabled the learners to listen, listen and listen till they could get the right intonation and pronunciation; they also indirectly learnt words which, through continuous practice, became a part of their vocabulary. Though this was done initially only with a few selected and interested students, the biggest achievement has been that more students have now started reading, selecting poems which they like and converting the text to e-text, which has proved quite effective as it puts audio, image, graphics and text together, thereby having a multisensory appeal. Learning a

poem in this manner is like generating a poem again and reliving the experience of the poet. It leaves an impression on the learners and provides them an opportunity to blend aesthetics, information and technology. This pilot project carried out over a short period proved that, given the right environment and approach, digitization can indeed influence learners positively.

Text and technology, when blended together, can create wonders. We can use technology to present texts in a new form. It is hard to ignore the interplay of both these tools. It promotes research and helps learners to explore. Learners can even be encouraged to add context to the text in their recording and make it a movie, which fellow students and peer group can also connect with. The text in question can be loaded with the background information, the era in which the text was written, the social conditions and information about the author's personal life.

Conclusion

The three "R"s – Repetition, Reinforcement and Reward – can never be far removed from these activities. The learners, free from the limitations of time and space and liberated from the pressures of expectations, are able to optimize the desired results. The resources are at hand and they can guide the learners. Both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication help them to interact and collaborate with one another.

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Remedial English Language Teaching Triggers Dyslexic Students



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ABSTRACT

It is an accepted truth that many children are suffering from various forms of Dyslexia. And they are facing academic failure even though they have high IQs. Their learning problem is making it difficult for them to compete with other normal children. If it is undiagnosed or addressed at the right time, their condition severely affects their academic improvements and most of the time the children are developing HDAD/ADD related problems. This study aims to explore new ways of how dyslexic children can be helped by every English language teacher to prevent their academic failure.

Key Words: *Dyslexic children; English Language Teaching; Remedial Teaching.*

Introduction

Viewing Dyslexia as a learning difficulty means that something is “wrong” with the learner. This will lead to identify the weakness or problem rather than identifying strengths. This kind of view will bring the remediation specialists rather than resolution by knowledgeable subject teachers. If it is the policy to view dyslexia as a learning difference, we can find a range of strengths and weaknesses in the learner, then the remediation will focus on inclusion, differentiation and learning when we concentrate Teaching English as a second language to a dyslexic student in the mainstream classroom can take the form of improving the quality and quantity of discrete intervention like in-class support and need-based combination in teaching.

This paper aims to identify the problems of learning English language of the Dyslexic student in mainstream classroom in Tamilnadu schools and a possible combination of teaching methods to teach them English as a second language and to prevent their academic failure.

Dyslexia

Dyslexic children have some learning differences both in the combination of strengths and weaknesses which can possibly affect the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes in numeracy. It is a language disorder, and the problem is not in the eyes or in the ears but in the language acquisition and processing. We can understand Dyslexia better by the definition of The International

Dyslexia Association as follows, “Dyslexia is a neurologically based, often familial disorder which interferes with the acquisition and processing of language. Varying in degrees of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes in arithmetic. Dyslexia is not a result of lack of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instruction or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions. Although dyslexia is life-long, individuals with dyslexia frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate intervention.”

Types of Dyslexia

Main types of dyslexia are listed and according to the severity the teacher has to plan the lesson style. Even in the trauma dyslexics, the teacher can help the child according to the severity; if the child has mild

difficulty, it is easy for the teacher to understand and bring the child to the mainstream. It is important to study all the types of dyslexia and its symptoms and causes to help the child properly or to recommend to the parent to further special help for their children. If the kindergarten or primary teacher knows about this difficulty and prepares herself and the parent in right time it will be a great help to the child and society. As dyslexia is a difficulty in learning language, it becomes the duty of the language teacher to identify and get help. If the language teacher does not know the remediation help, the teacher can direct the child to some other remediation classes. But the language teacher at least should know about this difficulty of the child and the teacher should not blame the child as dumb or stupid. It is the duty of the language teacher as well as other subject teachers to know about types of dyslexia and early intervention gives the best result. The types of Dyslexia are listed below.

Table 1: Types of Dyslexia

Trauma Dyslexia	occurs after some form of brain injury or trauma.
Primary Dyslexia	is a dysfunction of the left side of the brain and it does not change with age.
Developmental dyslexia	is caused by hormonal development or malnutrition during the early stages of foetal development.
Visual dyslexia	is the result of immature development of not only the eyes, but the whole process that gets information from the eyes to the brain.
Phonological dyslexia	is known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) – the sounds are perceived as jumbled or not heard correctly.

Dyslexic Students and Their IQ

Most of the dyslexic students have very high IQ. This is a proved phenomenon and a knowledgeable teacher does not need any IQ test to realise this; as the teacher really works with involvement and dedication, it is very easy to understand that the child is very brilliant and fails at school. If the teacher really wants to prove the child's IQ then the child can be recommended for IQ test. Most of the great scientists and artists who changed the world with their wisdom are dyslexics. Many reasons have been researched and accepted for their thinking processes which are totally different from those of non-dyslexics and a few of them are listed below (Davis, 1994).

1. They can utilize the brain's ability to alter and create perceptions (the primary ability).
2. They are highly aware of the environment.
3. They are more curious than average.
4. They think mainly in pictures instead of words.
5. They are highly intuitive and insightful.
6. They think and perceive multi-dimensionally (using all the senses).
7. They can experience thought as reality.
8. They have vivid imagination.

Syllabus and its Role in Remedial Teaching

After studying the child's difficulty in language, the teacher has to analyse the child's IQ level and it is very important to discuss with the parents to design the syllabus and teaching plan for the child.

If the child gets help from the parents at home, it will be easy for the teacher to achieve results. In our Indian educational system, students are simply forced to follow the textbook for answers and they are not encouraged by the teachers to develop their own style of writing. In remedial teaching, teachers have to follow their own methods and remedial techniques. After discussing with parents and analysing the child's IQ, the teacher has to plan the syllabus for the child according to the child's need and difficulty in learning. If the parents are not cooperative in understanding the problems of the child, the teacher has to plan the method of teaching more class-oriented activities. If the parents are educated and willing to help the child, the teacher can frame the syllabus for the child with more homework-based activities. So, it is very important to make the parents understand the difficulty of the child in learning and it is the teacher's duty to educate the parents to get help from them to fulfil the teacher's aim. In remedial teaching, the teacher has to plan the syllabus for the child according to the child's learning problem.

Learning Styles

Learners are categorised according to their learning styles. The teacher has to be aware of these learning styles to help the dyslexic children. Without knowing these learning styles, the teacher cannot use remedial teaching techniques. So, this is very important to design the child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Four Major learning styles are listed below.

Table 2: Types of Learners According to Learning Style

Visual Learners	Receive most of the information through eyes. More visual details will help like shape, designs, colours etc. They can receive information from books, maps, diagrams etc.
Auditory Learners	Receive most of the information through ears. They will enjoy listening, discussing, talking, music etc. They need a quiet place to concentrate, distracted by noise easily.
Tactile Learners	Receive most of the information through sense of touch and feelings. They will learn through hands and fingers, and are sensitive to atmosphere in a room, sensitive to facial expression, gestures, tone of voice, body language. They can learn best in an emotionally positive atmosphere.
Kinaesthetic Learners	Receive most of the information through large muscle movements. They can learn by doing and activities, they have difficulty in sitting in one place for a long time. They need physical comfort and are easily distracted by seating, smell of the place, people around them, hunger or thirst.

Remedial Techniques

To use the remedial techniques, the teacher has to be aware of the child's learning style. According to the child's style of learning, the teacher has to plan the Individual Educational Plan.

Important techniques of remedial teaching are:

1. Involving the student;
2. Using multisensory teaching methods;
3. Using logic rather than rote memory;
4. Presenting material sequentially;
5. Presenting material in small units;
6. Practising and reviewing;
7. Helping students organize time and space;
8. Individualizing instruction;
9. Being aware of emotional climate;
10. Working with an IEP, lesson plans and documenting your work; and
11. Having a journal on the child.

Following these techniques, the teacher can easily help the children to overcome their difficulty. In remedial teaching, the role of the teacher is more important than any other teaching methods. Most of the dyslexic children are good at oral communication and the teacher has to encourage the children to give oral answers. The teacher has to analyse the child's strengths and weaknesses thoroughly to design the child's Individual Educational Plan.

Conclusion

When we acknowledge dyslexia as a specific learning difference rather than a "specific learning difficulty", it helps to bring out new lesson plans, vision and hope. The government is ready to help dyslexic students if they approach it. It is the language teacher's duty to identify and help the child in the classroom and to get help

for the board exams. To make more dyslexia-friendly schools the focus has to be changed from identifying weaknesses to celebrating strengths. This will happen by remedial teaching techniques by the English language teacher. Preventing academic failure and helping the child to cope with the world can be done by the knowledgeable and effective English language teacher through early intervention and remedial teaching.

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REQUIREMENTS

A4, Font size: Times New Roman 12, Double Spaced, Margin of 1 inch on all four sides.

Title of the article should be in Caps, bold, centered.

Abstract in about 150 words

Full paper should not be in more than 2000 words.

Articles should be sent only as AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT – AS A WORD DOCUMENT to eltai_india@yahoo.co.in with a copy to ramanipn@gmail.com (CDs and Hard copies will not be accepted.).

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

Practice and Perception of Oral Presentation: A Study on ESL engineering Students in Odisha



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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study seeks to uncover the disparity in practice and perception of oral presentation competence in English among engineering students from an institute in Odisha. The practice of oral presentations was examined from the video recordings of students' presentations. The perception of oral performance competence was assessed on the basis of responses of participants given in the questionnaire, the participants' evaluation of their own performance and views of participants shared during the semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that some participants could not put into practice their knowledge of what makes a good oral presentation. A few participants had knowledge about the competencies involved in oral presentation and could practise them but failed to evaluate themselves while viewing their recorded presentations. The study has implications for the teaching of oral presentation skills to ESL engineering students. Knowledge about the competencies involved in oral presentation, opportunities to practise them, followed by provision for self-evaluation of recorded presentations could help in bridging the gap between practice and perception.

Keywords: *Oral presentation; ESL engineering students.*

Introduction

Oral presentation is a formal mode of communication that constitutes an integral part of the repertoire of skills required for a graduate engineer, in both education and employment. Despite the importance of oral presentation as a measure of communicative competence, literature on oral presentations in English as a second/foreign language classrooms (Morita, 2000; Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008) is scant. A few qualitative studies examined the challenges experienced by ESL students during oral activities in higher education (Weissberg,

1993; Morita, 2000; Zappa-Hollman, 2007). These studies showed that oral presentation was a challenge for ESL students. Most of them were unaware of what needs to be done to improve their oral presentation skills (Nakamura, 2002). Students often encounter the task of doing an oral presentation by practically making a presentation without any knowledge of what makes a good oral presentation. Sometimes students know about what makes a good oral presentation but fail to practise it during their presentation. This often results in students making amateur presentations

in spite of having good academic or content knowledge on the topic of making oral presentations.

Research shows that oral presentation skills can be improved by receiving feedback from recorded presentations through self-evaluation (Quigley & Nyquist, 1992; Brown, Bull & Pendlebury, 1997; Quigley, 1998; Grievson & Lowe, 2000; Rosenstein, 2002). Self-evaluation is defined as the self-judgment of oral speech by the student (Boud, 2013). De Grez, Valcke and Roozen (2009) emphasize the importance of feedback that can be obtained from videotaped recordings of oral presentations. These authors reiterate that feedback from recorded presentations can help in improving the oral presentation skills of students pursuing higher education. When students are made to view their own performance they are able to judge themselves. They come to realise their weaknesses in their own presentations making them liable to improve. As proven in a recent research by Oi (2012), self-evaluation can also motivate the students.

The Present Study

The present study draws on this rationale and adopts video-recorded presentations as a tool for self-evaluation of oral presentation in English by engineering students in Odisha. In this study the practice of oral presentation is examined and compared to students' perception of what makes a good presentation. However, the study limits itself to a few competencies involved in making a good oral presentation. They include paralinguistic features of speech and

nonverbal behaviour of the speaker which enables the speaker to connect with the audience.

Paralinguistic features, a widely researched topic on speech, has different connotations leading to a lack of clarity and conciseness. The present study draws on Crystal's (1974) explanation of paralinguistic features by restricting the scope to 'vocal factor' and excluding visual communication. Moreover, in this study 'vocal' includes paralinguistic features such as speed, rhythm, pitch, stress and intonation, and does not include 'cough' or 'smile' even though these can be included under 'vocal' and they can be embedded in linguistic messages to add to the meaning of the spoken text. Similarly, the pitch of the voice is taken into consideration for the meaningfulness of the text and not for the emotional content of the messages involved in paralanguage.

Audience connect was investigated in this study, as this is an important aspect of a good oral presentation (Gurak, 2000; Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). Otoshi and Heffernan (2008) emphasize that in the context of EFL classrooms it is vital to connect to the audience in a convincing manner. However, audience connect is often manipulated through nonverbal behaviour as in standing posture, hand movements, facial expression, eye contact and gestures. These aspects of nonverbal behaviour help in connecting to the audience and thereby making the presentation effective (Gurak, 2000). The CEFR (2001) scales also include gestures, facial expressions (e.g., smile or scowl),

posture (e.g., slump for 'despair' or sitting forward for 'keen interest'), eye contact (e.g., a conspiratorial wink or a disbelieving stare), body contact (e.g., kiss or handshake) and proxemics (e.g., standing close or aloof) as body language under the category of paralinguistic features while describing nonverbal communication.

To sum up, good presentation skills are important for every student both during education and for employment. However, there is not enough scope for understanding the application of theoretical knowledge in practical settings as in oral presentations. Hence there remains a gap in implementing theoretical ideas into practice, resulting in poor performance in spite of knowledge of academic content. This study aims at bridging this gap between practice and perception of what makes a good presentation.

Methodology

The study was an exploratory study with a mixed-method design where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. Quantitative data was obtained through a questionnaire as a survey instrument and the analysis of video recordings of oral presentations. This data was used to examine the relation between practice and perception. This examination added to the rigour of the study and thereby increased its reliability. Qualitative data furnished the possible explanations of perceptions behind the practice. Triangulation of data obtained from the questionnaire, video recordings and focused group discussions helped to establish the reliability and validity of the study.

Sample

The sample of this study consisted of first year engineering students in a private educational institution in Bhubaneswar, the capital of the state of Odisha. A total number of 65 students out of which 25 students from the Electronics and Telecommunications branch and 40 from the Computer Science participated in the study. The mean age of the students was 18. The socio-economic background of the participants was not investigated. However, the fees for the course they were enrolled in was around 5 lakhs, which gives an idea of the economic background of the students. With respect to language exposure, the medium of instruction is English in the Institute. However, Hindi and Odia (the local language) are used for informal communication. All the first year students have English as part of their curriculum, which includes oral communication.

Tools

A questionnaire was used as a tool to examine the knowledge of the participants about the competencies investigated in the study. The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions to be answered mostly with an 'yes' or a 'no'. Every such question was followed by asking for reasons behind the responses given. Some of the questions were directly on the role of specific features identified for this study in making a good presentation. A sample questionnaire has been attached for reference. The recorded presentation of the participants was the other tool used in this study. This enabled the examination of the practice of oral presentations.

Tasks

The task designed to assess the competencies involved in oral presentations was to give a formal presentation. The participants were asked to give this presentation for not less than one minute and not more than three minutes. The topic was 'introducing yourself'. The presentations were video-recorded. The evaluation of their own video-recorded presentation was also one of the other tasks the participants had to undertake.

Procedure

The participants were asked to give a presentation introducing themselves in their own convenient time, in a classroom with video recording facility. They were video-recorded by the researcher while doing the presentation. This was not their first time they were being video-recorded. During their normal classroom hours they are often video-recorded. Hence this was not a novel experience for them. However, they were told that they were being recorded this time for a study.

After the recording the students were given the questionnaire and asked to give their views on the different competencies involved in the oral presentation investigated in the study. The next phase was viewing the video recordings by the researcher and individual participants. This was followed by semi-structured interviews by the researcher with the participants to get their responses on their own presentations. There was discussion only on the features of oral presentation identified for investigation in this study.

Data Analysis

Data from the three different sources including video recording of the oral presentations, students' responses to the questionnaire, students' evaluation of their own presentations, and the views and opinions expressed in the semi-structured interviews were analysed separately to seek answers to the research questions.

The video recordings were first viewed by the researcher to examine the practice of the different features investigated in the study. The paralinguistic features of the speech were identified and their presence in the presentation noted. This was followed by watching the videos for observing different kinds of nonverbal behaviour such as eye contact and posture to examine the presenter's ability to connect to the audience.

Individual participants were shown their video recordings and asked to evaluate themselves on each of the features investigated in the study. They were asked to state whether they thought the speed of their presentation was right and whether they felt they used intonation, rhythm, pitch and stress in the right places in their presentation. They were asked to review whether they made connection with the audience. Their answers were followed up with questions asking for the reasons behind their judgements. They were asked whether connecting to the audience was important during oral presentation. They were also questioned during semi-structured interviews if they felt their non-verbal behaviour in the recorded presentations was enough to make

connection with the audience.

Findings

Paralinguistic features of the presentation

The number of 'yes'/'no' responses in the questionnaire to the questions on paralinguistic features was calculated by

the researcher. The participants' self-evaluation of their recorded presentations on the practice of the paralinguistic features was recorded. The total number of participants who gave responses in the questionnaire that these features matter and the total number of those who felt that they practised them are given in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Knowledge and Practice of Paralinguistic Features

Paralinguistic features	No. of Participants who said 'yes' to these features in the Questionnaire	No. of Participants who felt they practised these features in the Presentation
Speed	65	40
Intonation	65	23
Rhythm	57	25
Pitch	61	35
Stress	60	28

If we compare the data in the questionnaire column with that in the presentation column, we find that the numbers are higher in the questionnaire column, suggesting that theoretical knowledge was easier to acquire than the implementation of practical skills for this group of students. This was not surprising, as the participants had studied them in class but their experience in practising these skills might not have been adequate.

Table 1 shows that all the participants had knowledge that '*speed*' is one of the essential features of oral presentation. This again was not surprising, as 'speed' is an easily recognisable feature compared to others in the list. However, according to participants'

own analysis, only 40 participants out of 65, nearly two-thirds of the sample, were able to put their knowledge into practice in maintaining speed in their own presentations.

With reference to '*intonation*', it can be observed that all 65 students had knowledge of intonation. The discussion during the semi-structured interviews revealed that this was because they had been given a very simple definition of intonation, i.e. rising and falling tone. However, when it came to practice, only 23 participants thought their intonation was right, again reflecting that this was a difficult skill to practise.

'*Rhythm*' was the least understood among the five competencies investigated, with 8

participants lacking in knowledge and awareness of 'rhythm' for oral presentation. The reason behind this as reflected in the semi-structured interview was that rhythm is often taught in the context of poetry and training opportunities had not focused on rhythm in oral presentation. **Table 1** shows that only 25 felt that they had done their presentation with proper 'rhythm', reflecting that only about one-third of the participants could practise rhythm in their presentation. More participants knew about 'pitch' and 'stress' than they did 'rhythm'. For '***pitch***', 61 out of the 65 participants thought that this feature was essential for good oral presentation. This reflects that the majority of the participants had adequate knowledge and awareness about the role of pitch in oral presentation. However, only 35 out of the 65 could identify this feature in their presentation. The reason that the speakers gave during the semi-structured interview was that they became aware of their weakness in making the right pitch only while listening to their own presentations. This suggests that feedback from recorded presentations can help in improving this skill as it is very easy to identify this feature in recordings rather than during the presentation.

'**Stress**' remains one of the features of oral presentation where the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice was the widest; only 28 out of the 60 participants were aware of its role in making a good presentation and could identify it in their own presentation but failed to practise it.

Evaluation of the presentation by the researcher and the participants

Video recordings of the practice session were also examined by the researcher. The results of this examination were compared to the ones made by the participants themselves. This comparison revealed that there was lack of agreement between the researcher/teacher and the participants, which was also reported by Oi (2012). Some participants were not able to evaluate themselves correctly by failing to identify the features in their practice. The students' responses to the questionnaire and their own evaluation of their practice showed that there were some who had the knowledge and were able to practise those features. However, when they reviewed their own presentation, they failed to evaluate their practice of some paralinguistic features.

Table 2 below presents the findings.

Table 2: Disparity in Evaluation between Researcher and Participants on Paralinguistic Features

Paralinguistic features	'No' by Participants	'Yes' by Researcher
Speed	25	2
Intonation	42	3
Rhythm	32	6
Pitch	29	3
Stress	41	4

It was found that out of the 25 students who had the knowledge, 2 had practised speed in their presentation but could not evaluate their speed effectively in their presentation. Three students had intonation in their presentation but could not identify it in their oral presentation while evaluating themselves. Six students had knowledge of rhythm and they practised it also during their presentation but failed to evaluate themselves correctly. Similarly, three and four students could not identify pitch and stress respectively in their presentations. Failing to identify these features in their own presentations shows that the students' theoretical knowledge had not translated into conscious awareness. Practical expertise could be a reflection of unconscious learning. If evaluation is to be adopted as a tool for self-improvement, explicit knowledge on both theory and practice of these features is vital.

Audience Connect

The video recordings were analysed for evidence on audience connect. Eye contact and body language as in hand and leg movements were observed to measure the level of connection with the audience. It is difficult to judge exactly how much eye contact and body language helps in making the necessary connection with the audience (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). However, in this study, an attempt was made to examine this feature not in the amount of eye contact but by qualitatively analysing each recording and making a judgement on the effectiveness of the behaviour in connecting with the audience. The researcher led the

participants to evaluate themselves on what they felt about this feature. All the participants felt that their eye contact was not adequate enough to connect to the audience. Out of the 65 participants, only 6 felt that they needed improvement in their posture. A few participants felt that their hand and finger movements needed correction.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study point to a gap between perception and practice of oral presentation with this group of engineering students. With reference to paralinguistic features the findings show that certain competencies like speed, intonation, pitch and stress were not difficult for the students to understand. However, it was difficult for them to put these competencies to good effect. This conclusion is in conformity with that made in other studies (Weissberg, 1993; Morita, 2000; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) and implies that explicit teaching of these features should be accompanied by conscious practice in oral communication with learners of English as a foreign /second language.

Based on the findings on rhythm, it can be concluded that mere classroom instruction in oral presentation competencies may not be adequate to provide complete knowledge or its application in actual practice. As the findings of this study show, the students failed to understand the role of stress and rhythm in oral presentation because rhythm was usually taught in the context of poetry and not related to other modes of language use. This suggests that classroom

instruction in ESL/EFL should provide elaborate examples of use in different contexts to enable a clear conception about the different competencies involved in oral presentation (Joughin, 2007).

The findings also provide evidence that feedback can help bridge the gap between practice and perception. By listening to their own presentations the students realised their lack of correct pitch in their presentations. As shown by other studies (Brown, Bull & Pendlebury, 1997; Grievson & Lowe, 2000), this study also provides evidence that feedback in the form of watching one's own video-recorded performance helps to show the disparity between practice and perception.

The findings also suggest that the gap between practice and perception can be bridged by self-evaluation. Some students had knowledge and could practise some of the competencies involved in oral presentation and yet failed to evaluate themselves. This finding is similar to that of Oi (2012), who also came to the conclusion that agreement between self-evaluation and teacher evaluation might be low. This implies that teaching and learning of oral presentation should focus not only on theoretical knowledge but should be followed up with opportunities for practice and feedback (Quigley, 1998). Moreover, self-awareness, which is the first step for self-assessment (De Grez, Valcke & Roozen, 2009; Oi, 2012; Boud, 2013), could be developed through feedback on recorded presentations.

The findings also shed light on another important feature of oral presentation,

namely nonverbal behaviour or body language (Gurak, 2000; Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). The self-evaluation of non-verbal behaviour by the students helped in receiving vital feedback on their role in connecting to the audience. Self-evaluation of recorded presentations made the students realise how their practice of their non-verbal behaviour was different from their perception.

Conclusion

The small size of the sample and the evaluation of student presentations only by the researcher without a co-evaluator could be mentioned as the limitations of this study. The single-rater practice might raise the issue of reliability (Bachman & Palmer, 1989). However, the present study brought in self-evaluation as a means of improving competencies into the purview of research on oral presentation skills of ESL engineering students. Future research could extend the study to other branches of higher education such as law and business administration, and include a variety of tasks on oral presentations.

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The Effect of Anxiety on the Use of Oral Communication Strategies by Engineering Students in the Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the findings of a study that aimed to find out the types of communication strategies (CSs) used and the frequency of their use by engineering students with high and low levels of anxiety. The data on students' anxiety level was collected by using Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) (McCroskey, 1982) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz & Cope et. al., 1986). To collect data on CSs, selected students were given three oral tasks: public speech, presentation and interview. By using a multi-featured advanced mobile with a good audio recorder, students' performances were audio recorded. To analyse the data, the taxonomy of communication strategies was adapted from Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), Ellis (1984) and Dornyei (1995). Results showed that high anxious students frequently used reduction strategies and low anxious students used achievement strategies more than high anxious students.

Keywords: *Communication Strategies; Anxiety and learning; Engineering students.*

Introduction

"I always feel nervous when speaking English."

"Thoughts came into my mind but I can't express them quickly in English."

"I can't write grammatically correct in English."

"I do not get exact word at exact place in writing as well as in speaking."

(Quoted from the transcripts of the study)

Such statements are commonly used by foreign language learners, and foreign language teachers are also well acquainted with them. These statements show an important problem that the majority of students face in learning, particularly in speaking and writing a second/ foreign language. Many learners express their inability to, and sometimes even acknowledge their failure in learning to,

speak and write in a second/foreign language. These learners may be experts at learning other skills but, when it comes to learning to speak another language, they claim to have a 'mental block' against it (Horwitz et. al., 1986).

Language Anxiety can bring about several problems in the process of language learning since it can hinder students from mastering the language. Anxiety refers to concern and fear, especially about what might happen (*Oxford Dictionary*, 1995, p. 16) and language anxiety refers to a type of anxiety unique to second language learning (Horwitz et al., 1991, p. 25).

What are the causes that hinder or stop learners in learning a second/foreign language? Most of the time, students' feeling of stress, anxiety or nervousness may impede their language learning and performance. Theorists and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have reiterated that these feelings of anxiety are specifically associated with learning and speaking a second/foreign language, which distinguishes SL/FL learning from learning other skills or subjects. Both language teachers and students are aware and generally feel strongly that anxiety is a major hurdle to be overcome when learning to speak another language.

The highly anxious students usually construct learning strategies, such as learning certain tricks, that help them to keep the conversation going, in order to be able to perform well in their oral activities. Those strategies are called Communication Strategies. A Communication Strategy is defined as "a systematic technique employed

by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty (Corder, 1981, in Dornyei, 1995, p. 56). It can be in the form of using circumlocution, fillers, code switching, et cetera (Dornyei, 1995, p. 58).

The focus of the present research is to check the level of anxiety of the engineering students and find types and frequency of communication strategies used by them.

Theories

According to Horwitz et al. (1991), language anxiety means the feeling of nervousness, worry, or uneasiness experienced by foreign language students, especially EFL students. Many students, especially in a classroom situation, find that learning a foreign language is stressful, especially if they have to perform something using foreign language, owing to the fear of making mistakes, feeling of high self-consciousness, and the desire to be perfect when speaking (Foss et al., 1991).

There are three types of language anxiety: *test anxiety*, *communication apprehension*, and *fear of negative evaluation*. "Communication apprehension is the fear or anxiety an individual feels about orally communicating" (Daly, 1991, p. 3). It usually occurs in a classroom situation. Students may avoid talking in foreign language because they are unprepared, uninterested, lack confidence, or because they are afraid of communicating. The characteristics of a person with high communication apprehension level are that they have difficulties in concentrating, become forgetful, and sweat much (p.3). The most

commonly used measure is that of McCroskey et al. (1985), called Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA). It consists of 24 items related to communication apprehension. Students experiencing high Communication Apprehension score high in PRCA, while those with low Communication Apprehension level score low in PRCA.

Communication Strategies

“When language learners are unaware of how to say a word in English due to fear or anxiety, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, inventing new words, or describing what they mean. These ways of communicating are called **communication strategies (CSs)**.” They are “attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second-language learner and the linguistic knowledge of his or her interlocutor in real communication situations” (Dornyei, 1995). According to Selinker (1972), “Strategies of Second Language Communication” are the ways in which foreign/second language learners deal with the difficulties they encounter during the course of their speaking performances in the target language when their linguistic resources are inadequate. Among the four language skills, ‘speaking’ appears to be more complicated for learners. Therefore, “speaking in English fluently and accurately and communicating orally in the target language have been accepted as threatening acts for EFL learners since effective oral communication requires the ability to

use the language appropriately in social interactions” (Shumin, 1997).

Many researchers have proposed definitions of communication strategies since the notion of ‘communication strategy’ was first introduced by Selinker (1972). Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976-1977), and Tarone, Frauenfelder and Selinker (1976) defined ‘communication strategy’ as “systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language (TL), in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed.” A common definition is that communication strategies are considered “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared” (Tarone, 1980).

Taxonomy of Oral Communication Strategies

The taxonomy of oral communication strategies has been adopted and adapted from various available taxonomies of Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), Ellis (1984), and Dornyei (1995). The CSs identified in the taxonomy are divided into two categories: Reduction Strategies and Achievement Strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1984).

A) Reduction Strategies:

These are learners’ attempts to escape from a communication problem. The strategies from this category include:

- 1. Topic avoidance:** Not try to talk about terms/concepts which students find difficult to express.
- 2. Message abandonment:** The learner starts communication but then cuts

short because he faces difficulty with the target language rules or forms.

B) Achievement Strategies:

By using achievement strategies, the learner attempts to solve problems in communication by expanding his communicative resources, rather than by reducing his communicative goal (functional reduction) (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). Achievement strategies aimed at solving problems in the planning phase due to insufficient linguistic resources can be called **compensatory strategies**. In executing a plan, learners may have difficulties in retrieving specific interlanguage items and may adopt achievement strategies in order to get at the problematic item (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). Such strategies are called **retrieval strategies**.

- 1. Literal translation:** Learner translates the content or matter from L1 to L2.
- 2. Generalization:** Learner employs an L2 word which is semantically similar to the targeted lexical item.
- 3. Paraphrase:** By using a paraphrase strategy, the learner solves a problem in the planning phase by filling the 'gap' by using simple language structures.
- 4. Word coinage:** Learner coins a non-existent L2 word or creatively constructs a new word.
- 5. Use of all-purpose words:** Learners use some empty lexical items to transmit the message completely.
- 6. Restructuring:** This strategy is used whenever the learner realizes that he cannot complete a local plan which he

has already begun and develops an alternative local plan which enables him to communicate his intended message without reduction.

- 7. Circumlocution:** It is a strategy used by learners in which they go on describing or paraphrasing the target object or concepts.
- 8. Waiting:** When the learner starts communicating, he/she sometimes stops in between and takes time to think up the next utterance.
- 9. Use of fillers:** The learner uses filling words to get some time to think. For example: *well, as a matter of fact, now let me see*. Wajnryb (1987) added examples of fillers such as *I think, you know, you see, um, mm, ah, sort of, OK, right, really*.
- 10. Repetitions:** Learner repeats the same words, phrases, or sentences if he/she does not get next part of their communication.
- 11. Asking for repetition:** It is a cooperative strategy which includes requesting repetition when not hearing, or misunderstanding, something.
- 12. Asking for clarification:** It is also a cooperative strategy in which the learner requests to elaborate unfamiliar meaning structure or new concepts – for example, *What do you mean?, You saw what?*
- 13. Code Switching:** It is a strategy in which learners switch from L2 to L1 when they face difficulties in continuing the communication.
- 14. Unused strategies:** Meaning replacement, asking for confirmation

and foreignizing are generally unused but important strategies.

Methodology

Data collection

For the present research both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Data for the present research was collected from all (four) engineering colleges in Ratnagiri district, (Maharashtra) from **120** second year engineering students from various branches, the sample being selected using stratified random sampling.

To collect information on the anxiety levels of the students, a questionnaire adapted from PRCA (McCroskey, 1982) and FLCAS (Horwitz & Cope et al., 1986) was used. PRCA records participants' feelings about communication in four different

communicative situations: group discussion, meetings, conversations and public speaking. However, in the present study one situation, i.e. meeting, was replaced with 'debate' as these engineering students are more familiar and experienced with debates than with meetings. Students' concerns related to their self-image can be addressed in a similar manner using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, 1984), which can also be used to identify students mostly likely to suffer from language anxiety related to speaking and writing in the target language. To elicit information on communication strategies, case study method was used. To observe and analyze students' use of CSs in oral communication situations, **24** second year engineering (mixed branches) students from the four colleges were selected:

Table 1: Sample Sizes

Purpose	Class	No. of Students
To check anxiety level	SE (From All Colleges)	120
To check use of CSs	SE (From All Colleges)	24

Selected students' performances were observed and audio recorded with a multimedia mobile phone having high quality audio recording facility. Along with the audio recording, observation, questionnaire, and retrospective interview methods were also used for the present research. Personal information on students was also collected.

Data Analysis

Based on the responses of the engineering

students and the weightage given by them, three oral communication situations (i.e., public speech, interviews and presentation) were chosen. Based on the analysis of the students' responses to a questionnaire on PRCA and FLCAS, 24 out of 120 students were selected as the subjects for the present study. They were divided into two categories, viz. high anxious and low anxious. Recordings of the students' performances in the selected oral communication situations were transcribed and analyzed to

identify students' use of various communication strategies. Students' retrospective interviews were also transcribed and analyzed to know what planning they did to solve the given tasks.

Discussion and Findings

The analysis of the questionnaire showed that only 11 (9.1%) out of 120 students had low level of communication apprehension, fifty (41.66%) medium communication apprehension and 61 (50.83%) high communication apprehension. The public speaking scores revealed high communication apprehension for a majority of the respondents. Group discussion and debate scores revealed that most respondents experienced comparatively low communication apprehension in both types of communication situations. It indicates that students need more training or practice in public speaking.

Comparing students' use of CSs in oral communicative situations

Use of fillers (42.83%), *repetition* (14.14%)

and *restructuring* (10.31%) were the most often used strategies in all the tasks. *Message abandonment* (overall usage of 8.46%) was used more frequently in the interview task than in public speech and presentation. *Topic avoidance* was used only in the interview task (overall usage 3.18%). *Literal translation, paraphrase* and *waiting* were used more in public speech than in presentation and interview. *Generalization, word coinage, circumlocution, use of all purpose words, asking for repetition* and *asking for clarification* were used more in the interview task but the frequency of use of *word coinage, asking for repetition* and *asking for clarification* was remarkably less. *Code switching* was used only in the interview task and also less frequently. However, some other important strategies like *meaning replacement, foreignizing* and *asking for confirmation* were not at all used by the subjects of the present study in any of the oral tasks. **Figure 1** below shows the overall use of CSs in oral communication situations.

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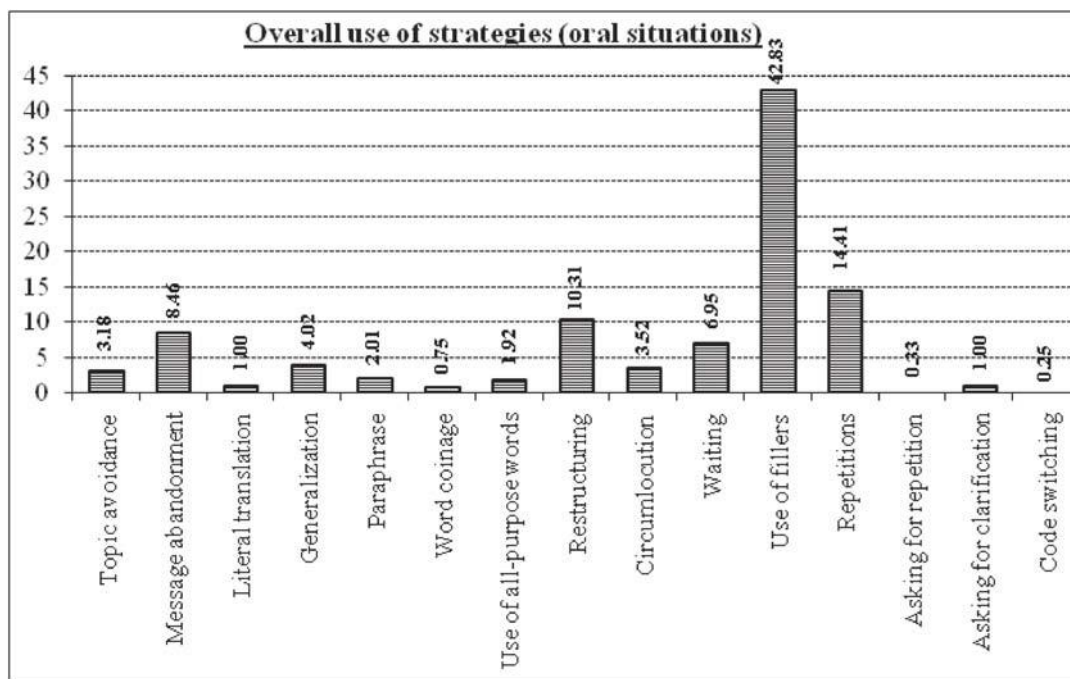


Figure 1: Overall percentage of use of CSs in oral communication situations

Comparing high anxious and low anxious students' use of CSs in oral communication situations

Even if low anxious students had a little anxiety in some tasks, they performed better than the high anxious students. Their anxiety was facilitative anxiety, which made them make efforts to perform better in all oral and written tasks. Many low anxious students felt fear initially – at the beginning of interview, public speech or presentation, but once they got settled on the stage they did not experience any kind of fear or anxiety. On the other hand, high anxious students' anxiety was debilitating. They could not perform well due to nervousness and anxiety though they had prepared well for the tasks.

According to the retrospective interviews of some high anxious students, facing an interview was a little easier than giving a public speech or a presentation. The reason given was that in the interview task they could sit and answer questions, while in public speech and presentation they had to stand in front of the audience and maintain eye contact with them. Almost all the students had selected technical topics for presentations. It showed that giving a presentation on a technical topic was felt to be easier than giving one on non-technical topics, because they were learning technical topics every day in the classroom and so they need not take too much effort to remember those concepts and terminology. Low anxious students, on the other hand, were found to

be confident in oral as well as written tasks. Some of them were a little anxious at the time of speech and presentation but their anxiety did not become a barrier in their performance. They were getting their doubts clarified and taking help from the researcher as well as their friends.

The analysis of low anxious and high anxious students' use of CSs showed that high anxious students used reduction strategies more frequently than low anxious students. Comparing the use of CSs by LA and HA students in oral communication situations, it was found that *use of fillers* was used in oral tasks by both high and

low anxious students; *message abandonment, restructuring and repetition* were used more by high anxious students; *waiting* strategy was used more by low anxious students. *Topic avoidance, code switching, generalization, word coinage, use of all purpose words* and *asking for clarification* were used more by high anxious students, while *literal translation, paraphrase, asking for clarification* and *asking for repetition* were used more by low anxious students. **Figure 2** shows strategy wise overall use of CSs in oral communication situations by LA and HA students.

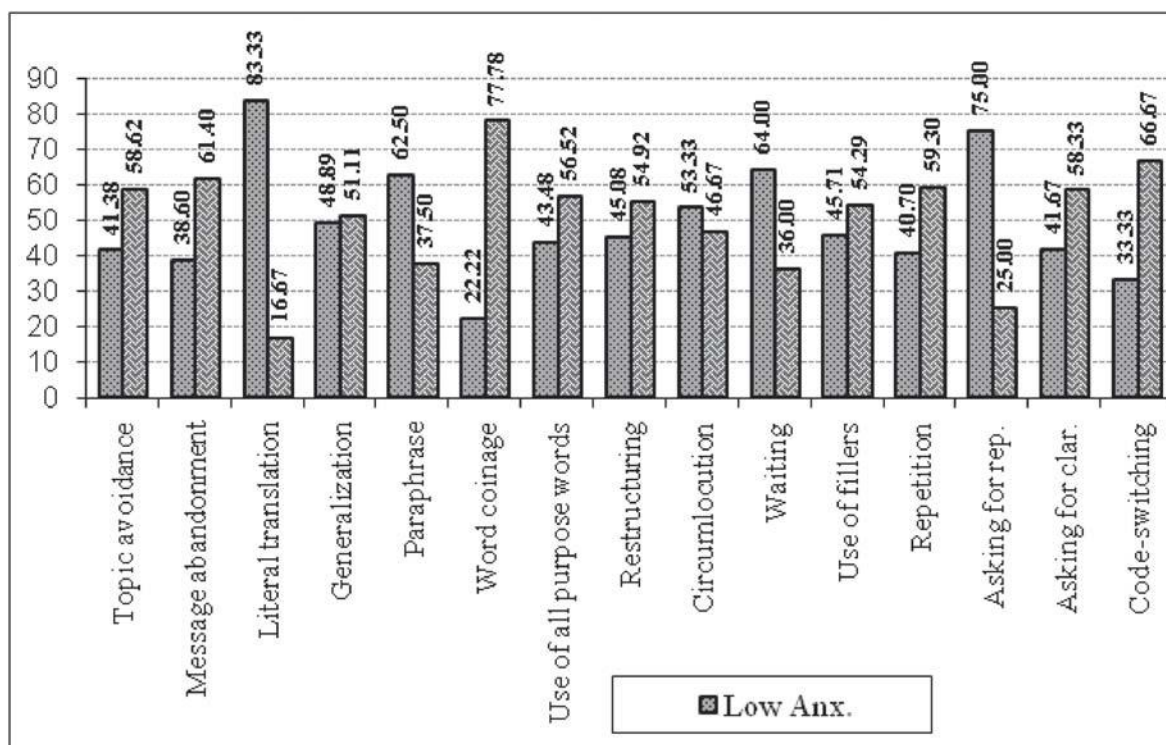


Figure 2: Comparison of overall usage of CS (oral situations) by LA & HA students

Conclusion

Strategies most often used in all the tasks were *use of fillers, repetition* and *restructuring*. *Message abandonment* was used more frequently in the interview task than in public speech and presentation. *Topic avoidance* was used only in interview and frequently, too. *Literal translation, paraphrase* and *waiting* were used more in public speech than in presentation and interview. *Generalization, word coinage, circumlocution, use of all purpose words, asking for repetition* and *asking for clarification* were used more in the interview task, but the frequency of use of *word coinage, asking for repetition* and *asking for clarification* was remarkably less. *Code switching* was used only in the interview task and less frequently so. However, some other important strategies like *meaning replacement, foreignizing* and *asking for confirmation* were not at all used by the subjects of the present study in any of the oral tasks.

Use of fillers was used in oral tasks by both high and low anxious students. While *message abandonment, restructuring* and *repetition* were used more by high anxious students, *waiting* was used more by low anxious students. *Topic avoidance, code switching, generalization, word coinage, use of all purpose words* and *asking for clarification* were used more by high anxious students, whereas *literal translation, paraphrase, clarification* and *asking for repetition* were used more by low anxious students. Among oral communication situations, students experienced comparatively less fear in interview and presentation than in speeches.

Implications and Recommendations

The present research has significant pedagogical implications. If students are made aware of reasons for anxiety in communication and how to overcome them by using various successful communication strategies that low anxious students use, it will be very useful to improve the output quality of engineering students. Teachers teaching English in engineering colleges can play a crucial role in alleviating students' anxiety and creating an anxiety-free learning environment by teaching them how to use positive communication strategies.

A module or unit on using communication strategies and reducing language anxiety should be included in the syllabus of engineering courses. This view corroborates Dörnyei's (1995), who suggests that communication strategies need to be taught and he also suggests procedures for strategy training.

High-anxious students should be introduced to risk-taking strategies employed by low-anxious students in order to build their confidence level. Cohen and Dörnyei hold the same view: "One possible way to help low-ability students improve their oral communication may be to introduce them to the use of risk-taking strategies employed by high-ability students." Cohen et al. (1998) and Dörnyei (1995) have claimed that "communicative skills can be improved by developing specific CSs and raising low-ability students' awareness of strategies for solving potential communication problems, leading to the development of their oral communication ability." These suggestions are supported by Nakatani (2005), who has

noted that “trained participants significantly improved their oral proficiency test scores and their success.”

Teachers should also remove students’ fear of tests and test scores. They should not make students worried about passing or failing the course. Classroom environment should be made comfortable to students, which will in turn lead to more efficient learning. Teachers should give pair/group activities, as many students feel comfortable talking to their friends; if they make a mistake, they do not feel bad or anxious. There should also be an additional module in the syllabus on using the register features of EST correctly and frequently in their oral performances.

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Techniques in Teaching Pronunciation to Pre-Service Teachers

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ABSTRACT

In many English language classrooms, teaching pronunciation is given the least attention. ESL teachers hold the view that what is essential for being able to communicate in English is rich vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. There is certainly some truth in this. Nevertheless, being able to pronounce words properly can be critically important in certain situations. Factors leading to pronunciation problems are interference of mother tongue, learners' age, attitude and their insufficient knowledge of phonology and phonetics of English. This study was undertaken because language teachers play a decisive role in enhancing their students' pronunciation and this should be rightly emphasized during pre-service education so that the future teachers can work on it. Moreover, the study indicates that ESL learners need extensive training especially in the recognition of sounds and the differences in the production and articulation of these sounds.

Key Words: *Techniques in pronunciation teaching; Pronunciation drill; Intelligibility.*

Introduction

Learning a foreign language "is basically a mechanical process of habit formation" (George, 2002). Non-native English speakers often use the pronunciation and communication style of their native language when speaking in English, resulting in accented speech. There are some common problems, such as articulation of vowels and consonants, intonation, stress, sense groups and linking, that can interfere with intelligibility when speaking in English. General observation suggests that it is those who start to learn English after their school years who are most likely to have serious difficulties in acquiring intelligible

pronunciation, with the degree of difficulty increasing markedly with age. This difficulty has nothing to do with intelligence or level of education, or even with knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary.

There is no simple answer to why pronunciation is so difficult to learn. Indeed, there is a whole range of theoretical perspectives on the question (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005). What is generally accepted among psycholinguists and phonologists is that the difficulty of learning to pronounce a foreign language is cognitive rather than physical, and that it has something to do with the way 'raw sound' is categorized or conceptualized in speech.

Many learners of English as a second language have major difficulties with English pronunciation even after years of learning the language. This often results in difficulties in finding employment. Most of the students from rural backgrounds, who were not taught pronunciation, have problems with distinguishing the English sounds while listening to them and that results in difficulties in understanding the spoken language. Some of them cannot produce the sounds properly; they have problems with intonation, and word and sentence stress, and so communicating in English is problematic. To rectify these issues the teaching of pronunciation should be introduced as early as possible.

Significance of the Study

Today it will be very difficult to neglect English language because of the rich scientific and technical literature in it. It provides opportunities to Indians to get employment throughout India. It is a powerful language of communication. Effective communication consists of many elements such as vocabulary, grammar, structure and pronunciation. Among these elements pronunciation receives very little attention among the learners and teachers. Intelligible pronunciation is essential for better communication. Those who are not good in their pronunciation experience social isolation, difficulties in employment and limited opportunities for further study. Many learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from the teacher (Jenkins, 2000). Therefore, some sort of

pronunciation instruction in class is necessary. Adopting new techniques in the teaching of pronunciation may work. The techniques used in this study are based on constructivist learning. They are based on the principle that students discover their own truths through activities. The teacher's job is to facilitate that discovery. How do we get students to discover concepts? The simple answer is, "Ask, don't tell." The investigator adopted some techniques in order to create a collaborative learning environment for learning pronunciation in an easy and enjoyable manner. This approach provides an enjoyable learning environment for students.

Objectives

The study aimed to:

1. Assess the standard of pronunciation among the B. Ed. English students;
2. Enhance correct pronunciation among those through some techniques;
3. Evaluate the effect of the techniques on the pronunciation of the B. Ed. English students; and
4. Examine differences between boys and girls in acquiring the correct pronunciation as a result of the techniques.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the B. Ed. English students' pronunciation as a result of the techniques.
2. There is no significant difference in the English pronunciation of urban and rural B. Ed. English students as a result of the techniques.

3. There is no significant difference in the English pronunciation of boys and girls among the B. Ed. English students as a result of the techniques.
4. There is no significant difference in the English pronunciation of B. Ed. English students studying in government and non-government colleges as a result of the techniques.

Method and Sample

Since the major objectives of the present study were to enhance correct pronunciation through some techniques and to find out their effectiveness, the investigator adopted the experimental research design involving a pre-test and a post-test on a single group. Based on the non-probability purposive sampling technique, the study sample was selected. The size of the sample was 80 spread over four colleges, both government and non-government ones, amounting to 20 from each college.

Study Tool

A test named "Check your Pronunciation" was constructed by the investigator consisting of thirty-five multiple choice items to test pronunciation, stress and intonation of the B. Ed. English major students of Coimbatore city. The tool was administered to the same level of students to calculate reliability, which was found to have the value of 0.67 using Spearman Brown's formula. Finally, the number of items was reduced from thirty-five to thirty. Each item in this tool carried a score of one for the correct response. Since this study

was conducted to measure the average gain in the achievement level of the whole group, the same tool was used for both the Pre-test and Post-test. The *pre-test* was meant to test the average achievement level of the whole group *before* using the techniques; the *post-test* was used to measure the average gain in the achievement level of the whole group *after* using the techniques.

Tool Administration and Experimentation

The pre-test was administered to the samples chosen using the tool constructed and the students' performance was evaluated immediately. After one week, the investigator started enhancing the pronunciation of the Experimental Group using the techniques. Four Pronunciation techniques were adopted, namely Pronunciation Drill, Dictionary Usage, Use of Audio-Visual Aids and Phonetic Transcription. These techniques were employed for six hours per week for a month. The techniques encouraged active participation of the learners and provided for students' interest, comfort, collaborative learning and exploration. After completing the experiment, the instructor advised the group to practise the same for four weeks. Then, the same tool was used to evaluate the students' pronunciation in the post-test. Both pre-test and post-test data were analyzed.

Techniques – An Overview

Pronunciation Drill

The investigator selected an activity named 'Introducing features of pronunciation' from a book by Hewings (2004). This activity

introduces some key terms – vowel, consonant, consonant clusters, word stress and intonation – and gets students thinking about differences between pronunciation in English and in their first language. The level of the activity is elementary. A copy of the handout (See **Appendix**) was given to all the subjects to perform the activity. Examples in 1 were presented by the investigator, the subjects were then asked to complete the exercises in 2, and their answers were checked. Time was given to think about the questions in 3. Similarities and differences between English and the subjects' first languages were highlighted and it was checked whether students had understood the key terms correctly. The same procedure was carried out for all the key terms except 'intonation'. Demonstration was given by the investigator for the tones – fall, rise, rise-fall, and fall-rise - and sufficient practice was given individually.

Dictionary Usage

The investigator recommended *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (OALD) (8th Edition)* (Hornby, et al., 2010) to the subjects for learning the pronunciation of the list of words given. Initially, the subjects were instructed to use dictionary for learning the pronunciation. They had already been trained in English vowel and consonant sounds, and their symbols. A list of words was given to the subjects for practice and they were tested for their accuracy.

Using AV Aids

PowerPoint, audio and video clips of native

speakers conversing about various topics, such as interview tips, conversation with neighbors, visiting a library, participating in a competition and environmental issues, were used. The subjects of the study were given adequate exposure to these materials for two weeks.

Phonetic Transcription

Phonetic transcription is the visual representation of speech sounds. The most common type of phonetic transcription uses a phonetic alphabet. Four simple exercises were carefully selected – *Write the words you read*, *Match the phonemic script with the corresponding English word*, *Choose the suitable transcription* and *Transcribe the sentences*. Suitable guidance was given to the subjects, who practised the exercises for two weeks.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected were coded and processed for obtaining values. The t-test was employed to find out whether there was any significant difference between the sample groups. From the results, the association between the independent and dependent variables was identified. The data were analyzed in relation to the objectives and the hypotheses were tested for significance.

Hypothesis 1:

There was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in acquiring correct pronunciation among the B. Ed. English students.

TABLE: 1

Test	N	Mean	Difference of mean	SD	t-value	Result
Pre -	80	8.88	6.33	2.757	16.68**	Significant
Post-		15.21		3.623		

**significant at 0.01 level

From **Table 1** it is evident that the mean scores of Pre- and Post-tests differ significantly. The calculated t-value was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2:

There was no significant difference between Government and Non-Government College B. Ed. English students in the acquisition of correct pronunciation.

TABLE: 2

School type	N	Mean	Difference of mean	SD	t-value	Result
Government	20	16.05	1.12	3.912	0.266**	Not Significant
Non -Government	60	14.93		3.515		

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in acquiring pronunciation among the high school students with respect to the type of institution – Government and Non-Government. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3:

There was no significant difference in the post-test of urban and rural students in the acquisition of correct pronunciation.

TABLE: 3

Locality	N	Mean	Difference of mean	SD	t-value	Result
Urban	40	15.65	0.87	3.584	0.283**	Not Significant
Rural	40	14.78		3.654		

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value is less than the table value at 0.01 level, which means that there is no significant difference in the post-test of urban and rural students in the acquisition of correct pronunciation and hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4:

There was no significant difference in the post-test of boys and girls in the acquisition of correct pronunciation.

TABLE: 4

Gender	N	Mean	Difference of mean	SD	t-value	Result
Boys	20	14.1	1.48	3.796	0.134**	Non -Significant
Girls	60	15.58		3.519		

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is less than the table value at 0.01 level, which means that there is no significant difference in the post-test of boys and girls in the acquisition of correct pronunciation and hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Findings of the Study

- There was significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in acquiring correct pronunciation among the future teachers. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the techniques adopted helped the students in acquiring the proper pronunciation.
- There was no significant difference between Government and Non-Government College students in the acquisition of correct pronunciation. The result highlights that the techniques produced a similar impact on both

government and non-government college students.

- There was no significant difference in the post-test of urban and rural students in the acquisition of correct pronunciation. The approach created a positive impact on students' achievement irrespective of their locational background.
- There was no significant difference in the post-test of boys and girls in the acquisition of correct pronunciation. This shows that both boys and girls benefited equally from the techniques.

Conclusion

Since the pre-service teachers are the torch-bearers for the future generation, they need to be trained in various skills. At present very little importance is being given to pronunciation by both teacher trainees and

teacher educators. So, pronunciation activities are often neglected. This negligence ultimately puts the future teachers at a disadvantage in the job market even though they have completed their B. Ed. programme and have mastery of other skills required. The present study has shown that, with the help of some techniques, the pronunciation skill of future teachers can be developed and they, in turn, can hope to develop their students' pronunciation as well.

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ELTAI ESP SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)

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APPENDIX – STUDENT HANDOUT

Vowels

- 1 Examples: job give good car
- 2 Underline the vowel sounds in these words:
Fall learn way road
- 3 Does your language have the same vowel sounds?
Give example words:.....

Consonants

- 1 Examples: my top work this
- 2 Underline the consonant sounds in these words:
Shoe rob good leave
- 3 Does your language have the same consonant sounds?
Give example words:.....

Consonant clusters

- 1 Examples: black drop trip queen
- 2 Underline the consonant sounds in these words:
Space play climb strong
- 3 Does your language have the same consonant clusters?
Give example words:.....

Syllables

- 1 Examples: bad (1 syllable) arrive(2) computer(3) supermarket(4)
- 2 How many syllables do these words have?
Helicopter some trousers president
- 3 Does your language have words with the same number of syllables?
Give example words:.....

Word stress

- 1 Examples: traffic about terrible tomorrow conversation
- 2 Underline the stressed syllable in these words:
Banana teacher engineer alone chemistry
- 3 Does your language have words with same stress pattern?
Give example words:.....

Intonation

- 1 Examples: Yes ↘ Yes ↘ Yes ↘ Yes ↘
- 2 Listen and mark the same tones in the word *No*.
No No No No
- 3 What are the words for *yes* and *no* in your language?
Is it usual to say them with the same four tones?

Using “Big Writing” Strategy for Developing Writing Ability: A Study

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ABSTRACT

Writing in English effectively has become mandatory for academic success at secondary and tertiary levels. Students are assessed, evaluated and graded only by their written work, which signifies the importance of writing skills. Developing writing skills is invariably one of the responsibilities of teachers of English. Hence, it is the need of the hour for teachers of English to find out various strategies to improve the writing skills of students. ‘Big Writing’ is a strategy used by many primary schools in the UK to develop the writing skills of primary students. Having identified the challenges faced by high school students during writing tasks, the researchers used the ‘Big Writing’ strategy as an experimental method to explore its significance in developing the writing skills of high school students. The participants were 14-year old high school students, who were at an intermediate level of language proficiency. They took a pre-test on a paragraph writing task before the ‘Big Writing’ strategy was used and a post-test after taking ‘Big Writing’ classes. The results indicated a significant difference in their writing ability.

Introduction

Effective oral and written communication skills are very important in today’s highly competitive world. Writing, in particular, is an important skill and essential for academic success and career growth, but in the language classroom it has become mechanical and exam-oriented rather than creative and imaginative. Writing is a demanding process that involves extremely

complex cognitive processes.

Heterogeneous environment is a common phenomenon in today’s classrooms. In such classrooms, not all students understand lectures and texts in English, and respond to them correctly. Hence, when writing tasks are given, students who exhibit average proficiency in English language skills become frustrated and show reluctance to participate. The main reasons for their

frustration and reluctance in writing activities include lack of vocabulary, spelling, grammar and handwriting skills. Moreover, students rarely write even in their own language, and so the writing activity feels strange. Another powerful disincentive is the fear that they have 'nothing to say' – a common response of many students when asked to write (Harmer, 2004, p. 16).

In a heterogeneous environment, teaching writing skills is not an easy task because "Writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one of gradually developing a text, it involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organising information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing it. It is a complex process neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers" (Hedge, 2000, p. 302).

There are various factors that affect the teaching of writing skills effectively. Time constraint, syllabus completion, classroom management and less effective teaching methods are a few of the factors. As a result, students who can write well in English miss opportunities to enhance their writing skills and students with average English skills struggle to construct sentences and paragraphs on their own. When these students get enrolled in higher education, they require English for Specific Purposes (ESP) depending on the branch they choose at the tertiary level and need to write fluently different forms of texts such as reports, process descriptions, formal letters, articles and theses. This future requirement emphasises the significance of teaching

writing skills. Thus, it is very important for the teachers of English to try various strategies to teach their students writing skills, as "the skill of writing well in a second language is important and needs separate and special attention" (Brookes & Grundy, 1998, p. 1).

'Big Writing'

'Big Writing' was created by Ros Wilson, a highly experienced English educationist, and marketed by Andrelle Education, a literacy-based education company which provides professional development to teachers and educators, to raise the writing standards of primary school students in the UK (Harland, Lynn and Sainsbury, 2014, p. 5). 'Big Writing' classes are usually conducted for forty-five minutes to one hour focusing on speaking and writing skills. 'Big Writing' strategy is used in English classrooms to teach four elements of writing: Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers of sentences and Punctuation, which promotes efficiency in the writing abilities of students. The importance of teaching connectives and punctuation are evident in the words of Hedge (2000, p. 326), "teachers can support students in their growing awareness of how to achieve accuracy in a text: of such things as how the parts of a text are linked through cohesive devices, how sentence structure can vary to develop meaning, and the role that punctuation plays. These are aspects of crafting a text, putting together pieces of English language."

'Big Writing' approach was implemented by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), a centre for educational

research and development in England and Wales. The investigation, “Initial Evaluation of the Impact of ‘Big Writing’” was done on 635 students belonging to 9 primary schools in the UK. The aims and objectives of this initial evaluation were to:

- Investigate teachers’ experiences of using ‘Big Writing’ and their perceptions of its impact;
- Compare teachers’ confidence and competence before and after the use of the ‘Big Writing’ approach;
- Compare pupils’ writing performance before and after exposure to the ‘Big Writing’ approach; and
- Compare pupils’ confidence in enjoyment of writing before and after exposure to the ‘Big Writing’ approach (Harland, Lynn and Sainsbury, 2014, p. 9).

The evaluation focused on schools that were beginning to introduce ‘Big Writing’ and involved four strands of data collection activity (Harland, Lynn and Sainsbury, 2014, p. 9):

- **Strand 1:** before and after pupil writing assessment tasks in nine primary schools (a total of 635 pupils completed both baseline and endpoint writing tasks);
- **Strand 2:** before and after pupil writing attitude survey in nine primary schools (a total of 635 pupils completed both baseline and endpoint attitude surveys);
- **Strand 3:** before and after teacher survey in nine primary schools (28 teachers completed baseline surveys and 21 teachers completed endpoint surveys); and
- **Strand 4:** qualitative telephone

interviews with five teachers from five different schools using ‘Big Writing’ (three of these schools were also involved in the writing tasks and surveys).

The findings and implications of the ‘Initial Evaluation of the Impact of ‘Big Writing’” programme suggest that teachers and students are strongly positive about the ‘Big Writing’ approach and its effectiveness in enhancing teaching writing for primary students and their writing performance and attitudes.

The ‘Big Writing’ strategy was adopted for the present study since it focuses on developing the four elements: vocabulary, connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation, which form the basics of writing. This strategy was used to teach an experimental group of 15 high school students to assess its effectiveness in developing the high school students’ writing ability.

The Study

The present study addresses the use of ‘Big Writing’ strategy in developing the writing abilities of high school students. The study is significant as the impact of ‘Big Writing’ on high school students has rarely been explored by researchers. The objective of the study is to determine whether the ‘Big Writing’ approach has any significant impact on high school students’ writing abilities. The study, especially, seeks to answer to the following question:

- Does ‘Big Writing’ approach significantly affect the writing abilities of high school students?

The Design of the Study

The design of the study was experimental which involved only an experimental group. The experimental group's data before and after the 'Big Writing' classes was analysed and compared to evaluate the impact of using 'Big Writing' strategy in developing writing abilities of high school students.

The Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were fifteen high school students, who were at an intermediate level of English language skills, belonging to the age group of 14-15 years, and whose parents were graduates. They participated in writing tasks that did not require any recounting or imagining but were highly reluctant when creative writing activities were suggested.

The 'Big Writing' Tasks

'Big Writing' classes, which involve the teaching of vocabulary, connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation, were conducted once a week for forty minutes focusing on teaching writing. Before beginning the 'Big Writing' classes, a pre-test was conducted by the researcher for the fifteen participants on a paragraph writing task. The topic given for the pre-test was, 'The things I like about my school.' Then four 'Big Writing' classes were conducted, one each for vocabulary, connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation. In the fifth class the researcher administered the post-test to measure the efficacy of the 'Big Writing' classes. The post-test was a paragraph writing task on the topic, 'The Morning Beach.' The description

of the 'Big Writing' classes conducted for the study is as follows.

'Big Writing' Class 1 (vocabulary): The participants were given the topic, 'The Morning Beach,' and asked to give words related to it. They were encouraged to write down a list of words. The researcher was ready with a lexical set on the topic and the words that were not listed were added. Then the participants were divided into three groups of five each and a vocabulary quiz was conducted in five rounds: Round 1 – Spelling; Round 2 – Define the words; Round 3 – Synonyms; Round 4 – Antonyms; and Round 5 – Frame sentences. By the end of 'Big Writing' class 1, the participants had sufficient knowledge of vocabulary on the topic, 'The Morning Beach.'

List of words learnt by the participants:

early, relax, sunlight, sun rise, waves, spray, salty, cool, wet, breath, smell, fresh, seagulls, crash, blue, jogging, walking, alluring, sight, wonderful, beautiful, sun rise, shining, morning, sandy, breeze, refresh, glittering, cliffs, rocks, sky, gentle, shells, shore, washed, golden.

Outcome: When this task was given, 100% participants' involvement in the vocabulary quiz was observed. The activity promoted the learning of meanings, synonyms, antonyms, spelling and sentence formation of the 'beach' words.

'Big Writing' Class 2 (connectives): The participants were tested for their existing knowledge of connectives. Then the

researcher explained the different types of connectives and their usage. At the end of the class, the participants did the worksheet given below.

Underline the connectives in the following passage and explain their usage:

Many doctors and scientists have studied the effects of smoking on the human body. Their results show that people who smoke, or passive smokers, have a much higher risk of developing many diseases. For example, smoking can cause some cancers, emphysema and angina.

Also, the risk of contracting one of the diseases mentioned is directly proportional to the length of time and amount that a person has smoked. Therefore, people should not delay quitting the habit.

Passive smokers (people who inhale secondary smoke) are at risk of developing the same diseases as smokers. Hence, smoking has been banned in many places and will be banned in many more in the future.

Because of the health risks associated with smoking, cigarettes keep getting more expensive to try to deter people. However, many people continue to smoke despite the enormous risks and huge expense.

Outcome: 60% participants identified all the connectives and explained their functions. The remaining participants were only able to identify the connectives but had difficulty in explaining their functions.

'Big Writing' Class 3 (sentence openers):

The participants were asked to discuss among themselves and list the different ways of beginning a sentence. The researcher guided the participants to write different sentence openers. Then the participants wrote sentences in the right order starting with time connectives: *First... Then... Next... Soon... Suddenly... After that... Finally... At last...*

Outcome: About 47% of the participants were able to write simple sentences using the time connectives as sentence openers and the remaining participants showed interest in learning them to use in sentences.

'Big Writing' Class 4 (punctuation): The participants were taught the basic punctuation marks necessary to punctuate a paragraph. Then the following task was given to the participants.

Punctuate the following sentences. Ensure whether you have used the following basic punctuation marks – changing small letters into capital letters wherever necessary, full stops, apostrophe, commas, question marks and quotations.

1. where did raju go last weekend
2. i dont believe it said rekha
3. the sun rises in the east
4. my father bought me a blue shirt a parker pen a story book and a big chocolate cake
5. william wordsworth is a famous poet

Outcome: About 53% of the participants

were able to punctuate the sentences accurately and the remaining participants committed errors in second and fourth sentences.

‘Big Writing’ Class 5: The participants were asked to write a paragraph in about 200 words on the topic, “The Morning Beach”, for which they had learnt the vocabulary; they were instructed to use four connectives as sentence openers and punctuate the paragraph accurately.

Data Collection

The researcher developed a paragraph rubric (**Appendix I**) using the parameters: number of words used from the vocabulary list, connectives, openers of sentences and number of errors made in punctuating the paragraph, to measure the efficacy of ‘Big Writing’ classes in developing the writing abilities of the participants. In order to determine if ‘Big Writing’ classes had any significant impact on the high school students’ writing abilities, the pre-test and the post-test were evaluated using the paragraph rubrics and the results were compared.

The evaluation was based on the performance of the participants in the pre-test and post-test. A four-point scale (Good, Fair, Satisfactory and Needs Improvement) was used to evaluate writing skills against the criteria, namely, Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation. The rating of writing skills was based on the

ability of the participants to use the four key elements effectively in their texts. Vocabulary was evaluated based on the number of words used appropriate for the context in the pre-test and the number of words from the list on ‘Beach’ and the context in which they were used in the post-test. The evaluation of connectives was based on the number and choice of connectives they made. Sentence openers and punctuation marks were also assessed based on their effect and accuracy, respectively.

Data Analysis

This study was an attempt to determine the effect of ‘Big Writing’ approach on developing the writing abilities of high school students. This part presents the results of data analysis. For this purpose, inferential statistics was used to analyse the data. First, the data collected from the fifteen participants on pre-test was analysed using the paragraph rubrics designed by the researcher. Then the data collected from the participants on post-test administered after the ‘Big Writing’ classes was analysed. Both the results were compared to measure the efficacy of ‘Big Writing’ classes on developing the writing abilities of the high school students. The comparative chart below shows the percentage of students who needed improvement in their writing tasks before and after the ‘Big Writing’ classes by using their pre-test and post- test results (See **Figure 1**).

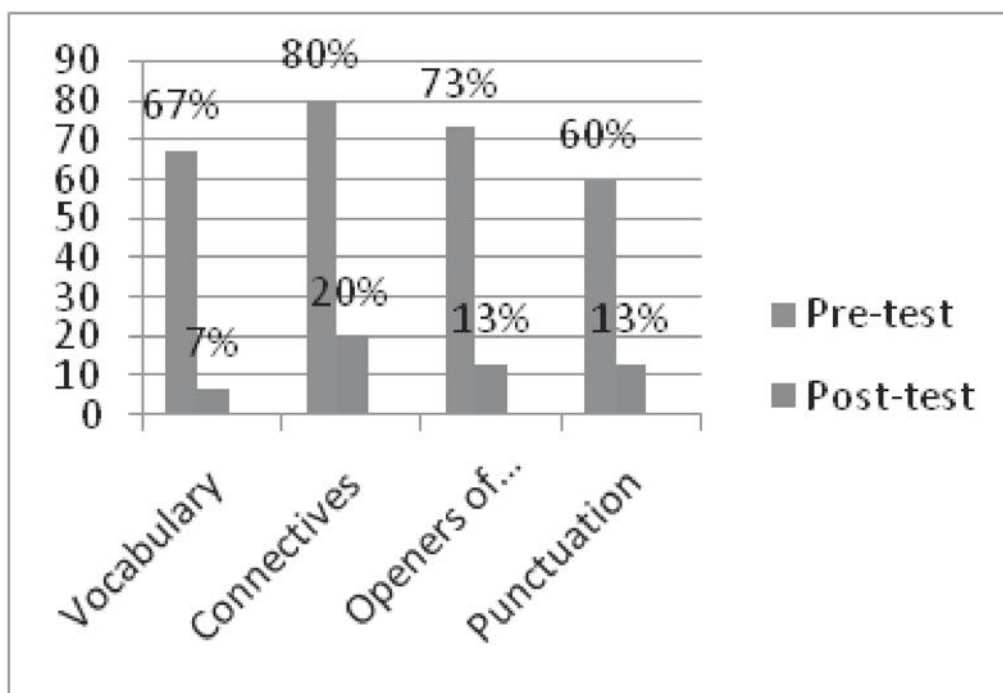


Figure 1: Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Results

Results, Findings and Discussion

When the results of the pre-test and post-test were compared, it was revealed that 66.7% students needed improvement prior to the training in Vocabulary, whereas 73.3% showed “Good” performance post-‘Big Writing’ classes. 80% students and 20% students needed improvement in the area of Connectives prior to and post- ‘Big Writing’ classes respectively. 73.3% students showed poor performance in sentence Openers before the ‘Big Writing’ classes; in contrast, 66.6% students showed “Good” performance after the ‘Big Writing’ classes. 60% students needed improvement in Punctuation prior to the ‘Big Writing’ classes. On the other hand, 60% showed “Good” performance in Punctuation post-‘Big Writing’ classes.

The evaluation substantiates the fact that there was a marked improvement in the writing abilities of the students. The improvement seen in the participants could be attributed to the ‘Big Writing’ classes they attended. This is evident from the improvement and accuracy seen in using vocabulary, connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation by the participants in their post-test.

The findings of this study are significant because the previous studies on ‘Big Writing’ approach focused on the improvement of writing standards of primary students. The findings revealed that the participants of the ‘Big Writing’ class who were high school students also showed a positive impact in learning vocabulary, connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation.

Conclusion

'Big Writing' classes, which are not based on prescribed textbooks and are not exam-oriented, give special attention to the writing needs of the students and remove their anxiety. The focus was on enabling the key elements of writing: vocabulary,

connectives, openers of sentences and punctuation, which develop their writing abilities. Each class offers the students well planned writing tasks to build their confidence, knowledge and motivation, which would go a long way in enhancing their writing skills.

Appendix I

'Big Writing' Elements	Good performance 4 points	Fair Performance 3 points	Satisfactory Performance 2 points	Needs Improvement 1 point
Vocabulary	The student has included all the words from the list.	The student has included many words from the list.	The student has included some words from the list.	The student has used only a few words from the list.
Connectives	The student has used four connectives.	The student has used three connectives.	The student has used two connectives.	The student has used only one connective.
Sentence Openers	The student has used four meaningful sentence openers.	The student has used three meaningful sentence openers.	The student has used two meaningful sentence openers.	The student has used only one meaningful sentence opener.
Punctuation marks	0-1 error	2-3 errors	4 errors	More than 5 errors

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The Teaching of ESP Compared to General English: An Experimental Project

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to evaluate the scope for improvement of teaching ESP to engineering students for developing their proficiency in English. The paper addresses the issues of teaching ESP in comparison to General English to analyse the improvements shown by learners in English. The differences in courses and methods and their impact can well be analysed to determine the efficacy of ESP focus. The paper tries to explore the effectiveness of ESP teaching through a survey of students' feedback. The results show that teaching ESP is effective in terms of students' basic understanding of grammar, syntax and the correct usage of words. It also proves effective in terms of the development of learners' language skills (LSRW). Moreover, learners have been found to be highly motivated in the classroom.

Keywords: *English for specific purposes; ESP Vs. General English.*

Introduction

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) refers to communication as well as writing needs and practices of a particular professional or an occupational group. ESP proves its utility to students who have already some basic knowledge of English and learn the language in order to communicate properly in job-oriented functions. A wide range of areas such as accounting, computer science, tourism, business management, aviation, hospitality, marketing and engineering are covered under ESP. The focal point is that English is not taught as a subject and isolated from students' needs; instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area for the learners. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have observed that one has to give learners access to the language they

want and need to accomplish their own academic or professional goals. In ESP all four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are stressed equally.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

In ESP the term 'specific' refers to the specific purposes for learning English. ESP draws its strength from a theoretical foundation and a commitment to research-based language education which seeks to reveal the constraints of social contexts on language use. A skill-based language teaching approach was adopted by Calderbank who applied it in 1988/1989 as an integrated approach to meet the needs of his trainees to perform better afterwards. Unlike other pedagogical approaches which may be less specific-needs-based and more

theory-driven, ESP pedagogy places heavy demands on its practitioners to collect empirical needs assessment data to create or adapt materials to meet the specific needs identified. Needs analysis is the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a focused course (Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Jordan, 1997). In many ways, the means and ends of ESP and general English studies are so similar that it is different to disentangle both. There are also other terms in the field of ELT, such as EGP/GPE (English for General Purposes/ General Purpose English), EST (English for Science and Technology) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes). The importance of ESP becomes particularly evident when these terms are placed in the context of concepts such as 'register' and 'needs analysis', which generally provide the underpinning of context specification in an ESP course. In engineering colleges ESP course is introduced to meet the needs of the cutting-edge society and the needs required for jobs.

Experimenting with ESP in the Classroom

It was decided to test the efficacy of ESP in engineering colleges where only general English (mostly conventional grammar) is taught. The teaching of ESP started in a class of engineering students taught by the Dept. of English, Cambridge Institute of Technology, Ranchi and continued for a month. The sample size was 55-60 students of an engineering class of second semester of 2013 batch. The students of this class were given some reading materials related

to engineering subjects and reading exercises with comprehension questions, sentence writing and vocabulary related to the reading texts. Unlike the conventional classes, where short stories, paragraphs and other study materials were taught in the classroom, the students of this class were given questions to assess their motivation, language learning skills and communication skills. For example, a piece of writing from engineering subject 'Strength of Material' (SOM) was distributed to them and they were asked to answer some questions based on it. This case study aimed to focus on three areas, namely writing skills, oral communication skills and motivation. The experiment tried to focus only on writing and speaking, as these two skills were found to be more important than the other two for students of engineering. In this regard a survey was conducted to investigate improvements in English proficiency of the engineering students.

Results and Discussion

This study revealed some very interesting results. The students had gone through the experiment and showed keen interest in such an approach to teaching and classroom activities. The results revealed that out of 60 students, 45-50 students (75%-76%) frequently and unhesitatingly started to turn up for the class for writing skills and a very few students (14%-15%) admitted that they were weak and not competent enough in writing (See **Figure 1**).

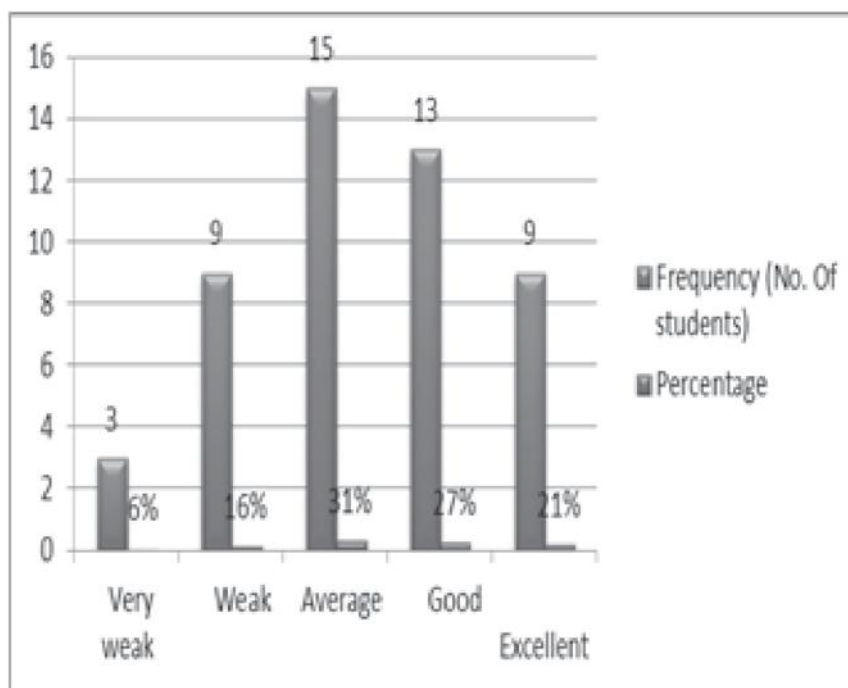


Figure 1: Students on their Writing Skills Improvement

The next step in this case study dealt with the learners' oral communication skills (Speaking). The students were given different topics to prepare a short presentation based on engineering subjects. After a short period of time they were called to make presentations and they performed well. In this process, they were assigned different projects based on engineering topics and at the end a set of questions was asked. It was found on the basis of their responses that they were doing well through this process unlike the traditional approach of speech, extempore, quiz and debate competition related to general topics. Out of 60 students, 48-52 started to turn up for the class with more zeal and enthusiasm unlike in the General English class. There

was a very positive feedback with a surprising 91% with an "YES" response regarding improvement in communication skills. Since this session was based on engineering subjects, the learners were found to be very motivated to make presentations to improve their communication skills.

In this connection a survey was conducted to get the views of learners on their motivation. From the students' responses to the survey questionnaire, it was found that nearly 99% of them said "YES" regarding the improvement in motivation in ESP class through engineering-related texts compared to the general English class (See **Table 1**).

Table 1: Comparison of the ESP Program with the General English Program

Total students in a class	ESP Program (Taught for Case Study)		General English (Traditional Program)	
	No. of learners coming to class	%	No. of learners coming to class	%
62 (strength of class)				
Writing skills	45-50	70%	30-35	53%
Communication skills	50-56	91%	25-30	44%
Motivation	56	99%	35-45	59%

The ESP course was introduced as an experiment, but it was observed that learners started to turn up in the classroom in a large number with greater interest in learning. They found it more interesting and started to attend ESP classes more than they did the general English ones. They were found developing English language skills better than in the general English classes.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper reflects the effectiveness of ESP orientation based on the learners' feedback. The results show that the learners had achieved a greater level of motivation as a result of participating in the ESP program in the classroom. They also performed more effectively than before. Secondly, the ESP program motivated the students in improving their writing skills. Thirdly, ESP training served them well in the development of communication skills to meet their professional needs. The study reflects a growing awareness and recognition of the quality issue in ESP teaching-learning. Finally, it can be claimed that the efficacy of the ESP program for students of Cambridge Institute of Technology has contributed to the

improvement of the students' performance in class and is likely to help them in their professional career as well.

A single program alone cannot adequately address all the needs of the learners. ESP training program is a means of continuing professional learning and makes an English teacher more effective and practical to meet the needs of engineering students. The results of the present project can be shared and generalised to the extent possible to other engineering colleges of the state that share the same economic, historical, geographical and cultural background.

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Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills

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ABSTRACT

The present paper attempts to study and investigate the possibility of teaching grammar and vocabulary to enhance critical thinking skills effectively in the process of ESL undergraduate students acquiring English. The effect of teaching grammar and vocabulary on their writing skills and critical thinking skills is measured. To find out this effect, the researcher carried out a survey of 50 undergraduate students of B.A./B.Com. from two colleges affiliated to the University of Mumbai using a questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed. The results showed the positive effect of teaching these on the students. Students must acquire advanced vocabulary and grammatical mastery in order to develop higher order thinking skills.

Keywords: *Second language learning; Critical thinking; ESL grammar; ESL vocabulary.*

Introduction

Grammar is often associated with boredom and mechanical exercises. But the word grammar can be related to the word 'glamour'. It is a consciously learned and explicit set of rules and principles. We learn such a set when we learn a second language. Our mother tongue too has its own set of rules and principles. And when we speak our mother tongue, we do follow these rules, but we follow them quite unconsciously and so we feel that our mother tongue has no grammar whereas English has a lot of grammar.

The teaching of grammar is an essential aspect of the teaching/learning process of any second language. Grammar is important for the mental growth of a child and acts as

a means of disciplining the mind. Teachers often ask the question whether explicit grammar and vocabulary teaching is desirable at university level, and to what extent the academic study of language in a linguistics programme can assist its learners in their L2 acquisition and developing their critical thinking skills. It has been observed that grammar and vocabulary teaching is ignored at the tertiary level. Teachers assume that students already know the grammar rules by the time they reach the UG level. Therefore, they do not pay attention to grammar teaching and vocabulary building at that level.

Views against the teaching of grammar

a) The usefulness and desirability of explicit

grammar instruction has been the subject of considerable debate. With the emergence of the communicative language teaching approach, in which the focus lies on fluency rather than on accuracy, explicit grammar teaching has sometimes been considered superfluous or even counter-productive.

- b) Grammatical explanation in the classroom has relied on the assumption that rules which are learnt consciously can be converted into unconscious processes of comprehension and production. Some scholars have questioned whether academic knowledge ever converts into the ability to use the language in this way. Grammar does not exist in isolation from language; language is grammar.

Krashen (1985), however, has persistently denied that consciously learnt rules change into normal speech processes in the same way as grammar that is acquired unconsciously does. It means learnt grammar does not convert into acquired grammar that speech depends on. If Krashen's view is accepted, people who are taught by grammatical explanation can only produce language by laboriously checking each sentence against the relevant rules.

Why grammar is essential for UG students

Undergraduate students need educated vocabulary and grammatical competence of exceptional quality. Thinking skills fail unless they deploy a necessary system of right word use and right grammar. Students must acquire advanced vocabulary and grammatical precision in order to develop

higher order thinking. Students should necessarily be taught advanced English components to be able to comprehend academic English. Wrong vocabulary and incorrect usage can lead to wrong conclusions in critical as well as ordinary thinking process. Therefore, students need to learn accurate usage of words and grammar. Teachers have to play a crucial role in this process. The tasks given to students should be challenging and related to real life situations. Students should be assured that they can handle the rules confidently; this will make grammar teaching/learning process an exciting one.

- 1) The objective of teaching grammar to students should be to improve their receptive and productive language skills and to make them better users of the language. The grammar lesson should emerge out of the language material being used to develop the skills of reading as well as to form the basis of the grammar lesson.
- 2) Grammar provides the mental discipline of human thinking and allows us to understand the meaning of clarity. Grammar is a function of thought; the best structures of grammar are the natural structures of thought at their clearest.
- 3) Grammar is also an essential factor in the highest level of interpretation of literature. Great prose writers are adept at shifting grammar structures to make them consonant with the phenomena of the plot.
- 4) Prescriptive grammar instruction is appropriate. There are linguistic

standards in the professional world that students are expected to observe. Students must be prepared to meet such standards.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the effect of teaching grammar and vocabulary in enhancing the critical thinking skills of undergraduate students;
- To find out their ways of using English while thinking critically; and
- To find out their perceptions, attitudes and problems while learning these components.

The Study Questions

1. How does the teaching of grammar and vocabulary enhance critical thinking in the process of acquiring English as a second language?
2. Does the explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary promote students' motivation and active participation?
3. What are students' attitudes towards these components?

Hypotheses

1. Teaching of grammar and vocabulary has great effect on developing the critical thinking skills of undergraduate students especially in urban areas.
2. Effective teaching of grammar and vocabulary improves students' acquisition of ESL.

Methodology

A survey of 50 undergraduate students was conducted during Semester I of the

academic year 2014-2015. A questionnaire was designed and administered to these students in order to collect their responses. The questionnaire included questions about the effect of teaching grammar and vocabulary on the students' second language acquisition; their ability to think critically and express their views in writing; their attitudes and difficulties in this process. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were administered. Self-reporting was also done by the students. A very simple numerical analysis of the data collected was done.

Subjects

The subjects of the study consisted of a sample of 50 undergraduate students (first/second year B.A./B.Com.) enrolled in two Mumbai suburban colleges (M.M.K. and Chetana) affiliated to the University of Mumbai. All of them had nearly the same level of English proficiency and they were in the age group of 18-19 years. The selection of these students was done randomly. It was assumed that these students had similar opportunities for learning English.

Results

The students from both the colleges observed that grammar and vocabulary were not part of the syllabus. More emphasis was given to organizational behaviour, and internal and external communication, rather than on developing the critical thinking skills of the students. All of them felt that these components were more useful and important; they could promote their confidence in English.

There were, however, mixed responses to the questions related to their attitude towards the use of these components. Some of them felt that these components increased their confidence and motivation level. Some felt they became more creative by using them. Students with low level proficiency in English were afraid of such a type of instruction. They felt that if this became part of the assessment process then they might not be able to score well. The students surveyed also felt that they were not taught the rules in the classroom. Teachers assumed that they already knew the rules and that further instruction was a waste of time. Some students even felt that it was not necessary to acquire critical thinking skills and that they could survive without them.

Suggestions for Enhancing Critical Thinking

- a) Group work wherein both gifted learners and learners with low level proficiency are part of the same group should be encouraged so that they feel motivated and healthy competition increases in the group. The importance of achieving accuracy in language should be explained to them.
- b) Direct instruction in vocabulary and grammar is a prerequisite to the highest fulfillment of curricular goals in language. If students have to think clearly in the medium of language, high-level intellectual components must be in place. Our thinking skills fail unless we have a necessary system of right word use and correct grammar.

- c) Thinking skills rest on mastery of vocabulary and grammar. Students can be exposed to grammar and vocabulary through reading and listening. Grammatical awareness needs to be developed through reading and writing.
- d) "In order to make choices among words, students must internalize a bank of words that provides choices. The acquisition of such a vocabulary base can (and must) occur through reading, especially in the classics that have strong vocabulary, through a deliberate vocabulary program of well-selected words, through the study of the Latin and Greek foundation of English and through the study of foreign languages that have strong English cognate connections, such as Latin and Spanish" (Thompson & Thompson, 1996, p.174).
- e) School systems that focus student reading on colloquial English titles cannot expect to increase students' vocabulary banks. It is clear that reading literature will not increase student vocabulary unless the selected literature contains words unknown to the students when they begin. There must be a degree of vocabulary discomfort for students.
- f) Undergraduate students need to select words for use very carefully. The criteria employed for choosing words include accuracy, tone aesthetics, precision, brevity, meter etc. High level word use of the kind necessary in critical thinking or academic writing involves more than the common task of finding a usable word that has approximately the right meaning. Having to search for a

particular target lexical item leads to an immediate disruption of the speaking or writing process.

- g) As far as vocabulary teaching is concerned, communicative language teaching approach advocates a focus on meaning in context and the belief has emerged that the meaning of words can better be picked up from reading than from the explicit teaching of new words.

Suggested Strategies for Building Vocabulary

The teaching of four skills of English language – listening speaking, reading and writing – faces a common hindrance, i.e. lack of strong vocabulary. Vocabulary can be *ad hoc* (words important for a given text), *passive* (recognition vocabulary), or *active* (words required for regular use). The techniques which can be used for developing vocabulary are as follows:

- 1) Attention should be given to passive vocabulary because a learner should recognize the words on his/her encounter with them.
- 2) Prudent use of mother tongue in a class of English language is welcome. Mother tongue can be used to give equivalents of unfamiliar words.
- 3) Semantic grouping helps in retention of vocabulary. Words are easily learnt if they are organized into semantic groups, e.g. *shore, ocean, island*. Wide reading is the best way of increasing one's vocabulary.
- 4) Direct instruction is a popular method of enhancing vocabulary. Lists of words have to be studied deliberately for word power exercise.

- 5) Vocabulary becomes permanent only if it is transferred to writing, speaking and thinking. Learners should be encouraged in this direction.

- 6) One clear strategy for building an effective vocabulary bank is to concentrate on words that have a high profile in literature. This direct word study will have the concomitant effect of making it easier for students to read literature, which will then continue to reinforce and supplement the vocabulary they have learned.

- 7) Students must learn the Latin and Greek heritage that underlies English diction. Students who have learned the most common Latin and Greek stems in English will have an inestimable advantage. Each stem students learn will be found in many words. To know that *pre* means 'before' is to know part of the meaning of *previous, preordained, precedent* and dozens of other words.

Conclusion

At the tertiary level students are expected to possess language skills and a certain degree of grammatical competence and vocabulary. Explicit instruction in grammar and vocabulary should be encouraged in order to make students think clearly. Higher order thinking can be achieved through this technique. Teachers should not assume that students would acquire grammar and vocabulary on their own. Systematic instruction is required in this area urgently. The main aim of any teaching/learning process is to make students critical thinkers and knowledge of grammar and vocabulary

will help in acquiring critical thinking skills.

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An Evaluation of the First Year BA Compulsory English Coursebook at Sardar Patel University



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ABSTRACT

This article evaluates the Compulsory English coursebook prescribed for the First Year BA students at Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar (Gujarat). It is based on a survey.

Keywords: Coursebook evaluation; Instructional Materials; Evaluation of materials.

Introduction

As in the other states of India, learning English is increasingly becoming the order of the day in Gujarat. When the state of Gujarat was formed in 1960, English had already consolidated its position in school and university education in India. However, in Gujarat, English was introduced from standard V on a voluntary basis and it was an optional subject in class X. At the higher secondary level, English was compulsory only for the Science Stream students; it was not compulsory for the Arts Stream. The Government of Gujarat has made English a compulsory subject at the secondary level since the academic year 2006-07 and at the higher secondary level since 2008-09. This means that now English is a compulsory subject at the secondary and higher secondary levels. At the tertiary level, English was not a compulsory subject for the B.A students earlier in some universities in Gujarat, but from 2010-11 it has been

taught as a compulsory subject in all the universities. In the colleges offering the B.A. programme, there has been a great increase in the number of students who opt for English as the main subject.

Programmes like SCOPE (Society for Creation of Opportunities through Proficiency in English), DELL (Digital English Language Laboratory), and KMPF (Knowledge Management Programme for Faculty) by the Government of Gujarat can be considered to be significant landmarks in the history of English language teaching in Gujarat. SCOPE is a government initiative in collaboration with Cambridge University. The aim of this programme is to make the youth of the state proficient in English and thereby to open up a whole new spectrum of job opportunities for them. DELL is also an English Language Proficiency Enhancement initiative conceived, funded and launched by the Government of Gujarat. Under this project,

fully computerized English Language Laboratories are established in the institutions imparting higher education across Gujarat. The main thrust of these labs is functional English rather than literary English, so that the major gap between English proficiency and employability is bridged.

Today the Gujarati learner is aware of the importance of English and learns it for its practical value in life. He is aware of the important role English plays in the world today and has a highly positive attitude towards English. This is the reason why in Gujarat, in primary education, enrolment for the vernacular medium stream has seen a fall in number in favour of English medium schools. Recently, a group of renowned Gujarati writers and scholars started a 'Save Gujarati Language' campaign. It is obvious that the growing influence of English has adversely affected the status of the mother tongue in the state.

Importance of a Coursebook

Course books play a significant role in foreign/second language teaching, especially in India. They are not simply everyday tools of language teachers; they are an embodiment of the aims and methods of the particular teaching/learning situation. In the words of Cunningsworth (1995, p. 7), a coursebook is "a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs." Through evaluation, we can assess whether the coursebook is the most appropriate for the target learners at various levels and in various teaching-learning settings.

According to Sheldon (1988), such evaluation assists teachers in making optimum use of the strengths of a book and recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks and even entire texts.

Analysis of the Coursebook

The coursebook prescribed for the First Year BA students by Sardar Patel University (Mishra, et al., 1999) has been divided into ten units. Apart from these sections there is an introduction to the book, which outlines the objectives of the book and refers to the theme, exercises and language skills to be taught with the help of the book. The introduction also points out the special care that has been taken to make the textbook interesting for the young learners by presenting lessons that describe a variety of experiences human beings have had in their encounter with the world. But it is silent on the methodology that should be adopted by the teacher while using the textbook.

The ten units of the book consist of contemporary texts taken from a variety of sources including fiction (literary texts), newspaper/magazine articles (mass media), letters, advertisements and other authentic materials. Each unit presents two texts on one theme so that learners are exposed to different functions of language. A variety of subjects have been dealt with: sports, use of technology, environment, science, education, advertising, women and struggle for freedom. Each article is about 1000 words in length. Out of the ten units, only four units have been prescribed by the syllabus. At the end of each chapter

beginning with glossary and vocabulary tasks, there are exercises in grammar emerging from the text (and usually prescribed at the UG level), comprehension exercises, extension activities and general writing practice.

The evaluation checklists presented by different writers (Sheldon, 1988; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ur, 1996; McGrath, 2002; McDonough & Shaw 2003) for teachers and students provide criteria for detailed analysis of the materials. Experts in curriculum development and syllabus design have put emphasis on the importance of needs analysis for language teaching (see Clark, 1987; Nunan, 1988; Johnson, 1989). The researcher undertook this study to analyze and evaluate the English coursebook for the first year BA students in terms of appropriateness, language, communicative skills, language learning skills, activities, exercises included in the coursebook, as well as its merits and demerits.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The teacher is considered to be initiator, mediator, facilitator and promoter of language learning. His is a pivotal role in the language classroom. Therefore, it was decided to design a questionnaire to elicit the views of the teachers of English from different colleges of Sardar Patel University on the compulsory English coursebook prescribed by the University.

McGrath (2002) discusses three different types of material evaluation: *pre-use evaluation*, *in-use evaluation* and *post-use evaluation*, and emphasizes the importance

of in-use evaluation. Hence, the questionnaire was administered to the teachers who were actually involved in teaching Compulsory English to the First Year BA students in Sardar Patel University.

Sample

Since Sardar Patel University (Vallabh Vidhyanagar) is relatively a small university, all the teachers of English working at the undergraduate level were taken into consideration for the collection of data. First, a pilot study was conducted and necessary changes were made in the questionnaire (See the **Appendix** for the final version).

The subjects, as mentioned earlier, were teachers of English belonging to the colleges affiliated to Sardar Patel University. It was a heterogeneous group drawn from both sexes with teaching experience ranging from 1 year to 19 years. The students' feedback was not sought owing to the following reasons:

- As they were students of the first year B.A., they were not familiar with this type of research. The researcher met several students informally but they could not say more than 'yes' or 'no'.
- A majority of them had recently passed their Class XII exam where centrally designed textbooks were prescribed and taught. So, the students were not able to understand the purpose of the present study.

Apart from using the questionnaire, the researcher also interviewed the teachers to raise certain issues and seek specific information.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised thirty-two questions: 3 in the multiple-choice format, 26 asking for *Yes/No* responses and 3 open-ended questions giving space for the respondents to write down their opinions. Questions 1-15 and 30 sought to elicit the teachers' opinion on the English coursebook, questions 16-19 on the exercises given in the coursebook, questions 20-22 on the vocabulary included in the coursebook, questions 23-27 on the tasks/activities, questions 28-29 on the companion workbook if any, and the last two questions (i.e., 31-32) open-ended questions aimed at eliciting the teachers' opinions on the merits and limitations of the coursebook as well as their suggestions for additions and deletions to it (See **Appendix**).

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

The first part of the questionnaire obtained the teacher's profile. It included information such as the name of the teacher, the name of the institution he/she worked in, his/her educational qualification and teaching experience. All the teachers were post-graduates in English. Some had an M. Phil. degree, while a few of them had a Ph.D. The second part contained the questionnaire proper. The responses were thoroughly analysed and on the basis of the analysis the researcher could come to certain findings and conclusions.

Major Findings of the Study

The significant findings which have emerged from the investigation conducted by the researcher are as follows:

- (i) The majority of teachers firmly believed that a coursebook must be based on the needs of the students. Their needs should be taken into account while designing the course. Getting a good job is one of the major needs of the students nowadays. This coursebook dealt with only three skills – reading, writing and listening – ignoring the speaking skill. If the students were not trained in all the four skills, it would be very difficult for them to get a good job in these competitive days.
- (ii) A large number of teachers felt that the contents of the coursebook were suitable to fulfill the objectives of the syllabi as the tasks and activities given in the coursebook were carefully prepared, catering to the needs of the students.
- (iii) According to them, the first year students found the materials interesting. Students could learn fast if the materials were interesting and appropriate for the students. The materials prescribed for the first year students were well balanced.
- (iv) They found the rubrics very lucid and clear to the students well supported by examples.
- (v) The course materials had potential to involve both learners and teacher. At many points teaching techniques, such a group work and pair work, were also given to facilitate the teaching of English.
- (vi) The materials in the coursebook were sufficient for the learners at

- this level, as they provided for revision and drilling, and allowed the students to grow independently.
- (vii)** The teachers were satisfied with the kind of exercises given in the textbook. They were of varying difficulty level to suit different students. The exercises given at the end of each chapter in the textbook were relevant and useful.
- (viii)** All the tasks/activities had been carefully selected and presented in the coursebook, so the teachers did not feel the need to exclude any of the tasks/activities from the coursebook.
- (ix)** The types of tasks/ activities given in the coursebook were as follows:
- Tasks/activities based on the chapters
 - Tasks/activities based on vocabulary and language items
 - Tasks/activities based on the grammar items.
- (x)** The coursebook contained a glossary which explained all the words that the students might find difficult to understand.
- (xi)** Almost all the teachers believed that the tasks/activities given in the materials promoted learners' language development.
- (xii)** They also realized that the students required the help of their teacher so far as the tasks/activities were concerned.
- (xiii)** The materials prescribed could be covered within the stipulated time.
- (xiv)** The other merits of the coursebook, as mentioned by the teachers, were:
- (a) It was handy and well designed.
 - (b) It was moderately priced and easily available in the market.
 - (c) It provided interesting materials on different subjects.
 - (d) It helped students develop their linguistic competence.
- (xv)** The coursebook included articles written by well-known writers and thus they were authentic materials. However, the teachers felt that the exercises were contrived. They were intended specifically for teaching purpose.
- (xvi)** The teachers in all the colleges agreed that their coursebook was appropriate for their learners' background. The prescribed textbooks corresponded to the textbook of the immediately preceding level, which was Standard XII.
- (xvii)** The coursebook included chapters written by writers from different countries. As such, it could be said that different and appropriate cultural and social environments had been catered for, in terms of the topics/ situations presented.
- (xviii)** The coursebook prescribed was the most attractive of all the textbooks in the university so far as its layout, design and organization of material were concerned. It was easy to use and successful in their teaching situations, in terms of time, effort and money.

(xix) The exercises given in the textbook at the end of each chapter provided the teacher some guidelines for teaching different skills.

Limitations of the Coursebook

- (i)** The coursebook included only essays. It did not include stories, poems, drama and dialogue.
- (ii)** The coursebook failed to provide the right degree of challenge as the chapters and essays were not graded properly.

Suggestions

- (i)** The teachers felt that the following elements should be added to the coursebook:
 - (a) Exercises on listening skill;
 - (b) A chapter giving information about e-mails and blogs;
 - (c) A chapter related to our festivals;
 - (d) Some poems and short stories;
 - (e) One or two lengthy chapters;
 - (f) Writing skills like dialogue writing;
 - (g) The use of language lab.
- (ii)** The teachers felt that the following elements should be deleted from the coursebook:
 - (a) Some very easy chapters like 'Cleaner Cities';
 - (b) Boring chapters like "Ratan Tata".
- (iii)** Major constraints with the teaching-learning activities were: large classes, lack of motivation in the learners and inadequate facilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to analyze and

evaluate the instructional materials in terms of appropriateness, communication skills, language, etc. On the basis of the analysis and evaluation, the following conclusions and recommendations are given:

- (i)** The instructional materials prescribed for the first year BA students in the university are interesting and useful from the point of view of the teachers.
- (ii)** The coursebook makes use of realistic situations which are related to the learners' interests and experience.
- (iii)** The editors have adhered to the requirements of an appropriate textbook while preparing the coursebook.
- (iv)** However, a clear statement of objectives is not provided in the syllabus.
- (v)** In the prescribed coursebook, speaking skill is not emphasized. The instructional materials should provide enough scope for students to develop adequate proficiency in all the four skills. Pronunciation exercises and group discussions should also be included.
- (vi)** The coursebook does not cover all the topics of grammar prescribed in the syllabus, while some grammar topics included in the coursebook are not prescribed in the syllabus.
- (vii)** Situations and themes should be imaginatively conceived and should have the element of fun.
- (viii)** The textbook should also include short stories, one-act plays and

poems. There should be equal emphasis on language and literature.

- (ix) In the English language classroom there should be facilities for tutorials, individual work, seminars, use of audio-visual aids, etc.
- (x) The coursebook should be attractive to make learning a pleasurable experience for the learners.
- (xi) The University should prepare a teacher's handbook, as a teacher's handbook has a very significant role to play in language teaching-learning.
- (xii) Special training programmes for teachers should be arranged to make them familiar with recent trends in ELT.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Members of ELTAI are free to give their views on the articles published in this journal. The letters should reach the ELTAI (eltai_india@yahoo.co.in) with cc to the Editor (ramanipn@gmail.com) within a month from the date of publication of the journal.

APPENDIX – TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1 – PERSONAL DETAILS

Name of the Teacher :
 College :
 University :
 Qualifications :
 Teaching Experience :

PART 2 – QUESTIONNAIRE

Tick your choice from the options given. [Y=Yes; N=No; SE=To Some Extent]

No.	Questionnaire Item	Y	N	SE
1	Does the university prescribe any other instructional materials apart from the coursebook? If yes, give details. _____			
2	Do you think that the instructional materials prescribed take care of basic skills of language learning? ² (a) Listening(b) Speaking(c) Reading(d) Writing			
3	What do you think are the objectives of teaching this coursebook at the FYBA level? Rank them in order. [] To provide students training in all the four skills [] To develop students' communicative competence in English [] To expose students to the works of literature, such as plays, essays, short stories, poems, etc. [] Any other? _____			
4	Do you think that the contents of the instructional materials are suitable to fulfil the objectives of the coursebook?			
5	Do you think that the instructional materials prescribed are appropriate for the FYBA students?			
6	Do you think that the instructional materials cater to the needs of the students?			
7	Do your students find the course materials interesting?			

No.	Questionnaire Item	Y	N	SE
8	Does the coursebook contain a mixture of different types of reading materials, such as poems, stories, essays, dialogues, etc.?			
9	Do you think that the course materials presented are well proportioned, well balanced and well unified?			
10	Do you think that the instructional materials are presented in a way which is clear enough to be understood and varied enough to be interesting?			
11	Do you think that the materials are presented through both the written and spoken forms of the language (i.e., some examples of dialogue are included)?			
12	Do you think that the instructional materials you use at present are sufficient?			
13	Do you find that the materials provide the right degree of challenge to the learners? If yes, specify. _____			
14	Do you find that the course materials, on the whole, involve both learner and teacher equally?			
15	Do you think that the materials provide enough training for your students to be independent in learning?			
16	Are you satisfied with the kind of exercises given in the coursebook?			
17	Are the exercises given at the end of the chapters relevant and useful?			
18	Do you think that the exercises are of varying difficulty level to suit different students?			
19	Are the exercises carefully prepared to realize the objectives of the coursebook?			
20	Does the coursebook contain a glossary of unfamiliar words?			
21	If yes, do you think that it covers all the words which the students find difficult?			
22	Are there enough exercises given in the vocabulary section?			

No.	Questionnaire Item	Y	N	SE
23	Which types of activities are given in the coursebook? Please specify. _____			
24	Do you think that the students can cope with the activities themselves?			
25	Do they promote learners' language development?			
26	Would you like to add any task/activity to suit this level? If yes, please specify. _____			
27	Do you feel that any of the tasks/activities should be excluded from the materials? If yes, please specify. _____			
28	Has the coursebook a companion workbook?			
29	If the coursebook has a companion workbook, do you think that it provides extensive further practice and review of:(a) pronunciation?(b) grammatical structures?(c) comprehension?(d) composition?(e) vocabulary?(f) any other?			
30	Do you think that the total content of the materials is such that it can be covered within the stipulated time?			

31. What, according to you, are the merits and limitations of the coursebook?

32. If the coursebook were to be revised, what would you like to add to the coursebook and what would you like to delete from it?

Status of ESL in Assam: An Agenda for Improving Learners' Proficiencies

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ABSTRACT

There have been many public initiatives at improving the skills of learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the state of Assam. However, the results have, at best been, mixed. On the other hand, organizations like the British Council and other non-profit organizations are currently engaged with public schemes, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to create a more incisive impact of their own initiatives at improving ESL proficiencies among the students of Assam. This paper deals with the current state of ESL in Assam and some innovative activities currently being undertaken in the state schools and suggests a public agenda to make such initiatives more effective.

Keywords: *ESL proficiency; ESL activities; Macro skills.*

Introduction

Those who speak English and speak it well may never realise the significance of the concept of English as a Second Language (ESL), or even that it exists. For those who do not speak English, or encounter difficulty in speaking the language, however, an ESL education can prove to be the best in helping them learn better and correct English. ESL gives the learners a better opportunity to grasp this nearly-universal language. It is considered important in countries where the English language is dominant in areas of business and education. Indeed, in some developing countries like India or others in South Asia, the rise in the social or economic ladder is directly and strongly related to one's ability to use English. ESL is normally a fundamental component of education for

learners who first learnt to speak a different language at home. Proficiency in English is often important not just for learners who seek jobs and careers that involve travel, trade and communication, but also in almost all vocations involving some communication with internal or external stakeholders.

Notwithstanding the difficulty in ESL training in the urban areas of India, it is a challenge particularly in the rural areas as they suffer from inadequacy of qualified and experienced ESL teachers and, in many instances, find the costs for teacher training prohibitively high. Rural areas are also less likely to have policies for making adjustments for ESL learners. A particular challenge is the prevalence of pressure groups (often emerging as political

constituencies) in these areas which hold and propagate the view that a second language is less important compared to the first, i.e. the mother tongue. Indeed, in the entire South Asian region there appears to exist two diverse schools of thought in this context: one supporting English language and another expressing aversion to it (Shah, Farooq and Shams, 2010). These challenges make it difficult for the teacher to impart ESL education to the target rural area groups.

However, ESL in rural districts enjoys certain advantages as well. The ESL teachers have a better connection with the community and the guardians of the young learners who can be of immense help in

establishing a healthy home-to-school connect. In rural areas, a single ESL teacher may have only a few students, enabling a very effective one-to-one communication, leading to the learners getting personalized attention.

ESL in Assam

Assam is the largest state by population in North East India. Although the official language of the state is Assamese, it is a multilingual state (see **Table 1**) and, in that sense, a microcosm of the diversity of India. Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Manipuri and their various dialects are spoken by different communities.

Table 1: Speakers of Major Languages in Assam

Language	Native speakers (%)
Assamese	53.08
Bengali	29.96
Hindi	6.40
Bodo	5.29
Nepali	2.30
Manipuri	0.63

Source: *Census of India, 2001* (reproduced in the *Economic Survey of Assam, 2010-11*)

The state of Assam has been chosen for the study since its multilingual status makes it reflect very well the plurality of India. Besides, although considerable efforts have been made in promoting English language in the state, there is not much by way of evidence-based research on these efforts or their impact in the mainstream academic literature. This study, therefore, is also an

attempt to bridge the gap between the status of ESL in this remote and less-developed state and what is known about it from the available academic literature.

The state follows a ‘Three Language Formula’ in its educational system. In the vernacular medium schools, English is introduced in standard I¹. The language is

¹ This is a relatively recent change from the earlier policy under which English used to be introduced in Standard V.

studied as a compulsory subject up to the Matriculation (10th Standard) level. Thereafter, it is studied for two years (up to the 12th standard) and three years at the under-graduate level. In other words, English is studied as a core subject for 15 years. Yet, the general subsidiary status accorded to English both at the curriculum and instructors' levels leads to poor English language skills among students.

Rahman (2011), Dutta (2012), Awal and Rout (2013) and several other researchers confirm that most schools in Assam, particularly those in the vernacular medium, have largely failed to provide quality education in English language. Indeed, some surveys find that the students are often 'scared' of English and that a good number of students every year pass the 10th level board examination at the mercy of the examination board in the form of 'grace marks' (Rahman, *op. cit.*). It is believed that even some of the otherwise bright students from vernacular medium schools may fail to achieve the standard achieved by students from the English medium schools only because of their low attainment in the English language. Because of their inability to speak fluent English, a good number of such students show poor performance in interviews for job recruitments (Rahman, *op. cit.*) and, even when they do, they may not be able to communicate well in day-to-day transactions where English is required, resulting in low self-esteem and obstacles in career progression. In other words, there is a perceptible long-term impact arising from the contrasts in the levels of attainments between the students of these two categories of schools in Assam.

There have been studies on the relationship between the socio-economic status of students in Assam and their English language skills. Awal and Rout (*op. cit.*) carried out an extensive primary survey and used statistical methods to test the strength and direction of the relationship between these two aspects. Their study concludes that parent income affects the reading ability positively and parental education could be responsible for improving students' English language reading ability.

Current Need and Importance of ESL in Assam

The liberalization of the Indian economy has suddenly opened a plethora of opportunities for pursuit of employment and academic interests of the youth in Assam, whether within or outside the state, which require considerable command in all skills of English language: listening, reading, writing and speaking. There are now call centres that need not only staff but also trainers to equip their employees with communication skills; there are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff who, in turn, need to be taught spoken and written English; there are medical transcription centres which need efficient translators and reporters. Those desirous of seeking higher education in North America or Europe need professional help in clearing tests like the IELTS and TOEFL. Hence, the avenues where English language skills are required in Assam are unlimited today (Rahman, 2013). Perhaps the most glaring evidence of this change, which is less than two decades old, is the mushrooming of spoken English coaching classes. There are regular

advertisements for these in local dailies of Assam as well as discussion in newspaper articles about the impact of such facilities (Lais, 2005).

Initiatives at Enhancement of ESL Capability

The British Council has designed numerous activities and tasks for the benefit of young learners to improve their proficiency in ESL. The British Council, through its Trainer Development Program for Master Trainers in Assam, is working with the Government of Assam and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Assam to impart training through these tasks and activities in about 35,000 government primary schools across the state under its initiative called 'Aim Higher in Assam' (AHA). Till 2012-13, 460 Master Trainers were trained over three phases. Apart from this, the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Gauhati University has designed courses and provided workshops in which training is imparted with focus on improving the proficiency of learners in ESL. Recently, a team of eminent professors have joined together to form an NGO with the objective of improving the condition of ESL at the primary level in the schools of Assam.

There have been some initiatives on the part of the state government, too. The Assam government recognizes the importance and fundamental role of English language for the progress of the people in so far as it is an effective tool for modernization. Towards this end, the English Language Teaching Institute, Assam (ELTIA), an autonomous organization, was set up on 4th Sept 1986, under the Department of Education,

Government of Assam. The institute aims to promote the teaching and learning of English in Assam, train teachers of English and improve the syllabus, textbooks, examination system and related matters in the state.

In most of these initiatives, understanding the requirements of a particular area, tasks are designed according to the needs of the target audience. Accordingly, to the extent that differentiated treatment to ESL has taken the differentiated needs of the audience into consideration, the impact of the initiatives has been different. For example, activities designed by some private agencies, such as those by the British Council, have reportedly been found to be popular among the ESL learners of the rural areas in Assam. Many of these initiatives have started a battery of innovative tasks and activities for the learners of ESL, to which we turn next.

Activities for Improving Proficiency in ESL

The National Curriculum Framework emphasizes the importance of the four skills: "Speech and listening, reading and writing are all generalised skills, and children's mastery over them becomes the key factor affecting success at school." (National Curriculum Framework for Second Language Acquisition, 2005, sec. 3.1.3).

The British Council and several other organizations have identified a number of fun-based activities and tasks, designed to improve learners' proficiency in ESL in government as well as private schools of Assam. These activities focus on the four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading

and writing. Apart from these, the building blocks of language, namely vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, are also focussed upon. Surveys and media reports indicate that many of these activities are at various levels of implementation in the schools of Assam. The activities, which appear no more than interesting games, are described below:

Listening Skill

- a) Dictation and running dictation:** The speaker dictates words or sentences and learners respond accordingly.
- b) Deduction from voice:** A simple statement is repeated in a variety of ways from which students try to deduce according to the way it is said. This focuses attention on what the speaker means rather than the words used.
- c) Chinese Whisper/Word of Mouth:** A word is given to the group leader who whispers it to the student next to him/her. This continues until the last student comes out with the correct word.
- d) Step-by-step:** A city map is prepared so that it has drawings of streets and other landmarks. One student starts from a point and asks another student for directions. The other student is then to give directions accordingly. One who reaches the destination becomes the winner.

Reading Skill

- a) Students practise planning a reading lesson based on a text from one of the course books. Pre-reading stage, while-reading stage and post-reading stage are to be included.

- b) Some jumbled lesson plans are given for reading. The learners are to read them and arrange them in order. After arranging the lesson plans, the learners are to find out as to which stage of the lesson plan falls under the three categories of pre-, while- and post-reading stages of a reading lesson.
- c) Learners make lists of advantages and disadvantages of reading aloud.

Speaking Skill

- a) **Play adjectives:** Every learner adds an adjective to his/her name and the process continues.
- b) A topic is introduced to the class and every learner is to speak a few lines about the topic.
- c) The facilitator picks up any object from the classroom and the learner speaks about the object.
- d) Every learner introduces himself/herself to the class.

Writing Skill

- a) The teacher takes some alphabet blocks and asks the learners to arrange them so that they form meaningful words.
- b) Some words are jumbled and the learners are asked to arrange them in order to form a meaningful sentence.
- c) A topic is introduced and a few lines are written by the learners about the topic.

The Way Ahead

The economic reforms over the past two decades have provided an impetus to the economic growth of Assam, albeit in ways which have less impact than that witnessed in other developed states of India. Much of

the immediate economic impact of liberalization on Assam has been in the creation of jobs outside the state, making the local educated youth relocate to far-off locations (particularly the metros of India). The immediate effect has been to create a huge demand for qualified speakers/writers as well as trained instructors in ESL, translators, medical transcriptionists, reporters, teacher educators and English language professionals in print and electronic media. However, as we have noted earlier, despite the recent government and non-government push for instilling ESL skills in Assam, there is still much to be achieved as revealed by the formal examination results as well as independent surveys. Hence, there is a need to fine-tune existing policies and programs and explore innovative ways of addressing the challenges related to quality education in ESL. This calls for micro level planning at all levels of imparting education: primary, secondary and tertiary.

The Assam Human Development Report (2003) recognizes the need for flexible, alternative strategies for special education to disadvantaged groups, as well as the requirement of bridge courses in ESL from school level to the post-school levels. Secondly, there needs to be a provision for incorporating locally relevant materials and activities in ESL curricula. As we have noted, there is already a great demand for ESL and this demand can be effectively met only by serious preparation and publication of textbooks, workbooks and teacher's handbooks by incorporating the views and opinions of local experts and the local community. This approach is possibly also

important for decentralization of ESL curriculum so as to mitigate the gender gap, rural-urban divide and the gap between elite and deprived groups (Rahman, 2013).

Rahman (2011) makes some micro-level suggestions for implementation:

- a) ESL teachers need to be given intensive pre-service training. The training should include micro and macro teaching, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) basics, lesson planning, designing group/pair activities, basics of phonetics, setting question papers, use of audio-visual aids, preparation of teaching aids and evaluation techniques.
- b) The English textbooks prescribed by SCERT should have a teacher's handbook and a workbook, the former containing guidelines for the teachers and the latter containing exercises in primary, secondary and advanced skills for the students. The textbooks should help develop language skills and practical application of English in day-to-day activities.
- c) School libraries should be provided with English language learning materials like books, magazines, audio cassettes, CDs with songs, grammar activities, pronunciation exercises, word drills, and so on. Teachers' resource books, guides, dictionaries and pronouncing dictionaries should be made available to all English teachers.
- d) Grants should be allotted to schools for the purchase and use of audio-visual aids in English classes.
- e) At present, the only assessment that matters is the year-end examinations administered by the state or central

boards, and students prepare for them by cramming answers to likely questions. Assessment should be made a continuous process with unit tests, assignments and oral examination.

- f) Summer classes should be organized which should help students who have little opportunity to use English or learn it at home.

Conclusion

While there may be constituencies which advocate the idea that supporting ESL education is pointless, there is no getting around the fact that ESL and its instruction is a non-negotiable factor for the social and economic development of a relatively backward state like Assam. As discussed in this paper, some initiatives by public and private bodies to promote ESL in the state have taken place with encouraging results. However, for long-term, sustainable effect, particularly in the unique socio-political and economic context of Assam, it is necessary that English should be taught as a language, not as a content subject. Most significantly, the pedagogy, including the process of instruction and evaluation, needs to manage the process of learning and enhance the communicative competence of the learner, rather than promoting rote learning.

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www.teachingenglish.org.uk.

[Department of ELT, Gauhati University:](http://Department of ELT, Gauhati University)

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www.primary-education-oasis.com

The Current State of ELT in Rural Areas: Rethinking the Possibilities

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to present the condition of ELT in rural India. The paper takes a review of the importance of English in various contexts especially with reference to David Graddol's observations in the first section. Then it throws light on some classroom realities through personal experiences, observations and reflections on ELT. In the end, some suggestions are made to make ELT more realistic and student-centric.

Key words: *English language teaching; Teaching English in rural areas.*

Introduction

English has spread in almost every part of the world and every sphere of life. However, in India, it was and has often remained the hegemony of the elite circle. But with the emergence of global economy, the need for competence in English to get opportunities for social and economic advancements is perceptible not only among the middle class but also among the lower order of the Indian society. Students have not only realized the role of English in shaping their careers but also become aware of the fact that they cannot dream of a bright career by keeping themselves away from English. According to Kachru (1994:542), "The end of the British Raj in the subcontinent was supposed to initiate the slow but sure demise of the English language in South Asia. However, the reality is different. The actual picture is one of ever greater

penetration of English. The functional domains in which English is used have actually expanded rather than shrunk."

In the following sections, the present paper, after making a review of the importance of English in various contexts especially with reference to Graddol's observations, throws light on some classroom realities through personal experiences, observations and reflections on ELT. In the end, some suggestions are made to make ELT more realistic and student-centric.

The Increasing Demand for English

Graddol (2010) focuses on the increasing demand for English. He says "We are fast moving into a world in which not to have English is to be marginalized and excluded." He also thinks that English is a useful *catalyst* which can help us in bringing a drastic social change. It is a basic skill,

necessary for employment and social inclusion. English has certainly acquired the status of link language even within India. Services, even shop or hotel workers, need good communication skills both towards customers and within their own management. Our continual economic growth will depend on the availability of people who can communicate across language and cultural boundaries both nationally and internationally. Many public sector jobs require applicants to pass English language exams.

According to him, government reports, too, have identified improving English competence at all levels. In private sectors, new shopping malls, supermarkets and clothing shops in both metro and rural areas are providing job opportunities for school-leavers and graduates with appropriate skills which include English as one of the most important skills. Tourism sector in the country is witnessing a boom and there is demand for workforce at managerial, supervisory, skilled and semi-skilled levels. Tourism companies and elite hotels need English-speaking drivers, who can earn 2-5 times as much as a driver elsewhere, in addition to receiving the benefits of a job in the organized sector, such as health insurance and a pension. The IT-BPO industry in India directly employs about two million people, but anticipates the need for a further six million in the coming decade. There are fears that India just does not have the English-speaking 'talent pool' to support this level of growth. The social impact of IT has been felt even in rural areas. E-Choupal, introduced by ITC in 2000 gives access to

four million rural families. With access to the internet, farmers can check prices of crops, get weather forecasts, find out insurance information and be informed about new developments in farming techniques. The government of India, having realized this vital and massive growth of English, both within and outside India, calls for a massive expansion of technical and vocational education (Graddol, 2010).

English 'milk of tigris': The Other Side of the Picture

Despite the government's policies to support English education for the deprived sections, teaching English to rural students, as it is the case of roads in rural area, is often not the smooth way to ride on. Students entering into this class are mostly from economically and educationally deprived classes. Most of them endeavour to overcome every hurdle, physical, intellectual, social and economic, in their way. As for English, it is often projected as the "milk of tigris" by their teachers at secondary and higher secondary levels. Consequently, they do not dare go near this 'cruel and wild animal'. Having managed to secure the passing marks by hook or crook, these students enter a senior college with many dreams. But they are poorly equipped to fulfil their dreams as the "Anglophobia" in them is more powerful than the knowledge of other subjects of their study. Realizing the importance of English as the language of opportunity and exposure to the spectrum of knowledge, they develop an aspiration to learn this language. Sadly, they also become aware of their inability to learn

it with some memorized grammatical rules and lessons in answering 'the seen and unseen' passages learnt during their high school and junior college days¹. They realize the wide gap between their previous knowledge and the syllabus of Compulsory English at the UG level, which is designed by assuming their previous exposure to English and aims at testing their skill of reproduction. After striving desperately to get rid of their Anglophobia, they helplessly develop a feeling that 'it's not their cup of tea' and eventually give up their fruitless efforts to drink the milk of this "untameable tigress".

According to Agnihotri and Khanna (1994), "Most of the rural students get deeply frustrated when they realize that all the years of studying English have not equipped them to negotiate successfully ordinary day-to-day encounters that demand the use of English. The select few who do manage to acquire high levels of proficiency in English become willing partners of English. For most, English remains a burden intellectually and a non-starter functionally." In rural and semi-urban areas English is still the language of the elite and the powerful and it is often associated with domains of social prestige. This particular perspective helps widen the social gap between the elite and the "Englishless" masses. Even within the educated English-knowing groups, there is a division between those for whom English has been the medium of instruction in private schools and those who largely learn English as a subject

in ordinary government or government-aided schools. The English medium convents and private schools provide every possible exposure to their students through various means such as audio-visual aids, well-trained teachers in English and required context and situation for the use of English. Hence, with their high proficiency and competency in English, these students grab the opportunities in administrative services both in public and private sectors. On the contrary, in ordinary government and semi-government schools, English used to be introduced at a much later stage, i.e. at 4th or 5th standards. Of course, many state governments have recently introduced English as one of the subjects from the first standard itself. However, according to Vaish (2008: 6), "The pedagogic practice in government schools in India does not inculcate communicative competence in English, which is the demand of the workplace." According to Agnihotri and Khanna (1994), "A textbook is prescribed; teachers are expected to 'cover the portion'. Students must be tested only within the portion covered and the examiner who sets the question paper must ask questions only on the syllabus." We, the teachers in rural area, witness this tragic defeat of our students and seldom experience a sense of satisfaction in teaching.

English in Undergraduate Classes

A quick review of the existing syllabi of Compulsory English at each level, viz.,

¹ Here I refer to the syllabi of English prescribed by Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Pune.

primary, secondary and higher secondary, and graduation levels might help us realize that it is designed based on some general assumptions. The classroom realities and students' abilities rarely get any serious attention in this process. In their attempt to bring both national uniformity and standard in the syllabi, our curriculum designers often forget the objectives behind teaching English as a compulsory subject to our students learning in so called vernacular medium schools and colleges. Consequently, the syllabi of English at each level are the products of presumptions. Students' abilities and knowledge of English language and grammar are taken for granted and the syllabus is designed accordingly. Having overcome the hurdles at every level, sometimes by their own hard work and sometimes by the grace of teachers, examiners and moderators and the humanistic evaluation system, our students manage to enter an undergraduate class. However, when the teacher of English enters an undergraduate class, she realizes that her students, although willing to learn and understand English, are not able to understand what is being taught in class. Ironically, in a class where none of the students can make sense of a single English sentence, write a few sentences of English, read and comprehend a single English sentence, the teacher is forced to teach communication skills, to conduct group discussions, to write and present situational dialogues and much more. To make things worse, some textbooks aim at fulfilling these objectives with the help of some short stories, intellectual essays, one-act plays

and poems from foreign literary works. The government, as part of its higher education policy, intends to make it available to the masses and at a time, it expresses its inability to sanction funds to start more classes and divisions and recruit new teachers for it. As a result, large numbers of students are admitted in a single section. Can we dream of the effective implementation of a so called communicative syllabus (foreign texts?) in such overcrowded classes? How can we expect the teacher to conduct group discussions, and carry out role-playing by dividing such large classes in a limited period of 50 minutes? And what about the evaluation method? Doesn't it merely aim at testing the reproductive ability of the students? Obviously, in a situation, where the teacher's efficiency is judged on the basis of the passing percentage of students, the teacher tends to be contented in coaching her students to prepare for the examination. The teacher can seldom play the role of a 'facilitator' recommended in a communicative classroom.

Some Possibilities and Suggestions

In Vaish's opinion, "English is an empowering vocational skill in a globalizing economy" (2008: 1). She further reminds us that Gandhi envisioned an education system that would develop both the spirit and the intellect of the child and in the end provide empowering opportunity for employment and self-sufficiency (2008: 4). If English is to be taught to our students to make them competent enough to meet the demands of modern industrial society and job market

and to bring them into the mainstream of progress and development, we need to think of some of the possibilities of making English language teaching a more productive and student-oriented mission. Can we develop a sensitivity to learner needs and response which, according to Gupta (2005), has been lacking in the academic aspect of ELT in India? Of course, there is a lot to be borrowed from western pedagogical approaches and methodologies in ELT but at the same time we can incorporate these pedagogical ideas to develop a new model which will focus on the needs of the rural students and enable them get rid of their 'Anglophobia'. Could we make learning English an enjoyable experience rather than 'a hard nut to crack' for them?

Revamping the English Syllabi

Lack of proper exposure to the spoken variety is the commonly recognized problem during the formative years of learning among the students from rural and semi-urban areas. As mentioned earlier, the existing evaluative method emphasizes productive skills and learners are forced to concentrate on reading and writing skills. Certainly, these days some attention is paid towards testing oral skills, but the oral examinations are conducted at the end of the academic year. Due to time limit, classroom size, and much emphasis on the written examination, teachers are obliged to cover their syllabus in a given time and consequently learners are not trained for this test. Hence, there is scope for rethinking on the present syllabi of English and also on the evaluation pattern.

To draw and sustain the interest of learners, a proper connection between language and real-life situations has to be established. Instead of plunging the Indian rural learners into the awkward and uneasy imaginary situations by introducing the vocabulary and structures from the urban elite culture and foreign contexts, we should make them feel comfortable by making them use English in the situations from their own real life. Hence, at the primary level the syllabus comprised the maximum use of audio-visual versions of various situations, songs, poems, stories, and conversations from their neighbourhood can be more interesting and enjoyable experience for them. The role of Hindi movies and songs in the spread of Hindi even among the illiterate non-Hindi speakers is a very good example in this context.

Language Laboratory

Of course, the implementation of such a syllabus would cause an extra financial burden on the government because the establishment of the 'Language Laboratory', well-equipped with a television set, DVD/VCD player, voice-recorders, and language improving machines (LIM) etc. at every school would be an additional requirement for it. If teaching-learning process takes place in such encouraging and motivating conditions, it will certainly help increase the inquisitiveness of the learners. This revamping of the syllabi and effective implementation of it in a specially designed 'Language Laboratory' can be a solution to the problem of large classes. It can also be the remedy for the dependence on the

unskilled and less proficient teachers in English at both primary and secondary levels. This method can allow us to divide a large class into small batches so that the students from each batch would be made to participate actively in both individual and group activities such as descriptions, narrations, storytelling, conversations and discussions etc. This suggestion certainly implies the need for evolving an evaluation pattern which, along with testing the reading and writing skills, will give the learners an opportunity to use English in real-life situations.

English at the Degree Level

At the degree level, most of the students from rural areas being conscious of the need and importance of English in shaping their career, start learning it with both determination and serious efforts. They get motivated by the anticipated role of English in getting well-paid jobs in both public and private sectors while some of them having better proficiency in other subjects of their curriculum learn it seriously. These students take care to ensure that English does not become an impediment in their way of getting degree in the subject of their own interest where the concerned regional language is used as the medium of instruction. However, their motivation to learn English is discouraged by the syllabus designed with the presumption of their previous learning and also by the evaluation pattern used at this level. This is not to underestimate the approaches and methodologies used in this process of syllabus designing. Obviously, factors such

as age, aptitude, attitude, motivation, learning styles and learning strategies etc. are taken into account while designing the syllabus. But the generalization of these factors, in every context, is a matter of concern.

The syllabus designers think that if the students have studied English for six years at the secondary and for two years at the higher secondary level, they must be able to understand, read and write English. In some cases, editors are asked to select the texts or they make the random selection of texts as per their own likes and interests. But the reality is that these students are often not competent to cope with this syllabus. Consequently, after striving hard to learn and understand these texts, they surrender themselves to their destiny. Besides, their 'Anglophobia' lowers their confidence and hampers their overall performance.

If English is to be taught to these students not merely to meet the standard guidelines in higher education, but to improve their competency in this language, we should rather think over the possibility of introducing an option within the Compulsory English exclusively for the students from rural and semi-urban background at the degree level. This step might help the curriculum designers to give scope for the needs of English for both urban students, who want to learn English for advanced skills such as pronunciation, technical writings, report writings, presentations etc. and rural students, who need elementary English at least during the first and second years of their graduation.

The syllabus meant for rural students may comprise introduction to Basic English. Hence, it should include some topics emphasizing the connection between language structures (vocabulary, sentences, tense etc.) and the contexts from their surroundings (rather than the imaginary alien situations).

Conclusion

Thus, there is a need to understand the fact that students from rural areas run away from English not because they hate it but because they look at it as something beyond their capabilities and reach. This pessimism is the outcome of the negative teaching-learning conditions and the failure to understand, speak, read and write English despite learning it for six to seven years. Understanding the needs and abilities of the rural students, we need to think of revamping the syllabi and developing student-oriented teaching and evaluation methods. We need to understand that teaching of English should aim at the betterment and empowerment of the weaker sections of the Indian society; care should be taken to see that it will not become the

hegemonic means to throw them out of the stream of progress and development.

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REVIEWS

Farrell, Thomas, S. C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework of TESOL professionals*. New York & London: Routledge. (pp XV + 138) [ISBN 978 1138 025042]

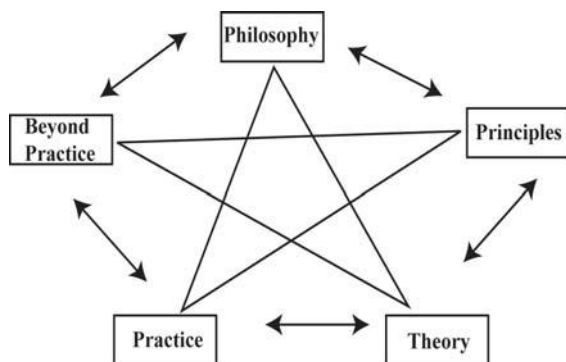
I like to begin this review on a personal note. The last decade has seen a splurge in book publication at large. Being an ELT practitioner, my attention was obviously diverted towards books published in the field and looking at the mass output, I reflected and came to the following conclusion. 'Most of these books are reproducing what is already said. There is no point in reading them anymore.' So saying I decided to take a *sanyas* from reading new books about two years ago only to realize soon how false my reflections were. I felt sorry for taking such a decision, for I began to discover that many books in the field introduced new concepts, new thoughts and put them across succinctly, making me realize how small I was. The book under review is one such that caught my attention and made me go through it in a single sitting.

Farrell has been a well known author who is referred to extensively when matters pertaining to professional development and teacher education are discussed. The present volume discusses one aspect of professional development – Reflection. Reflection and reflective practices have been talked about for over two decades now. Schon (1983), Woodward, T (1991), Wallace M (1991) and Edge J (2001), among others, began discussing the concept of reflection as an integral part of teacher development. This idea has been developed since and several theories have been posited for discussion. Though each of the works cited above offers a few suggestions to the practising teacher, there hasn't been a comprehensive book on reflective practices

as the present volume. Farrell provides a framework for reflection which can be used by teachers. The book provides a detailed description of the framework, its uses and tasks to reflect on the concepts introduced in the book.

The book begins with a discussion on the confusion that exists between two terms 'contemplation' and 'reflection'. Often these two words are used interchangeably. The author provides various examples from religion and philosophy to bring out the distinction. Contemplation, he says, is a precursor to reflection (p. 6). Contemplation makes us think of a situation but without involvement and does not 'entail any intervention'. However, reflection cannot be free from intervention. It is a 'conscious process' and analyses 'what we are doing and why we are doing it' (p. 8). The rest of the book is devoted to building and discussing the framework for reflective practices.

Farrell conceives a five-stage framework where each stage/level is closely interrelated to the others. This framework is diagrammatically represented as follows: Each stage is closely interrelated to the others, as is evident from the diagram, and this clearly suggests that there is no hierarchy among these stages. However, Farrell assigns each stage a number and discusses them in a logical progression as part of the framework, though he mentions that each stage is modular and can be discussed independently of the other stages. The five stages of the framework as presented in the book are discussed here.



Philosophy is recognized as a stage in the framework. Philosophy helps us probe the reasons that may exist for every action we are involved in, in the course of teaching. Each action constitutes a behaviour which can be attributed to the environment in which we are born and brought up. Hence behaviour is a cultivated trait and influenced by several factors that exist in our surroundings. How do we reflect on our behaviour? We as teachers are given to narrating incidents from our own life and experience. Farrell says ‘telling our autobiographical stories’ (p. 25) is an essential part of reflection and this helps us refine our behaviour.

Principles are the assumptions, beliefs and conceptions of teaching and learning we have. Assumptions, beliefs and conceptions, though they are different, ‘are three points along a continuum’ (p. 26). These are responsible for moulding our classroom practices. All three lead us to build a set of images (mental pictures of ourselves) based on the experiences in our life. These images further help us to compare and contrast ourselves with the images as perceived by others. Such a comparison helps us reflect and improve ourselves.

Theory is evolved from the practices we adopt in our classroom which are obvious

outcomes of the philosophies and assumptions. We as teachers have been exposed to a set of theories in the course of our training. Such theories which are established and universal are termed ‘official theories’. The theories that we develop for ourselves, which are largely unconscious processes, are termed ‘unofficial theories’ by Farrell. Though we are not aware of the theories that we follow, we do reflect on them, and such reflection takes us to practice.

Practice is an outcome of reflection on theories we have arrived at. Practice is seen in our ability to plan our teaching. Here we need to conceive of planning in three different ways – *forward planning*, *central planning* and *backward planning*. *Forward planning* helps us decide on the objectives and materials we propose to use in the class. *Central planning* has a focus on the classroom techniques and the way we negotiate them during the class. *Backward planning* helps us assess the outcomes (p. 69). Planning and execution of the plan capture the entire process of teaching, and reflecting on our practice happens best by looking at certain critical incidents and the way we handle them.

Practice is also the major part of our teaching. Farrell uses the metaphor of an iceberg to describe the entire framework. Practice is the 9/10 part of the iceberg that is submerged and hidden from our eye. This analogy helps us understand its importance. Practice also needs to be observed, and this can happen through self-observation using audio or video recordings, peer observation using a checklist (‘the observer should not carry his own baggage while observing the other’s lesson’ (Bolitho, 2013)) and Action Research. Farrell uses the image of a ripple

that is created by throwing a stone in a pool of water to help us understand how reflection becomes possible while observing our own lessons (p. 85). Reflection here is conceived as three distinct entities, the third being an offshoot of the first two, *Reflection-in Practice* and *Reflection-on Practice* leading to *Reflection-for Practice* (p. 82).

Beyond Practice is the last stage of the framework, which is seen as a process of refinement. The practices that teachers adopt in their class and work should have a set of social implications. The actions of the teacher should promote social values and instill in the learners a sense of social responsibility. Does the teacher cooperate with colleagues or does he/she work alone? Factors such as cooperation, collaboration, coordination and consultation are important in the work environment. Whether a teacher adopts these practices is what is discussed in the chapter on Beyond Practice.

The book closes with a chapter on how to use the framework and is called 'Navigating the Framework'. Farrell makes it clear that his framework is more descriptive than prescriptive. This comes as a caution to the reader who would want to adopt the framework readily and use it in his profession without reflecting. This reminds us of the structure of grammar. Grammars have to be descriptive, but there is an inherent element of prescription in all grammars. This is inevitable, for grammars cannot work without an element of prescription. So is this framework.

The book is organized into 9 chapters. There are two initial chapters that introduce us to the essential concepts we need to understand in order to go through the book. The third chapter provides a detailed description of the framework and the

successive five chapters (chapters 4 – 8) discuss each of the stages of the framework. The book concludes with a discussion on the use of the framework.

The book is written in lucid, reader-friendly style. Each chapter is punctuated with several tasks at regular intervals that compel the reader to reflect on what has been read. Thus the book assumes the form of a series of worksheets that can be used on a teacher development workshop. As one reads through the book, one is obviously made to recall several critical incidents from one's own teaching experience and relate them to what is discussed. This is a good demonstration of reflection-in-action.

The book is a welcome addition to the existing literature on professional development and a useful source of reference to students on teacher development courses.

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Cenoz, Jasone and Gorter, Durk (2015). *Multilingual education: Between language learning and translanguaging*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Series Editors: Carol A. Chapelle and Susan Hunston [Pages: 258; ISBN 978-1-107-47751-3]

As a researcher/teacher in a *natural* multilingual societal and educational context, the pedagogic support that other languages can render to English language education has been a complex and intriguing point of interest. The question that becomes pertinent yet guilt-laden (at least for teachers) is: is it legitimate to use other languages that learners possess and teachers know in the teaching of English? A lot of teachers and learners do use their multilingual resources but justify it as a necessity emanating from a deficient English competence of learners. They do not view such instances as naturally occurring multilingual practices of communicating. What this book does is to propose and operationalise a continuum along which such instances of multi-language resources will be seen.

The notion of multilingual practices in pedagogic and social contexts has recently witnessed a spurt of research investigations from an array of theoretical orientations including Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, Sociolinguistics and Sociocultural Theory and Pragmatics. In simple terms, multilingual practices involve the learner/language users' use of a repertoire of multilingual and multimodal resources such as code switching, mixing and meshing, or a choice of strategies in communicating one's intentions. Theoreticians argue that the legitimate acceptance of the multilinguals' language

use behaviour involving the multilinguals' repertoires of resources would not only value multisensory, multimodal, multidimensional nature of learner resources, but also counter the normative, monolingual and ideologically driven pedagogic practices (Clyne, 2008; Canagarajah 2011). This book is a step closer to understanding and investigating such practices. The core studies reported in the book offer unique interpretations and operationalisation of the notion of multilingual resources either along the contextual/pedagogical planes, the methodological planes, or the analytical planes. So, beyond question the book is a resource to teachers and researchers alike. The book begins with the introductory chapter where Cenoz and Gorter (2015: 5-6), in referring to the "approaches taken by researchers when studying interactions between languages or language features in the context of multilingual education", propose a continuum which shows positions of "crossing over of applied linguistics and second language acquisition theory to sociocultural theory to social approach to language" (**Figure 1**). At one end of the continuum is the deliberate effort taken/put in by teachers and learners to *become* multilingual, i.e. to build competencies in languages. At the other end is the ability of *being* multilingual, i.e. to wield the competencies in order to code intentions. Instead of dichotomizing the two ends, the

continuum attempts to see interventions that aim at enabling communicative competence and studies that investigate the fluid use of communicative competence along the continuum. While doing so, the authors point out that languages are still seen as codes but their borders are

permeable and that the two concepts (i.e., acquiring language competence and using the language competence) are dynamic, and they interact and develop over time. The schematic diagram not only summarizes the perspective but also points out the professional interest of researchers.

The 'Multilingual' Continuum
(Cenoz and Gorter, 2015: 6)

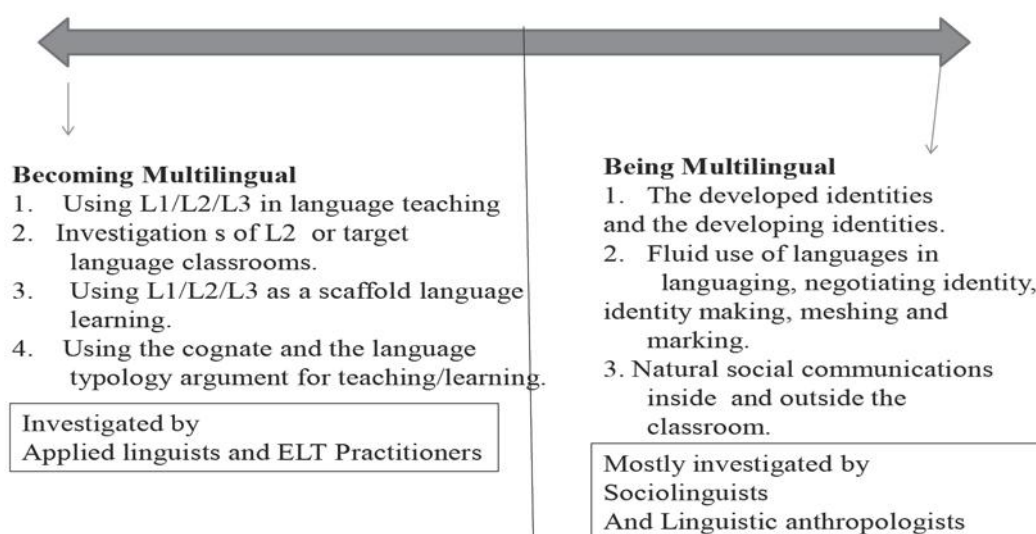


Figure 1: The 'Multilingual' Continuum (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015, p.6)

Operationalising the framework, the studies reported in this book would find a place on either end of the continuum. Studies that fall along the 'becoming multilingual' end include pedagogic efforts such as: a systematic integration of Chinese as a cognitive support to enable science knowledge in school going learners in Hongkong (in Luk and Lin's chapter); integrating multilingual strategies in peer-collaborations (in Ballinger's chapter); and tapping cognate relationship between languages (Arteagoitia and Howard's chapter). In his chapter Levine proposes the need to analyze the nexus of eventualities

that trigger code-choices in multilingual practices and then argues for "curricular initiatives for enhancing multilingual competencies". Kramsch and Huffmaster point out the "paradox of foreign language learning" where teaching the 'standard' language becomes the norm, which contradicts the fluid blending of languages in dynamic and situated contexts of meaning making. Basing their chapter on how their students bring in their multilingual resources in a series of translation projects, they argue for the need to integrate such practices into foreign language teaching.

Falling on the 'being' multilingual end of the continuum, the authors of the chapters highlight how 'being' multilinguals already impacts the participants' language use behaviour. Fuller, reporting on the fluid language choice behaviour of learners engaged in a task completion, contends that bilingual classrooms possess the potential to question and resist the normative monolingual ideologies in the educational space. Creese, Blackedge and Takki report that 'semiotic reorientation' could result in the extremely situated, dynamic and constructed negotiations between teacher and learner interactions in a complementary school context. In a similar tone, Wei, through 'moment analysis', talks of how the participants bring in their repertoires of experiences in their critical and creative language use events. Gracias et al. in their chapter argue for the need to create spaces where 'being' multilinguals can mediate 'becoming' multilinguals and vice versa. David Block in the final chapter draws similarities between the *being* and *becoming* ends of the continuum to the debate on 'language learning' and 'language use' between Susan Gass (1998) and Firth and Wagner (1997), and calls for a change through curricular integration of the tenets of 'becoming' and 'being' multilingual and a change that can transpose into pedagogic practices and policy-based innovations – a challenge indeed for researchers and policy makers to garner evidence to counter the all-prevalent monolingual mindset in curriculum, practice and policy.

In conclusion, whether one reads the book as a teacher or as a researcher who is interested in the 'becoming' or the 'being' end of the continuum, one has valuable take-away points. For the teacher the book

presents a possible array of strategies, components of language resources and ways in which learner repertoires of resources can be tapped for enabling language capabilities in a pedagogic space. For the researcher, the book presents a wide array of theoretical arguments, research designs and methodologies, procedures of data analyses and conclusions. Beyond doubt this book is a welcome addition to the literature on multilingual education.

Acknowledgement

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Sarkar, Jadunath. *The Fall of the Mughal Empire (4 Volumes)*. Orient Black Swan.

Why should a student of the English language and literature study this book, some people may ask. It is only a very recent trend that students of English are confined almost solely to books prepared by their teachers and the textbook committees. Careful analysis will show that these new books may have the skeleton of language, but they lack its body and flesh, skin and beauty and vitality, leaving the student confused and impoverished. Language is best learned when it is used for learning something else. That is how Indians learnt English until about the 1970s – some grammar and translation aided by a generous offering of classics.

I can boast of descent in a rather direct line from the late Prof. Sarkar (1870-1958). He taught my father, Govind Chowdhary (1909–2002) Mughal History at Patna College. And like other students of Sarkar, my father always referred to him in any conversation on Medieval India. So I heard several times about the house-arrest of Shivaji in Delhi by Aurangzeb and his escape from there.

A first class B A (Hons.) in English and History and a first class M A in English from Calcutta University, Sarkar was appointed in the Indian Education Service (IES) as a lecturer in English. But following his interest, he later shifted to History. He was a nationalist, like many others of his kind and time, and he made no secret of his support for the freedom movement in India. As a result, the provincial police suspected him of being a “terrorist” and watched his movements. But Sarkar was neither a crony of the British, nor an obscurantist or terrorist. Like most Brahma Samajis, he did not believe in caste, rituals and idol worship, He thought the British Imperial Rule had

been a divine blessing for India. Yet he was proud of India’s heritage. In almost the last lines of his four-volume history of *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, he says, “India was not called upon to plume herself in the borrowed feathers of European civilization; she had only to assimilate modern thought and modern arts into her inner life without any loss of what she had so long possessed” (p. 293). For more about his life and works, we can see the links to some websites on him in the references.

His works were almost invariably fruits of decades of painstaking research in Persian and other contemporary sources. And then there is his art of story-telling – together they place his works in a class of great historical works of wide readership. Ignoring all that their own CID felt, the British conferred knighthood (C(ompanion of the) I(ndian) E(mpire)) upon him. He wrote nearly a dozen books, edited two and supervised other miscellaneous works. Principal among his works, *History of Aurangzeb* (5 Vols.) and *The Fall of the Mughal Empire* (4 Vols.) are massive works. They took nearly 50 years to write. But the relentless pursuit of a goal seen here is monumental.

My father had some of his books. I remember the *History of Aurangzeb and Later Mughals*, A-5 size, green, cloth-bound volumes, in my father’s revolving book-shelf. But before I was old enough to understand these books and their value, they decayed and disappeared. But not from my mind. Along with two other equally timeless books, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Gibbon, and *The History of English Speaking Peoples* by Winston Churchill, it held its place on my reading list. In February this

year, a kind friend and book-seller brought me the new edition¹ of the four volumes of *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*. This week I read the last page of the last volume.

I will first like to say why these books have interested me. The first and the last, i. e. Gibbon and Sarkar, talk about the decline of mighty empires; and the second, i. e. Churchill, talks about the rise of a nation from obscurity to a superpower. Until about the early centuries of the Christian era, Romans controlled nearly all trade routes of the then known world. Their coins have been found from Patna to Rameshwaram even in India. But by the early centuries of the first Christian millennium, they had shrunk to a medium-size European city presided over by a priest. What went wrong? Ditto for the Mughals. When the British came to India in 1603, their agents had to wait for months to see the then Mughal Emperor. But in 1803, when the then Mughal “Emperor” accepted the British protectorate, his empire had shrunk to the precincts of the Red Fort in Delhi. Actually, not even there, “the authority of the Shah was to be a harmless fiction... he had no revenue, law courts or troops of his own” (Kaye, I, 223, cited in Sarkar, p. 283). He was virtually a British employee, promised a monthly salary of Rs 90,000/-. Actually, he was so inconsequential now that the British Governor-General visiting Delhi in 1808 did not think it worth his while to call on the Emperor. What went wrong?

First, about the Mughals. Beginning with Babar, the first six Mughals truly deserved the epithet of “Great”. They were matchless at arms; they were peerless in diplomacy. But after Aurangzeb, there came a

succession of princes who were weak, lazy, vicious and avaricious men of no personality or character. Sarkar says, “Now began a rapid and hopeless decline in the moral character of our ruling rajahs and nawabs. They continued to live as autocrats without the moral justification of being the leaders in war and fathers of clans that the founders of their dynasties had been... The Mughal empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society...” (p. 288-9).

I like many things about the book. But Sarkar’s art of storytelling, his analysis of events and personalities, and the narrative power of his English prose render this book in a class where one does not ask if it is a work of history or literature.

In the third battle of Panipat, 1761, Maratha forces of the Peshwa were evenly matched with the Afghan forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Marathas had 45,000 horses and 15,000 foot soldiers. They had a mercenary but very loyal Afghan General Ibrahim Ghardi managing their artillery. Abdali, on the other hand, had 50,000 horses and 15,000 foot soldiers. But similarities ended there. Maratha General Bhau had only a couple of years before defeated the massive forces of Nizam and had been handpicked by the Peshwa for this campaign. But he had no one else whose advice he could trust, or on whom he could depend for help. His camp was riddled with jealousy, sabotage, indiscipline, disorganisation, absence of essential commodities, supplies and logistics. His organisation was deficient in other ways too. Whereas Abdali had at least half a dozen generals who were as good as he himself, and who worked as a well-knit

¹ Sarkar, Jadunath (1934/2008) *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Hyderabad (India) : Orient Black Swan, 4 Volumes

team, Bhau had hardly anyone whom he could trust and consult. The results did not take a long time to be known. The blow-by-blow account Sarkar gives of this battle is no less than Sanjaya's commentary on the Mahabharata war.

Sarkar's flair for English language often shows in his personal observations. His similes and metaphors are telling. Regarding efforts for the revival of cottage industries in India, Sarkar says, "...to save our artisan class from starvation by promoting the manufacture and sale of curios and objects of art, for foreign tourists, had exactly the same practical effect as applying a mop to the Atlantic waves rolling on the beach of England..." (p. 287).

With the decline in the royalty came the decline of the masses as well. If the 500 years of India did not produce another Akbar, it did not produce another Tulsidas either. "...the literature now produced... merely pandered to the rich men's pride and vice" (p. 291). European civilization in India gave them an opportunity for both, intellectual improvement and moral decline. Without any notable exception, most people imported only articles of luxury. Not even a lithographic press was imported by any Mughal prince or Nawab (p.294).

Observes Sarkar, "The mere copying of the externals of European civilisation, without undergoing a new birth of the spirit... led only to the growth of the Anglo-Muslim culture of the Oudh Nawab's court, which was a bastard sprout producing no flower or fruit. In it the inner spirit of modern civilisation was wanting; and only the outer trappings of European life were borrowed and put on the persons of Indians who then looked like idiots or buffoons. No modern literature took its birth in the Lucknow royal

court, the pictures and poetry it produced were mostly pornographic; Asaf-ud-daula used to eat sixty-four grains of the strongest Turkish opium every day. His successor, Sadat Ali, knew English and a little French too, but turned out on the throne to be such a drunkard that he had to be assisted to his bed almost every night" (p. 294).

Along with other observers, Sarkar believes that the fall of the Mughal Empire had a "divine dispensation" (p.295). The intellectual vacuum thus created was filled in by the English language and literature the study of which, Sarkar says (p.294), began India's intellectual awakening and renaissance.

By any standard, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Jadunath Sarkar, like the Taj Mahal, *King Lear* or Monalisa, is an all time great that must not be missed.

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ELTAI THOOTHUKUDI CHAPTER

Date of inception of the chapter: **25th May 2013**

From the date of its inception Thoothukudi ELTAI chapter is active in developing the teaching skills of teachers of English. The mission of this chapter is to communicate knowledge and skills for the professional development of English teachers. Following are the various activities done by the chapter in 18 months.

1. On 16th July 2013 a training programme was organized for 82 engineering college students at Chandy College of Engineering on the topic **English for Engineering Graduates**. The need and importance of developing language skills are dealt with.
2. On 21 – 22 November 2013 an international conference on **Teaching English for Employability** was organized by the chapter. This conference was sponsored by UGC and supported by the Regional English Language Office, New Delhi and the British Council, Chennai. 265 participants from different parts of the country participated in the workshop and 260 papers were presented. Selected papers were published with ISBN.
3. On 11th September 2014 a workshop on **Communicative Language Teaching** was organized for 42 pre-service teachers by Mr. George Bishop Jr., ELT trainer from New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.
4. On 12th September 2014 Mr. George Bishop Jr., conducted a workshop for 48 in-service teachers from 24 schools at Thoothukudi district. The topic was **Teaching Grammar in a Student centred Classroom**. This programme was sponsored by the RELO, New Delhi.
5. On November 8-9, 2014 a workshop on **Virtual Learning** was organized at Annammal College of Education, Thoothukudi and 24 teachers from Tamilnadu were benefitted from that workshop. A google group was formed and the participants are involved in pre and post workshop tasks.
6. On December 6 -7, a workshop on **Technology Integrated Teaching** was organized at St. Mary's college, Thoothukudi and training in web 2.0 tools was given to 38 teachers.
7. On December 17-18 a workshop on **Promoting Communication Skills in the ESL Classroom** was organized at VO Chidambaram College, for 58 pre-service teachers. This event was supported by the British Council and they sponsored one speaker for the workshop.
8. On December 27-28 a National workshop on **Developing speaking skills** was organized in association with ELTAI, Chennai. 22 teachers participated in the workshop. This programme was sponsored by ELTAI.
9. On January 6-9 a workshop on **Virtual Learning** was organized for 15 teachers of Annammal College of Education. Intensive training was given for the teachers.

10. During December 2014 a project was undertaken on **Assessing the English Language Proficiency of the Students Studying Standard I – V in Subbiah Vidhyalayam Primary School, Thoothukudi** and the findings are interpreted. Based on the results we have planned to organize an intensive workshop for the primary school teachers.

Regular Programmes

We have signed MoU with the Fisheries College and Research Institute, Thoothukudi to conduct Basic English Proficiency Course for the I year BFSc students. Every Saturday two hours class is conducted for them regularly from the academic year 2013 – 14 till date. Spoken English classes are conducted regularly for the pre-service teachers of

Annammal College of Education every day. English Orientation programme is organized for a week in the beginning of every academic year by the members of ELTAI Thoothukudi chapter for the pre-service teachers.

Future Plans

On July 24-25 the chapter has planned to associate with the IT club of Annammal College of Education to organize a two days workshop on **Constructive Teaching Through Web 2 Tools** for teacher educators. In August 2015 ELTAI Thoothukudi chapter has planned to organize a workshop on **Best Practices in TEYL** for primary school teachers at Thoothukudi district. A Virtual Learning workshop is to be organized for 40 teachers at Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai.

Dr. Shermila Azaraiah, Convener

GRAMMAR CAN BE FUN

**What's the difference between a bird watcher and a bad speller?
One watches birds and the other botches words.**

**What's a synonym?
A word you use when you can't spell the other word.**

**You should not say, 'I ain't going'.
You should say, 'I'm not going, he's not going, they're not going . . .'
Gee, ain't anybody going?**

ELT@I NCR-Greater Noida Chapter

Report for April 2013-January 2015

Present Strength: 75 (Seventy-Five) No. of new members enrolled during the year: 47 (4 Donor, 25 Short-Term, 17 Annual, 1 Institutional)

ELTAI-NCR Greater Noida Chapter was started in 2011 at NIET, Greater Noida with the aim of making advances in ELT and developing confidence among students and teachers. This chapter has as its members teachers from Pre-primary to the University level under one umbrella for CPD (Continuous Professional Development). A Training Cell has been set up for conducting workshops on various topics for the benefit of teachers and students in NCR, Greater Noida. The chapter bagged **“The Best Chapter Award-2014”**, which was given

away at the Jaipur conference in August 2014.

Types of Activities

- **Workshops for students on Communication skills:** GD, Interview skills, Presentation, JAM session, Spellathon, Comprehension, Debate and Elocution
- **Workshops for teachers:** Teaching Methodologies
- **CPD Activities for Teachers:** Conferences, Seminars, Workshops in collaboration with RELO, US Embassy and British Council, New Delhi, Regular Meetings, Consultations and Felicitations.

- *A workshop for Teachers of Bloomsberry Pre-Nursery School Ghaziabad is proposed on 31 January 2015.*
- *A Training programme of 03 Months for B. Tech. Students is proposed from February to April 2015.*
- *A training programme is being organized in government schools for under-privileged students of Ghaziabad by Dr Shravan Kumar, Dr Harleen Kaur, Dr R A Vats, Dr Seema Verma, Dr Rakesh Verma, Dr Kartikey Gaur. This was announced in a Press Conference.*

Total Monthly Meetings organized in 2013-14: 15

Achievements: 70 Research papers have been presented and published by the members of our Chapter.

Newsletter published: *Antas*

URL of chapter's blog/website, if any:

<https://www.facebook.com/NcrGreaterNoidaEltiChapter?ref=hl>

Dr. K. Shravan Kumar, Convener

A brief account of the activities carried out:

#	Nature of Programme	Resource Persons	Topic	Target Group	Place/Venue	Date
1.	Workshop	Dr Harleen Kaur	Communicative English	Non-English Teachers of Engineering Institute	Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women, Ghaziabad	13 May 2013
2.	Workshop	Dr Shravan Kumar & Dr Harleen Kaur	Effective Teaching Strategies	PGTs & TGTs	Vivekanand School, Annad Vihar & Preet Vihar	29 June 2013
3.	Workshop	Ms Diane Miller	English for Specific Purposes	English Teachers of Engineering Colleges	Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women, Ghaziabad	26 July 2013
3.	National Seminar cum Workshop	Dr Vijay K Sharma, Dr Smita Jha Dr Shravan Kumar	Strategies of Technical Writing	English Teachers of Engineering Colleges	ABES Engineering College, Ghaziabad	30 November 2013
4.	Workshop	Ms Dawn Bikowski	Teaching ESP Students	English Teachers of colleges	American Centre, US Embassy, New Delhi	08 February 2014
5.	National Seminar cum Workshop	Dr Pashupati Jha Dr R K Mudgal Dr Shravan Kumar	The Role of English Language and Literature for promoting Education in the Present Scenario	English Teachers from college and technical colleges	Teeranthankar Mahavir University, Moradabad	11 & 12 April 2014
6.	Workshop	Dr Ghazala Naaz Dr Vipin Kumar Dr Vivek Kumar	Role of Communication	Non-English Teachers of Engineering College	Noida Institute of Engineering & Technology	12 & 13 May 2014
7.	Workshop	Dr Harleen Kaur	Role of Effective Communication	Teachers of Class X & XII of Government School	Ghaziabad Inter College	15 June 2014
8.	Workshop	Dr Shravan Kumar	Role of Pronunciation	Teachers of Higher Secondary School	HLM Inter College, Ghaziabad	27 July 2014
9.	Symposium	Dr Shravan Kumar	Effective Teaching Skills	50 Teachers of Engineering College	RKGITW, Ghaziabad	18-19 September 2014
10.	Training Programme of 30 days	Dr Shravan Kumar Dr Harleen Kaur	Making you Placement Ready	200 Students of III & IV Year of B. Tech.	RKGITW, Ghaziabad	25 Sept. to 30 Oct. 2014
11.	Workshop	Ms Diane Millar	Making the most of free RELO resources	10 Members of Greater Noida Chapter	RELO, American Centre New Delhi	15 November 2014
12.	Workshop	Dr Shravan Kumar	Role of Pronunciation	150 Students of Graduate level	VSSD College, Kanpur in a National Conference	22 November 2014
13.	Weekly Workshop	Dr Seema Verma Dr R R Panda Dr Lata Singh	Win English	450 Teachers of Engineering College	ABES Engineering College, Ghaziabad	25 Nov. to 22 Dec. 2014
14.	National Seminar	Dr R K Khandal, Vice-Chancellor, Uttar Pradesh Technical University, Lucknow and Members of Indian Buildings Congress	Waste Management	115 Members of IBC	RKGITW, Ghazibad	12-13 December 2014

ELTAI Tirupati Chapter

ELT@I Tirupati Chapter, initially with 32 members, was inaugurated by Prof. K. Elango, Secretary, ELT@I and Prof. M. A. K. Sukumar, Rector, S. V. University, Tirupati during the two-day Faculty Development Programme in Tirupati on 9th May 2012. Prof. M. A. K. Sukumar is the Honorary President; Dr. G. Reddi Sekhar Reddy is the Secretary along with other office-bearers. The chapter is committed to the cause of English language teachers' development by organizing various conferences, seminars, workshops and training programmes depending upon the requirements. Towards this end the chapter organized its 2nd Annual National Conference on 26th April 2014 in association with the Department of English, S. V. University, Tirupati. The conference got tremendous response with 200 participants and 162 paper presentations. The chapter successfully brought out a publication *English Language and Soft Skills: Problems and Perspectives* with 118 selected papers edited by Dr. G. Reddi Sekhar Reddy which was released during the valedictory function by Prof. W. Rajendra, Vice-chancellor, and Prof. M. A. K. Sukumar, Rector, S. V. University, Tirupati.

The chapter has also started a biannual journal *ELT@I Tirupati Chapter Journal of English Language and Literature*, and the first issue of the journal was released by Prof. K. Elango, Secretary ELT@I, Prof. M. A. K. Sukumar, Rector, and Prof. K. Sathyavelu Reddy, Registrar, S. V. University, Tirupati. As a member of the chapter Dr. G. Reddi Sekhar Reddy got the opportunity to attend the ELT@I International Conference 2014 at Jaipur during 21 – 23 August 2014 with the sponsorship of Regional English Language Office of American Embassy apart from attending the IATEFL-ELT@I funded workshop on Virtual Learning. One more member from the chapter was nominated for another IATEFL-ELT@I funded workshop on developing speaking skills using internet tools and resources. The chapter plans to organize annual conferences during April apart from seminars, training programmes and workshops to meet the needs of the English teaching fraternity. Further, the chapter is continuously striving to enroll new members to the ELT@I Family: at present it has 26 short-term members, one donor member and 6 annual members.

Dr. Reddi Sekhar Reddy, Secretary

ELTAI Jabalpur Chapter

Total number of Members: 66

Jabalpur chapter was added to ELTAI on 2nd Feb 2013. It was inaugurated by Dr. Ghanshyam Iyenger, National Vice-President of ELTAI. The executive committee was formed by nomination of the office-bearers. A **Workshop on Professional Development** was organized on this occasion. Dr. Abha Pandey, Convener of the workshop, highlighted the importance of professional development and announced the names of the members of the executive committee of Jabalpur Chapter of ELTAI. A book titled *The plays of Girish Karnad: A study in myths and gender* and written by Dr. Abhishek Kosta, member ELTAI, Astit. Professor, Panagar, Jabalpur was also released by the guests on this occasion. Initially there were 26 members in Jabalpur Chapter.

Online Presence: Visit us at: www.eltajabalpur.blogspot.com

Activities conducted during the year 2013-14

- **Establishment of Digital Multimedia Language Lab:** The department established a Digital Multimedia Language Lab in the College with the Equipment Grant from UGC, Bhopal. Lab equipment and software was purchased. The lab was inaugurated on 21 September 2014 by UGC, CRO Dr. G. S. Chauhan from the Regional Office of UGC, Bhopal.
- **Short-Term Certificate Course in Communicative English:** A short-term

certificate course in **Communicative English** for two months was conducted in 2013-14 by the department for the students. The objective of the course was to improve the communicative competence of the students in English. Special emphasis was on Listening and Speaking skills. The response of the students for the course was unprecedented. 68 students registered themselves for the course. Two batches were formed. The focus of the sessions held in the course of fifty days in September and October was to break the ice and familiarize the students with meeting and greeting, introducing themselves and others, describing people, places, objects, and places, giving information, asking questions, arguing and making short conversations.

- **Symposium on Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language:** ELTAI Jabalpur Chapter in co-ordination with the Department of English, Govt. Mahakoshal Arts and Commerce College organized a Symposium on "Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language" on 22nd March 2014 in the College Auditorium. Dr. Abha Pandey, Convener of the Symposium, highlighted the objectives of Symposium.

The report of different activities of 2013-2014 of all colleges around the district was read by the Secretary Dr. Pratibha Kumar. The occasion was graced by the Chief Guest Dr. Neeraj Agnihotri, from the Institute of Excellence for Higher Education, Bhopal.

Professors, research scholars and students of Jabalpur and nearby districts were present in large numbers. The members were reminded about extending their membership. Forty new members joined in the year 2014.

- **Report on Non-conventional activity conducted by literary club 'Blossom':**

In every academic session the department of English organizes various Non-Conventional activities under the literary club 'Blossom'. **Word Power** game was conducted on 13th Sept.2014. **Quiz on English Grammar** was conducted on 18th Sept 2014. **A film**

show of the animated film 'Croods' was organised on 30th Sept 2014 in the language lab. This activity was based on listening skills, the emphasis being on accents and pronunciation. Forty students were present along with the staff. **Extempore speech** competition was held on 12th Nov. 2014. **Quiz on Literature** was conducted on 18th Nov. 2014. All the activities were organised by the co-ordinator of non-conventional activity Dr. Meena Keller and Dr. Smita Belwanshi. About 150 students benefitted from these activities.

Dr. Abha Pandey, Coordinator

GRAMMAR CAN BE FUN

Why are teachers rather special?

They are usually in a class by themselves.

Prof.: This test is 'multiple choice'.

Student: Then I choose not to take it.

What's the difference between an active verb and a passive verb?

An active verb shows action. A passive verb shows passion.

ELTAI Rajnandgaon Chapter (Chhattisgarh)

Rajnandgaon Chapter (Chhattisgarh) was established on 28.07.2012. Since its inception it has gone through many ups and downs in the past two and a half years. But despite the problems and difficulties faced, we managed to organize a series of workshops and other activities. Details of some of them are given below.

- 1. Formation and inauguration of the chapter on 28.07.2012.** Chief Guest: Dr. I. D. Tiwari, Dean Arts Faculty, Indra Kala Sangit Vishwa Vidyalaya Khairagarh; Special Guest: Dr. Savita Singh (Convener, ELTAI Raipur Chapter); Guest of Honour: Mr. Shivaji Kushwaha, President, Bilaspur Chapter.
- 2. Workshop on Classroom Activity (Dongargaon) – 07.10.2014.** Guests: Mr. Y. K. Tiwary (Senior Lecturer in English, Kanya Parisar Amba Garh Chowki Rajnandgaon) & Mr. Manoj Sonkalihari (Vice-President, Rajnandgaon Chapter). No. of Participants: 40.
- 3. Workshop on Personality Development for Students (Chichola)** conducted by Dhanesh Ram Sinha (President, Rajnandgaon Chapter). No. of Participants: 5 Teachers & 80 students.
- 4. Workshop on Vocabulary Teaching and Learning (Chichola) – 28.05.2013.** Guests: Mr. Suresh Malhar, Authority Inspector and Social Worker; Mr. Manoj Sonkalihar, Vice- President and Program Coordinator, Rajnandgaon Chapter; and Mr. Praveen Gotekar, Senior Lecturer in English; Mr. Womendra Sahu, ELTAI Member. No. of Participants: 80.
- 5. Workshop on Mixed Ability Test And Prepositions (Rajnandgaon) – 18.08.2013.** Guests: Dr. G. A. Ayenger (National Vice-President of ELTAI); Dr. Tapas Mukherjee (President of Bhilai Chapter); and Dr. Vivek Joshi (ELTAI member from Vidharbha Chapter). No. of Participants: 70.
- 6. Workshop on Spoken English (Chhuriya) – 22.09.2013.** Guests: Mr. Vijay Gupta (Social Worker); Mrs. Pushpa Sinha (Social Worker); Mr. Manoj Sonkalihari, Vice-President of Rajnandgaon Chapter; and Mrs. Raj Kumari Jain, Senior Lectrer in English. No. of Participants: 90.
- 7. Workshop on Writing And Personality Development (Chichola) – 19.01.2014.** Guests: Dr. Ghanshyam Ayengar (National Vice-President,); Dr. Shivaji Kushwaha (President, Bilaspur Chapter); Mrs. Neelam Kaur (Member, Bhilai Chapter); and Mr. Rakesh Didarshika (Secretary, Bilaspur Chapter). No. of Participants: 120.
- 8. Workshop on Spoken English (Chichola) –** Guests: Mr. Kaushal Ram Chandrawanshi (Principal, GHSS Charbhata, Dongargarh); Mr. Hemraj Sahare (AT, GPS Morkutumb); Mr. Ravi Shanker Markam (GMS Rampur). No. of Participants: 65.

- 9. Workshop on Constructivism in Teaching** (Lalbahadur Nagar Dongargarh) – Guest: Dr. Amol Padwad (Convener, AINET). No. of Participants: 80.
- 10. Workshop on Virtual Learning** (Rajnandgaon) – 28.09.2014. Guests: Mrs. Neelam Kaur (Bhilai Chapter); Mr. Ashley Kennath Douglas (Pendra Road Chapter); and Mr. Rakesh Digrasker (Bilaspur Chapter). No. of Participants: 20.
- 11. Workshop on Preparation of Examinations** – 10.11.2014. Guests: Mr. Manoj Sonkalihari, Mr. Sayeed Quraishiee, Mr. Harish Dwivadi, Mr. Asim Yadu (All ELTAI members of Rajnandgaon Chapter). No. of Participants: 100.
- 12. One-Day Workshop on Innovations and New Ideas in Teaching English** (09.05.2015) in Mendha, Dongargarh, Rajnandgaon and Chhattisgarh. No. of Participants: 60.
- 13. District Level Quiz Contest** (28.03.2015) at Chichola (Block–Chhuria, Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh). Guests: Mr. Ghanshyam Kamde (Deputy Superintendent of Police), Ms. Poonam Khobragade (Sale Tax Officer), Mr. Lekh Ram Verma (Best Teacher Awardee by the President of India), Mr. Kaushal Ram Chandrawanshi (Principal, GHS School, Charbhatha, Dongargaon, Rajnandgaon), and Mrs. Pushpa Sinha (Social Worker). 120 students of Intermediate level and 40 teachers participated.

Other Activities

- 1. Workshop on Virtual Learning** on 09-10 August 2014 (Conducted by ELTAI and IATEFL at Kilakarai, Ramanathapuram) – Dhanesh Ram Sinha (President and Convener, Rajnandgaon Chapter) attended this two-day workshop.
- 2. International Conference of ELTAI in Jaipur**, 21-23 August 2014 – 6 members from Rajnandgaon Chapter participated in the conference.
3. On behalf of Rajnandgaon Chapter, we visited about ten schools to tell the students and teachers the importance of English in the present context. We gave them several tips to increase their vocabulary, to face exams and competitions, and to improve their personality.
- 4. Conference in Patna** (on 2 & 3 April 2015). Three teachers (Mr. Dhanesh Ram Sinha, Mr. Kishore Kumar Rath and Mr. Kaushal Ram Chandrawanshi) from Rajnandgaon Chapter attended a two-day National Conference in Patna (Bihar) on the theme ‘Sustainability and Development: Implications of ELT for Individual, Society and Ecology’.
- 5. Two-Day Workshop** (on 22 & 23 May 2015) at Bilaspur. Five ELTAI members (Mr. Kaushal Ram Chandrawanshi, Mr. Harish Dwivedi, Mr. Sayeed Qureshee, Mr. Gita Ram Sahu and Mr. Kernal Tiwary) from Rajnandgaon Chapter attended the programme.

Dhanesh Ram Sinha, Convener and President

ELTAI COIMBATORE CHAPTER

Report of Activities for 2014-2015

1) History of the Coimbatore Chapter:

ELTAI Coimbatore Chapter was born on 25.07.1993 at Mani Higher Secondary School, Pappanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore, in the presence of Dr. B. Kumaravadivelu, Department of Applied Linguistics, San Diego University, USA. The Chapter was formally inaugurated on 19.02.1994 and the first President was Dr. M.N.K. Bose.

The 27th Annual Conference of ELTAI was conducted at Sri Avinashilingam Deemed University on 6th & 7th of January 1995, and it was presided over by Dr. S. Rajagopalan of ELTAI, Chennai and addressed by three Vice-Chancellors.

2) Report of the Activities of ELTAI

- ❖ **ELTAI Meeting** was conducted at PSG Sarvajana Higher Secondary School, Peelamedu on 19.09.2014. Thiru. V. N. Rangaswamy, Retired PG Assistant, PSG Sarvajana Higher Secondary School gave a speech on "Listening Skills".
- ❖ **ELTAI Meeting** was conducted at PSG Sarvajana Higher Sec. School, Peelamedu on 31.10.2014. Thiru. V. N. Rangaswamy, Retired PG Assistant, PSG Sarvajana Higher Secondary School gave a speech on "Speaking, Reading & Writing Practices".
- ❖ **ELTAI Meeting** was conducted at PSG Sarvajana Higher Sec. School, Peelamedu on 06.02.2015, Dr. Ratinasabhpathy, Head of the Department of English, PSG College of Arts & Science highlighted the importance of 'Materials Production'. 151 teachers attended the meeting.

- ❖ The President, Dr. N. Ramani, who is now in Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) visits schools and colleges, publishes papers, addresses conferences and seminars, conducts workshops and training programmes particularly for school teachers with reference to the implementation of CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation System).
- ❖ The Vice-President, Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan, and the other Office-Bearers also visit schools and colleges to popularize the teaching of English. She had been to Canada as Chief Guest and delivered a Guest Lecture to the Tamils there and was honoured by the Canadian Government with a Certificate.
- ❖ The Secretary, Mr. N. C. Nandagopalan visited and conducted many programmes as given below:
- ❖ Guest Lecture on "Effective teaching practices for maximum student engagement" on 26.07.2014 at School Education Conclave, Puducherry (CII-Sponsored).
- ❖ Guest Lecture on "How to be a motivating teacher" on 06.09.2014 at Dr. G.R.D. College of Education, Coimbatore.
- ❖ Motivational talk at the "Annual Day Celebrations" of Thambu Higher Secondary School on 25.10.2014.
- ❖ Resource Person at the Faculty Development Programme of PSG College of Arts & Science on 01.11.2014 and delivered a speech on the Role of Teachers and Education.

- ❖ Motivational talk at the Children's Festival – Inter-School Competitions conducted by Coimbatore Ladies Circle No. 1 at Vedapatti on 29.11.2014.
- ❖ Motivational talk at the "Kumaran Fest" School Day of Sri Kumaran Matric Higher Secondary School Management on Monday 12th January 2015.

Training Programmes Attended by our Faculty

- ❖ **Dr. S. Sankarakumar**, Associate Professor of English, PSG College of Technology attended a National Level two-day Workshop on "Training the Trainers in Virtual Learning" organized

by ELTAI at TBAK College for Women, Kilakkarai on 9 & 10 August 2014.

- ❖ **Mrs. John Suganya**, Assistant Professor in English & **Mrs. Umaadevi**, Assistant Professor in English, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore attended a Training Programme on "Developing Speaking Skills" held at Thoothukudi on 27th & 28th December 2014.
- ❖ **Dr. S. Sankarakumar**, Associate Professor of English, PSG College of Technology will be deputed to attend the National Level Conference to be held during July 2015.

N. C. Nandagopalan,
Secretary

GRAMMAR CAN BE FUN

Teacher: What did you do this weekend?
Student: John and me went to the ball game.
Teacher: John and I.
Student: No, you weren't there.

Teacher: Who can give me an example of a double negative?
Pupil: I don't know none.
Teacher: Very good.

How is a judge like an English teacher?
They both hand out long sentences.

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 (15th 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 author(s)' names.***

GRAMMAR CAN BE FUN

Teacher to students: English is an easy language to learn.

New student to English teacher: Says who? If English is such an easy language, then why does 'fat chance' mean the same as 'slim chance'?

'Are your father and mother home, Ramesh?' the teacher asked the boy, a brother of the student she was visiting at home.

'They was in. They is now out, ' replied the boy.

'Where is your grammar?' asked the shocked teacher.

'Gra'ma,' said the small boy, 'has gone upstairs for a nap.'

SPEAKING ACTIVITY

Reminiscences

Dr. K. Elango

Chennai ELTAI-National Secretary & Formerly of Anna University,

elangoela@rediffmail.com

Objective : To enable learners to revisit, reflect on, and communicate their memories to others effectively and interestingly in English

Preparation : Recalling their pleasant as well as unpleasant memories of their past lives (however young, one has a past) as often as possible and reliving those experiences imaginatively and formulating views on them

Participation : In pairs

Duration : About 5 minutes

Procedure :
The teacher shares with the class one of his childhood memories, perhaps a traditional game he played with his friends when he was very young.

- The teacher gets an articulate volunteer to share with the class one of his/her interesting experiences in the primary/high school, perhaps a mischief that a group of friends played, a quarrel with a friend and so on.
- The teacher, then, informs the class about the significance of reminiscences and instructs them to recall some good/bad memories and share them with their friends.
- The students in pairs could reminisce about several events such as their childhood days, the prizes won, gifts received, bench



mates, festivals/birthday celebrated, picnic with their family/friends, the food they ate in a restaurant and so on.

- A few pairs who have had interesting exchanges could be asked to redo them for the whole class.
- Feedback by the class, including the teacher, is to be given on their performance, especially focusing on their linguistic competence.

Learning outcomes:

- Learners realize the role of reminiscing in making their communication engaging and meaningful.
- Learners understand that even mulling over past experiences, pleasant or unpleasant ones, could turn them into fluent and effective communicators.

Further Activities:

Learners should reminisce about past happenings whenever an appropriate opportunity arises. A common feature of interactions among friends/family/relatives is that they often reminisce about their past.

*"I am hopelessly in love with a memory
An echo from another time, another place."* – Michal Foucault

GRAMMAR CAN BE FUN

**'I've just had the most awful time,' said a boy to his friend.
'First I got angina pectoris, then arteriosclerosis. Just as I was recovering, I got psoriasis. They gave me hypodermics and, to top it all, tonsillitis was followed by appendectomy.'
'Jeez! How did you pull through?' sympathized his astounded friends.
'I don't know,' the boy replied, 'toughest spelling test I ever had!'**

Teacher: Lisa, can February march?

Lisa: No, miss, April may.

ELTAI Office-Bearers

Presidents

Prof. R. Krishnamurthy	(Aug. 74 - Oct. 85)
Dr. S. Rajagopalan	(Nov. 85 - July 08)
Dr. Amol Padwad	(Aug. 08 - Mar.12)
Dr. Sanjay Arora	(Apr. 12 - to date)

Secretaries

Prof. M. Duraiswamy	(Aug. 74 - June 81)
Prof. B. Ardhanareeswaran	(July 81 - Oct. 85)
Dr. K.K. Mohamed Iqbal	(Nov. 85 - Aug. 89)
Dr. V. Saraswathi	(Sep. 89 - Mar. 07)
Dr. K. Elango	(April 07 - to date)

The Journal of English Language Teaching (an official organ of the association) was launched in 1965.

Editors

Prof. R. Krishnamurthy	(June 65 - Oct. 84)
Prof. B. Ardhanareeswaran	(Nov. 84 - Oct. 85)
Dr. K. K. Mohamed Iqbal	(Nov. 85 - Dec. 94)
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