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From the Editor's Desk

Bringing up children bilingual from early stage? No harm.

It has been stated repeatedly these days that bilingualism is no more an exception; it has become a norm, universally. Most of the people across the globe are bilinguals, except people in remote areas who are distanced from other speech communities, or not connected via means of technology.

If adults naturally, or by compulsion become bilinguals in course of their life, is there any harm in letting children grow bilinguals? No consensus in this regard among researchers. But, let research wait. Let me quote from a paper.

“There are millions of children around the world who grow up bilingually or even multilingually. They need to know many different languages to be able to communicate with their parents, their teachers, with the people they buy their groceries from, or with officials who might all speak a different language. For those children, for their parents and the society that surrounds those it is more than normal to be multilingual. Over the past decades the topic of bilingualism has become more and more important in the western part of the world too. There are many families who start teaching their children two and more languages but it is also still a subject that is highly debated between scholars from all over the world. People are afraid that teaching two languages to a child might harm his or her development. They do not want to overburden their children or cause any severe damages. Therefore, many parents and caretakers still decide for one language which they will teach to their child(ren).” (Anika Kehl, 2010. Early bilingualism: Growing up with two languages. <https://www.grin.com/document/279061>)

I am not arguing for or against teaching a language other than the mother tongue to infants. In fact, I'm not at all concerned with 'teaching' per se. What I am thinking aloud is, whether there is any harm in letting children listen to another language, in natural context from early days. Instruction, teaching-learning, pedagogy, classroom strategies—none of these jargons disturbs me. The child is growing naturally at home. One or two elders, preferably

parents or elder siblings use two languages in the presence of the child, and occasionally address the child directly, too. And, just imagine this second language is the one that the child is taught rigorously at the age of three onwards! (Does the child master that language after fifteen more years of concerted efforts by parents, teachers, educators, examiners and the government is yet another question!)

I have a doubt: Is the teaching of English the monopoly of teachers? Or can any one outside school give it a try? Teachers, more or less, miserably fail all over India. Therefore, people's representatives popularly known as ministers, accompanied by an army of government officials and teachers' (union) representatives undertake pilgrimages abroad, in search of places where teaching has been best done on the surface of the earth. This exploration is not only rigorously carried out by all state governments every year, but more religiously observed too as an annual ritual. Departments of education are highly confused as how to spend the crores that come to them year after year. One thing remains unchanged for ages—teaching of English!

It is in this context, some people (crazy fellows) have started urging mothers to take care of the English language education by themselves, without waiting for the teachers to shoulder that responsibility, in the most undesirable way. Can we ever imagine children “mastering” English without teachers “communicating” in English? How does this proposed miracle work?

Mothers, arise, awake, start communicating with your kids at home—with whatever broken English you possess. After all, you are their mothers; you are likely to put in any effort to get a little English for your children. Let teachers prepare children for examination at school; let mothers start communicating with them at home! God helps only those who help themselves!

P. Bhaskaran Nair
(Editor)

Pedagogic Scaffolding and Anthrologic Learning Contexts: Issues in Metaphor Mismatch

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Abstract

The suitability of the well-established metaphor of the pedagogic construct 'scaffolding' is being questioned and challenged in this paper, in the context of anthropogenicity. It is argued here, the metaphor associated with a static object-- a building or a structure--does not fit into the vibrant and dynamic human context of language learning, and therefore it is high time, we had a re-examination of the properties of the metaphor. Not only the features of language learning, but the very nature of the object of study, namely language, as an ever-evolving process, supports the argument put forward in this paper. The paper goes in search of better alternatives— not just one-- considering the adult learner characteristics and demands viewed from an anthropogenic perspective.

Key Words: Anthropogenicity, scaffold, scaffolding techniques, language classrooms.

Scaffolding is one of the many techniques that are routinely being applied, researched, advocated, marketed and used in language learning contexts amongst other disciplines. Despite the fact that many researchers/educators may be excited about scaffolding, it should be clarified that this scaffold is inseparable from an instructor who thinks s/he is offering support. The framework of this scaffolding is explicitly seen as the nick of time support that gives students the educational push that empowers them to work at a more elevated level of movement, namely in their respective zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). To be sure, a few researchers with a sociocultural orientation (e.g., Donato, 1994; De Guerrero and Villamil, 2000; Lantolf 2006, Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, Walqui, 2006) have exhibited that students are bound to succeed with regard to learning a language when their instructors, as well as their peers, offer designated help when vital. According to Walqui scaffolding can be applied in more ways than one with English language students. The absolute most striking informative framework procedures are modelling, bridging, contextualising, pattern building, representing text, and developing metacognition (2006). While there are faithfuls that almost worship

the scaffold almost like a pew, there are others who question its usefulness.

Searle (1984) has vehemently rejected the metaphor of scaffolding in child learning contexts by proving that such scaffolding ignores students' intentions and becomes an instrument of control in the hands of the adult (here teacher). She further argues that the original context of the Brunerian scaffold at home (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) is very different from a child at school and classroom and is being exalted to 'pedigree' proportions in the literature. She further acknowledges that these scaffolds actually make the teacher adorn the role of a builder and the child is the 'predetermined structure' supposed to arrive at an 'intended outcome'. (Bruner, 1975). This is problematic because often in adult language use, teleological outcomes are often absent: these are the predetermined responses that come from the belief that the means justify or lead to a predictable end which is rarely present unless the directions of conversations are preconceived or are the type that are ridden with proleptical (answering anticipated questions before they are raised by the audience or reader) directions. Adult, real time conversations have a deontological character embedded in them; the conversations may not

necessarily move towards a logical, predetermined end. Scaffolds disregard the deontological nature of conversations in adults. Some even blandly acknowledge that conversations are a “complex set of social and semiotic dynamics” (Stone, 1993:180). For example, if the teacher in either a school or an adult classroom walks in with a certain plan of teaching, and finds that the plan is going haywire then she needs to determine what alternatives are possible in such situations rather than steering the whole class time into her predetermined/ pre planned outcome. This kind of steering may be easy in a pedagogic teaching/learning space but in an adult classroom it is not easy to dismiss the genuine concerns raised by adult students and no amount of ‘scaffolding’ will help the teacher unless she uses her teacher’s whip to silence the class. Alternatively the derailed (hijacked) sessions in an anthropogenic classroom can be civilly negotiated in an adult like manner to such a point that the groups, agree-to-disagree or the issue is shelved for the time being in order to respect the class time of both the teacher and the students. Graves argues that when a scaffolding is in place, the adult (teacher/caregiver) works to “support the child in achieving an intended outcome.” and this is teleological and not deontology scaffolding, as though the Brunerian adult “follows the contours of child growth.” (1983: 271). This implies that scaffolds are not fluid but tight structures into which the building grows and scaffolds do not come in interesting shapes unless the scaffold builder is specially trained like a garden pruner or a vegetable carver who is specialised in the art. The metaphor fails miserably and needs a serious afterthought if it needs to be a term of ‘pedigreed’ proportions. Nevertheless, we need to consciously remind ourselves that the genesis of the argument and the technique of ‘scaffold’ began at home for Bruner (and his followers, or rather worshippers) with child/ren. Scaffolding talks only about child-adult conversations and interactions but not about adult-adult interactions. It is ironic that the term has parasitically occupied ‘anthropogenic’ (Trott,

1991; Deepa. S, 2022) learning spaces and continues to grow at weed-speed in research. My fundamental problem is with the word ‘scaffold’ and its usage with a full fledged human being, however tight or loose the structure is envisaged as being built or used. The term refused to excite the teacher in me for a long time, even as a teacher of children. The term and its resultant application in anthropogenic classrooms irritated me more because there was no clarity amongst the users and appliers of the ‘technique’ and were found using the metaphor, loosely translated as ‘support’. I do agree that children might at times need some kind of a support system in their learning because of their lack of world experience (deliberately replacing the term ‘world knowledge’ here, because children are knowledgeable in their own way but lack the experience gained from world exposure). At the same time, children too are humans not buildings to need ‘scaffolds’. If we for a moment articulate that buildings are constructed using scaffolds and explore the ‘steps’ of its growth and conclude that buildings do grow, then the ‘pedigree’ of scaffolds seem to be seamlessly applicable to the growth of language in a child that grows as well. But the growth of a building from being just a piece of land or a foundation into a multistoried building and the growth of a child in no sense can be equated on any planet of learning. Buildings appear to grow brick-by-brick and layer-by-layer. Buildings grow and so do trees: animals and human beings also grow. This ‘growth’ will appear similar if we consider the addition of bulk and define the term only from that limited perspective. In a human being, the addition of bulk takes place at least in three different modes, the physical, the cognitive and the affective (Bloom, 1956; Krawthwohl, 2002). Of these three, the cognitive and the affective are intangible and are seen as tangibly accessible only through assumptions and are mostly inferential. To add to this problem as elaborately criticised by Shanker (2001) the generativist builder the agent is ambiguous. We are compelled therefore to ask a few questions: who is the Brunerian builder, is it the child or

the caregiver/adult? And for how long do the scaffolds stand? What are the criteria for it to come off? We are forced, like Shanker, to acknowledge that, “what was initially thought to be the constructor’s external scaffolding is actually part of the edifice itself that the child, with the help of her caregivers, has endeavoured to build” (Shanker, 2001: 25). This is not to go against the construct of ‘support’ or ‘help’ in the classroom that is anthropogenic but the limitations of the metaphor need a thorough understanding before we attempt to ‘use’ it on our adult students, knowing fully well that it came from observing children alluding to children and being hijacked into the pedagogic classroom with heterogeneity.

Learners (adults) with a disability or a physical issue can be ‘scaffolded’/ supported either in the form of offering a suitable assistive device, such as a crutch, wheelchair, or a vision enabling device. But when the operation of cognitive and affective domains are concerned, we cannot ignore the fact that these domains themselves are intangible and are assumptive (because they are accessible as only as assumptions and have no credible existence on their own) in nature; strapping a ‘scaffold’ onto such a domain will often probably result in constriction rather than ‘construction.’ Often an unattended tree fence if not dismantled in time will be grown into by a large tree: the growth of a building is clearly different from the growth of a rock or a tree or an animal. The agent of growth in a building is calculated and planned, with severe human intervention and the building itself is inanimate, feelingless, incapacitate and limp. Trees appear so in the beginning, but once big or tall enough, even they outgrow or even ingrow the protective fence if not removed in time.

Human beings are not buildings. These are thinking beings with a strong knowledge capital/ substrate; they are effervescent, vibrant and strongly evolved beings that rely more on thinking and execution rather than remaining limp like a building. Humans are not buildings and do not need scaffolds. Adult human beings are not wanting beings because they come with their own problem solving devices that are

informed by their knowledge/culture capital and only need consensus and negotiation rather than a scaffolding. Learning in an adult human being is all about matching and pitching one problem handling (not solving, because not all real problems can be solved, but need to be handled first before attempting to solve it). A solution is a product, but problem handling is a process: humans handle problems first before they can follow the can be solved route with, when needed, help from another and they negotiate the best suited method for the current situation. There are no standard ways in human processes. The standard is arbitrary and generalisations are usually ‘democratic’ processes (defined as large public opinions). Scaffolding in learning contexts is actually a teacher centric process as it presumes that the learner needs help and it is only the teacher or teacher chosen ‘peer’ that can afford the scaffold in a manner that the teacher finds fit. This also reduces the learner and the learning into an inanimate building (both noun and verb). It is surprising that for decades the teaching/learning community have stomached this ‘method’/ ‘technique’ of ‘mental assistance’ in the form of tangible straitjackets or moulds that the learner and her learning grow into (something like a square watermelon). Human brains and thinking processes are not watermelons either. Hence scaffolds are best left to buildings and humans will need ladders, wheelchairs, walking sticks or ramps etc and they will ask for it if and when they need it, while the learning process in adults is just negotiations and handling problems, taking them toward a democratic solution with consensus in a humane manner. Humans don’t need scaffolds, they need other human beings who are socially and psychologically relevant in problem handling situations. The decision is usually with problem solving, problem handling or problem enhancing. The choice of teaching/learning practices fall into these categories. If someone does not see a problem, we need to let that person be in his/her peace and not force him/her to see the problem that we envisage and leave it to him/her to decide. Problems are not always uniform unless it is a

natural calamity or a national emergency.

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Bruner's Theory of Scaffolding

Bruner's scaffolding theory is that children need support and active help from their teachers and parents if they are going to become independent learners as they mature. According to Bruner's scaffolding theory, children are somewhat dependent on those who have more knowledge or competency than they do in certain areas, such as reading or calculating square roots, when they begin learning. As students gain more independence and confidence, the help from teachers and parents decreases until the students are independent learners, much as scaffolding used to support construction workers and their materials is removed as a building project nears completion.

[E. Reeder. Source <https://www.practicaladultinsights.com/what-is-bruners-scaffolding-theory.htm>:]

The Limiting Nature of the Notion of ‘Mother Tongue’

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Abstract

Using the case-study of one individual and a few studies in the area, this paper problematizes the term ‘mother tongue’ and draws attention to its limiting nature, even as it is an idea that has inflamed passions including spates of suicides, for example during the anti-Hindi agitations of the 1960s. The paper argues for an abandonment of the ‘mother tongue’ mindset in favour of ‘multicompetence’ as the norm in multilingual India and calls for a celebration of this absence of unitary labeling.

Keywords: mother tongue, plurilingualism, societal multilingualism, linguistic identity

Introduction

What is my mother tongue? We no longer live in a world where mother tongue is the first language one learns or the language one is most proficient in. If I am highly proficient in more than one language, then what is my mother tongue? What is my mother tongue if my father and my mother have different languages as mother tongues? What if my mother tongue is considered only a ‘dialect’ and not a ‘legitimate language’? What if my mother tongue is not a dominant language? What if I feel ashamed of disclosing my mother tongue?

Anecdotes abound about individuals calling Hindi their mother tongue when they are probably mother tongue speakers of Braj/Maithili/Magadhi etc. Tribal language users often claim to be mother tongue users of a dominant language. When the last census enumerator visited my residence in Chennai, and asked me my mother tongue among other things, and I said “Malayalam”, she expressed surprise, laughed it off, and suggested she will put it down as Tamil till I insisted she write Malayalam.

During my teacher-researcher intervention for PhD, I taught at a school with a diverse set of individuals. A few of them had called themselves mother tongue speakers of Hindi and by the end of my intervention had changed to referring themselves as speakers of Braj or Marwari, for example. In a workshop I held online recently with secondary school teachers of Madhya Pradesh, many respondents called

themselves mother tongue speakers of Hindi and only when I clarified the status of languages vis-à-vis dialects did, they come out with the names Bundelkhandi and other languages as their mother tongues. I had a chat about languages with a professional acquaintance recently. Knowing of my interest in multilingualism, he proudly claimed to know four languages including Maithili, Nepali, Hindi, and English. However, this proud multilingual’s 10-year-old daughter studied in a Kendriya Vidyalaya and considered Hindi to be her mother tongue. She claimed to know only two languages – Hindi and English and seemed keener to show her proficiency in English, something that made her a cut above the rest in her region.

Linguistic Identity Markers: A recent phenomenon in India

Language as a marker of individual or people’s identity is a comparatively recent phenomenon in India. Mitchell (2009) argues that languages were identified geographically till the end of the 19th century. This is due to the influence of British colonialism and Western ideas. Languages were associated with a geographical location, and individuals used multiple languages to serve different functions of daily life. So, it was not uncommon to find an individual using a certain language at home, another in the market outside and yet another in official letters etc. without taking recourse to claiming linguistic identity as an individual or

using the term mother tongue.

The idea of a mother tongue is a concept borrowed from the West and it is high time we do away with one language (mother tongue) as a marker of identity. We are each plurilingual and we enjoy varying degrees of proficiency in a set of languages, and we can call ourselves users of those languages for various purposes of life. By cooping ourselves into one linguistic identity we are missing the nuances of multicompetences that we all have and by bracketing ourselves as mother tongue-speakers of particular languages we are depriving the other languages that we are proficient in, the status they too deserve. Additionally, we need to begin looking at the plurilingual nature of our language competence more seriously. How can we capture the varied abilities we have in choosing the language or language-mix to suit the different contexts that we use them for? This cannot happen using the Western monolingual lens, where the proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities as well as accuracy in grammar and vocabulary use are tested for one language at a time and are not recognised unless one has a certain level of attainment in each language. If I can speak my mother tongue only at a functional level, and I am merely literate in it and cannot read academese in it, will I cease to be a mother tongue speaker of that language? If I can speak fluently in the language of the region where my workplace is located, should I not claim to know that language? Is it appropriate in individually and societally multilingual India to describe individuals using single labels of linguistic identity?

A case-study

Consider this individual: He can read and write Kannada with a little struggle. He can read questions in a theory paper in Carnatic music, just manage to answer them in Kannada, and pass with distinction. He can speak fluently enough in Tamil to haggle with vendors at the town market on Sundays for a good bargain, with friends playing rudimentary cricket in the evenings, and with neighbours etc. too, Tamil being the local lingua franca. He can speak functional Malayalam with his father and

mother, both mother tongue speakers of Malayalam living in this tri-junction of three states each formed as a linguistic state with a language different from Malayalam. He can barely read and write in Malayalam. That is, he can read bus-boards and catch the correct bus to his destination, when in Kerala. He can read and understand headlines in newspapers, for example. His knowledge of the Malayalam script helps him read a few characters in Tamil and his knowledge of Tamil as a language helps him guess the rest and often make some sense. He studies at a Kendriya Vidyalaya, where the two languages used to teach all subjects are Hindi and English. He uses English, Tamil, and Kannada, and occasionally Malayalam to speak with his classmates depending on their language comfort. What is this person's mother tongue? Malayalam because his parents were born and raised in Kerala and consider themselves mother tongue speakers of that language? Kannada, because he was himself born and raised in a place that actually belongs in the linguistic state of Karnataka? Tamil, because he lives in a place that has Tamil as its default lingua franca, except in institutional contexts? English, because he is most fluent in that language more than any of the others he uses? By casting him as a mother tongue user of one language, we are limiting the understanding of his linguistic profile and shattering the richness of the diversity there.

The way out

Why cannot we add richness to our linguistic descriptions of people and allow for heterogeneity in our capturing of their multicompetences, this way? Khubchandani (1997) in fact argues that there is a fluidity in the boundaries between languages in India, which means that people living in the geographical border regions of areas designated as dominated by certain languages, in reality, choose to speak a fluid form that combines aspects of both the languages concerned or switch between both languages in a fluid non-compartmentalized way. Annamalai claims that this is especially true in informal interactions not constrained by "normative requirements to use standard varieties" (pp

228). Canagarajah (2007) borrows the term 'communities of practice' for "shared pragmatic strategies without having to invent common centralized codes" (pp. 236). While he uses the term for the context of speakers of different varieties of English, we can use this idea to capture the set of strategies used by individuals in multilingual spaces in India before the 19th century, and recommend it for use now, without taking recourse to identifying communities based on a unitary language, but as those practising the fluid use of different codes in shared spaces.

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David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India*

Talk for Lingua Franca (ABC, Australia), January 2005
<https://www.davidcrystal.com/Files/BooksAndArticles/-4052.pdf>

India currently has a special place in the English language record books as the country with the largest English-speaking population in the world. Ten years ago that record was held by the United States. Not any more.

The population of India passed a billion- that's a thousand million - a couple of years ago, and is increasing at the rate of 3% per annum. In 1997 an India Today survey suggested that about a third of the population had the ability to carry on a conversation in English. This was an amazing increase over the estimates of the 1980s, when only about four or five per cent of the population were thought to use the language. And given the steady increase in English learning since 1997 in schools and among the upwardly mobile, we must today be talking about at least 350 million. That's equal to the combined English-speaking populations of Britain, the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

All of these speakers - bar a lakh or so - have learned English as a second language. A lakh, by the way, is the Indian English word for a hundred thousand- it's spelled l, a, k, h. English has special regional status in India, and is an important unifying linguistic medium between the Indo-European north and the Dravidian south. Special status means much more than having a place in the public institutions of the country - in parliament, the law courts, broadcasting, the press, and the education system. It means that the language permeates daily life. You can't avoid it, especially in the cities.

A couple of months ago, my wife and I returned from a two-week lecturing tour of India, sponsored by the British Council. We visited Chennai (or Madras, as it used to be called), Delhi, Kolkata (or Calcutta), Pune, and Mumbai (or Bombay), and we found ourselves surrounded by English everywhere. The roads into the city centres from the airports would pass through some very poor areas, but even the smallest shops and stalls would have an English sign or poster nearby. Nor were the slums exempt: on the corrugated walls of a straggling Mumbai complex was a series of ads for vitrified tiles, all in English.

Outside the Red Fort in Delhi, a Hindi-speaking teacher was marshalling a class of 30 Hindi-speaking teenagers, and giving them instructions about where to meet and when their bus would leave - all in English. Outside St Thomas' Cathedral in Chennai we met a group of primary-school Tamil children coming out of the local school. As soon as they saw us they waved excitedly - we were the only fair-skinned people to be seen - and we received a chorus of 'hello', 'hi', 'how are you?... 'Fine thanks, how are you?' we replied. 'We're fine too', they said. Seven-year-olds, we marvelled, on a confident career-track towards English.

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Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose as a Puzzle Game between the Author and the Readers

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Abstract

Set against the socio-religious background of Medieval Europe, Umberto Eco unfolds a mysterious game played by the monks in an abbey. The incidents taking place in the abbey create a horrifying atmosphere. These unhappy events disturb the peace and the calmness of the monastery. The whole developments taking place in the abbey resemble a game wherein the monks of the abbey are the players. The narrator too joins the other characters and in parallel, builds up the novel along with the reader. This article aims to interpret the novel as a game being played by the author on the one side, and the reader on the other, like a game of chess.

Key words: Author-reader game, mysterious play, destruction, monastery

Introduction to the novel

Eco's most famous novel *Il nome della rosa* (The Name of the Rose) was set in the fourteenth century Italian abbey where the power of life and death lay with the inquisition. Descriptions of monastic and civic rivalry, the troubled history of the papacy in the fourteenth century and the richness of the flora and fauna captivate the reader's attention. The unusual murders, clues to the murderer's identity and the narrator's observations lead the adept mystery-reader to the text in order to solve the mystery of the novel's intrigue. Conventional

The relationship between the signifier and the signified was so convoluted and fragmented that conventional reading may not help to enrich aesthetic sensibility. The multiplicity of interpretation and varying styles of spoken idiom in the abbey make direct interpretation impossible and the detective present throughout is a mere interpreter. If he became incapable of transforming mystery into fact, signifier into signified and the suspect into criminal, then the detective would become the victim. There was no longer the possibility that the detective "possesses the stable code, at the root of every mysterious message" (Moretti 145) because stable codes no longer existed.

Eco's mysterious abbey

Eco's abbey was a microcosm of the medieval

society – ordered, self-sufficient and isolated on the peak of a mountain. Aedificium, the massive building that houses the library and the most imposing structure, the sublime orientation of the church and the harmonious proportions of the abbey's design exemplified how architecture emulated the order of the universe. The age and the height of the Aedificium provided a graphic image of mankind's place in the universe, of punishments and rewards after death. As Eco's abbey was a microcosm, his Aedificium was its focal point: a *speculum mundi* or 'mirror' of (that) world.

The second floor of the Aedificium housed the scriptorium, the library which was shrouded in mystery from outside. Ossarium which was under the graveyard connected the church with the Aedificium and was filled with the bones of monks. The ground floor contained the kitchen and the refectory, a noisy region heated by ovens in the west and south towers. The description of the towers and the paths connecting the various buildings gave an outline picture. Also, gave an impression of the complicated design of the abbey.

The author has created two maps to help the reader visualize his fictitious abbey. Both the maps contained clues for comprehending and unraveling the mystery. First map depicted the layout of the abbey. The other map guided

Brother William of Baskerville and the young novice Adso through the abbey's labyrinthine library to the Secretum known as Finis Africae, 'The end of Africa'. Inquisitors were given permission to move in the abbey but had to hide from others to achieve the goal. Monks too had to hide from the inquisitors to keep quiet about the happenings in the abbey.

William of Baskerville, a Franciscan, who was on a visit at Benedictine abbey was asked by the abbot, Abo to investigate the strange death of one of the monks. In the course of William's visit four other monks are also murdered. Though the murderer was discovered by William and his travelling companion Adso, he committed suicide. The murderer's death leads to a fire which burns down the great abbey. The unusual murders, clues to the murderer's identity and the narrator's observations lead the adept mystery-reader to the text to solve the mystery of the novel's intrigue.

Monks from all over the earth congregated in the scriptorium to study the manuscripts. Though abbot requested William to investigate the death of the monk, they were not allowed to enter the library and were informed that entry was limited to the librarian and the librarian's assistant. But the investigators ignored the restrictions and found out that one stairway led to the library from the scriptorium and three stairways led from the kitchen and the refectory to the scriptorium. The inquisitors figured out that this sole access was situated in the east tower.

Most of the monks in the abbey acted indifferently. In the scriptorium, a stranger snatched William's lenses and ran away. The darkness and the trapped situation of the inquisitors inside the labyrinth frighten them. Benno who was hesitant in the beginning to reveal the particular book gave it to William and told all those he knew about that book. Meanwhile, the monks who held high position in the abbey were removed from their position by death. The situation became intolerable by the rise of proposal for the vacant seats in the abbey. This anticipated an evil force which was awaiting to encroach upon the abbey.

Series of death happened in the abbey under

mysterious circumstances. The secret book arose curiosity and confusion. Nobody revealed the knowledge about the book. Earlier, the inquisitors were following the Apocalypse as the series of death happened according to Apocalyptic words. Only later, they realised that they were misguided and came to know about the book which was kept as secret. The black hands that engulfed the abbey was shown in its full vigour at the last moment. Once he was revealed, Jorge strived hard to hide himself to stay away from others. He ensured that the object he wanted to destroy was fully demolished before trying to escape. The evil force showed how hungry it was to fulfill its wish.

Days of inquisition in the abbey

The memorable seven days of William and Adso, the inquisitors in the abbey, revealed the cruel and awesome face of the murderer and the sad plight of the victims. The first day of arrival of inquisitors was spend for introducing everyone in the abbey. They met several persons and discussed about the death of Adelmo of Otranto. They collected as much information as they could. The visited the rooms and met brothers in the abbey. These meetings helped them to get an idea regarding the inner structure of the abbey. Also, they got a chance to dine with all the monks in the monastery which helped them to study the monks.

The second day started with a prayer. But this was distracted by the discovery of a corpse. The leg of the man was thrust head down into the vessel of blood. The corpse was identified to be of Venantius of Salvemec. Though the inquisitors probed the monks, only a few cooperated – Benno readily revealed the talk between Jorge and Venantius; though Berenger was hesitant in the beginning became ready only later; Aymaro of Alessandria gave some allusions regarding the library; Jorge interrupted the inquisitors and was humiliated; Benno shared the story regarding the life of abbey; Alinardo revealed the secret of labyrinth and the way to enter it. Further, on the end of the day, the information regarding the missing of Berenger in choir by the abbot reached the

inquisitors and arose fear.

The third day began with the search for Berenger and ended up unsuccessful except for the discovery of a bloodstained cloth under the pallet from Berenger's cell. Meanwhile, Adso confronts denial from Salvatore when asked about Fra Dolcino. But, he comes to know the tragic end of Fra Dolcino from Ubertino. This conversation inspired Adso and led to the library where he encounters a moaning young girl that ends up in a sin. By the time, William deciphered the necromantic signs left by Venantius and the riddle of the labyrinth. Afterwards, William and Adso went in search of the body of Berenger and found out in a tub in balneary.

The fourth day was spent on discussing the death of Berenger. Close examination of the corpse of Berenger revealed further data – poisons and an earlier theft in herbalist's room. The fingertips were found dark which were similar to the earlier deaths. Then Salvatore was made to speak about the woman in the kitchen and about Berenger. Afterwards, William and Adso met the Cellarer to discuss about the death of Venantius. But, Adso was still troubled by the sinful encounter and came back to conscious only when William approached him with the book of Venantius to decipher. Thereafter, Adso started his hunt for the truffle which he came to know from Severinus. He enquired about the girl to Salvatore and joined William to the labyrinth. Both of them searched the room for the letters. At that time, Salvatore was caught by Bernard Gui with a woman. The woman was arrested as a witch and was hanged to death.

The fifth day revealed an interesting book. Severinus disclosed about the book to William. But he died even before the meeting got over and the book was found missing. Cellarer was arrested on account of the murder and was brought before Bernard Gui for questioning. The questioning hour revealed many things regarding his earlier life. Malachi, who was also asked about the book refused to tell. Then, two legations met and debated regarding the poverty of Jesus which was interrupted by the problem regarding abbey. In the due course, the

rumour regarding Malachi's proposal of Benno as his assistant came out by the end of the day. Meanwhile, Jorge called all the brothers to the pulpit to talk about sins and death occurring in the abbey.

The sixth day witnessed the death of a monk. Malachi died under mysterious circumstances and Abbot made arrangements for Malachi's funeral. The responsibilities of the abbey were assigned to Nicholas to act as Cellarer and to Benno to open the Scriptorium. Meanwhile, William discusses about Malachi with Nicholas, Jorge and the earlier Abbots Paul of Remini and Robert of Bobbio. By the time, the Abbot lost confidence in protecting his abbey. He was so scared of the progress of the investigation that he told the inquisitors to stop inquisition over the unhappy events. He feared it would take the life of the missing monks – Jorge, Benno, Alinardo and Nicholas. Abbot noticed the absence of Jorge for supper also. This made him anxious and he asked others to pray for the health of Jorge.

The seventh day was destined to be last day of the inquisition. William and Adso entered the Finis Africae, the secret room while Abo went to close the Aedificium. There, they met Jorge who informed them about the death of the Abbot. Though the inquisitors were in bewilderment after listening to Jorge, they summon courage. William asked him for the last manuscript of the bound volume of Coena Cypriam, the pages of which were covered with a poison that was fatal to touch. Jorge gave it to William and informed that he would win if he could read it. But, at the end of their conversation, Jorge reached out his hands for the book and drew it towards him, tore the pages of the manuscript and swallowed it. He put off the light and ran out in darkness. The inquisitors ran through the mirror door for their life, lit the lamp and caught Jorge.

On the seventh day night, William's hypothesis about the Poetics manuscript was confirmed. While trying to catch Jorge, the lamp fell down abruptly and the books caught fire. It spread out to the attached buildings and church and everything started burning before someone could put down fire. Confusion spread all

around by the collapse of the roof of the dormitory. The abbey burned for three days and three nights. Everyone abandoned the abbey on the third day with whatever they could collect to far off places.

Author Vs the readers

The author played with the reader using various techniques. He made the character move in a straight track allowing the reader to watch him or her from all the angles. He anticipated that when the reader became so close with the character, suspicion would not fall on him. Meanwhile, the readers would get ample time to understand and study the character. The author also read the mind of the character thoroughly and moved along with the character. Yet, the author tried to direct or redirect the reader according to his will and pleasure.

The inquisitors and the monks encountered one another on various matters. Their encounter created a simultaneous impact on the readers. They gave one clue or the other during each moment. Here, the readers get victimized by the author. But, the clues were not enough to expose the real criminal. Thus, the reader had to go for abductive logic. This gave answers to the rest of the puzzle. During the final stage, the readers become detective. They themselves tracked down the real culprit. They work hard enough to understand the game played by the author and emerge successfully.

The author introduced several characters in the fiction and they interacted with each other in several ways. He made the characters move very cautiously so that they were not easily identified by anyone. The author played the game with the reader mainly through two characters – Brother William of Baskerville, a Franciscan and Adso, a young Benedictine novice were given charge of the mission that happened in the monastery through the abbot of the abbey, Abo. Other characters who came in between were made to interact with them mostly to enquire or due to some special circumstances.

Every day a new character was introduced. These characters were made to talk in such a manner that they created confusion in the minds of the reader. The readers who would be

on the verge of taking a decision was diverted by the entry of another character. As a part of the enquiry, William spoke with brothers and servants in the abbey. All of them gave him information regarding the abbey or about the murdered. Some of the stories told by them were confusing while others were interrelated. This opened new venues before the reader.

The author affirmed that William was a very talented inquisitor with his way of inquisition. William, along with his assistant Adso moved in the abbey in search of truth. They entered the rooms in the abbey and analysed the windows, floors and doors very carefully. Here, the inquisitor provided an impression that he was very cautious about everything in the abbey. Thus, the author showed the reader that William was intelligent enough to solve all the problems. William made his assistant capable enough to handle the situations in his absence. He described all the matters regarding the abbey and offered enough suggestions. Every time, he allowed Adso to accompany him so that he could perceive everything in person and come to a conclusion. Slowly, Adso started assessing things wisely like his master. During the rest-time they discussed all the matters that they came across and interpreted the behaviour of each person and their assessment about them.

William and Adso were made aware of the rules, regulations, traditions and customs that prevailed in the monastery through each of the characters. Each of them gave clear picture of a particular place or room in the abbey. Amidst the talk, they described the behaviour of the persons and the person whom they suspected for the murder of the brothers in the monastery. Their conversation dealt mainly about the passing of certain knowledge, those who were allowed in particular rooms and the secret paths in the abbey.

The author revealed the richness and peculiarities of the abbey through the conversations of the monks with the inquisitors, William and Adso. Though some of the conversations helped the enquiry, some diverted their attention. Still, the author informed the readers, how well the plans were made and executed after getting necessary

information. The game for the readers started from the first day, proceeded for some more days and ended on the seventh day when everything bursted in front of them.

The author made the readers very anxious to know the result of their ventures on the first day and moved to the second day with great interest. On the second day, the author sited some of the events that took place and showed the reader that the real game has been initiated. The third day informed the reader about the channel through which the investigation proceeded and offered hint to the reader on the success of the inquisitors. Fourth day went off with the discussion of a monk which led to the revelation of certain other happenings in the abbey and suspicions took new direction. On the fifth day, everyone was set to focus on a missing book and the person who informed about the book was also murdered.

A series of other events pus the reader under suspicion on the fifth day of the investigation and the readers start their search for the real culprit with a notion that there would be a mastermind behind all the murders. The sixth day brought some answers to the readers and the secret behind the book was made clear. Also, William gained full confidence of the readers as the inquisitor of intelligence. On the seventh day, the readers were revealed about the man behind the consequent murders in the abbey. They were shocked and were sad for the tragic end of the abbey.

Everyone was alarmed by the outcome of the inquisition. The book which was suspected in the beginning became the reason for the disaster of the abbey. The person behind the death of the monks and the manner in which they died shake the whole world of Christendom. The least suspected one was found out as the person behind the murder. He planned his work very cautiously so that it left no trace of clue for others. Fall of a rich abbey with the world's greatest library was not endurable. The only relief was that William and Adso could untie the mystery behind the abbey.

Eco's readers

Eco revealed two kinds of readers through two characters in the novel who explored the world

within the text by discovering the meaning of signs just as a naïve or a critical reader outside the text could discover the meaning of the metatext. He allowed both the types of readers to be represented in both William and Adso. Both the characters help to explain the significance of the readers of a text by helping the reader of the novel to find a path through the text's maze.

William represented the critical reader who recognized various levels of signs in the universe. Just as a critical reader was able to find a way through the maze-like structure of a text, so William was able to find his way through the maze of clues in order to solve the mystery he was asked to solve. Eco helped the reader to develop a textual strategy by showing how the text could be read by the naïve reader and the critical reader.

Adso represented the naïve reader. While writing the story as an old Benedictine monk, Adso described the event that took place years earlier when he was a young novice. Though, he had the gifted observation in describing the details, his description was a collection of surface details without reflection on their significance or meaning. He was unable to see beyond the immediate situation and was incapable of understanding the real meaning of the clues presented to him.

Eco identified the possible reader as the model reader who dealt interpretatively with the codes within a text just as the author dealt generatively with the codes. The model reader and the author thus cooperated in discovering the codes of the text (Eco 7). The author could create two kinds of texts for the readers – closed or open. A closed text was designed by the author to elicit a specific response from the reader. However, Eco maintained the closed text as actually open to several possible interpretations. The text was considered closed as it did not adequately take the reader's ability to interpret a variety of readings into account (Eco 8).

Conclusion

The mystery ended with an apocalyptic fire that destroyed Eco's all-too-mortal library, that 'Celestial Jerusalem' as Adso once called it, that 'underground world on the border, between

Terra Incognita and Hades' (Eco, Name of the Rose 108). In the climax scene, Finis Africae became an accursed room whose evil spread throughout the entire library and the abbey. The abbey burned for three days and three nights. On the third day, everyone abandoned the abbey.

The time when the monastery was destroyed was based ultimately on two details in II Peter 3: 8-10: first, the statement that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (verse 8), and second, that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (verse 10). Thus, the end of the world will come after 6 "millennial

days," that is 6000 years after the creation of the world, on the seventh "millennial day," and it will come at night.

The society of the abbey was constructed of guilty individuals. All were guilty of deception. Everything sounded strange and created tension. One by one important persons were cut off from the mainstream. This tied the story even more tightly, making it a literary labyrinth. Finally, the revelation of the mystery set the abbey on fire. Gazing upon the disfigured visage, William could only call his enemy 'the Devil' and 'the Antichrist'.

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David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India* (Continued from page 15)

Towards Indian English, of course. India has had a longer exposure to English than any other country which uses it as a second language, and its distinctive words, idioms, grammar, rhetoric and rhythms are numerous and pervasive. By the way, Don't confuse Indian English with what is sometimes called 'Hinglish' - a vague phrase which can refer to a use of English containing occasional Hindi words or to a much more fundamental code mixing of the two languages, unintelligible to a monolingual English speaker, and heard daily on FM radio. Indian English is a much broader notion, applicable to the whole of India, including those regions where other languages are used. There we find Punglish (mixing with Punjabi), Tamlish (mixing with Tamil), and much more.

Collections of Indian English vocabulary have been around for over a century. A large book known as Hobson-Jobson was the first, published in 1886. It is largely of historical interest now, and there have been attempts to supercede it, such as Hanklin-Janklin (a book compiled by Nigel Hanklin, and published last year). But no dictionary has yet catalogued the extraordinary stylistic range and regional diversity of Indian English. Just as Australian and New Zealand English have developed in their own directions, so it is with Indian English. We encountered hundreds of distinctive usages on our travels, such as pre-owned cars (meaning 'used cars'). Phone numbers for calling friends and family are called near and dear numbers. Something that's free of charge is said to be free of cost. A work surface in a kitchen is called a kitchen platform. Words are also broken in different ways. In New Delhi the signs warn of an approaching ROUND ABOUT - the two words are separated by a space. Above a store we read SUPER MARKET. A housing ad offers PENT HOUSES. Outside the University in Mumbai is the greeting WEL-COME, with the two elements separated by a hyphen. A roadside warning reads LAND SLIDE PRONE AREA. Another says OVER-SIZE VEHICLES KEEP LEFT. I was continually being surprised by distinctive uses of space or hyphens.

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Extensive Reading Leading to Academic Excellence: A Case for Early Exposure to Books

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Abstract

A second language which is not an integral part of day to day life (i) is usually learnt through formal instruction as opposed to acquiring it at home or on the streets and (ii) can be learnt predominantly through reading. Reading here is a substitute to oral exposure and can be made effective if judiciously employed. This paper explores the possibilities of tapping the pedagogic potentials of self motivated, casual, incidental reading via exposure to books in early childhood, Which can be nurtured through careful maneuvering and grading through gradual stages leading to effective comprehension of academic reading texts and thus academic excellence. This approach is the reversal of the conventional process of teaching how to read a second language from academic reading in the class to extensive reading via exposure to books in real life. This paper tries to justify the reversal of the processes from a pedagogic as well as socio- linguistic perspective.

Key words: Reading, Exposure, books, Academic reading, Academic excellence

Introduction

Reading is an integral part of one's life. Those who read more will be enriched with vocabulary and grammar and they can write better (Krashen, 2004). From the educational point of view, reading stands higher. Earlier the most important objective of teaching English in India was to strengthen reading efficiency, since the goal of learning English was to get access to knowledge available in books. Therefore, among all the skills in language acquisition, special attention should be given to reading, as it is known as an accompanying tool in fostering good language acquisition. More over reading is one of the factors which foster intelligence, similarly it enhances thinking power and thus can enjoy high imagination. One can improve one's speech and writing through reading and the ultimate use of language becomes more accurate (Thompson and Wyatt, 1952).

A good reading requires good vocabulary, comprehension, reading fluency, knowledge of word structure, sense of sense group in a sentence and text organization. It also involves

delicate balance between attending to forms, the meaning, the style and semantic information and assembling all these into a coherent and structured whole (Lesgold and Perfetti, 1981). In addition to all the above mentioned, reading involves recall, reasoning, evaluation, imaging and organizing. Thus reading becomes synonymous with education itself. All these imply that reading is a complex skill and reflects the importance of bringing the second language learner to the realm of reading.

When a child starts his/ her schooling, he/she is compelled to read according to the curriculum. It is a static way of reading rather than dynamic one. For a child, to read and understand English at school is a psychological requirement, because it is a question of self esteem. It is a sociological act too, since he is a member of a society in which English plays a key role. More over it is an act of cognitive development. Through this the child has to achieve many socio- cultural needs like higher career prospects, better economic status and higher social roles. Because of all the above mentioned

requirements the child is forced to come to the realm of academic reading and thus academic excellence.

What is academic reading? It is defined as reading with a specifically academic and educational purpose. It is different from everyday reading. When reading academic text, the general purpose is likely to be one of the following: to get information, facts, data etc; In academic reading the reason for reading is very important and one has to decide how to read it. Reading is a difficult skill to learn but an important skill to be learnt. Sengupta (2002) defines academic reading as powerful and critical reading of academic text for studying specific major subject areas (p.3).

Academic reading generally happens through instruction, especially in the classroom. In the early stages the stress is on vocabulary, word structure, grammatical structure etc; Being a conscious learning process, its mastery becomes a hurdle to the learner. Usually knowledge gathered in the subconscious level helps any learner to any learning process—here reading. Some of them read just to achieve their goal, this reading is habituated and conditional. A good academic reading is needed for academic excellence. All these emphasize the importance of academic reading in a learner's life. There may be many methods to improve academic reading. But an important and a slightly neglected one is random exposure to books and vast reading. Exposure to the world of books and fostering of unintentional reading helps the learner to grab the nuances of reading, this prowess's academic reading, leading to academic success. This unintentional and random reading creates motivation in reading, an important factor needed for academic reading. The conscious as well as subconscious mind of a learner can be filled through exposure to books and random reading. Things thus learned and recorded helps the learner to comprehend and conceptualize ideas easily.

What is Reading?

The urge to read a printed word in a familiar or unfamiliar language is common to all human beings, especially children. There is a

psychological inquisitiveness behind the tendency to read. A word or a letter is a secret code and the human instinct wants to decipher the code and get the message. Therefore reading is an act of code breaking and message finding. If the reader is competent in breaking the code, reading becomes successful. How to be competent? Many factors influence reading like home, community, school, culture, society, individual characteristics and life experiences the reader brings to reading. The background information, that the reader brings to the text (schema) helps the reader to comprehend the text. According to Anderson, R.C. Spiro and Anderson M.C (1978) schema theory of reading is effective for understanding of any reading materials .

The pre-requisites and skills needed for good academic reading

Academic reading requires active engagement and critical thinking about the information we gather through reading. The reader must (a) recognize the purpose of reading (b) work towards comprehension (c) process text fluently (d) account for the learner's level of proficiency and (e) account for difference in interpretations caused by social context (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Jensen, 1986). The skills needed for academic reading are good lexical knowledge, structure of the language, inferential knowledge, re-organization of the idea in the text, identification of sense group, cultural knowledge and in addition to it, reading should have a purpose .

Reading an academic text differs in many ways from reading comics, novels and magazines. The important differences are what we read and how we read. What we read points to the content and style of academic text. How we read points to what readers of academic texts are expected to do. Widdowson (1979) suggests that texts do not have meaning, but potential for meaning, which will vary from reader to reader depending upon a multitude of factors, but critically related to purpose and knowledge. Beyond mere reading, the reader has to ask questions to the text and has to interpret the text. Similarly the reader has to build a bridge between existing knowledge and the new.

Apart from this the reader needs to integrate information. In addition to all this the reader has to evaluate evidence and draw their own conclusion instead of simply accepting what the author says. Academic reading includes understanding the author's interpretation of the text, which may be very different from our own, ability to interpret and analyze, the reader has to question and evaluate what is read. A recall of the read items and a re-reading of the text is also necessary. When reading for academic purpose one has to ask why this is being read? Is it necessary to read everything? Where to start? Which way to go? How can it be helpful? These questions help to become more focused on the content. To become successful in academic studies, one needs to develop the ability to become efficient, skillful, and as elective reader.

Exposure to books ignites reading, gateway to academic excellence

Random reading via exposure to books is the process of reading something, without the intention of doing so. It is an unplanned indirect reading within an informal situation. Here the reader has the freedom to choose what to read, this freedom that the reader enjoys while selecting materials, automatically evokes interest in reading. Comprehensible input has a vital role in second language acquisition, readers acquire language subconsciously when they receive comprehensible input in a low anxiety environment (Stephen Krashen, 2004), thus this fosters second language acquisition. Through wide reading the reader when confronted with unfamiliar words and grammar applies different approaches to decipher the message. Thus the reader becomes familiar with new words, syntax and semantics of the second language. All this learning happens subconsciously without any formal instruction. From this it is clear that this random reading improves the habit of reading and also automatically improves language knowledge, general knowledge and vocabulary which are key factors of any reading. Whatever the learner learns and adopts through reading, gets retained in his/her subconscious level, and will be of help in the future. Therefore, the habit of

reading should be inculcated in a child in his/her early childhood, through exposure to books and this will help the learner to step into the world of academic reading easily.

While reading a story book, magazine or article the reader tries to guess the unfamiliar words due to the enthusiasm to know the story well or to know the very interesting adventure depicted in the book, the process is subconscious. There are limits in using consciously learned words in sentence, whereas words can easily be used when they are subconsciously acquired through reading. Ponniah (2011) analyzed the performance of students in reading. One group learned consciously the meaning of words to learn the idea in the given text, the other group was exposed to vast reading thus read incidentally and comprehended the matter. The result was that the learners who learned unknown words consciously were unable to use the words in sentences later. But the group who learned subconsciously were able to use the words in sentences proving that they not only absorbed the meaning of the words but also the grammar. Therefore this study confirms that through random reading via exposure to books, acquisition of language and retention of vocabulary and grammar becomes easier.

Thus the reader gains good lexical knowledge and structure of the language, picks up inferential knowledge, learns re-organization of the idea in the text. In a sense the reader acquires an overall proficiency of language. Thus readers subconsciously acquire writing style, syntax, spelling, grammar and fluency (Lee & HSU, 2009). More over vast reading habit promotes learner autonomy, crucial for any academic reading.

Fostering reading habits Sociolinguistic and psycho linguistic perspective

Habit of reading and attitude towards reading can be fostered in the family. The reading habit of parents and exposure to reading materials motivate the child to read. Those who grow up in homes where reading is seldom done seem to have a very different view of the value of reading (Heath, 1983). How much input a child receives in childhood has a crucial role in his/

her later academic development. In the early stages of childhood the child usually imitates his/her mother, here comes the role of mothers. Conversation between the mother and the child, discussion of stories, books and morals helps to link the child to the society, especially at a higher level. Here develops an intimacy towards books. Mother reading stories to the child creates enthusiasm in the child to know about the world through books. Bed time stories for relaxation and enjoyment motivate reading books. Reading stories for children with facial expressions, actions and voice modulations will drag the children to the world of imagination, at the same time motivate them to read. Later the child should be motivated to read stories with expressions and emotions for parents. These deeds will sow the seeds of reading habit indirectly in the mind of the child and it develops gradually. Later just a patting is enough for the child to go on with it. This makes academic reading and conceptualization easier leading to future academic excellence. Like home culture shapes a groups basic system, it is like a filter blocking or letting through a set of learned patterns and attitudes that form its core values. In a culture where reading is highly valued, the society will take much pain to promote reading.

In the reading process, the brain uses three cueing systems (phonological, semantic, syntactic) to recognize words during meaning making, while reading the reader uses past experiences, learnt things (schemata) to make sense of what is in the text. Exposure to books and thus reading books help the reader to learn all the nuances needed to explore the text in a subconscious level. Things learnt in the subconscious level of the mind will be retained and can be used whenever necessary. Thus exposure to books and vast reading helps to enrich the schemata and the three cueing systems

Pedagogic perspective

Exposure to books is a powerful tool that helps language acquisition which is a necessary part

of academic reading and thus academic excellence. Ironically though it has a pivotal role to play in the development of academic reading and success, not many have given due importance to it in the curriculum. And it is still comparatively ignored. Therefore, there is a dire need for increasing the importance of exposing the children to books.

A classroom is generally heterogeneous, consisting of children hailing from different socio-psycho-economic environments. Despite limitations, a competent and enthusiastic teacher could lift the children to the world of books by employing many activities in the classroom. The students can be assigned to prepare a review for oral presentation or in written form based on any of the books read by them according to their taste. This could motivate them to read extra books. Such task could be preferably given just before a long holiday. So during the holidays the students would get enough time to spend with the story books or novels. Similarly the students could read in the classroom any of the news from the newspaper which they found interesting, it could be politics, films, business etc; and allow them to present a synopsis of what they have read. Similarly, the children could be encouraged to present stories in the classroom which he/she has read earlier apart from textual stories. All these regular practices would lead to fostering random or incidental reading, a gate way to academic reading and excellence.

Conclusion

Exposure to books and vast reading is a self-motivated task, if it is nurtured in the proper way, it will lead to effective comprehension of academic texts. It contributes to all the skills required for academic reading. Through this reading, learners become autonomous learners. More over reading habit makes behavioral changes that even changes the personality of a person. Thus, exposure to books is a good promoter of reading habit leading to good academic reading and thus academic performance and excellence.

A Stylistics Analysis of Shelley's *To the Moon* – A Reflection on Classroom Practice

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Abstract

Reading of a poem always makes an emotional and aesthetic appeal. But explaining this aesthetics in terms of stylistics is another way of teaching and learning language. Stylistics involves phonological, lexical and grammatical analysis of a poetry by taking into account of foregrounding devices. According to Van Pere (1986), there is a tradition of explaining aesthetic sensation to literature and other works of art by foregrounding effects as deviations from a normative background focusing mainly on structural and stylistic properties of poetry. Reflective teaching practice paves way for action. This reflective practice of teaching of a poetry for undergraduate learners has given new insight for language teaching. This paper being a reflective one on classroom teaching makes a stylistics analysis on P. B. Shelley's 'To the Moon'. This poetry is juxtaposed with two prominent stylistics devices namely Enjambment and End-stop'. The learners were excited to find out these devices from the given poem after getting the meaning of these using examples. The paper traces the origin and meaning of Stylistics, defines the predominant foregrounding devices and gives line by line structural analysis using the lens of the stylistics.

1. Introduction

When we trace the etymological meaning the word 'style', it is derived from the Latin word 'stylus'. In ancient days Romans wrote on a waxed tablet using an instrument called 'stylus'. The scribes learnt and showed some skills in using the instrument so that writing was not only legible but also artistic. This way of a shift from the focus on the instrument to the manner of handling it defines 'style'. Hence 'style' is the skill with which one handles the instrument of communication, viz. language. The following quotation on literary style by Federico Fellini best defines style.

"What's important is the way we say it. Art is all about craftsmanship. Others can interpret craftsmanship as style if they wish. Style is what unites memory of recollection, ideology, sentiment, nostalgia, presentiment, to the way we express all that. It is not what we say but how we say it that matters". (As cited in Lavanya and Sriman, 2012 P. 45)

In broader sense, Stylistics examines the style of written or spoken texts. It concerns itself more or less exclusively with the language of literary and through a systematic examination

have the language it arrives at an interpretation of those. It applies the insights and methods of linguistics to analyse the language of literary texts and offer interpretations of those texts on the basis of that analysis. Therefore, stylistics can be called as the application of linguistics to the analysis and interpretation of literary texts.

Stylistics and second language pedagogy

Stylistics help readers of a second language to promote themselves from learners to users, in the sense that stylistic devices prompt us to explore the possibilities of multiplicities. Language is not a monolithic entity; ambiguities that are part of day to day language use certify this fact. How can one arrive at the multiplicities in form and content while language is in use? Once the learner has crossed the threshold of 'skill using' to move towards 'skill using', stylistic devices can lead him or her to the higher level of language use—the aesthetic level. When in a literary text where real objects, people, occurrence, experience and normal speech vanish and metaphors and symbols try to convey the message of the piece, stylistic studies come handy to reach the potentials of

language use.

Shelley's *To the Moon* under the lens of Stylistics

I

*Art, thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth, —
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?*

Stylistics gives more scope for analysing a language and negotiating the meaning. This article is a reflection on my classroom teaching practice. P. B. Shelley's 'To the Moon' is prescribed for I year undergraduate students. While preparing for the teaching, I thought the poem is very small that it can be explained in 5-10 minutes. But when I was thinking of extending the time, I started navigating upon the stylistics approach of teaching a poem. The poem 'To the Moon' is juxtaposed with the stylistics features called End-stop and Enjambment.

End-stop and Enjambment as stylistics devices

End-stop is a poetic device where the idea or thoughts break with the punctuation marks. To find out whether a poem is end-stopped is to look for punctuation at the end. That might include a comma, colon, semi-colon, dash, period, question mark, exclamation point, or ellipsis. If the punctuation signifies the end of a grammatical unit, whether that unit is a clause of a sentence or a complete sentence, then the line tends to be end-stopped. The word enjambment is derived from the French which means step-over. This grammatical overflow from one line to the next line is called a run-on line or an Enjambment.

The poem 'To the Moon' is composed of 8 lines in two stanzas, the first one being a sestet and the second one is a couplet. The sestet follows the rhyming scheme of ABABCC and the couplet is unrhymed one. The first line has the Enjambment which steps over with the next line. The first line says that the moon looks pale out of weariness and the reason is stated in the next line that the moon is tired of climbing

heaven and gazing on the earth.

*"Art, thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,"*
The second line has the End - stop of comma and breaks the thought. Again, third line has the Enjambment saying the moon is wandering alone without any company. The fourth line carries over the reason that moon is companionless for stars and moon have different birth. They can't make a company. The two different End - stops in the fourth line being a comma and dash can be related to the different natures of the moon and the stars. The moon waxes and wanes whereas the stars always twinkle. Another feature is the stars are many in number and the moon is single. As people of different nature can not find a company or solace in each other, the moon and stars cannot be friends. Thus, the different birth of two is denoted by the use of two different punctuation marks as End-stop in the same place.

*"Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth, —"*
The fifth line has both the end-stop and enjambment. End- stop being a comma breaks the thought that moon is ever changing and again there is an Enjambment which takes the meaning to the next line that a joyless eye which never finds anyone worthy of loving. The theme of constancy is clear in the sixth line. The moon is joyless, without a company worthy of love and dedication. Hence it is tired and wandering all alone.

*"And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?"*
The last couplet has two End-stops. The poet pauses with the End-stop saying that the moon is the chosen sister of the spirit and that not only looks on it but pities on the moon. The spirit which has chosen the moon as its sister gazes at the moon and pities upon it for being lonely. The moon cannot treat the spirit as its company as they both have different nature. "Thou chosen sister of the Spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it pities ..."

Though the poem is short, it is beautifully embellished with the Stylistics devices. This is limited to lexical level analysis. This can be

extended to phonetical, phonological, grammatical, graphological levels of stylistics.

Conclusion

Students of literature are usually asked not to look for contents in a literary piece. Ins, well-informed teachers lead them explore how the content has been presented for the reader and what the second language learner of literature

is expected to do is to find out the tools and devices the author has used, and how they are used. Thus, the learner is expected to identify the similarities and differences between transactional language and literary language. In fact, they are not two entities; but two sides of the same coin.

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David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India* (Continued from page 22)

It is far more than just vocabulary, as we saw on the 132-km of road between Pune and Mumbai. Listen to these examples. They're all signs we saw on the roadside. There's nothing quite like them in British English - or in Australian or New Zealand English either. OVERSPEEDING AND TYRE BURSTING CAUSE ACCIDENTS DO NOT CRISSCROSS ON EXPRESSWAY - I'd only ever encountered 'crisscross' in informal usage before. DO NOT LITTER ON YOUR EXPRESSWAY SPEED BREAKER AHEAD - referring to road bumps LANDSCAPING AND BEAUTIFICATION, ROAD IN CURVE AHEAD - 'in curve' PARKING INSIDE THE LAWN IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED - don't park on the grass.

And then there was this one, which we saw approaching an expressway: NO 2-/3-WHEELERS. 2-wheelers is- the generic term for motorbikes and scooters; 3 wheelers is the everyday description of auto-rickshaws)

The historical background of India is never far away from everyday usage. 'What do you think you're doing? Cutting grass?' says a boss to a worker lazing about. How can cutting grass be equivalent to doing nothing? Because grass-cutting was done by servants. But this history also promotes correspondences. In particular, there is a remarkable sharing of linguistic humour between India and other parts of the British-influenced English-speaking world. In particular, there's a common delight in word-play. A review headline about a critical book on Jane Austen begins: 'Austensibly, it's about Jane', with the 'o' of 'ostensibly' spelled 'Au'. Be Ecofriendly says a sign in Delhi - but it spells the second word 'Ecofriendelhi'.

Indian English is changing. Regional dialects are increasingly apparent - an inevitable consequence of a result of this huge country's cultural and linguistic diversity. There are noticeable differences of accent and dialect, especially between north and south, and 'regional' jokes are common - you know the sort of thing - there was this man from Kerala...', or some other rural region distant from the joke-teller's location. On the ad billboards, and in Bollywood film posters, there are now Hindi slogans written in the roman alphabet. You can see change in the newspapers too - in the matrimonial columns, for instance, where families advertise for desirable brides or grooms. A generation ago these were full of such terms as 'wheatish', describing a type of complexion. Today, these have largely gone, and we find such criteria as 'professionally qualified' instead a linguistic reflection of an important social change.

Three generations on after independence, Indian English is still having trouble distancing itself from the weight of its British English past. Many people still think of Indian English as inferior, and see British English as the only 'proper' English. It is an impression still fostered by the language examining boards which dominate teachers' mindsets. At the same time, a fresh confidence is plainly emerging among young people, and it is only a matter of time before attitudes change. It's a familiar scenario, for anyone living in Australia and New Zealand. (*continued on page 27*)

Re-imagining Classrooms during Covid - 19 and beyond - Learning English Online

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Abstract

This paper is in the form of a report that simultaneously reflects on the twists and shifts in pedagogic procedures enforced by the pandemic on the one side, and at the same time it explores the possibilities of programs and strategies that may attract more learner engagement, and demand more teacher intervention. It studies the areas in the field of education that are affected by the pandemic. The remedial measures that can be undertaken during this period are also explored here.

Key Words: Educational activities ,threats, redesigning, momentum of teaching, subject groups

1.Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a turbulent disruption in the education system, all over the world. As it started spreading around the world, normal school activities began to falter. The whole world was like that, but not all educational activities can be stopped for that one reason. Our schools have been finding alternatives to overcome the threats of the pandemic.

School Profile

Schools, these days, are redesigning classroom activities . Many schools offer a variety of programs challenging the threats of the pandemic, through online mode by allowing the students to stay safe and sound at home. My school, Udinur Central UP School also worked in our own way to provide quality education, exploring the possibilities of the online platforms. My school is in the topmost position among the schools in the state in academic excellence, bagging the most number of state-sponsored scholarships such as LSS, USS and Sanskrit scholarships.

Exposure to the language

Exposure to the language is one of the most important requirements for children to become proficient in English. For this, it was decided to avail the services of eminent persons in this

field. It seemed that it would be better to have programs to introduce children to foreign pronunciation methods as well.

I was able to do educational research in the United States for six months as part of the Fulbright Fellowship. There I decided to take advantage of the services of foreign friends who had worked with me for fellowship work

Exploring Potentials

How to keep the momentum of teaching and learning? Loss of continuity means that education is at stake. It's unthinkable for any school. We conducted an SRG (School Resource Group) meeting in Google Meet to discuss the issue.

The SRG meeting discussed how to overcome this crisis when the school could not be reopened, in June. By then, the Department of Education had decided to start classes at the state level through the Victor's Educational Channel run by the Education Department . This has been a great blessing. In parallel, it was decided to carry out activities at the school level as well. Subject groups at the UP level and Class groups at the LP level discussed what programs could be planned and implemented Each subject council started conducting meetings to work out a plan for the online classes. The English Subject Council meeting

decided to hold separate online classes for the subject. We also decided to conduct the inauguration of the English Club in the school. However, during this Covid period, most of the teachers had a natural apprehension of how to form an English club without seeing the children face to face, but decided to explore the possibilities of online platforms.

(a) English Club

The inauguration of the English Club of Udinur Central AUP School was organized online. It was decided to form the English Club using its online platforms WhatsApp, Google Meet and Zoom and to launch it in a different way. It turned out to be a different inauguration.

The inaugurator was from the North American country, Mexico. Sandra Haira, a professor and chemist at the Department of Chemistry at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico inaugurated our English Club by blessing us with a marvelous speech. The children enjoyed the very interesting inaugural speech.

Spanish is the mother tongue of Sandra, who is of Mexican descent. The children enjoyed Sandra's utterance of words like 'Udinur' in Spanish slang.

Weber Kaiser, an English teacher at Espirito Santo, Brazil, also came to greet the ceremony. Both Sandra and Webber interacted through WhatsApp. Through AV Santosh Kumar, a teacher and writer at Udinur Central AUP School, contacted Sandra and Weber for this purpose, as they were in the US as part of their Fulbright Fellowship.

(b) English Fest

Communication skill is one of the most important skills in language learning. But there are no shortcuts to achieving this.

The first step in developing English communication skills in children is to build their confidence.

The best way to do this is to give children the opportunity to present their natural talents naturally without being motivated.

The English Fest turned out to be a unique experience with the participation and presentation of the children.

Even parents and teachers were amazed when

they saw the English language quality of the children through different child friendly activities through the English Fest conducted by the class WhatsApp group. Different pre-prepared activity areas were introduced to the children two weeks in advance and then the children were given the opportunity to participate in activities of their choice.

The action song story telling of the little ones was all beautiful. Even the children who saw English as a nuisance were able to beautify the English Fest by drawing posters and pictures in the way they could. Also, the success of the English Fest came when some parents called the grandchildren's performances and saw them as their own children and congratulated them directly.

Different corners were prepared for this through precise intervention. Different corners were formed involving children from the same area (Reading Corner, Writing Corner, English Corner, Story Corner, etc.) The inauguration program was conducted in each class under the leadership of the children. The role play together with the children and parents was full of fun. Even the performances of the first-class children who were newcomers literally amazed us.

(c) Reading Corner

Children generally have less access to reading, especially audio reading. Teachers make sure to provide opportunities for English audio reading in the classroom. Reading English, a UNPHONETIC language, is often not easy for children to master.

Even in the classroom, children are often able to read and write English fluently only if the teacher interacts well. It can be said that the possibilities for this were almost closed in the online study. The online classes conducted by Victor's Channel do not provide any special opportunity for audio reading.

It's natural because it is not possible to give children the opportunity to read audio in a one-sided class on TV. It is in this context that the possibility of audio reading through the WhatsApp platform is opened up. The teacher reads and records lessons and other related material with precise pronunciation patterns

(pronunciation, stress, intonation, pause, rising and falling tunes, expressions, etc.).

It can use video or audio possibilities. Like this, children take advantage of the teacher's model reading - by listening many times and learning to pronounce difficult words - and send their audio readings back to the teacher. The teacher can listen to the children's readings and give necessary instructions. Prizes can be given for the best reading. This method was very successful.

(d) Speakers' forum

When various events are organized online, the children themselves give the welcome speech, the presidential address, the felicitation speech and the vote of thanks. Each of these different forms of discourse provides specific instructions for writing and understanding their various suprasegmental features.

We have been able to cultivate great promises in the art of preaching by giving children the opportunity to be different each time.

These are just small attempts to overcome the limitations of online time learning. Many of these are just the beginning. Many things are going on continuously. There is no claim that all of this is a complete success. But we can say for sure that we are on the path to success. Suspicion of being overweight in children is definitely a problem to face.

There should definitely be an inquiry into whether the children are getting enough time to complete the assignments that the children receive from the various online classes.

It is also important to find out how much time they spend each day in front of the phone and TV - screen time - and whether it is affordable for children or whether it is causing them mental and physical problems. In any case, there is no doubt that the impact of online learning possibilities on pedagogy is boundless.

(e) Parental intervention

Comments by a few educated parents on the newly introduced programmes follow:

(1) English Fest was a completely different event. The children presented the programs in a

very good way. It was great that the children themselves were involved and ensured active participation in the event. The children performed very well with .speech, action song, story telling, loud reading and poem recitation. Special mention should be made of the fact that the welcome speech and the keynote address were prepared and presented by the children themselves.

2) The children presented very good programs related to English fest. The main events were speech, action song, conversation, story telling, loud reading, telling about any object, telling about their hobby and poster. As well as the welcome, the president and the thanks were done very well even by the children in the 1st Std. for parents

(3)The inaugurations of the English Club and the English Fest were a wonderful experience for the children.

The children's performances in all categories were absolutely enjoyable. Poster, Recitation, .Story,. Items such as speech, .tongwister, skit and collage were presented magnificently. The children took full advantage of the online possibilities. Congratulations

4) The children presented very good programs as part of the English Fest. The children performed at the fest, including speeches about Corona, recitation, loud reading, story telling, action song, poster making, tongue twister and conversation. The event was very helpful in alleviating the fear of the children towards the English language. There is a good opinion about the organization of such an event and the participation of the children. Congratulations!

Conclusion

Periods of challenges are periods of possibilities too. The history of mankind is the history of challenges and how we managed to overcome the difficulties. This period of pandemic taught us many a lesson.

The field of education is the most effected area. Still we somehow overcame those difficulties my inventing newer ideas.

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures

Lecture 34 (16 April 2022) **Dr. Santosh Mahapatra**

Assistant Professor of English, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

Topic : Being an Empathetic Teacher: A Key to Professional Growth

Report by Bhagyalakshmi Mohan

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In a fast-changing social milieu, the academic and administrative responsibilities in the field of teaching too undergo drastic changes. Moreover, the nature of the moral obligations of the teacher also need to be redefined though not stipulated anywhere in the documents. In the case of assessing the performance of an individual teachers of the past, sincerity was the foremost quality that used to get highlighted. Now, it seems, teacher's sincerity alone won't work since the sociocultural, psychological and emotive dimensions of the learner have evolved into certain unprecedented elusive mazes in the post-pandemic period, and above all the cognitive potentials of the learners of any stage too have assumed larger dimensions because of the explicit presence of technology in the virtual classrooms of the past two years. It is in this context, Dr. Santosh Mahapatra suggests some sort of a cautious measure on the part of teachers to be more empathetic so that learning-teaching experience may turn out to be more personal, more learner-engaged and more fruitful, too

Dr. Mahapatra started his presentation by stating that he was addressing teachers rather than researchers, and he was focusing on teaching than adding any research component in his presentation. His presentation focused on:

1. What constitutes empathy for a teacher?
2. How a foreign language teaching can be made more empathetic, and
3. Empathy and growing professionally.

In the first part he discussed the definition of empathy and how teachers can be more empathetic. He quoted the definition of empathy given by various experts in the field:

- empathy is an understanding another person's

experience by imagining oneself in that other person's situation (*The Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*)

-The ability to experience the feelings of others. (Armstrong,2017)

-Ability to mentalize the experiences of others. (Armstrong,2017)

He added that there is always a boundary between self and the other as we cannot be absolutely empathetic.

He suggested certain ways through which we can be empathetic to the students. Teachers should treat the students in the ways which they want to be treated whereas teachers should keep their reactions as secondary. Teachers should address what the students need by actively listening to them. Teachers should pay attention to non-verbal cues by validating feelings without judging them.

In the second part, he focused on empathetic language teaching and tried to bring empathy and language teaching together. He suggested that teachers can be more empathetic in teaching methodology, teaching materials (tasks and activities) and assessment.

(a) Teaching Methodology

He talked about heterogenous classrooms where students have individual language needs. Teachers have to start by knowing them personally. They should be familiar with the socio-economic background of the students. He mentioned some strategies that can be used in the classroom. The same kind of task can be modified and used for different levels of students. Also, by individually approaching them, the teachers can allow the students to use language more. If they are comfortable in using another language to express their ideas, teachers could allow it. The teachers should also follow a learner centric approach where

learner talk time should be more than teacher talk time. Teachers can use different levels of questions in the classroom that can facilitate the students in using the language. Teachers should develop a need-based feedback mechanism in the classroom that help them to assess the progress of students. It can be positive or negative. They should give importance to group feedback system in the classroom.

(b) Tasks and Activities

Use relatable contexts: Teachers should find familiar contexts or take examples from familiar contexts.

Challenging tasks(i+1): Teachers should be able to provide different tasks for different level students. Thus, more students will participate and it will be productive.

Interesting Tasks: Teachers should find tasks that are interesting to the students.

Variety: Teachers should be able to find innovative activities that are interesting.

Encouraging collaboration: Teachers should give space for students to work in pairs and groups.

Ensuring participation: All the students should get equal chances for participation.

(c) Assessments

Assessments should provide adequate scope to everyone so that they can demonstrate their performance. All the students should be able to perform well. Teachers could share assessment criteria and rubrics in advance. They should be

fair and democratic in their assessment. Students should be able to understand what the teachers expect from them. Teachers should not violate the validity of assessment. They should assess the skills or components that they have already taught. So similar tasks or activities can help the students more. Teachers should be able to explain the performance and score in relation to the shared rubrics.

Towards the end of his presentation, he pointed out that being empathetic includes growing professionally. Teachers should keep track of the innovations that are happening in the field of language education and update themselves regularly. He also suggested an empathy self-test for the teachers and stressed that teachers should be empathetic.

Dr. Mahapatra's lecture must be read against the academic-administrative atmosphere prevailing in most of the colleges. As pointed out at the outset of this report, pressure has been mounting on teachers these days to show themselves to be more and more accountable to the administration, rather than to the profession. As a result, quite often teaching occupies the backstage, public/university exam results and cut-shorts to accreditation steal more and more of teaching time and teacher preparation. Imposing conformity on heterogenous learners, thus becomes the easy way to overcome time restrictions. But, learners are waiting patiently for empathy-embedded individualized teaching!

David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India* (Continued from page 22)

It could hardly be otherwise when we consider the way Indian writing is increasingly reflecting indigenous varieties. Gone are the days when everyone in a novel, from sahib to servant, spoke standard British English. The same linguistic diversity is apparent in the films - over a thousand each year - produced by Bollywood and the other growing film studios. There's the less well-known Kollywood in Chennai - beginning with a K, which stands for the suburb of Kodambakkam where the studios are located. And there's Tollywood in Andhra Pradesh the T stands for Telugu. If I had to choose a single instance of this newfound confidence in films, I would cite the cheekily titled *Bride and Prejudice*.

What status will this rapidly growing English dialect have in the eyes of the rest of the world? Linguistic status is always a reflection of power political, technological, economic, cultural, religious... - so this is really a question relating to the future of India as a world player. If I were a betting man, I would place quite a large sum on India as an eventual cyber-technological super-power. The amount of daily text-messaging (or SMS) exceeds the amount taking place in the UK, USA, Australia, and New Zealand.

(Continued on page 29)

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures

Lecture 35 (28 May 2022) **Dr Muralikrishnan T.R**

Professor, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit Kalady (Ernakulam Dt. Kerala)

Topic : Narratology of Dramatic Texts: Making Use of the Concept in Classroom Practices

Report by DR. AC Sreehari

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Narratology has always been associated with the study of texts and their constituting narrative elements like characters, setting and events. How can a traditionally text-centred theory be transformed into a performance-oriented method for analysis and how can such ideas be used for pedagogical practices while teaching literature, especially in a classroom where fiction and drama are treated in the same way? What are the methods to be adopted from reading drama as a text to a performance? Dr. Muralikrishnan in his lecture identified the factors which help teachers deal with texts on drama compared to fiction in the classroom from the perspective of narratives. Teachers are to adapt to the new scenario. They are to be critical mediators of old texts. They must be well equipped to face the challenges posed by the text. roles in a modern classroom.

First he analysed what happens in a novel. Readers construct the story from the narrative of a novel. Narrative is therefore defined as 'story plus narrator'. The narrator or narrative discourse shapes the narrated world creatively and individualistically at the level of the text. He explained the two terms invented by Gérard Genette, the French literary theorist, homodiegetic narrative (roughly, first-person narrative) and heterodiegetic narrative (third-person narrative). There are extra, intra, hyper, metadiegetic narratives as well.

The methods of narrative theory are inspired by modern linguistics. Narrative theory tries to trace how 'sentences turn into narrative' or, how the narrative emerges from the narrative text, the words on the page. In the 1960s and 1970s, an entire school of text linguistics established text grammars. They tried to divide narrative texts into what they called 'narremes' and analysed these in various combinations.

Narratology, he continued, has close ties to

poetics, the theory of genre, and to the semiotics, or semiology, of literature. The classical phase of narratology developed as a strand within structuralism in France and includes the work of Claude Bremond, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette. Furthermore, it also enabled the extension of structuralist methods in the direction of generative grammar (Noam Chomsky) with its transformations from grammatical deep structure to surface structure. Vladimir Propp therefore paved the way for the text grammars to come, in which deep-structural narremes are transposed to the textual surface of sentences and paragraphs.

He introduced the most notable narratologists of the present who are researchers from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (where the narratological journal *Poetics Today* is published), such as Meir Sternberg, Shlomith Rimmon Kenan and Tamar Yacobi. Younger German narratologists include Wolf Schmid, Manfred Jahn, Ansgar Nünning, Monika Fludernik and Werner Wolf. Some narratologists postulate a second set of communicative relations around the narrator/narratee relationship, namely those between what Wayne C. Booth terms the 'implied author' and the 'implied reader'. The implied author is in actual fact not a character but a construct of the reader or interpreter, who tries to determine the 'meaning' of the work in question. Fludernik's book *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996) states that narrativity should be detached from its dependence on plot and be redefined as the representation of experientiality. It implies that narrative is a subjective representation through the medium of consciousness.

Dr Muralikrishnan disproved the general perception that narratology has a limited usability within the context of performance

analysis. He quoted the English theatre and film director, Peter Brook in his essay “The Empty Space” (1968) marked the very beginning of a new way of thinking on theatre as performance. At the time, the famous opening sentences of the essay sounded as an opening provocation to the existing, text-centred theatre conventions: “A man walks across this empty stage whilst someone else is watching, and this is all that is needed for”. Brook brought theatre back to its essence, he said. A narrative exceeds the terrain of the exclusively verbally narrated texts and functions as a container concept for all modes of signification.

He further argued that narratology can perfectly be integrated in a systemically oriented history of theatre in which the interaction between the closed system of the performance and its larger cultural, historical, social, and artistic context takes up a central position, thus linking up the rather specialised study of narratology with the broader framework of systemic theory. In each performance there is a constant interaction between the theatrical system and its context; the narrative ‘barriers’ of the fictional world are constantly crossed.

The post dramatic theatre is a radical reaction to the traditional logocentric approach in which the direction (i.e., the intended performance) of the play is considered as the ideal semiotic construction and the actual performance as an imperfect derivative of what was intended by the author, he said. He substantiated that it is a shared rather than a presented experience, a presentation rather than a representation. The

narrative entity which is presented to the spectators, is no longer a representation, a mirror image of a story; it is the presentation of an event. Cognitive narratologists stress the importance of the context in which the spectator operates as a watching entity, as the cornerstone of the analysis of artistic products.

Different schools have different approaches, he said. The school of Poetic Drama roundly prioritizes the dramatic text. Reading the text is regarded as a uniquely rewarding experience, particularly when set against the shortcomings of actual performances. Poetic Drama’s main interpretive strategy is a close reading which aims at bringing out the dramatic work’s full aesthetic quality and richness. He gave an example of Eugene O’Neill who hardly ever went to the theatre. He produced a better play in his mind; a dream theatre; greater than the play interpreted by the director. It was a rewarding experience for him. Main objective of such close reading is to feel the aesthetic quality and richness of the text. The school of Theater Studies, by contrast, privileges the performance over the text. A play’s text is accepted as something that is “intended to be performed,” but the performed play is really the only relevant and worthwhile form of the genre. Reading Drama is a school that envisages ideal recipients who are both readers and theatregoers - readers who appreciate the text with a view to possible or actual performance, and theatregoers who (re)appreciates a performance through their knowledge (and rereading) of the text, he concluded.

David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India* (Continued from page 27)

The call-centre phenomenon has stimulated a huge expansion of Internet-related activity. When I call up British train enquiries about how to get from Holyhead, where I live, to, say, Manchester, I speak to someone in Hyderabad. The IT press is always speculating about where future Googles will come from. One day I feel sure it will be India. India has a unique position in the English-speaking world. I see it as a linguistic bridge between the major first-language dialects of the world, such as British and American English, and the major foreign-language varieties, such as those emerging in China and Japan. China is the closest competitor for the English-speaking record. Currently with some 220 million speakers of English, it plans to increase this total dramatically as the Olympics approaches. But China does not have the pervasive English linguistic environment encountered in India; nor does it have the strength of linguistic tradition which provides multiple continuities with the rest of the English-speaking world. When Indian operators answer my call about train times between Holyhead and Manchester, they are far more likely to be aware of where you are travelling than would any equivalent operators in China. Apart from anything else, they probably have relatives in Britain.

(Continued on page 35)

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 7 (19 March, 2022)

Let There be Language! Teachers and Language Teaching Materials

Resource Person:
Dr Dr V.K. Karthika
Asst. Professor of English
National Institute of Technology, Trichi

Report by:
Vinija N S
Chief Tutor i/c
District Centre for English, Thrissur

Language teaching materials are the vital elements to improve the quality of language teaching; to facilitate teachers in doing their duties, and to lead students to a higher level of understanding in learning. They generally serve as the basis for much language input and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. Teachers, being the materials developers, need to select, adapt and supplement materials that cater to the needs of their students. Dr V.K. Karthika's workshop titled Let There be Language! Teachers and Language Teaching Materials introduced certain practical aspects of material development and adaptation to the teachers of English.

Dr. Karthika started her workshop with a discussion on English Language teaching and learning. She asked the participants to use a simile or metaphor to describe their English classroom. The participants came out with several metaphoric descriptions such as their classroom is a garden, a buzzing beehive etc. Further, she shared some thoughts on learning citing the following quotations.

"If the teacher is indeed wise, he doesn't bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind."
(Kahlil Gibran)

"I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can live".
(Albert Einstein)

"Learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting." (Illich, 1972:116)

"Given a rich environment, learning becomes

like the air- it's in and around us."(Sandra Dodd)

Dr Karthika asked the participants to define learning based on these four assumptions. She consolidated the responses received from the participants that learner centeredness is commonly focused in all these four assumptions. She asserted that students are not blank slates and individuality of the learner should be maintained in the classroom.

The next topic of discussion was about how a teacher would facilitate the 'rich' environment in the classroom. She pointed out that the National Education Policy of 2020 focuses on the holistic development of the students and the main skills aimed at are, 'Thinking and Learning Skills' and 'Social and emotional Skills'. Thinking and learning skills include creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy and learning to learn. Communication, collaboration, emotional development and social development come under the social and emotional skills.

Further, Dr. Karthika opened a discussion on materials in language classrooms. She stated that the materials need novelty, variety, attractive presentation, appealing content and achievable challenge. The materials should be appropriate for the learners' level of development. She explained all these points in detail with apt examples. Effortless language learning through reading stories or anything else, while the focus is not exactly on language, is to be encouraged.

The discussion of the materials in language classrooms was followed by a discussion on authentic materials, its advantages, disadvantages and the ways of troubleshooting

the disadvantages. Authentic materials are print, video and audio materials students encounter with in their daily lives such as change-of-address forms, job applications, menus, voice mail messages, radio programs and videos. It offers real language, rich language input, motivation, cultural knowledge and needs and interests to the students.

Apart from the above mentioned advantages, Dr Karthika added a few more benefits of authentic materials.

bridge the gap between outside world and the classroom

- ◆ enhance grammar knowledge in context
- ◆ build vocabulary
- ◆ improve pronunciation
- ◆ improve intercultural communication and competence.

She also pointed out some of the disadvantages of authentic materials as well. Those are summed up as follows:

- ◆ Frustrate lower level learners in terms of structure and vocabulary.
- ◆ Complex vocabulary and structures.
- ◆ Sometimes culturally biased.
- ◆ Mixed structures making it difficult for the lower level learners to decode the text.
- ◆ Difficult for teachers to make them culturally and linguistically accessible.

After elucidating the advantages and disadvantages of authentic materials, she put forward some ways for troubleshooting the disadvantages. She suggested choosing materials as per the age and proficiency level of the learners. The activities should be planned and must have a clear pedagogical focus and different types of tasks and types of input should be included. The tasks can be graded based on the learner's levels.

In the ensuing practical session, Dr. Karthika gave the participants some activities using

authentic materials. At first, an image of the newspaper excerpt with the title, 'Thailand Cave Rescue Complete' was exhibited on the screen. The participants were asked to make opinions regarding how this could be used in a reading comprehension task, a speaking task, a writing task and also as a grammar task. Next, a video song was played and various aspects of using it as per the level of the learners were discussed. Some participants shared their views on using the song for enhancing the language skills of the students. She illustrated a few activities using the video song and shared her own experience in using them in her classroom. A video of a dance adaptation of Maya Angelou's poetry 'Still I Rise' was screened. Various ways through which it could be used in the classroom was discussed. She also reminded the participants about how to value the learners' language and how teachers can use the regional language materials in the classroom.

Dr Karthika concluded the session by sharing 'Letter to a teacher' by Haim Ginott, an educationist, Child Psychologist and Survivor. I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So I am suspicious of education.

My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

Through her thought provoking and enlightening session, Dr, Karthika inspired the participants by emphasizing the message that being a human being is nothing big, but being humane is a great thing.

ELTIF Teaching-Learning Materials

ELTIF is planning to develop a 'Material Bank for Rural and Backward Learners'. Teachers and researchers, who are willing to share their teaching-learning materials (print and electronic) are requested to mail them to eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com. They will be first published in the Journal, and later compiled as a handbook for teachers with the name and details of the contributors. – Editor

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 8 ((30 April, 2022)

Multilingual Approach-Principles and Practices

Resource Person:
Dr. Ravinarayan Chakrakodi
Professor, Regional Institute of English
South India, Bangalore

Report by:
Rathamany K
Former PGT (English), Syrian Jacobite
Public School, Thiruvalla, Kerala

Multiplicity of languages necessitates multilingualism in a developed society. Multilinguistic approach seems essential as it dominates all walks of life. Dr. Ravinarayan Chakrakodi, Professor and Academic head, RIESI, Bengaluru, in his workshop on 'Multilingual Approach-Principles and Practices' highlights the importance to develop multilingual competence in children. He advocates the need to view code-switching, translating and translanguaging as normal classroom processes. The goal of language teaching is to develop bi-/multilingual literacies. In his talk, he propounds possible ways of encouraging students to communicate across language barriers in the classroom building on their prior knowledge and experience.

He opened the session with a video clip, 'Kids Laugh at a Child Who Cannot Read' showing the trauma and subsequent triumph of a girl student suffering from dyslexia. The timely intervention of the teacher made the impossible possible. She became resilient in learning spelling and remained nonchalant at times of humiliation. The purpose of the video, he opined, was not to show the techniques of teaching, but to highlight individual differences and to multilingualism. Dr. Ravi advised the teachers to create awareness among the students to respect each other as there is only differences in learning. The video was a fact check to participants to mend their ways accordingly.

Multilingualism manifests manifold in the entire living space. Almost all the signboards and information boards are multilingual and he presented two boards to illustrate it. He beautifully related to multilingualism from

languages of individual, languages at home, languages around oneself, languages over media and the reasons for the use of different languages. Subsequent interaction invariably established the influence of multilingualism.

Dr. Ravinarayan further explained how to approach multilingualism in the present scenario.

- Multilingualism, not monolingualism, is the norm; its more a way of life than a problem.
- We respect the use of different languages in daily life.
- Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge. It is also a fundamental attitude of cultural identity and empowerment.

He presented a picture of his own classroom of teacher training session for 20 days where one teacher was sitting aloof. He observed that the said teacher was sitting along with other participants initially and later found him sitting apart. On enquiry, the participant admitted his incompetency in English and the resultant disappointment. Dr. Ravi commented that if the participants were allowed to use their L1 (mother tongue), they would have expressed their ideas freely.

He cited the report of the British Council which conducted an impact study of one of the teacher training programmes. It says that the key concepts and theory can be voiced out in the languages which the learners are comfortable with - may be their mother tongue.

Report of the British Council

"Most teacher educators we observed used only English and some described how they

insisted on use of English only in the sessions. While this provided an intensive period of English exposure, with some opportunities for written or spoken production by the participating teachers, the insistence on English may have prevented discussion on topics that many teachers lacked the lexical resource to discuss in any depth (for eg: how to engage in continuing professional development or how their learners learn). It is important that the Teacher Educators are aware of the value of teacher discussion in language in which they are most confident when it comes to theory and key concepts.”

Developing multilingual competence in children demands utmost attention. The challenges/problems the teachers faced in the classrooms as they shared authenticates its relevance. They grieved that students in the high school section struggle to read and write in English, they have short term memory, they skip long answer type ones and they have a tendency for rote learning.

Dr. Ravinarayan observed the deplorable state of EMI in government schools which warrants an introspection in the medium of instruction. The findings are:

- Choral repetitions, mass drilling, rote learning are found to be common practices in English medium sections.
- Students do not know the meanings of ascenders, descenders, greatest number, smallest number in Maths lessons. They are not able to do simple multiplication and division.
- Children spoke very little in these classrooms. Opportunities for students to involve in genuine communication/interaction in any language were very limited.
- Children could write their names in English but surprisingly they could not do so in their own language(s).

The general statements Dr. Ravinarayan presented titled ‘Agree or Disagree’ triggered a lot of irresistible interaction among the participants to the core of problem on monolingualism, bilingualism and

multilingualism.

- The goal of English language teaching is to produce native like English speakers.
- The best way to learn and teach English is through English, and English alone.
- Code - switching and translation are legitimate classroom strategies.
- English medium schools should adopt ‘English only’ approach in their classroom.
- Students using local languages in such English Medium Schools should pay small penalty.
- Assessment practices such as question papers should be only in English.

Dr. Ravi opined that teachers can help students build strong identities by acknowledging and respecting their languages. He added that bi-/multilingualism help them make more friends, enjoy music, films etc. in other languages and help in their workplace too. He quoted Prof. Ajith Mohanty who worked with marginalized communities said that many children were ‘pushed out of schools’ simply because their L1 was either neglected or banned.

He exposed the darker side of English Medium or monolingual schools which poses many challenges. Students lack proficiency in English. Further, majority of students do not use English either at home or in their communities and this mismatch creates more dropouts, especially in the rural areas.

Preferring bilingual to monolingual schools, he exhorts teachers teaching in English medium schools to explore the advantages of multilingualism using code switching and code mixing and to ensure smooth transition through comprehensible input model. It has been found that high achieving students can translate effectively between their L1 and English, and bi-/multilinguals outperform monolinguals in tasks which require high levels of cognitive control. He reiterated that the goal of English language teaching is to develop multi competence and multiliteracies.

Multilingualism is the use of more than one language, either by an individual or by a group of speakers. A multilingual class is a class where the learners speak a variety of first

languages. Dr. Ravinarayan highlights multilingual education as :

- An international movement supported by UNESCO as a means to improve educational quality and reduce dropouts.
- UNESCO supports bilingual and/ or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.
- Associated with higher cognitive development of children. Studies show a highly positive relationship between bilingualism,, cognitive flexibility and scholastic achievement.

Research suggests that bilingual and multilingual teaching learning materials and resources are far more effective than monolingual ones.

Dr.Ravi related the fundamental principle of NEP 2020 which promotes multilingualism and bilingualism, enabling the students to speak home language/mother tongue and English through technology, gamification as on contexts, subjects and languages.

NEP 2020

- Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning - one of the fundamental principles that should guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it.
- “Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching learning materials, with those students where home language may be different from the medium of instruction. All languages will be taught with high quality to all students; a language does not need to be the medium of instruction for it to be taught and learned well.” (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India,2020)
- “All efforts will be made in preparing high quality bilingual textbooks and teaching learning materials for Science and Mathematics, so that students are enabled to think and speak about the two subjects both in their home language/mother tongue and

in English.”

- “Teaching of all languages will be enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, including through gamification and apps, by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages-such as films, theatre, story telling, poetry and music- and by drawing connections with various relevant subjects and with real life experiences. Thus, the teaching of languages will also be based on experiential learning pedagogy.”

He suggested certain guidelines for using multilingual approach:

- Recognizing and valuing multilingual nature of classrooms
- Creating a supportive multilingual environment
- Establishing an inclusive learning environment. Example: video on the dyslexia student.
- Assessing individual learners in a manner that takes their linguistic background into account.
- Giving learners opportunities to use their home languages to support learning and demonstrating their understanding of subject content.
- Reflecting on how effective my implementation of multilingual approaches is in promoting learning.

He justified multilingualism, citing the research reports of British Council in India on literacy skills that reading and writing are higher in those EMI schools where code-switching is practised when compared to EMI schools where code - switching is practised when compared to EMI schools where English only approach is adopted.

Dr.Ravinarayan concluded his session in a non-customary way of waking the participants to ponder over teacher language, student language, translation, using students as resources, etc. In order to engage students in more cognitively challenging dialogues and discussion, he suggested the following

classroom practices:

- Give students a chance to think in their preferred language first before responding in English.
- Allow students to use local languages for exploration talk and group work.
- Draw on students' preferred languages for classroom discussion.

In addition, he shared some implications for the proper implementation of multilingualism.

- Developing locally relevant multilingual textbooks - making the curriculum locally more relevant.
- Creating opportunities for students to use all their linguistic resources to enhance communication and understanding.
- Develop positive attitudes towards local languages, multilingualism among students and other stakeholders.
- Using students as a resource -older students, students within the class
- Developing resources that display multilingual examples relevant to the curriculum.
- Making current codeswitching and translation practices more cognitively engaging.
- Language portfolios - to showcase their language skills and experiences of learning and using different languages. Proficiency in all the languages is valued.

- Maintaining reading logs - all languages, esp.L1
- Multilingual project works - field visits, interviews, data collection, etc.
- Demonstrating effective code - switching practices.
- Showcasing a variety of ways to learn and use languages.
- Teacher learning the local language.
- Preparing videos for modelling good teaching practice.

The views expressed by Dr.P Bhaskaran Nair at the Q & A session was an eye opener to the teacher community. He opined that if the teachers stick to English as far as possible, giving all the instructions (inside and outside the classroom) exclusively in English, supported by gestures, facial expressions etc, the learners will definitely 'float across from regional language to English'. If teachers can provide optimal input in moderately fluent and accurate English, ignoring the imperfections of the learners' English, the English speaking environment can be created. He commented that its fruitfulness rests on the competency, willingness and sincerity of the teachers.

Dr. Ravinarayan's earnest effort to bring out the best in multilingualism, a topic debated world over deserves high appreciation. The vibrancy of the interaction throughout the session and the erudite expression of thanksgiving by Dr. B. Nagalakshmy, member of the Online host tem, vouch for it.

David Crystal: *Mother-tongue India* (Continued from page 29)

And it is the Indian presence in Britain which marks the other end of this linguistic continuity. British people are familiar with (British dialects of) Indian English as a result of several generations of immigration. When 'The Kumars at Number 42' became successful, I heard local English kids using its catch-phrases and copying its speech rhythms, just as they did when 'Crocodile Dundee' made them play with Australian English. There are parallels in the literary world. Suhayl Saadi's new novel, *Psychoraag*, is an amazing mixture of South Asian English (Urdu, in this case), Standard English, and Glaswegian. We ain't seen nothin' yet. And India is special in one other respect. Alongside the spread of English there is a powerful concern for the maintenance of indigenous languages. I repeatedly heard young students express the need for a balance between an outward-looking language of empowerment and an inward-looking language of identity. CHOOSE YOUR LANGUAGE FOR YOUR POWER BILL, says one of the Mumbai billboards, offering Marathi, Hindi, Gujarathi, and English. Many of the smaller tribal languages are seriously endangered, there is no denying it, but there is an enviable awareness of the problem which is lacking in many Western countries. India, it seems, can teach the rest of the world some lessons not only about multidialectism but about multilingualism too.

Resources/Resourcefulness

ELTIF has been encouraging teachers to produce their own teaching-learning materials as part of its policy statement that a bottom-up approach may strengthen the predominating top-down approach. ELTIF resource persons have been experimenting with the pedagogic notion of teacher intervention in the curricula. The following is an instance of teacher intervention through developing indigenous materials. --Editor.

Surayya Najeeb

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Two Poems

Life

Life descends to the world with extreme cries;
Like a statue undergoes chisel, hammer, and
ambient tempering,
Infancy and childhood are as innocent as
angels;
No malice, no hatred, no foe and no ego.
Adolescence confers elegance, robustness,
wisdom and a vision;
like a bud blooms into a gorgeous flower to
mesmerize,
Youth brings challenges with the windows of
opportunities anew;
Confront all the obstacles and junctures
valourously with a beaming face.
Dotage showers infirmity, creases, passivity
and morbidity;
Like a towering sturdy age-old tree terrifies the
high winds,
Accomplishments of life dwindle like a
tranquil dusky evening;
Demise snatches away each possession belongs
to you Only.
Life awards woes, tears, intimidation,
deprivation and discouragement;
But family, relatives, friends, prosperity,
cognizance and achievements too.
So, learn to live before you lose life in the now
only;
Savor this precious irretrievable life, relish,
adore and content.

Exercises

1. Copy from the poem, words denote various stages in life.
2. At which stage are you now?
3. What were the preceding stages—stages before your present stage/
4. What is the next stage waiting for you?

5. In the first part of the poem, there is a reference to some beings which do not belong to earth. Who are they? Where are they supposed to come from to earth?
6. Select a few words and their antonyms (opposite words) from the poem.
7. Copy from the poem, words similar in meaning to the following words.
Pleasure, valuable, comes down, threat, fade or become weak, death.

Trust

Trust is the cornerstone of human society;
Once broken-
The entire life is less to grab it back;
Dreams, desires, hearts, lives and even human
beings shatter.

To find trust in a person of today – the rarest
thing;
The significant trait is to keep a trust,
Never attempt to play with the emotions of a
human being;
Each drop of a tear has its own consequence.

Exercises

1. Draw the faces of two persons who trust each other.
2. Draw the faces of two persons who do not trust each other.
3. Write a few words or phrases around each face.
4. If you want others to trust you, what should you do first?
5. Write as many words as possible with trust in them Example: child : children, childhood, childish, childcare.
6. Copy from the poem, words similar in meaning to the following words.
Complete, result, take by force, feature.

Reports from the field

It was Festive Mood at PC Guruvilasam UP School for ten days!

Valsan Panoli

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About 70 children and about 40 mothers were present at the inaugural session of the English Communication Programme at PC Guruvilasam Upper primary School, Vadakkumbad, a village east of Thalassery town in early April this year. It is a school with a difference—with a different sociocultural background. The school was established by a social reformer, inspired by the words and deeds of Sree Narayana Guru, the foremost social reformer of Kerala who undoubtedly asserted: “One caste, one religion and one god for humanity.” One of the oldest, in the district and one with the best academic achievements, PC Guruvilasam UP School came forward to organize a ten-day English programme for its students of upper classes during the summer vacation.

The programme called ‘Smart English ‘ was inaugurated on 7th April at a function which was attended by about 150—parents, teachers, students and public. The massive attendance itself showed the awareness of the parents and public about the need of English for their children in future. Incidentally, this village lies close to Thalassery town, which was the head quarters of the British Malabar District, and still the legacy of the British culture prevails in many aspects of its life.

ELTIF took the lead by providing a schedule, module, resource persons and materials. Most of the RPs were from nearby places, and were experienced in handling sessions in their own innovative ways.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. P. Bhaskaran Nair, President ELTIF at a meeting presided over by Mr. KP Baiju, President of the PTA. Mr. Valsan Panoli and Mr. Pavithran K

elicited, and Mr. Madhu Master, representing the school management promised full support in future too, for such programmes. Mrs. Jyoshitha, the Headmistress welcomed the gathering and Mrs. MN Praseeja, Convenor of the School English Club, proposed vote of thanks.

Parents were requested to take initiative in creatively intervening in their children’s studies at home, especially by getting them engaged in simple communication skill activities. ELTIF offered to conduct a special weekly programme for those mothers who were interested in improving their English and thereby seek self-employment or help children better. A few women expressed their desire to continue their studies through distance education mode.

ELTIF resource persons, PK Jayathilakan, C. Gangadharan, K. Pavithran, Vijayan Karayi, Sreejith and Hiran engaged children in various learning activities during the rest of the days. The main objective of the programme was to get learners completely immersed in English through getting them involved in meaningful activities. All the resource persons were trying their best to get the whole class engaged in their own self-designed teaching-learning activities.

It may be noted in this context, that ELTIF has been organizing a variety of academic activities and this programme for village children and the online lectures and workshops with international participation mark the wide range of the ELTIF spectrum.

Quite a few similar programmes have been planned for various schools and non-school organizations during the summer vacation.

Reports from the field

“I was lucky to get into a primary class much earlier than their teachers did”: A Report of the ELTIF Communicative English Course at Elangode LP School, Panoor Sub. District

Pavithran Kunnapadi

(Retired Headmaster)

ELTIF Resource person, Kuthuparamba, Kannur

It was in March 2019 I met school children last, at an ELTIF programme, as usual. Never did I fear that time, that it would take two years for me to get a few children to interact with and play with. Students of higher secondary and secondary were summoned back to school by the end of the last academic year since the fear of the pandemic was fading; but primary school children were still kept indoors at home—a wise precautionary measure taken by the government. If they were permitted to go back to school before making sure that the threat of the pandemic was over, they would enjoy the freedom as they liked, ignoring the rules of sanitization, mask and social distancing. Even teachers wouldn't be able to control their free movement and jubilation.

What I mean is that after almost two years, but before their regular school began, I had had the fortune of being with them during April-May last. I thank ELTIF and the headmistress of Elangode LP School for giving the opportunity to refresh my teaching skills and interaction skills in English.

Elangode Lower primary School belongs to Panoor Educational sub-district of Kannur district. The school is situated in a village, not properly connected by bus services. It was situated about six kilometres from Panoor town, and the mountains bordering Kerala and Tamil Nadu are not far from this village. The zigzag country road took me to the school. However, on reaching there, I forgot the difficulties of locating the school and the distance I had to ride through meandering trails. The school, though small, is housed in a beautiful two-storeyed building with very good infrastructure facilities and an LCD TV too for facilitating good learning experience. The ground floor housed classes, and in the rooms

upstairs, teaching-learning materials were stored and displayed.

Two of us used to be there every Sunday—One would engage the parents—mostly mothers—and the other, myself, would interact with children of Class 3 to 5. They were about 40. A few younger 'guests' too were there—either 'escorts' to their mothers attending the parent's session or just giving company to their elders of my class. Any way, their age didn't matter to me—age would matter if I were 'teaching' but I was (or, rather we were) engaged in various activities ranging from drawing and colouring pictures, to playing games.

Rhymes, stories, spelling games, action songs, small group work, acting—these were some of the activities perhaps the parents who were occasionally strolling through the verandah may observe. But, beneath those observable activities, I assure, strong currents of language learning were running smooth. Discussing and commenting on the day's weather, their love and affection to their parents and others at home, occupations such as blacksmith, goldsmith, tailor and teacher, games such as cricket and football, describing the details of a scenery on the wall—these and similar language elements formed the contents of teaching-learning.

Since mothers and teachers of the school too were observing the developments and activities in the class, I am hopeful of children getting better learning experience from their teachers in their class once the school re-opens, and better learning environment from their parents at home, as well.

The class has been suspended for two weeks because of bad weather. It is supposed to continue after the re-opening of schools in June.

Parenting

Birdwatching Leading to World-watching

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LQuite a few parents, especially of the young generation, seem to be unaware of the fact that there are plenty of things available around for showing their children and for talking about, other than the stuff on the TV. All that they need to do is just open the door (or windows, in the case of those children caged in apartments), and point to the hundreds of live and vibrant things around—ranging from the tree tops and the dozens of inhabitants in them busily engaged in various ‘household chores’, to the clouds “who are on their way to school/ way back from school/ going to the sea for a bath/ coming back from a bath” and so on.

The easiest available any time for drawing the attention of infants to (for feeding, to stop crying...) may be birds. The moment we open our windows, one bird may be waiting to get noticed—a crow in a tree, a pigeon on the parapet, a dove in the backyard, a cock on rooftop nearby, a mynah on the fence, a crane in a tall tree, an eagle or skylark in the sky, a hen and a few chicks in the courtyard....

In our present context, how many of us, parents, can distinguish the hopping of a crow from that of pigeon? Or, have we ever told our kids, why the cock, hen and chicks more or less come quite close to us, while the crow doesn't approach us so dearly? Don't you think that the kids want to know how a crow snatches a biscuit off the child's plate when left alone, but not, when in the company of mom. How does ‘the clever crow’ realize that it is safe to steal food from the child's plate when the child is alone? Why doesn't the crow look straight to us like a hen does? Why does it bend its head a little to left or right? How does an eagle, hovering up above in the sky locate a tiny chick in the backyard? What type of a sound does ‘the father cock’ produce to alert his

family about the approaching eagle? How does the ‘mother hen’, in turn caution her babies about the imminent danger? On listening to the particular ‘siren’ how do some chicks, close to their mother, save their life? What do those who are a little away do instead of running to the mother's spread wings? Where to they take shelter on their own? When do both groups come out of their hiding? Is there a difference between the mother hen's first cry of alert and the second cry of relief or release?

I have never seen grandmas (nor mothers, either) feeding babies indoors in my ancestral village. It was a sort of ‘roaming’ business for them. I too might have been fed like that—starting from home to the neighbourhood, crossing gates or street, scaling sky and earth, sharing local news among them, and after an hour so with an empty plate and a balloon-like stomach! At least, I saw it many times in my brother's case, five years younger to me. The general knowledge that amassed during this cross-country feeding would be amazing! Interaction with so many grannies --I'm sure, villages are abundant with wonderful grannies. I had had half a dozen around me in case of any emergency or exigency! Their words of appreciation and admiration, encouragement and advice, do-sand don't-s—all these contributed to my development, no doubt.

This lunch circuit or ‘the circular lunch trip’, is still common in villages and they play a great deal in the socialization of the infant. A lot of knowledge (not bits and pieces of information, useful only for quiz programmes, as schools provide) gets into the child subconsciously, about the plant and animal kingdoms around us through these mid-noon ‘excursions’ (in the real sense of the word).

It works in my classroom

Hide 'n Seek: Language Activities for Primary Classes

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T Let children be divided into groups of five. Let's name them: A, B, C, D and E. E hides A's pencil box somewhere; nobody knows where. Then E himself/herself goes hiding somewhere around the classroom—only D knows where. Then D goes hiding somewhere nearby, telling only C about the place of hiding. Finally, C too goes hiding—only B knows where C is. Now only A and B are left in the class. A finds his pencil box missing.

A: Where's my pencil box? It's missing.

B: I don't know.

A: Then who knows? Who else was in the class?

B: Maybe, C knows. He was here for some time.

A: But where is C now?

B: Maybe, in the garden.

A: Let me go and find out.

[In the garden]

A: Did you find my pencil box?

C: No, I didn't.

A: B says, you were in the class. Who else was there when I was out?

C: D was with me there. Perhaps he knows about your pencil box.

A: But, where is he now? He's not in the class.

C: D may be in the library.

A: Then, let me go and find him out.

[In the library]

A: Did you see my pencil box, anyway?

D: Sorry, I didn't take it.

A: I didn't say you took it? Did you find it?

D: I didn't. Perhaps, E took it. I saw him draw a map.

A: But, where is E? I didn't see him anywhere nearby.

D: He may be in the teachers' room. He was late to show his map to the social science teacher.

A: Thank you. Let me go and find him.

[At the door of the teachers' room]

A: Did you take my pencil box?

E: Yes, it's with me. Sorry, I was in a hurry. I had to show my map before the lunch break ends. That's why I took your pencil and rubber.

But, I left a note on your desk saying that your pencil box is with me. Didn't you see it? Sorry.

A: Did you? I didn't notice it.

E: Yes, and I kept the duster on that piece of paper, too. I remember.

A: Then, come. Let's go to the class.

[Back in the class]

A: There it is, lying on the floor.

E: Somebody took the duster, and the piece of paper fell down. Really sorry.

A: It's OK.

The game can be played simultaneously by the whole class in groups of four, five or six, with different objects missing, and different people hiding in different places around. Additional details may be provided by the teacher to each group, especially to below-average performers. Additional clues to teachers for planning similar activities for simultaneous practice

(a) Things missing: bottle of water, school bag, umbrella, lunch box, sketch pen set etc. (Never money)

(b) Places for 'hiding': Anywhere on the campus, but not outside.

(c) Reasons for somebody taking some other's belongings: urgency as suggested in the example above, unexpected events, emergency, in a hurry, on being instructed by the teacher, sudden rain (in the case of an umbrella missing), moving to another classroom on short notice (in the case of the school bag missing—a friend takes care of it), to get a refill (in the case of a water bottle), a minor accident on the campus (in the case of a bicycle missing—someone took it for taking a boy or girl to the clinic, nearby).

Important note: The teacher will be monitoring all the instances of 'missing'. No money should go missing.