Journal of English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum

Contents

From the Editor's Desk

Bullets can kill languages, as well.

The question in the semester examination question paper reads: "Write a short essay on 'Road accidents." What I saw in the answer scripts was a series of bullets one below the other, close to the left side margin, followed by a few content words. The whole 'essay' that ran to one or two pages had no words like *is, was, were, have, has, had, do, does, did* etc. One of the best writings has been copied below.

- Road accidents: Reasons. Bad roads, careless driving, people crossing roads carelessly
- Government's attitude: Total negligence to road safety
- Road and bridges Department: Gold mines for contractors and engineers
- Police department—Traffic police corrupt
- Motor vehicles department: You can get anything done, if you bribe. 50 year- old buses on the road—Most of the school buses very old.
- Judiciary: Synonym, 'delayed justice'. One died in accident--Son approaches court for compensation—Court orders inadequate compensation after the son died of old age.
- Insurance agencies: How to exploit victims.
- Rules? Yes, they are there. But, who to implement? "Who bells the cat called Corruption"?

I said, the one quoted above is one of the best 'essays' going by the contents. Yes, looking at road accidents from an 'angry young man's' perspective, the content is more or less right, and sufficient for forming an essay, too. We get facts. But, what the young man or woman was expected to do was to showcase his/her writing skills as part of a testing system. What skills do we see on this sheet of paper other than presenting facts. A shopping list, we all know, does not make an essay. But, an essay can be generated out of a shopping list. An essay can be generated out of anything or nothing, too. I was told by my teacher that Charles Lamb had never been to Oxford University Campus before he wrote the wonderful essay' Oxford in the vacation'. He simply imagined facts; and they were close to real facts. Just imagine, the facts Lamb invented were all untrue. Still, Lamb's essay would remain superb, as it does today.

That means, the abundance or accuracy of contents is not the prime motive in writing an essay. The success of an essay lies somewhere else, from the language teacher's or tester's point of view. Teachers of science and technology encourage the 'essay' presented above. A matter of convenience for them in teaching and testing. In teaching, they need not worry about language use, nor grammaticality or acceptability. A bundle of facts satisfies them. But the teacher of English is not satisfied, and rightly so.

In fact, what is quoted above is an instance of a fairly well-written note, as part of developing the study skill called 'note making'. The subject teachers leave the learner's writing skills half way, being satisfied with the quantity of contents and their accuracy. It is the latter part–what follows note making—the real language skills get developed,when the bulleted points are developed into individual sentences. When those sentences are logically sequenced, and then at some point the text written so far get split into paragraphs, an essay is born .

It is about 10% of the whole school/college time that the teacher of English gets. The rest is for various subjects. If all of hem are happy with the 'essay' cited above, what can a teacher of English do other than follow 'his masters' voices'? Usually subject teachers dominate classes; teachers of English always get marginalized when decisions are made. They are in a sense, happy too—"Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure", thanks to the Indian railways!

I am not sure, whether the inventory of the '21st century skills' includes writing skills too. Or, were they condemned as outdated and abandoned? Which netizen needs a well-written essay in the 21st century? What is the use of writing skills? Who writes? Who cares?

P. Bhaskaran Nair (Editor)

Sour Grapes Hanging on Vines in a Photo-poster:
A critical Revisit of the Construct of Scaffolding

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Abstract

This reflective introspection is a sequel to a paper written on scaffolding (Deepa, 2022a); my paper draws on a course that was offered a decade ago to adult colleagues and critically discusses how a single class hour became a turning point for the whole course. The whole experience with its revisit in this paper re-examines the assumptions that underlie the construct of scaffolding and its application to adult learning contexts in order to theorise from practice.

Key Words: Scaffold, scaffolding, learner chosen materials, anthrogogicity, retrospective syllabus

Introduction

In this paper I will retrospect and reflect on one teaching episode and its outcome with non-academic colleagues in my former workplace (EFL University), to help us understand what the Brunerian notion of a scaffold actually entails (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976), how it is teacher- centric, can be stifling, and may not be what the learner needs. This paper must be read as a sequel and as a supportive, additional response to an article published in this journal in the prior issue. The argument made there was that the notion of a scaffold is pedagogic and not anthrogogic in its orientation, has predetermined outcomes, that it can be used only for inanimate objects like buildings and ought not be used when referring to the support provided by human beings to teach other humans (Deepa, 2022a).

The Narrative

Nearly a decade ago, we had started a programme, English at the Workplace, to teach English to some of our less literate colleagues, who work as gardeners, peons and plumbers. The request came from them; some had not been to school, and if they had, had dropped out in class 3 or 4, more than 30 years ago. Surrounded by English they said they felt inadequate, and wanted to 'study' and become literate. We faculty members decided that we would oversee the programme and get our students (those who volunteered) to teach, for it would serve as an internship for them. In great earnest, we drew up a syllabus and decided to teach them English in the most current of methods, with oral skills preceding the skills of reading and writing.

The first few days, the student teachers easily taught them (about 13 in all) to name everything that the students could see, furniture, clothes, colours etc. We found out details about the different jobs these colleague-students do, and then taught them to talk about their daily activities in English. The teaching of the alphabet was done in an extremely learner centred manner; we started by teaching them to write their own names, and then, names of wives, husbands, children, etc. After this was completed, they chose the names; it began with the Vice Chancellor and went on to include many administrative authorities like the registrar, the finance officer, the Pro-vice chancellor, etc. At that point, we felt elated and thought we were doing very well. We told ourselves: Success! Soon though, we realised that we had spoken in haste!

My retrospection/reflection is centred around this one teaching episode from that programme that is recounted here. One afternoon,

(the classes were held at 2 p m; the student-colleagues gave up a wee bit of their lunch time and the university gave them permission to attend these classes) one of these students, Shreehari, brought a photo-poster with tales in 4 pictures (the Aesop's fable kind) and asked me about them. He said that his granddaughter had brought it home and he did not know what it was about. The designated student teacher was absent, and I was stepping in for her: I thought to myself, "Wow. Here is genuine learner chosen material(Modi, 2010) and here is a request for a story-telling session from a learner himself, so let me try, and they can listen to a story in English! They need the language and some learning can happen." With great conviction and enthusiasm, I held up the photo-poster for the students to see, and pointing to the pictures, launched into the tale of the crow and the water deep inside the jug, using a lot of gestures, pausing to ask in Telugu if they understood. I got no matching enthusiastic reactions, but I valiantly went on to narrate, in a similar manner, the story of the fox and the grapes. As with the crow and the water and stones, I got only poker faced responses, but I plodded on and finished all four tales. With infinite politeness, they sat through it all, silent and unresponsive.

Then came the next task, where again, with a view to learner centeredness and relevance, I told myself: "These are adults who are native speakers of their own first languages, and do so much in them all the time. I assumed that they probably had not understood all that I had narrated and told myself, "let me therefore use that first language (Telugu) and find out if they have understood my tales!" This was the point when everything fell about my ears.

One of the language learners, Ramulu, a gardener at the University, a bit more articulate, or rather 'gutsy' than the others stood up and said: (I am doing a free translation from Telugu) "All that you have told us just now is really like those grapes! It is of no use to us".

Critical reflection and retrospection

I was quite taken aback! I thought I had found the right zone of proximal development, (Vygotsky, 1978), because the story-pictures had come from the colleague-students who were our learners, and I was able to use age and level appropriate language to narrate the story: the photo-poster for me was like the illustrations in textbooks or the teaching aids that we take into classrooms and therefore become scaffolds (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). But such a predetermined end/goal decided upon by the teacher (story telling in English, retelling in Telugu) as an appropriate zone of proximal development did not work in this adult classroom. More importantly, while my assumption that the more enabled language, in this context, Telugu, could be used for production and that receptivity levels of English by comparison are much higher than production levels (Prabhu, 2019) is probably correct, the use of Telugu as a productive language scaffold (Durairajan, 2017) did not fulfil its function, not because they did not have the ability to retell the story in Telugu, but because they were just not interested and found it a waste of time. Adult scaffolds, or rather supports, aids and props, cannot be brought into the classroom by the teacher with a specific predetermined purpose or outcome. If used in that manner, it can function only as the scaffold for an inanimate building and not as the support and extra nutrition needed for a child, let alone an adult to grow.

At the end of this very frustrating class, as a teacher with more than twenty years of experience I could have easily told myself: "One bad class, it did not work, big deal, let me continue" but I did not and am very happy today that I chose to do what I did. I had a chat with Ramulu first and then the others to find out if they too felt the same, and when they said yes, why they said it, and what their expectations from the course were. I also asked Shreehari what he had expected me to do as the teacher with those pictures. Shreehari showed me a homework question based on the photo-poster that had been given to his granddaughter studying in class four; he had just hoped for a wee bit of help explaining to him how that homework was to be done. Ramulu intervened and reiterated this point because his grandson

was also in the same school and class. He said that they thought I would explain what it is used for in a school classroom in two sentences, and teach them how to use it to teach their grandchildren and not take a whole class on it, as valuable 'learner driven materials'. The whole narration and retelling was totally irrelevant to their needs! They had not come to the English class to listen to stories!

With a little probing I found out what they needed: they wanted to learn to read and write! Language learning for them is all about two of the three R's. It is not about speaking, and definitely not about listening to tales and that too, 'baby tales meant for grandchildren'. Once I sat down amongst them, (we also ordered cups of tea to provide a comfort zone), they also told us what their immediate requirement was.

Once class was over, I called for a meeting of the volunteer student teachers putting aside my sense of self, for all of us are learners, teachers and doers; I narrated my discomfiture in class, and told them about the requirements of my student colleagues. Once the initial shock and surprise had gotten over, all of us realised that we had learnt a huge lesson on the real meaning of learner centeredness. What teachers assume is relevant for students need not be so! 'Padna' for my colleague-students meant reading and writing.

More importantly, their basic and most important requirement was to be able to fill withdrawal forms in the bank to draw money. This had not entered our consciousness at all; we would never have seen this as important. It was simple, straightforward and easy to teach. They confessed that with their salaries being credited to their bank accounts, they had to 'find' a helpful soul, (look for faces that would smile at them, wonder if they could ask, would their heads be bitten off etc) to draw money and that this was humiliating to say the least! Earlier in the course we had just gotten them to spell numbers one, two, three, etc. and we had wondered why attendance used to be dismal. We had taught numbers in the banking system of teaching (Freire, 1970/1993). A mechanical "1=one, 2=two, 3=three etc" was meaningless

to them, as bad as teaching A for apple, B for bat etc.

Now, the 'write in words and figures' made sense to them. With ease, we got the forms, drew up enlarged versions on a black board, got a list of 'amounts' or rather numbers that they needed, and off we went. They first wanted to learn how to write the numbers 50, 100, 200, 300 and 500. Then they said teach us 1000, 2000, 3000. And 5000. Two of them had taken out housing loans, and so needed 10,000, and 20,000. Getting such information and teaching numbers in this manner is genuine conscientization, problem based education. (Freire, 1970/1993). Soon, we found four of them with a little help from us, filling up these withdrawal forms on their own. We had told them: you never have to hang your face ever again and wonder whom you can ask. Tell us before-hand.: one of us will discreetly be there at the bank counter. You fill in the form, and if you need help, we are there for you. The success of such focused learner centred teaching was driven home when Padma, one of our students, who till then could only sign her name, long after the course was over, was in the bank, asking for a withdrawal form, wrote out her name, all that was needed and filled it in. Sweta, one of our student teachers was there, and asked her in Hindi "kya Padma, apne aap form fill karre ho"? Teary eyed she replied, that the whole course was worth it, just to be able to do this on her own.

Theorising from practice
This whole episode, in hindsight, now prods me to think of what the construct of a scaffold is! It clearly dawned on me that what I had assumed was a scaffold (of working with the photo-poster) was actually a waste of time, effort and energy for both the teacher and the students. What was assumed as learner centredness was pedagogic as the assumption was teleologic because any material brought in by the student is usually seen as a call for inclusion as a teaching material. I did the same, used it for teaching and did not see the deontological angle of its use for the grandchildren. What was supposedly used as

learning material for the children, with a single assumptive oversight turned into a futile lesson for the grandparents. Scaffolds have been perceived as something valuable and necessary in all education and in language education as the essential support system that enables language acquisition, or rather, in this ESL context, learning to happen (Bruner, 1985). The saving grace that changed the whole course and the further action in the classroom was this one move of asking Ramulu to explain why the class was like 'sour grapes' to him. If this had not been done, then the whole course would have remained a teacher centric one, with pre-determined assumptions made about what the learners might need to do with English. The diagnostic needs analysis would have been elusive. This reflection reiterated that the construct of scaffolds in adults needs to be contested and clearly pointed out to the teacher in me that only buildings need scaffolds; buildings are inert lifeless structures which get built the way the architect designs it.) Even in such a context, there are architects who would argue that if they think of the person who wanted the building, sometimes plans change and that the building takes its own shape).

There are four significant points that I would like to pick up for further reflection from this teaching episode as a basis for theorization. First of all, if I had discounted what my colleagues turned students had vehemently stated, gotten angry with a "how dare they insult me, a Professor, like this" etc. and plodded on with the original plan of action, I would have become the oppressor, with the superior hand, like the colonial master and they the oppressed (Freire, 1970/1993). The whole course would have remained an autocratic, authoritative, dictatorial "we decide, you follow' we teach you listen and learn' 'we know what is best for you' type of programme. Secondly, if we had not taken the perceptions of the students into account and continued with the original syllabus, the teaching would have been purely pedagogic. By listening to what they had to say and teaching them what they wanted to learn, the

orientation changed and it became an anthrogogic classroom. This term is an adaptation and modification from the principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1968); the term andragogy has been used in the context of non-formal or continuing education. As such, since "English at the workplace' was only a non-formal adult literacy course, I could describe it as just andragogic but I would prefer to use the term anthrogogic because it not only includes all genders, but is more humane, and includes multilinguality, pluriculturalism and equity within its purview (Deepa, 2022b). More importantly, as reflected in the 'sour grapes' episode, teachers and learners were treated as equals, the syllabus was negotiated and open to discussion and after the course turning point sour grapes incident, it became a retrospective, procedural learner needs taken into account chosen syllabus (Prabhu, 1987).

Fourthly, Shreehari's photo-poster can be described as genuine, learner chosen materials. However, there was a discordance between what he hoped I would do with it, and what I chose to do. The purpose of the course was language enabling, and therefore, any means, (particularly something that was brought into the classroom by the student) was perceived by me as justifying the end. This is teleological and not necessarily adult. Adult anthrogogic education implies that it has to be deontological; the ends are not predeterminable and adult students will have their own goals (Deepa, 2022a).

Conclusion
This whole course is a reflection of how as teachers we often talk of learner centred materials, but rarely make the effort to find out what they really need. We select materials that we think are suitable for the students based on some 'notional' grape vine type of needs analysis but very often it sours the grapes on the supporting scaffolds; what is needed is an anthrogogic ripening that is freed from the shackles of inanimate scaffolds to sweeten them for the adult learners so that they become palatable. The nutrition from the 'photo (poster)'- synthesis needed for my learner

colleagues was not to listen to stories, but to teach them the basics to fulfil their communicative needs. Enlarged photocopied withdrawal and casual leave letter forms functioned as much better supports and aids in this adult self motivated classroom.

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Innovative Classroom Techniques

Reports of classroom activities which engaged the learners in your lesson are invited to the column "It worked in my class". Many teachers do experiment of various ways of teaching; some fail, while some others succeed. Report of success, when shared, reach others--thus, they reach many more classes. Please do share your experience. –Editor

Book Reviews Invited

Reviews of books are invited to be published in the journal. Preference will be given to ELT practice books, which will be useful to teachers for enhancing their professional competence. Books, which are useful to students, and which follow current thinking in learning-teaching, especially those which promote self study approach, are also welcome. Reviews must be original, highlighting the pedagogic features of the book chosen. Length limit around 1000 words. The full details of book, including current price must be provided.
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Challenges in Institutionalizing Literary Theories

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Abstract

The incorporation of one or two courses on literary theories in the literary curriculum has become inevitable at postgraduate and research levels in almost all universities and autonomous institutions in India with sanction from the UGC. However, they cannot function as standalone courses without having any pedagogical implications on using them uniformly in literature classes. Unfortunately, this pedagogical failure is reflected not only in classroom practices and research practices, but also in question papers of both formative tests and summative examinations. Such an approach to curricular change has resulted in many 'theory charlatans.' Moreover, such an incorporation has divided the English literature faculty into two classes: theoretically theory-knowing, but not pedagogically practicing teachers and those who either do not know or resist teaching theories. This reflective article discusses the challenges in institutionalizing literary theories in literature classes by analyzing the mental blocks in teachers toward using them as theories of reading literature. It crystallizes the teachers' belief that theory-informed literature teaching acts a barrier to their aesthetics of teaching literature.

Keywords: literature pedagogy, multidiscipline theories, theory resistance, literature scholarship, reading theories

Introduction

The very introduction of English Studies in England and its colonies during the 19th and the early 20th centuries was problematic and political. After prolonged discussions and debates, the authorities agreed to offer/institutionalize English Literature at Oxford in 1894 and at Cambridge in 1911 with many caveats whereas it was successfully introduced in India in 1857 without any conditions when three universities at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were established under the colonial regime. The academic administrators grilled those who mooted the idea of Eng. Lit. as a degree programme with a volley of questions like

i. If the study of literature cultivates taste, educates the sympathies, and enlarges the mind,' what is its knowledge component?
ii. How should it be taught?
iii. Who are qualified to do so?
iv. How can it be tested?

Prior to institutionalization, literature reading was treated as a personal agenda of deriving uninterrupted pleasure and aesthetic feast at home for the upper-class people who had plenty of leisure time. They were considered 'gentlemen.' In other words, they were reading it because they had nothing else serious to do in life. No one thought of its institutional, academic, interpretive, moral, and employment values, nor about any mediator like professional critics and trusted teachers for reading and enjoying literary works.

In response to queries at universities, I.A Richards, William Empson, and F.R. Leavis promised that they could provide a sense of direction to the English Studies at Cambridge. New Critics offered a scientific method of reading, teaching, and reading literary texts, particularly poetry. Richards' method of studying English is still the norm today. However, his method did a huge disservice to English Studies. His Practical Criticism broke the connection between language and literature. His close-study technique *isolated the text from history and context* as well. "Words on the

page" mattered to him. Leavis extended the close-reading method beyond poetry to novels and other materials through his Scrutiny that ran for 21 years from 1932. His approach to literature was overwhelmingly moral—to teach about life and transmit humane values. It resulted in one more degree of isolation for literary studies: *language studies, historical considerations, and philosophical questions.* Literature teaching was made a competitor for religion. He inherited this moral aspect of literature from Matthew Arnold. The introduction of 'theory' was to re-establish the lost connections between literary study and these three fields within the academia.

Meanwhile, literary theories have come to stay within the Indian academia as part and parcel of our literary curriculum fashioned during the colonial times after the ideals and dreams of Lord Macaulay and as research tools. They are no longer in the realm of theoreticians and critics. They belong to the students and teachers of English literature. It is too late in the day to view them as aliens to English Studies. They are also being introduced at undergraduate level in India. However, we are lagging behind the western literary academia by a few decades now. While some proactive teachers are familiarizing themselves with these theories, students and scholars are groping in the dark not knowing the breadth and depth of theories and not having any clue on the 'applied' nature of these theories.

The present article is anchored in the research question that was gnawing at the researcher's mind for a decade or more: What are the challenges in institutionalizing literary theories into classroom practices? As the result of observations, discussions with the faculty who are teaching and resisting theories, and longitudinal reflections, the researcher could develop the thesis statement in this article: *as long as teachers are firmly wedded to the humanist (colonial) perception of (teaching) literature, literary theories can never be brought into classroom practice.* Hence, the primary focus of the article is to identify and analyze the challenges in institutionalizing the literary theories into classroom practices and to

suggest some ways to entwine theories and texts in the process of reading and reflection. Paul de Man's "Resistance to Theory" has been chosen as a theoretical framework for reflection over the issue in the Indian context.

Discussion
There is a huge challenge to understand and interpret theories and then transfer them to the interpretation of language and literature, and language in literature. Literature itself is interpretive and we have no consensus over interpreting it since we are used to interpreting it subjectively for hundreds of years in Indian literary tradition as well. Theories are also interpretive in the sense that the ideas that are analyzed in them are basically multidisciplinary. However, the main challenge is the disruptive nature of literary theories. Their very provocative and proactive nature questions many of the concept that stakeholders of literature studies have taken for granted first in life and then in literature. Meanwhile, theories are revisiting everything that is at the heart of literature itself: reflections on God, women, freedom, democracy, desire, death, Being, (de)attachment, (his)tory, identity, sex, marginality, sexuality and sexual orientation, creativity and Romantic yearning, the author and the reader, text and textuality, mind, self, subject, subjectivity, construction of history, meaning, language, and so on. Since they are an analysis of these ideas, theories are called analytic. Of course, they do not make any propositional claims about the world in the manner of science. They are therefore not theoretical in the sense of science. At the same time, ontologically and epistemologically, they seem "to make claims about the world in a way that the literary text clearly does not." It becomes a huge botheration for English literature teachers who are used to assuming and professing the superior, distinct, unique nature of literary discourse.

Literary theories disrupt the traditional ways of perceiving, conceptualizing, and teaching-learning literature. Many of us faithfully follow these traditional (humanist/colonial) theories in our classes since our minds have been colonized and they are to be decolonized.

Teachers unproblematically perpetuate the colonial syndrome and happily pass it on to the succeeding generation. While they tend to teach poststructuralist and postmodernist theories in theory courses, they intend to uphold the basic tenets of humanist theories in literature classes. Some of them are contrasted, conflicting pairs of which the first is for the literature classroom consumption and the second one for theory classes.

i. Literature is a reflection of life; it 'holds mirror up to nature.' However, theories claim that literature creates an alternative life through imagination.

ii. Literature should be appreciated and accepted as it is. However, theories advocate that literature is a site where ideologies are exposed, accepted or questioned. Interrogation is a key idea in the reading process.

iii. Literature is universal (transcendental signifier) because it deals with the unchanging 'human nature & condition.' However, poststructuralism affirms that it cannot transcend time and culture. Thus, it speaks of man's nature and woman's nature, colonizer's nature and the colonized nature, Christian nature and the Jewish nature, and so on.

iv. The focus should be more on 'the what' than 'on the how.' However, postmodernism claims that the message and medium collapse, and the medium becomes the message. The borderlines between the literary and the non-literary, the canonical and the popular, and the fantasy and the real blur.

v. Language is a pliable tool for communication in the hands of humans. However, Poststructuralism claims that language is uncontrollable and disobedient; it is the master and man is its slave. It is man who needs language and not the other way round. Old equations are demolished.

vi. A text is a self-contained entity. However, poststructuralism claims that the destination (the reader) is as important as the point of origin (the author). Readers become co-constructors of textual meaning which is not merely available any more for discovery by the passive readers. Readers' contexts are as important as author's context.

vii. A critic is a mediator between the text and the reader. However, theories have become intermediaries now. Theories equally inform common people, the author, the reader, and the critic.

Thus, teachers unwittingly appear to be leading a kind of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde life in these two classes. Students and scholars, who are already confused over the multidisciplinary nature of theoretical discourses, are further confounded by this dual role of teachers.

On the other hand, theories claim that language is an unreliable medium for stating simple truths, leave alone literature. It is because of its rhetorical or figural component. Rhetoric undermines the abstract system of grammar and logic. According to Paul de Man, "literature flaunts its rhetoricity and avoids the bad faith in and fellowship with other discourses" because they are suspected of trying to repress it. These other discourses include the discourses of traditional literary criticism and literary history. Historically, this is the reason for literature students and teachers to avoid reading other discourses. Let it be history, philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, intellectual history, culture, social sciences (what Derrida calls human sciences) and biological sciences too. We have a mindset to treat literature as a superior discourse. But in reality, literature is also a dependent discourse. There is No text without context. Ultimately, it leads to a kind of intellectual isolation and disciplinary subalternation within the academia. In turn, administrators and policy making apex bodies take literature studies very lightly with a little or nil funding for research projects.

Pedagogically, Paul de Man identifies three components of literary studies and they are the scholarship, the theory, and the teaching of literature. He claims that there is a relation between them. Basically, scholarship is eminently teachable and therefore, it should be taught. What is literary scholarship? Literary scholarship involves at least two areas that are complementary.

i. Historical and philological facts as the preparatory condition for understanding, and

ii. Methods or theories of reading or interpreting.

Theories enjoy compatibility with teaching of literature and therefore, they must be taught in literature classes. However, we resist them in life, in class, and in research because they are understood to undermine ethical and aesthetic values. Teachers, scholars, and students are inescapably caught in the trap they lay innocuously for themselves when they speak of these values. According to Paul de Man, they resist theories chiefly because theories

i. uproot their ideologies such patriarchy, roles and functions of literature, democracy vs. monarchy, power, politics, gender, race, language and so on;

ii. go against the powerful philosophical tradition of which aesthetics is a prominent part;

iii. upset the established canon of literary works and blur the borderlines between the literary and non-literary discourse;

iv. demand us to reading in contemporary studies and methodologies (theories of reading) which are mostly multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary.

Thus, it is not the duty or responsibility of teachers to read and interpret individual prescribed texts alone on behalf of the students in the class. Students should not be robbed of an opportunity to enjoy the experience of reading and interpreting the text. Teachers are only expected to enable students of literature to read texts, reflect over them, and interpret them for themselves independent of teachers. Their teaching is supposed to confine itself to introducing philological facts and historical contexts, and demonstrating their understanding of theories through texts. However, teachers are not ready to part with the authoritative role of an indispensable interpreter. They should realize that they cannot journey with students throughout life interpreting only canonical texts. *It is better for them to teach students how to fish (how to read and interpret) rather than to provide fish (interpretations). Paul de Man warns us that "It is better to fail in teaching what should not be taught [interpretations] than to succeed in teaching what is not true [interpretations]."*

Teaching the methodologies of reading is therefore both an imperative and inevitable part of classroom practices because the study of literary texts is necessarily dependent on the act of reading. This act is systematically avoided. Our reading practice is informed by these theories. Reading should be conceptualized in a broader way. Julian Wolfreys (2001: 4) rightly points out that reading suggests "a manner of interpreting our world and the texts which comprise that world." Moreover, literature is not a transparent message, nor is there any distinction between the message and the means of the message in the postmodern world. Again, Paul de Man claims that the effort to state truth in language is both inevitable and impossible. There are grey areas in any text whose indetermination cannot be resolved by any grammatical means and decoding. Only the figural component can cut the knot or Derridean 'aporia.' Thus, theories have nothing to do with the author or their techniques, or even the text, but everything to do with reading. The reading is in the context of language, history, psychology, politics, gender, and philosophy.

Another challenge is our misconception about the very nomenclature. Many of us innocently mistake the theory of literature for literary theories. The theory of literature, in the sense in which Wellek and Warren titled their book in the 1950s, means the poetics or the grammar of literature with intrinsic and extrinsic values and influences. Some of us also mistake methods for methodology. Method is the 'practical' application of doing something and methodology is the theoretical and 'ideological' application of thoughts. Hence, theories are understood as methodologies of reading and not methods. Methodology must come before method. For example, deconstruction is a theory which hundreds of us can use in the reading and interpretation of the same poem. Each one of us can or does evolve our own

distinct method that can also be replicated. Theories (methodologies) strengthen the readers' ability to think logically and creatively with fresh insights. Gloria Anzaldua (2012) affirms that "theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world."

Suggestions for the pedagogy of English studies

Teachers should be intellectually willing and professionally ready for a paradigm shift in their attitude toward literature, language, language in literature, literature teaching, literature learning, knowledge production, and literature testing.

1. Literary theories should not remain as a standalone course within the curriculum. They should not be taught merely as a course. They must be entwined with literary texts while reading solitarily at home either for pleasure or for serious purposes and interpreting them collectively for intellectual purposes in all literature classes Texts cannot be read in the classroom. Reading a text is a personal activity that requires much quality time, but it can be discussed by informed and enlightened students and teacher with insights from theories.

2. In theory classes, students can display to what extent they have been influenced in their personal life. The attitudinal changes that are brought about by theories in the personal life of students and the teacher can be brought to bear upon their collective analysis of the text in the classroom. For example, they cannot make a feminist reading of a text within the academia if they continue to believe in patriarchal arrangements in society. Theories are not for the sake of theories but first for life and then for fictional life. Theories work well when we deal with film world, the art world, the media, and intellectual discourses with the educated in society.

3. In addition to classroom discussions, assignments, extended term-papers, and exam essays should be used as a site where students use theories. Films can be analyzed and interpreted in the light of theories. Social happenings that have political, judicial, and cultural ramifications can be reflected upon in the light of theories. When students are exposed to theories, students start to question the existing norms after reflection and they become 'new' human beings. Their old selves die and disappear.

4. Some of the conventional literature courses should pave the way for the inclusion of theory courses in the first two semesters of the undergraduate programme. Eventually, literature students need to be exposed to other discourses such as linguistics, psychoanalysis, intellectual history, philosophy, history, gender studies, human rights, the social sciences and so on chiefly because literary theories draw on ideas from them.

5. Textbooks and coursebooks on literary theories should be prepared in simple English. Teachers should not complicate the already complex theoretical concepts due to their multidisciplinary nature. Simplifying the complicated is the hallmark of a good teacher.

6. Theories and concepts should be translated into Indian languages. Concepts and ideas are better grasped when they are presented in students' mother tongue. Funded projects can be thought of. Students should be proud of intellectual discussions in their mother tongue for greater clarification.

7. The presence of theory textbooks should be made ubiquitous across the curriculum. Every course should indicate the possible theoretical approaches to the texts included in the units and a unit should be devoted for the discussion of relevant concepts. References should also reflect the relevant texts for further consultations.

8. There can be a foundational course on the nature and function of theories. Jonathan Culler's Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction or the first one or two chapters from Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory: An Introduction can be a productive starting point. This course will be intellectually challenging and certain amount of rigor is

required for the academic study of literature.

9. Students should be trained to read English canonical texts theoretically. For example, it is not enough to read postcolonial theories and confine them to postcolonial literatures. There are anthologies like Julian Wolfreys' Introducing Literary Theories: A Guide and Glossary wherein literary texts are read in the light of theories.

10. Students should be encouraged/trained to deconstruct the text to identify the textual fissures, internal tensions and contradictions, and the yet-to-be-discovered message Deconstructing the text is the bedrock of critical reading. They can start with individual lyric poems and move to deconstructing themes and characters.

11. Each traditional concept should be contrasted with theoretical concepts. For example, the literary vs. the non-literary; history and historicity; conscious vs. the nonconscious; colonial vs. the postcolonial; idealism vs. materialism; patriarchy vs. feminism; acceptance vs. deconstruction; canonical vs. the popular; Eurocentric vs. theglobal,homosexuality vs. heterosexuality, and so on. Such a deliberate comparison and contrast can easily bring students' attention to the taken-for-granted ideas and the new ones that challenge them with conviction.

12. There should be a perspectival shift from English literature to literatures in English; the English language to English languages. Poststructuralism has enabled the world to freshly look at language and literature. Its perceptions are diametrically opposed to the traditional, colonial views of language and literature. Literatures need to be located in their literary-historical, socio-cultural, and economic-political contexts. Postmodernism and poststructuralism have different perceptions of language.

13. Language is viewed as unreliable yet inevitable for (literary) communication. It is viewed with suspicion. Students should understand that language is problematic; it cannot do everything as humans wish; it is always fluid and slippery. Humans cannot control language and language cannot control itself since it has no centre to control it. As a result, the text need not be taken as final. Readers must pay close attention to its language which functions independent of the author.

14. Classes should be reader-oriented and discussion- and discovery-based; not merely lecture-oriented. Literature classes should also be writing classes. Only when students write down their understanding, they fully comprehend the text and its interpretations. Or else, it is a mere apprehension only.

15. Scholars should be guided to focus their attention on different aspects of theories for their research rather than textual inter pretations alone. Basic research is possible in the area of theories.

Conclusion

Poststructuralist theories function as the means of reading the world and texts from entirely new perspectives in the 21st century. They help us professionalize English Studies. English literature teachers should, therefore, shed the colonial (humanist) mindset and actively adapt to poststructuralist theories in their classroom practices. After all, our intellectual world is poststructuralist and postmodernist wherein there are no facts, but only interpretations. Literary theories intellectualize literature teaching and reading and provide a sense of assurance to research scholars to produce knowledge that can be placed on par with that of the (social) sciences.

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Inquiry-based Learning for Today's Language Learners

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Abstract

Using technology has become inevitable in the field of education just like in any other areas of human life. Teaching English through technology has even become mandatory in most of the schools and colleges. The system is also slowly turning towards student- centric, where the students have more control over their learning. Correspondingly, ineluctable change has to take place in the teaching process according to the needs of the students and the changing society. This paper has been written in support of inquiry-based method of learning that can help both teachers and learners equally and attempts to review and analyse the feasibility, the possible advantages and disadvantages of applying inquiry-based teaching and learning of English language in today's teaching scenario at Indian classrooms.

Key words: Inquiry-based learning, student-centric

The fissures in teaching and learning

EThe educators and the stalwarts of yore have invented and suggested many strategies to be implemented for manuring and intensifying the teaching and learning process. Today's teachers and researchers are researching the already existing methods and searching for new and more appropriate methods for the learners of today.

There are conspicuous gaps between dependant conditions in education. Teaching and learning are interdependent skills, without one the other remains meaningless in classroom education. So, it is necessary to eliminate any blockages that exist and affect this process and, it is also important to find and apply a catalyst that works well, to strengthen and fasten the process.

The present education system mostly aims at the young people which should not just be about producing herds of young graduates rather it should aim to make good citizens to make the country stronger. English language is regarded to be a key factor in fetching a good employment for a person. Since, English being a global language, it equips a person to be a global citizen when the student learns the language. Considering this particular aspect, it is inevitable for the curriculum and teachers of English to teach in a way that would aid the students to achieve their goals through learning according to their need. It is sometimes disheartening to see a young boy wasting his energy without learning anything with purpose either in his personal life or professional life. Hence, there is a gap that exists between what a student learns and whether he is able to use his graduate knowledge in his real life after his studies. In India, many students secure a degree and they get into a profession which has no connection with their undergraduate or post graduate studies. The years they have spent on studies hold no real-life value except the degree certificate they receive at the end from the respective institution. It is necessary to build in a critical and analytical sense to have an awareness on what he is studying and what he / she can achieve in life. So, the education should be in a way that helps the students to learn for life rather than focusing only on grades.

It is necessary to bridge the gap through incorporating an appropriate solution. Innumerable ways can be found now to teach English particularly. The teachers of today have to unfold some innovative techniques according to the need of the hour rather than getting stuck with a routine way of teaching. The students do not have the same learning attitude or nature that the students of last decade had towards education. The usage of books has noticeably come down. The books are mostly replaced by the arrival of YouTube videos, online library and website contents whereas the teachers still teach with a book that is prescribed by the board. The bookish knowledge that is dispensed by the

teachers are outdated mostly when compared to the current updates in some specific subjects. When a student understands this gap, it leads him to lose interest in the class room learning. It is the role of the education system to identify and fix such issues.

Technology has become integral part of our day-to-day life. As we know that today's learners are digital kids, the students can learn simultaneously through multimedia like YouTube, Google Facebook, Online library, Online courses, websites and the list goes on. They can acquire information from social platforms instantly at anytime from anywhere. It has become part of their life. Today's teachers are facing an important issue while teaching a content in the class, they find difficulty in delivering the content in an effective manner to the students with or without the assistance of technology. It is widely noticed that the students are frequently using their phones during the class hours that leads them to become inattentive and poor learners. In this kind of classes only teaching takes place not learning. Here, it would be wrong to blame the teachers or the teaching method they are using in the class.

Fetching students' attention and keeping them focused has always been a problem as it is the nature of humankind to experience difficulty in concentrating on one single thing for a longer duration. The teachers of bygone decades had an advantage that whatever they prepared and taught in the class was all new and unknown information to the learners that made them to listen with curiosity to a greater extent. Teachers were the only or major source to learn from.

But, now, the current teaching and learning scenario is entirely changed from that of those technology free days. This newly emerged scenario is more challenging one to the teachers. After preparing for many hours, taking notes and making their lesson plans in the form of a Power point presentation, when they present their content putting all the possible efforts, the amount of learning that takes place leads them to frustration and dissatisfaction. The reason is most of the

students think that whatever the teacher is teaching in the class can be collected from internet as they can browse through Google or learn from some YouTube channel. The most striking fact is that the students are thinking of the practically possible things.

Here, the noticeable thing is that it is difficult to exactly identity who is at fault as to whether the teacher or the learner. It is the gap that exists between them. Hence, it is indeed an important one to identify a filler that would bridge the gap and bring the teacher and learner closer and put them in line. Here, it is extremely difficult to point out one particular strategy that would eliminate all the problems that affect the teaching and learning process and make everything perfect. The ELT experts from all over the world keep inventing and prescribing various methods that are thoroughly researched and proved practically in various conditions.

Inquiry method, in the beginning, was used to teach only maths and science. But in recent times it is realized that the inquiry method is one of the best methods that can be incorporated in teaching language as well.

This method promotes the questioning ability of the learners. This method helps the learners to learn through questioning and knowing the unknown. Proving an autonomous environment where the learner can involve freely, curiously and share their knowledge with their peers is the preferred way of learning to a forced teaching and learning method (Ahmad, Sitti, Abdul, Mohammad, & Sanitah, 2014).

Enquiry method

Invariably, Inquiry is an indispensable part of education. This particular strategy foredates when Socrates and his teaching method that aimed to lead students to learn through questioning critically. But, later in 1960s, John Dewey, a philosopher and educationist involved in reforming the educational system that led to the first inquiry-based learning methods in the United States. Dewey advocated learner-centred learning based on real-world experience. The pure and solid base for this method is that the learning takes place when a person has doubts and questions about unknown things.

Questioning is the outcome of curiosity. This sense of curiousness is high among children compared to the grown-up people. It can be noticed generally that the growing children usually will keep questioning about everything around them. Curiosity is the reason behind this characteristic of growing children. They learn everything through inquiring continuously and constantly with the elders. The learning is more at this stage of every human. The children learn by observing and questioning. Similarly, in inquiry method, the learners learn through questioning and being questioned. In this method of learning the learners have more control over their learning process. In most cases the learning becomes more natural and interesting. This inquiry method can have some planned environment as well when there is requirement.

The difference between traditional and Inquiry-Based learning

Traditional method is mostly restricted to a prescribed syllabus, mastering the same within a stipulated time and preparing the students for the next grade rather than preparing them for a lifelong learning process, whereas the inquiry method is more focused on learning the content parallelly developing the analysing ability and problem-solving skills that helps them in their real life as well.

In traditional teaching the students are not mostly motivated and given less chances to observe their environment critically, find out the problems, inquire and investigate things, and create new knowledge (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013; Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Yen, 2014). Yet, in inquiry-based learning and other similar situations where critical thinking is accentuated; the foremost focus and aim of the students are to critically analyse and understand ideas, exploring widely on the topic, learn with curiosity or interest of topics, and reach on their own implications.

The assessment part in the inquiry-based learning is mostly focused on shaping the advancement of skills in addition to learning and understanding the content. As mentioned above, the Inquiry learning is concerned with preparation for life-long learning and equally concerned with in-school success as well. Daniel (2004); Dawit and Yalew (2008) conducted a study and found out that the traditional or the conventional way of teaching methods are still in use though teachers are in a situation to use some active teaching and learning strategies. The lecture method, which is considered as the conventional method of teaching, is used in colleges in which teachers typically concentrate on lecturing, and students depend primarily on lecture where discovery is not much concerned or encouraged.

Structuring the IBL

It is necessary for the teachers to structure properly before implementing this IBL method. This method proved to be much time taking and deviating than focusing when it was administered in US educational institutions. When America was contemplating on strengthening their country and make a world power, they thought that it is necessary to improve the quality of education, particularly, science and mathematical fields as these two can provide room for new discoveries and bring out solutions for unresolved problems. When the educators and the statesmen together deliberated over implementing a strategy that can help students to improve their critical and analytical thinking and this method was applied and followed by. But it did not give the anticipated outcomes as the IBL method was not properly structured including the allocation of duration for the selected content.

Though, this method proved and fostered the curiosity of the learners. So, instead of completely neglecting this approach, the flaws can be eliminated before its application.

Some teaching ideas

1. The teacher can list out some topics from the day-to-day life of the students which are appropriate to their age and learning ability.
2. Then, they can ask the learners to choose one from the list that interests them the most.
3. Thirdly, the teacher can clearly instruct them to prepare their topic and prepare minimum ten sensible questions related to the topic and bring it to the class which will

be discussed in class.

4. The next day when a particular student comes to the class with a particular topic that he has prepared the teacher can ask the learner to speak about the topic he/she prepared and list out the questions related to the topic.

5. To handle this way of teaching effectively the teacher should develop an in-depth knowledge on the same topic and prepare beyond the students' capacity. That only will help the teachers to stand in front of today's learners with confidence. Because whatever the source available for teachers are equally available for the learners. As a teacher, the teaching community holds the responsibilities to eliminate any false learning and encourage the correct way of learning.

The advantage of applying inquiry method

The advantage of applying inquiry method in language teaching is that the teacher may not have to stick with any specific content. The teacher can choose wide range of contents to teach a language through inquiry method. For instance, the topic from current issues in politics, science, sports, society and many more. The learners will have so much of opportunities to learn the things they like. The other biggest advantage for the learners is that they can gain knowledge and resources from various ways with help of the internet platforms even through their mobile phones.

Disadvantages of this method

As discussed above, the various social platforms can provide plenty of information on a topic. But, in many places the authenticity of the information provided on a particular platform is questionable. Many platforms are providing some unauthenticated false knowledge which may lead to a disastrous learning. Most of the students today depend on internet platforms for studying rather than reading through books. The teachers should also guide them on how to filter the necessary ideas and avoid unnecessary information.

Here comes the true responsibility of a teacher. The teacher should monitor and guide them on how to avoid these learning errors and educate them on finding out the reliable educational platforms that offer authentic and correct information.

To the teachers, this method may be a little challenging when a teacher is stuck with a prescribed syllabus to be covered as per the dictates of an institution where the education is solely focused on marks and grades.

To conclude, the system has to think upon these existing problems that occur in teaching and learning of a language. This paper has reviewed and deliberated on the possible advantages and disadvantages in applying IBL method in ELT classrooms. The studies conducted on this approach have found out that this method was effective in improving critical thinking among learners and showed considerable progress in acquiring language skills as well.

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Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 36 (9 July 2022)
Speaker: **Dr. J. John Sekar**
Professor & Former Head, Research Dept. of English,
The American College, Madurai TN   jjohnsekar@gmail.com

Topic : Experiential English Language Learning through Storytelling

Report by Dr. B. Nagalakshmi, Asst Professor, SDNB Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai -44. nagalakshmi.thiru@gmail.com

Story may be a few days or at the most a few months younger than humanity. Days, months and years were not born at that time, or in Time. But, now the disturbing question is that whether story may die much earlier than humanity. Or, will human race be destined to live a prolonged widower's life without the affectionate nursing of story?

Dr. John Sekar chose an apt topic considering the need of re-vitalizing the ESL curricula, and re-energizing the classroom. The lecture was interspersed with thought provoking questions and insightful explanations and it kept the audience hooked to his art of engaging narration. The speaker pointed out the polarity among teachers as one group focusing on the aspects surrounding teaching and the other on learning. He prefers to be the teacher who belongs to the second category and his lecture was spinning around learning and storytelling. He emphasized upon strategizing, defining outcomes of learning and cautioned upon ending the act of teaching in futility.

Dr. Sekar illustrated storytelling as an effective method of teaching and learning a second language, postulating emotional intelligence, inculcating moral values and discipline in literature classes. This can be enacted as performance. He reiterated that storytelling is an art of narrating a tale from the memory rather than reading out. Storytelling translates a lot of meaning in learning and also makes the storytelling teachers as popular among the students. He addressed the doubt raised by many teachers that if telling stories in the classroom meant for tertiary level isn't it diluting the language learning process. It was clarified that language teachers are basically from literature background and literature is an asset for making storytelling a cultural artefact. Apart from this, we all are born in a country of diversity and brought up in a family system rooted in telling and listening to stories across generations in which stories are integral part. Storytelling grabs the attention of students from other disciplines also. It makes the teaching process an implicit, joyful and painless one. It is a powerful tool for developing creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills. Storytelling translates the individual's literary and aesthetic experience into collective cultural repertoire for further survival, and provides an ambience for experiential, active and reflective learning for both teachers as well as students.

With storytelling, learning becomes a continuous constructive process from the past experiences making it relevant for present and future and for the learners it is individual and collective classroom experience too. Stories are memories which are formed out of one's belief, perception, prejudice and biases. This memory becomes experience. Students' own experiences can be churned into raw materials for storytelling. Telling stories springs from solitary confinement—each story is born within the teller. Once it is told, it becomes the shares property of the community, and hence and community activity.

Students acquire language spontaneously through stories, since a strange language is not rat imposed on them. Storytelling is the quickest way to share experience and transform the class into an interactive group. The speaker

elaborated upon the rationale behind using storytelling in the ESL classroom. Children acquire L1 through interaction, meaningful engagement and involvement. He pointed out the illogicality of exposing the L2 learners to the fragments of language as opposed to the whole as in L1. Stories present language as a whole.

Storytelling lowers anxiety level, enriches vocabulary skills and leads learners simple samples of literature to more complex ones. Storytelling puts imagination into action by making the students identify take sides with characters. It is a shared, social and cultural activity whereas other activities such as reading and writing are individual activities.

Dr. Sekar enumerated three sets of skills that storytelling develops implicitly among the learners. It reinforces thinking skills as it involves classifying, predicting, planning, and problem-solving, comparing and hypothesizing. It enables the students to develop strategizing, referencing and study skills. Teachers have the freedom to choose culturally and pedagogically appropriate stories to exploit language and acting skills.

The speaker gave five tips for teachers to master the art of storytelling

- Taking storytelling as a genre of performance, teachers must read the story from beginning to end without distorting and manipulating, practise reading aloud, and visualize the structure, acquainting with the tonal, rhyming of the words and highlight the description of the characters.
- Outlining the story incident by incident using notes and cue-card outlines.
- Controlling the storyline by shortening or with necessary modification, serializing of the long stories using judicious mix of activities such as acting out, reading aloud, reciting poetry and games.
- Controlling the vocabulary from the original by simplifying the adjectives and adverbs to the level of the language learners can be effective.

- Refining the style by training, modulating the voice as it is the main instrument for Storytellers.
- Teachers can master the art of storytelling in terms of reading –aloud, rehearsing narrating before friends, family and mirror with meticulous practice.

Teachers can adopt the following strategies for learning the skills of storytelling.

1. Teachers can consciously develop the 'what' of telling rather than of 'how' of telling.
2. A seating arrangements for listeners, different from the conventional classroom se up.
3. Slowing down the speed with clear articulation without being too much time conscious and ending the story with a suspense in case of serializing to arouse the curiosity of the listeners.
4. Involving the learners into storytelling by providing them with opportunities and training the students for doing mimes and acting out of characters.

Follow-sup activities for storytelling can be given incorporating suitable pedagogy. Customary ways of asking comprehension questions immediately following the storytelling activity may spoil the aesthetic sense. The students can be given time to ponder over and later they can be asked to frame critical questions.

The speaker opened up the unlimited potentiality of activities encapsulating storytelling by integrating all language skills such as retelling, journal writing visual activity, miming, role-play, and research projects. The speaker not only gave strategies for teachers but also gave directions for future researchers to carry out action researches on the art of storytelling, cultural appropriacy, and choice of materials and on the scope of incorporating into curriculum by designing appropriate activities. He concluded his lecture on storytelling by explaining how it can be made educative, inspiring, enlightening, and motivating for teachers as well as learners of all levels.

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 37 (20 Aug. 2022)
Speaker: **Dr. Abdul Mohammed Ali Jinnah**
Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Jamal Mohamed College, Trichy.TN

Topic : Decolonising the classroom: An Argument for Re-examining General English Textbooks

Report by **Dr. Leena A.K.** St.Joseph's High School, Chathiath, Kochi. drleenaak@gmail.com

The last traits that unwillingly say 'good bye' to the colonized land can be traced in the education system of the colonizer. Even when the colonized land gets socio-political and economic freedom, culture and education may refuse to leave the legacy of the colonizer—good or bad. It is true in the case of English education in India. Footprints of the West can clearly be seen on the pages of the textbooks in English, across stages—school to university. Dr. Abdul Mohammed Ali Jinnah, based on his decades long academic experience, critically evaluates the causes and consequences of the deep rooted cultural fossils of the West, still present in the teaching-learning materials at the undergraduate level.

Dr. Jinnah began his talk by discussing his academic and professional development as an English language teacher in order to highlight the types of students English language teachers meet in the ESL classroom: first generation language learners. who are primarily from a rustic, rural, or possibly agrarian background. He explained his own unique teaching and learning environment and expressed his concern that it may not be applicable to everyone. He explained that this lecture would be useful only for those who handled Part II English or General English in their ESL degree classes. The speaker raised an important point: what need of the learners exactly are we catering to, or what substance of language are we providing to our learners? In his lecture, he stated that he had been attempting to address this question. Based on his teaching experience, he continued, he was given 14 hours of Part II English classes in various streams. It would be a general practice of taking these textbooks and trying to connect with these students via the medium of these text books. It was the textbook that bridges between the learner and teacher.

He further illustrated that the English teacher stands at the crossroads of fist language, second language, second literature, and both cultures. ESL teachers are expected to function as a repository of language and communication skills, literary taste, and soft skills.Literature, according to the syllabus statements,is supposed to be the tool with which such transformation among students are to be inculcated. He expressed his doubt whether the English language teacher of today, is a kind of persona that someone like Macaulay envisaged in his Minutes. The colonizer wanted a clerk, a white collar 'babu' or a bureaucrat who could work in the administrative section, therefore he introduced a lot of English literature lifted from the imperial canon. "Don't we feel guilty for still using the same textbooks especially when we go to general English classroom?", blames the teacher in Dr. Jinnah.

In support the wide gap between the average Indian college student and the study materials he is burdened with, the speaker took a nostalgic trip to his own childhood days. As a child, his love for English started with adventurous stories. In his view, Robinson Crusoe for him was an epitome of human ideals. The normative of the white man he was ascribing to a sort of agile, a sort of DNA or community we never ever reach out. They were blatantly exercising racism, imperialism; on the contrary, we were laughing at them.There are some such textbooks that are prescribed as an initial stepping stone into the study of literature. Then he discussed Rudyard Kipling's 'If' which is an absolutely highly motivating and uplifting poem. We, the teachers, often fail to tell them the situation or context in which 'If' was written. According to him, the teachers simply give them a poem and ask them to read it without referring to the context. He reminded, without context

or isolating context from the text, we are basically committing a grave error.

Dr Jinnah proceeded his inquiry further by posing some questions: What are the most popular books and who are the most popular writers? He referred to Enid Blyton, the prominent writer of even today. The readers enjoy reading her books. But in this sphere, Blyton creates so many blatant risks. When we read or subscribe to her works as a child, the readers unwittingly as children become a part of the discriminatory process. Later, he related his experience while dealing with general English texts such as The Merchant of Venice, The Tempest- problematic textbooks which basically teach anti-Semiticism. Instead of looking at Shylock as a wronged man, we are trained to treat him as a villain. None of the teachers told the students regarding this. According to the speaker, we still look at Shakespeare as a canon and academicians still recommend his textbooks should be part of General English syllabus. He elaborated this point by citing Jane Austen who always produced apolitical novels. She never talks about history. But she lived during the period of colonisation. She never addressed this problem in any of her novels nor pointed a finger against that. Then he talked about the Bronte Sisters and expressed his doubt about how we are going to discuss these texts with our students.

For literature students, literature and its theories may help to some extent, gain access to the target culture. But, to a group of students who have no interest in literature and who treats English language as a tool with which they can grab opportunities, these literary texts do not offer much help. What they need is communication. Next, the speaker talked about the poetry section in the syllabus, which belongs to Victoria andRomantic periods. In his view, they talked about liberty and equality and these people were highly sceptical about the East. We talk about romanticism, but where do we exactly fix the context? These are celebrated literary pieces, but they also promote the white supremacy and what kind of cultural implication are we handing out to our students when we make these as part of the classroom or syllabus.

He suggested that we want to help the students to use the language of opportunity for day to day purposes. We are not against English literature; nor do we question its role in the university syllabuses. But, there must be re-thinking of its distribution across stages and disciplines. He pointed out that literature is a part of cultural studies. In other words, literature becomes a cultural material.

Then he discussed Ngugi's idea of decolonising the mind. According to him, geographically and spatially we became free but that is not real freedom. Real freedom comes when we decolonise our minds. It is important that in which context one text is created, narrated, formed or read. He opined that the spread of racism is very rapid in our country. We are in the post-colonial era but we still academically exist in the 70's. We still do not understand the realities of our existence.

Towards the end of his lecture, Dr. Jinnah described the role of an English teacher in India. An English teacher in India is someone who transmits the culture of a region to other regions and from one generation to another, S/he is part of a process of disseminating not just communication skills but communicating culture too. According to the speaker, the English teacher is akin to what Richard Wright opines in his Blue Print about negro writing. He says that the Negro writer is not just a writer who is angering the white community but he is someone who writes to uplift his society. In the same way, it is our responsibility to uplift the society of students that we have. Our duty is to reach out to our students of language, literature and culture with tools with which they can form their on views on their culture and the culture represented in the prescribed literary texts. In this interconnectedness, the English teachers are torch bearers of culture and the proper idea of culture.

Dr. Jinnah concluded his session by pointing towards the complacency and lethargy of academic bodies such as the board of studies, or as he sarcastically reworded, the 'Bored of Studies'. It is high time that academics started rethinking on the structure and contents of the undergraduate English curricula.

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 9 (11 June 2022)

Instructional strategies to develop speaking sub-skills

Resource Person:
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University of Technology and Applied
Sciences, Al Musannah, Oman.

Report by:
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Faculty of English, Govt.
Bharathidasan College for Women,
Pududcherry

"Language is primarily speech; writing is only a manifestation of speech"—thus we were corrected by Structural linguistics, way back in the beginning of the last century. Applied linguistics, though late, followed the stricture in principle and thus we were practising Audiolingual method and later communicative language teaching method. Now, it is a century passed, still Indian ESL classes mostly begin and end with the literacy skills (reading and writing), leaving a little space for listening—this listening component stays there not because the teachers in general are aware of the natural sequence of LSRW, but because of the convenience of lecture method—our mainstay in Indian education even in the 21st century. When the teacher lectures, the learner's listening skills may (or may not) get developed. But, speaking skills are nowhere on the agenda of teaching or teachers. It is in this context, Dr Binu's choice of topic becomes relevant.

Assuming the majority of the participants may be young teachers, Dr Binu P Mstarted his session stating that speaking is incredibly complex and demanding. He quoted the American writer Mark Twain in order to come to his topic.Mark Twain said that there are two types of speakers: those who are nervous and those who are liars.He said that as English teachers, our job is very challenging as we cannot expect our learners to end up as either nervous or liars. We have to equip our students with the essential skills they need in real life to communicate in different contexts. We have to increase the level of confidence in speakersand enhance their communicative competence by constant activities.He gave an overview of the talk and it included the purpose of speaking,reason for teaching speaking,speaking subskills,characteristics of speech events,aspects of good spoken discourse and instructional strategies to enhance speaking.

He talked about the purpose of speaking

1. Transactional: It takes place when the language is used in formulaic expressions of set phrases to get the business done, e.g., communication that take place at the railway station ticket counter.
2. Communicative: Any purpose of communication that tries to inform, to honour etc is communicative.
3. Interactive: It takes place mostly in conversations where exchange of ideas take place.
4. Persuasive: It takes place when there is a need to persuade the listener, e.g., religious and political speeches.
5. Entertaining: It takes place when the speaker tries to entertain the audience
6. Phatic:It takes place when there isa need to maintain social relationships.Greetings and comments on weather etc. provides a conducive atmosphere to enter into a an act of communication.

Dr.Binuthen moved to the rationale for teaching speaking sub skills. He is of the opinion that classrooms must provide opportunities for rehearsals of communication, to be followed by real life interaction. Feedback from teachers and peers should be functioning as rewards so that the young learner gets encouraged.Sessions must be made learner-engaged and learner-centred where students should be willingly, talking more and more. Teachers have to

activate the language already the learner possesses. Autonomy and automaticity(ability to speak without much thinking) should take place in the class rooms.

Dr.Binu spoke about the teaching sub-skills that are required in a formal speech,discussion or debate and argued that our syllabus is not giving focus on speaking sub-skills. He listed a few functions that we have to fulfil in our day to day life—academic and real life. These functions can be treated as the building blocks with which the foundation of communication skills can be built. They are: meeting and greeting,making/responding to requests,expressing/asking for opinions,making complaints,making offers, negotiating, repair and repetition, apologizing, initiating and responding, giving/asking for advice, giving/ asking for clarification, summarising and presenting results, interpreting graphs and charts,reporting incidents, giving instructions, turn taking in discussions, interrupting politely, managing adiscussion, agreeing and disagreeing, making/responding to suggestions, describing/narrating incidents/stories, parting and leave taking etc.

The resource person pointed out that we can see violation of certain pragmatic aspects of speaking skills on TV programmes, such as channel discussion and debate. Turn taking and waiting for one's turn, interrupting politely, opposing gently are a few instances. He gave examples of how (and how not) to get our learners engaged in normal speech.Words and phrases commonly used in the acts of congratulating, honouring, commemorating, giving compliments, making apologies etc. were outlined, followed by paralinguistic features like gestures, facial expressions, body language etc.

Dr. Binu talked about the characteristics of speech events. It can be formal like a minister addressing a gathering of statesmen, or a scientist interacting with researchers. It may also be of informal like a few minutes' chat over a cup of tea. The former may be a pre-be planned one, whereas the latter, spontaneous. It can be speaker-listener distanced as in a vide-conference between a doctor and a patient or an online teaching session. A face to face interaction as in a friendly conversation needs immediate decision making and selecting from options. There can be reciprocity when there is exchange of ideas between the interlocutor and speaker or no reciprocity as the Prime Minister addresses the nation. There can be formulaic expressions as in a formal speech. There can be elements of tenor(power,affective issues etc.)as in the speech of a military commander to his subordinates. He contrasted the Prime Minister's address to the nation with an informal conversation among friends in a park and outlined their characteristics.The first one is formal and planned, marked with maximum distance and the absence of reciprocity and use of formulaic expressions to some extent. The second one is informal and spontaneous with high reciprocity,affective issues with no tenor and no distance. He asked the audience to list out the characteristics of activities like making a presentation and talking at dinner with a friend.

The resource person, then discussed the various aspects of good spoken discourse. They are fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation. Fluency and coherence is the ability to produce language without hesitation or pause and the length of the discourse and cohesion matter than the speed of the discourse. People use filler words like ah..,um.., actually, well etc. while maintaining fluency. It has to be identified and a good vocabulary is needed by students to talk about a wide range of subjects. Next, the resource person gave the list of some fluency focussed activities that can be used in the classroom and stressed that teachers should not try to interfere and try to correct the students when they are doing the activity. Lexical resource means the use of a wide range of vocabulary with precision and flexibility. Register, style and collocation are the terms associated with lexical resource. Register/ jargon is the specific set of words and expressions that are associated with a particular profession or field. He gave an activity to identify the game by looking at the words. Another aspect of lexis is style, that is

determined by the situation and participants. Style can be formal, casual or colloquial. Collocations decide which are the words that go well together. 'A cup of coffee' and 'a glass of wine'are appropriate; the other way they may not sound natural. Grammatical accuracy should be there in which the speakers should have a good command of the linguistic systems. They should be familiar with the range of structures, it should be natural, appropriate and idiomatic. He listed out certain activities to familiarise the students with sentence structures.

He talked aboutpronunciation which combines features of connected speech (weak forms, assimilation, elision, catenation/liaison, intrusion) and prosodic speech (intonation, stress, rhythm). Students can be given practice sessions without introducing the technical terms. He discussed the use of yes/no questions, tag questions,statements etc. in order to teach intonation. He gave some activities to identify the language function. He suggested some classroom activities that can be designed by the teachers,by focusing on special subskills that we target, like role play/simulations,problem solving activities,information-gap activities, story-telling,debating a topic,group discussions, instruction giving activities, describing, student presentations etc.

Then Dr. Binu moved on to discussthe instructional strategies in the planning stage as speaking may be challenging for the students. So, teachers should handle it sensitively by understanding the potential student problem. The students should be given clear, focused and meaningful tasks which are integrated with other skills like reading or writing or listening. Students should be given enough language support and teachers can use the controlled practice or IRF approach. Students should be able to go for a freer practice without the guidance of teachers. Teachers should be aware of the feedback strategies also.

Dr.Binu argued that teachers have a major role in developing the speaking skills of learners. Teachers should create a relaxed environment for the students and motivate them by opting for a brainstorming of ideas. Teachers should write the main points on the board,give time to the students to think and prepare notes, demonstrate the activity, participate, monitor and can give feedback at the end.

The resource person concluded the session stating that the students will be very confident if the teaching activity ends well. He once again asserted that classroom can be made a rehearsalroom for the real-life activities.

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 10 (23 July 2022)

Reading Strategies for Fostering 21st Century Skills

Resource Person:
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Report by:
Dr. Vinija N.S.
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From the role of a library language, assigned to English by the colonizer, how successful our teaching was in converting it into a tool of communication in its oral form? The answer may not be very encouraging for teachers of English. Though most of us are not consciously aware of the fact, what in fact we have been trying to do is to retain English in India in its oldest mode of a library language. Both by teachers and learners, both inside and outside classrooms, English is still read than spoken written or listened to. The irony is that opportunities and resources are increasing for listening to English; demand for the spoken idiom is on the rise, good writing is a passport to better opportunities. Still we don't make use of these demands and opportunities, we simply teach students to read. Well, then the question is "Do we teach students to read the right way?". The answer, again may be an emphatic 'No''. Let's find out what are the better modes or strategies for developing better reading and comprehending skills.

Mr. Mohanan began his workshop session by stating that reading is an active, generative process of meaning making. It provides the learners with ample opportunities to face situations that pose complexities and confusion. Ultimately it enables them to develop an open-minded disposition required to understand, construct and promote diverse perspectives. There are various factors that influence reading. Effective reading strategies can help learners develop 21st century skills and can enhance the academic and intellectual development, societal interaction and personal enrichment. Critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, team work, leadership, cross-cultural understanding etc. are some of the skills to be fostered in ESL reading classes. Mr.

Mohanan P. introduced through a workshop session, different reading strategies essential for academic functioning and career prospects in the 21stcentury.

The resource person started the workshop by explaining the significance of reading in ESL classes. Proficiency in reading helps learners acquire other language skills also. No skill can be discrete, or dismantled from the other skills. He started a discussion by exhibiting a picture on the screen. He asked the participants to study the picture and guess the theme of it. Participants came out with different ideas. The activity highlighted the possibility of multiple interpretations of a text. He consolidated that even a picture could be a text. Likewise, funny questions, riddles, films etc. also can be a text. Then he defined what a text is. Not only language, but anything that generates too is languages. Anything that is the subject of reading, has a narrative integrity and written can be considered as a text. A text can be anything that has a potential to give meaning; a text does not contain meaning, it contains potential for meaning.

After briefly defining a text, the resource person elucidated reading and its implication. Reading implies decoding a text, passing through stages of linguistic construction which includes morphological, syntactical and semantic implications. The reader tries to get the writer's message by integrating the meaning to personal experience. In the course of reading, the reader may or may not reach "the writer's meaning". But other meanings also are generated. It also involves thinking, judging, imagining, reasoning, problem solving, evaluating, interpreting, regulating the understanding and reconstructing the knowledge residing in the text. Factors involved in reading include reader factors & textual factors, linguistic

factors, cognitive factors, perspective, affective, attitudinal and socio-cultural factors. Reading strategies can be cognitive, meta-cognitive, memory related, compensatory, affective and social.

Then a discussion on the subskills associated with reading was held. The resource person put forward the following points:

Identifying the topic

Reading for general understanding (skimming)

Reading for specific information (scanning)

Reading for detailed information

A discussion of the various subskills associated with reading helped the participants to get a general idea of how strategies for promoting reading skills can be formulated. The sub-skills discussed are:

1) Identifying the topic, which is associated with the process of activating the learner's schemata.

2) Reading for general understanding which implies the process of skimming

3) Reading for specific information or scanning

4) Reading for detailed information

The resource person interacted with the participants and explained each point with adequate examples. Then he opened a discussion on various possibilities of changing the climax of the story 'The Hare and Tortoise'. The participants were fully engaged in the discussion and expressed their thoughts. Different activities can be implemented in the classroom to make the learners involved in different skills of reading such as scanning, skimming, logical deducting, inferring, visualizing, interacting with the text etc.

"Can you define reading in a second language?" It was an edifying question the resource person posed to the participants and they shared different viewpoints. The resource person consolidated the points with a definition. According to Alireza Karbalaei (2010), "reading in a second language is a dynamic and interactive process by which leaners make use of background knowledge, text schema, lexical and grammatical awareness, L1- related knowledge, and real- world knowledge, as well as their own personal purposes and goals to arrive at an understanding of written material."

The resource person defined reading as an active process of interacting with the text, with the self, with the linguistic elements in the text and with the socio-cultural backgrounds in order to extract meanings, to arrive at new conclusions and to construct new meanings that lies neither in the text, nor in the author, nor in the reader, but in the interactive and mediative process of creating meaning, integrating all the available resources including the linguistic and socio-cultural elements in the text, the author's perspectives and reader's experience. It is a cognitive process of meaning making that involves the use of affective, aesthetic and cultural semiotics by using various strategies to gather the syntactic information, graphic information, semantic information, cultural implication, personal experiences and contextual clues.

In the next part of the workshop, the resource person expressed his views on twenty first century skills. He broadly divided it in three categories– (i) Learning skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication) (ii) Literary skills (information literacy, media literacy, technical literacy) (iii) Life skills (social skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, management skills, self-directed, perspective thinking and empathy, problem solving, adaptability etc.). He also quoted the report for UNESCO, by Jacques Delors (2001) which states that there are four pillars of education. They are learning to know, learning to do, learning to live and learning to be. All the 21st century skills are connected to these four pillars one way or other.

The session was concluded by assigning a few activities on skimming, scanning and divergent thinking. The session was highly interactive and the participants actively participated throughout the session.

Let's go back to the introductory remarks on English as a library language with reading it its core. But, the reading that we discussed so far (presented at the workshop) is a different type of reading—reading for academic purposes, a more serious one, a more precise one, and therefore something that needs to be attended well in classrooms.

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 9 (3 Sept. 2022)

Teaching English grammar through music: An interdisciplinary approach

Resource Person:
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Report by:
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Teaching English becomes a challenge when the students exhibit incomprehensibility of grammatical rules, lack of confidence and inability to process language to real linguistic setting. Research points out that knowledge of grammar rules is very fragile and is rapidly forgotten. Grammar is supposed to be acquired unconsciously and then the competence developed in this way can be stored in the brain subconsciously. Larsen-Freeman remarks that if comprehensible input is available, then first and second language can be acquired easily. Stephen Krashen who is the proponent of comprehensive input theory argues that comprehensive input like audio, video or written texts of the learner's interest, if integrated in the second language curriculum, can have a surprising effect on the overall ESL instruction.

The online workshop led by Dr. Lakshmi C.M, as part of English Language Teachers' Empowerment Programme, embarked on an exploration of an innovative method of integrating songs in the teaching of grammar. As brain loves music, this comprehensive input would effectively enhance learnability in the students, argues Dr. Lakshmi, who is a professional singer too. She started with a discussion on the role of music in teaching and learning a language. The use of songs in language teaching has been widely investigated and many researchers have reported positive effects of songs on language learning. Music can motivate anyone. When it is used in the class, it creates a learning environment that enhances the interaction between students and teachers. The students can internalize grammar when they can enjoy the whole process of learning. If the approach of learning grammar becomes student centered, activity oriented, interactive and task-based, learning can simply be fun enabling the students to learn grammar with ease, without considering it as a 'burdened learning process'. So how could learning be made fun is the next question. Moreover, the rhythmic nature of English language may naturally accommodate the rhythm of music.

In the next part of the workshop, Dr. Lakshmi introduced Carolyn Graham, the brain behind Jazz Chants who happens to be a Master Teacher of ESL at New York University. She is a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University and has trained teachers in the art of Jazz Chanting throughout the world. According to Graham, Jazz Chants bring rhythm into the classroom. As brain loves rhythm, this activity brings joy to the class and students unknowingly study the rules of the language. Jazz Chants is a wonderful and effective tool as it develops students' listening and speaking skills; enlarges their vocabulary; and helps them to construct sentences with confidence. Then she presented a few jazz chants and motivated the participants to sing with her. Dr. Lakshmi attempted to explore the possibilities of how Jazz Chants can be used to learn grammar by formulating certain worksheets to learn preposition, conjunction, concord and tense. The worksheets are supposed to help the students notice and practice these grammatical points and eventually transfer them in their conversation. Some of the songs are as follows.

1. **You did it again.**

You did it again.	What did I do? (2)
I told you not to do it.	I'm sorry, I'm sorry
And you did it again!	I'm sorry, I'm sorry
You broke it .	What did I break?
You lost it.	What did I lose?
You chose it .	What did I choose?
I told you not to do it	I'm sorry I'm sorry
And you did it again!	I'm sorry I'm sorry
You wore it.	What did I wear?
You tore it.	What did I tear?
I told you not to do it.	I'm sorry I'm sorry
And you did it again.	I'm sorry,I'm sorry.

2. **It was raining, raining, raining hard**

It was falling on my head,
It was falling on the stars,
It was falling on the sun,
It was falling on my shoes,
I got soaking wet,
I got soaking wet,
But I stayed outside,
I stayed outside,
The rain was sweet,
The rain was warm,
The rain was soft,
It reminded me of home.
And you did it again.   I'm sorry,I'm sorry.

3.

I like my school.	So do I
I like my old school.	So do I
I like my new school.	So do I
I am happy today.	So am I
I don't like my school.	Neither do I
I don't like my old school.	Neither do I
I don't like my new school.	Neither do I
I am not happy today.	Neither am I

The following is a worksheet for prepositions used to denote travel, which could be made easily understandable when the sentences are put to rhythm.

4. **I'm Bretch**, I love **traveling** by **land**
   I'm Bob, I love **traveling** by **sea**
   I'm Ruth, I love **traveling** by **bus**
   I'm Kate, I love **traveling** by **plane**
   I'm Sue, I love **traveling** by **car**

I'm Liz, I love **traveling** by **train**
I'm Toms, I love **traveling** by **air**
I'm Sandy, I love **traveling** by **ship**
And **I'm Mary**, I love **traveling** on **foot**

The next one is a worksheet that could help the students differentiate between 'elder' and 'older' and to learn that words like 'senior,junior, superior and inferior' are followed by 'to'.

5. **Hey** big **buddies** we're **junior** to you
   Hey small **buddies** we're **senior** to you
   I'm your boss, I'm **superior** to you
   But **never** am **I** in**ferior** to you
   She's my sister she is **elder** than **me**
   He's my friend he is **older** than **me**
   Steve and **Mary** arethe **eldest** in the **family**
   Bob and **Rob** are the oldest in the school
Tom, Mary, Sue are **taller** than me, **smaller** than me and **bigger** than me **respectively.**

The following worksheethelps the students to avoid faulty handling of conjunctions and make out easily,ss the various conjunctions including the subordinating conjunction and coordinating conjunction, the words denoting conjunctions are bolded.

6. **Hardly had** I entered the room, **when** the snake popped out of the window
   No sooner had I picked the stick, **than** it started coming into the room
   Neither the snake **nor** myself knew what to do next
   Well, I should do something, **lest** I **should** fail
   To check its second coming
   I decided **either** the snake **or** I am going to stay in the room
   So **although** I was panic stricken, I strike the snake on its head
   Though seldom or never I killed a snake, I killed it just in one blow.

Finally Dr. Lakshmi presented a worksheet for the students to practice tense forms by using singular and plural forms of the noun. This is exclusively to make the students understand the tense structure.

	Simple	Progressive/Continuous	Perfect
Past	**Ben sang well**	**Ben was singing well**	**Ben had sung a choral song well**
Present	**Ben sings well**	Ben is singing well	**Ben has sung a choral song well**
Future	**Ben shall sing well**	**Ben shall be singing well**	**Ben will have sung a choral song well**

Past perfect progressive	Present perfect progressive	Future perfect progressive
Ben had been singing	**Ben has been singing**	**Ben will have been singing a choral song well**

	Simple	Progressive/Continuous	Perfect
Past	**I sang well**	**I was singing well**	**I had sung a choral song well**
Present	**I sing well**	**I am singing well**	**I have sung a choral song well**
Future	I shall sing well	**I shall be singing well**	**I shall have sung a choral song well**

Present perfect progressive	Past perfect progressive	Future perfect progressive
I have been singing	**I had been singing**	**I shall have been singing a choral song well**

The participants were highly motivated and they actively interacted with the resource person by singing and adding / changing the lines of the songs. Dr. Lakshmi concluded that practicing worksheet as above along with rhythm can be adopted as a method to suit and enrich the language-teaching environment to help the students tide over the difficulties of learning grammar to a greater extent. The benefits of employing songs in the classroom cannot be ignored due to a variety of reasons. It enables them to recall and retain a grammatical point. Further they can develop their listening and speaking skills. It can be considered as one of the best method to make every student both attentive and active participants and thereby not only helping them imbibe important grammatical points comparatively quickly but also helps the students to retain and recall the grammatical points.

In the final interactive session, a participant pointed out that certain syllables or small words were 'swallowed' while singing. The resource person explained the differences between stress timed language and syllable timed language. English is a stress-timed language. It means, some syllables may be longer, some shorter. A stress-timed language is one in which the stressed syllables are uttered at approximately regular intervals, and unstressed syllables shortened to fit in the rhythm. Indian languages are syllable-timed in the sense that all syllables carry on them uniform stress. Such languages may not have stressed-unstressed distinction.

Parenting

From known to the unknown, or the other way round?

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Usually, teacher induction programmes such as Diploma in Education (D Ed.) and Bachelor of Education (B Ed.) prescribe a lot of 'do's' and 'don'ts' related to teaching, and they are treated as highly unquestionable scriptures or gospels. One mong them is the pair of antecedents and followers—this must follow this one;, not the other way round. "From concrete to abstract', "from near to far", "from known to the unknown', "from easy to difficult" are some of those 'commandments'.

Well, these are fine dictums for teaching; and teacher's convenience. But, a few doubts: First, is teaching equal to learning? Or does the former equal to the latter in process and product or results? In other words, do the learners learn all that the teachers teach? Of course, no. Secondly, don't children learn hundreds of things –concrete and abstract—without the guidance of teachers or even parents? Yes Thirdly, in real life, do children follow the dictum of 'first easy, then difficult' or 'first concrete, and then abstract'? wait, let me convert them as examples. Sun is concrete, sunshine or its warmth is comparatively abstract. Can we say that only after having a basic idea of the sun in the sky, a child can experience and thereby comprehend its light or warmth on the earth? Need not be so. Here, no teacher, no teaching. Natural learning, cognitive development.

Nature hasn't neatly sequenced its segments into a hierarchy so that the new-born can grasp reality in bits and pieces, step by step, the top up way. Life is all a messed-up affair. We try our best to iron out the ups and downs, odds and evens for our children. "Don't play in the rain; you may catch a cold", tells you to your child. Children who always enjoy shine and rain equally don't catch a cold, nor even they sneeze.Your child, when by accident, get exposed to rain gets hospitalized! That's all— very simple.

The problem, I think, is equating mind with body. Physical and cognitive development may have some correlations. But,their functioning and developments cannot be equated. For example, if there are two bags to be carried as part of the luggage on a tour, the heavier one goes to elder child and the lighter to theyounger. The reason is obvious. The elder had on earlier occasions already carried the bag of lighter weight. Now, he is capable of carrying a little heavier one. But this may not be the case with cognitive skills. Both of them may understand the rules to be observed while on a platform—stop playing and listen to the announcement, put the paper cup in the waste bin, check the number of bags etc. The same is the case with many other concepts closely related to real life. Of course, there are phenomena with different range of complexities. But, what I suggest is that a strict sequencing and gradation often brings in artificiality. Children always go the natural way, the prefer to reasonable. Our curricula. I am afraid, ruin their sense of logicality, rational thinking and blocks their critical thinking faculty.

Even without waiting for the known to begin with, we can proceed to the unknown. Then let's come back to the known and connect both. This recursive process may help learners to take risk to move to the strange and unknown reals of knowledge. Should we wait for introducing a rhino or hippo (real or image) till the child has been introduced moreor less all the domestic animals suchas a goat, cow, ox etc.? Just because, we the adults, "once up on a time", were first introduced to the domestic animals, and then the zoo-animals, it need not be the case with the new gen. They are constantly exposed to remote realities as well as immediate ones. Noodles, pizzas, pastry, sandwich are all native food and native language names for the child. Telescope goes along with the stars, not years later. Train can go far ahead of an auto onto the cognitive track of a child.—no harm. All that the child may insist on may be logicality, not sequencing.

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.

English and I

Deepmala Pathak

Teacher, Government Excellence Higher Secondary School, MHOW (MP)

Oh English! It was told by many to me
That you were forcefully imposed on us,
Half of the world, or more, had suffered
And you were blamedfor your imperialism.
You tried to snatch our culture, freedom,
and spirit.
To which the language English replied,
"It's not me, but the human race, my child
Who did all this to win the game
Of power, of haughtiness, of fame.
I, the language instead served a common link
In a diverse country like your India,
Where no one language is welcomed at a brink.
Those who think of me as a burden
Are ignorant, I'm the only language
In the vast sea of numerous dialects,
To serve the global purpose of expressing facts,
To access the ocean of digital knowledge.
And to give you all worldwide privilege.
Be my master and make me your slave,
Any hurdles to success then you can pave
Embrace me with your heart, soul and brain,
And your career graph may speed as a bullet train.

Task 1. Working in pairs, answer the following questions.

1. Divide the poem into two sections (not two halves).

2. Which of the following pairs suits the theme of the two sections? (a) a question and its answer (b) a statement and its illustration or explanation (c)) a misunderstanding and its clarification(d) a suggestion and its acceptance or refusal.

3. "It was told by many to me" (line 1) What was it? (a) English language was forced on us by the British (b) India needed a link language. (c) The British wanted to kill our languages. (d) English is a world language.

4. What do you think?—Is the British rule and English language the same?

5. Who did we want to get rid of—the former or the latter?

6. The British wanted to gain three possessions-What were they?

7. The English language replies that it was not her fault. But, whose fault was it?

8. English alone can serve as a link language in India's diversity, says the poet. True or False?

9. The poet attributes three more advantages to English. List them.

10. How does the poem end (the last four lines)? (a) A suggestion, followed by its advantages. (b) A request, followed by a threat. (c) A prediction followed by its consequences. (d) An advertisement followed by an offer.

Task 2. Now, a young Indian has become the British Prime Minister. In the changed situation, how do you view the relation between India and Britain? Write a short paragraph.

Reports from the field

'Functioning in English' (A Communicative English Certificate Course) Conducted by Dept. of Humanities IPS Academy, Indore (MP) in association with ELTIF.

Dr. Shalini Mathur
Head, Department of Humanities, IPS Academy, Indore (MP)

"Language has such power over the human mind. If one learns to use language wisely, one would be successful in all one's ventures."
— **Anuradha Bhattacharyya:** *The Road Taken*

A Communicative English Workshop has been conducted by IPS Academy, Department of Humanities, as a part of a 100 hour- English Proficiency Course. It is being done in association with ELTIF (English Language Teacher's Interaction Forum) Kerala for enhancing communication skills of the students.

The objective ofthe program is to enhance the basic language skills, which is a key to success in every field in the present era. The program aims to prepare the students to meet the challenging demands of the globalized world and make their communicative ability more accurate and effective.The duration of course is 100 hours and mode of learning is hybrid (Offline & Online)

Various interesting activities were performed during these eight-day's offline learning sessions to develop many life skills along with communication and soft skills. Overall 45 students from different streams enrolled for this course. There were two sessioneveryday;the first from 10:30 to 1:00 and the second from 2- 4pm.

Day-1: The inaugural function for this program was conducted on August 22, 2022. The program was introduced bythe Head of the Department,Dr. Shalini Mathur. Dr.DeepaVanjani was the guest speaker for the inaugural session. She highlighted on the problems faced by both students and teachers in the process of learning and teaching this language. The resource person Dr.P Bhaskaran Nair, President of ELTIF had shared how 'English is a language of opportunity and empowerment for youth in present time'. Post lunch, Prof Nair started the session with an ice breaking activity where he shared English translations of popular Hindi film songs. The participants immediately started taking part. Prof Nair had introduced himself in an interactive way& vice –versa. In another activity, the students were made to sit in group of 4 and had to give responses of the questions asked to them. They talked about their interest, habits, and culture.

Day-2 :The session started with Dr.Nair talking about self responsibility and importance of listening . He provided optimal input through his speech. Students also discussed in group a comparative status of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala in terms of social awareness,crime rate, weather, roads, tourism, food and culture. Students were given a few exercises based on critical thinking. In the latter part of the day, the students were asked to present views on a picture shared with them. All the students expressed their views.

Day-3: The session began with the practice through worksheets on English. There was a discussion on the importance of English language teaching and learning. Next session focused on reading skills; reading aloud with expression & action, and rightpronunciation. In our day-to-day life, we mispronounced many words. During almost every session, correct pronunciation of many such mispronounced words had been shared.

Day-4 : The session began with the discussion on Mythology (myth and reality). It was followed by the practice sheets of vocabulary development and functional grammar. Another interesting activity of the session was the introduction of one student by his/her partner. This enhanced the pair working skills among the group.

Day-5: This session had activities on conversational practice.Initially with help of worksheet short questions were asked and answered by the participants. In the later part of the session,the students as well as the resource person indulged in an interesting session where students posed as a film director, Army personnel, Media Person, Entrepreneur etc. and the rest of them interviewed him/her in the role of journalist. Prof .Nair insisted on the importance of ethics and values in life. In almost every session he motivated students through vivid examplesto lead a life in right direction. According to him education is worthless if one is not a good human being with the values of politeness, truthfulness and sincerity.

Day-6: Field visit: Students visited the Excellence Higher Secondary School run by Madhya Pradesh government at Mhow(M.P) and shared with the school students their experience and learning of various sessions. Students of IPS Academy enthusiastically participated in all the activities performed during this school visit .Participants interacted with the school students and participated in cultural activities like singing & story telling. All the English faculty were present.

Day-7: After a break for a day on Sunday, this was the final session.The session started with a few tips Dr. Nair gave to teach the letters of the alphabet. Though that was a part of teachers' training but equally important for these learners witha future perspective. In a broad framework of life, communication and soft skills, various minute components of these skills such as time and stress management,self responsibility and collaborative work, critical thinking, LSRW skills, reaching out to opportunities and interview skills were shared with the students.All the participants shared theirexperiences and were genuinely excited to continue learning through these sessions in an online mode. In the end a mementowas given to Prof. Nair as a token of love and gratitude.

Perhaps, it was for the first time the students got a real life opportunity to interact with a person outside their region, language and culture. Barriers of communication started getting blurred day by day, and confidence started rising. The department, as well as the student community is looking forward to the online sessions in future.

Reports from the field

English Firmly Linked Tamil and Malayalam:
A Report of the Cultural Exchange

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SDNB Vaishanv College for Women Chennai recently started a novel venture for understanding other cultures around Tamil Nadu.'Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Club' has been organizing a series of online lectures on films, folk arts, literature and theatre of other languages and cultures.

The club reached a significant milestone in its 'Journey of Going beyond mother tongue' by its members crossing the borders of Tamil Nadu and reaching the world renowned sea port city of Kochi in Kerala. A project ofcommunity teaching assigned by English Language teachers' Interaction Forum (ELTIF) took us to a Malayalam speaking community.My students from Chennai had great apprehension and fear in how they were going to manage for four days in Kerala with their little English. Not just managing, they have to manage teaching English too!

The children, teachers and parents were eagerly waiting for us at St. Joseph High School, Chathiah, in Kochi (Ernakulam District). For many of my students it was their first travel outside Tamil Nadu, and their first real life encounter with non-Tamil speakers. ELTIF made it possible. 14 students were taken for this program from our literary club. of which 10 students were from three different PG departments such as MA (English), MSc. (Applicable Mathematics), MSc. (Plant Biology) and 4 students were from BCA Dept. The PG students were given preference as this type of community activity fetches weightage in getting scholarship for research programs abroad and in India. In addition, this type of activity keeps their profile distinct in job, market, s well. The objective of the trip was to raise an awareness of other languages and cultures.

The Programme Diary
Preparatory stage
As soon as the invitation came from ELTIF, we started the preparation. Dr. AK Leena, representing the host school gave us the details of the school, students etc. and Dr .Bhaskaran Nair, representing the host organization guided us in the academic part of the programme. A few online sessions were arranged for giving guidelines for the student-tutors. Later, when Dr. Nair came to our college in Chennai as resource person for our faculty development programme (FDP), he interacted with prospective tutors and clarified their doubts.

Day 1
A team of 14 students escorted by me left Chennai on 20/9/22 by Chennai - Alleppey Express at 8.50 p.m..Students were excited at the prospects of a long distance study tour, and the teaching assignment awaiting them.

Day 2
We reached Ernakulam at 9.15 a.m.. We were given accommodation in Don Bosco Hostel inVaduthala. We were taken the hostel. After refreshing ourselves, and reached St. Joseph's School, Chathiah around 11. 30. The student-tutors were divided into four teams. Dr. P. Bhaskaran Nair, and Dr.N.SVinija, a professional teacher trainer, conducted training sessions for the students in the FN and AN respectively.

Day 3

We had a brief inaugural session with the participation of parents, teachers, students and representatives of the school Management. After tea break, Teaching sessions followed. Pairs of tutors engaged classes from Grade 5 to 8. The tutors had already planned and prepared a list of activities. In the beginning, they had to struggle a bit, because they were not adept in class management. But, later, with the occasional intervention and support of the school teachers, they found it a pleasant job. Soon, the students got engaged in the learning activities using many aids including lap top and smart phone. Post –lunch teaching session went on till 3.30 PM. After an hour of discussion and evaluation, we went back to the hostel.

Day 4

After breakfast, we got ready by 8.30. last evening itself, there was a rumour about a possible 'hartal' in the city—and throughout Kerala. No buses were plying. We walked the short distance of a kilometre and a half. Students and parents were ready there to welcome us. Teachers guided us to various classes. The tutors were conversant with the activities as they could assess the pulse of the students, the previous day. Two teaching sessions in the FN and one in the AN were conducted. They conducted a lot of games, interactive activities and quiz. They used projector and laptop, and white board effectively. Walking back to the hostel through the less crowded streets (because of hartal) was also a nice experience.

Day 5

Getting into a crowded bus, we reached the school in time. Tutors were all in greater confidence. They started their interactive sessions by changing classes. A very good rapport has already been established between the children and the tutors. By evening, both the tutors and the children were in a gloomy mood, because of the imminent parting.

Just before the valedictory session an interactive session was done by Bhaskaran Nair, with about 150 students. It was a team teaching session with the support of about 15 tutors and some 10 teachers going round and helping the students.

The valedictory session was attended by a lot of parents. Mementos were given to the tutors and guest teachers by the school, as a token of love. Books were presented by ELTIF as gifts. The student-teachers were all thrilled by their first experience as teachers.

We boarded the train bound to Chennai in the evening. All the teachers and many parents were at the school to bid us farewell.

Outcome of the program

1. Students gained confidence to interact in English, and even toteach English to the students from culturally, linguistically different background.
2. Students picked up some amount of Malayalam.
3. Students' English-speaking skill significantly improved as there was no other medium of communication. No inhibition.
4. Students were adopted to survive in a society with adifferent culture and language
5. Students developed interest in community service activities.

All fifteen of us express our sincere thanks to the College Management, Principal and all senior academic staff and administrative staff for providing us with such an opportunity.

Seminar-Conference-Workshop Notifications

Notifications of seminars, conferences and workshops in English language, Literature and Cultural studies will be accepted for publishing in the Journal. University and college departments of English and allied subjects may please contact the Editor:
eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com

Reports from the field

Our school in Madhya Pradesh gets a guest from Kerala; ELTIF's entry into MP, as well.
A Report of the Interaction Programme

Ms. DeepmalaPathak & Ms. Priyanka Rai
Teachers, Government Excellence Higher Secondary School, MHOW (MP)

It was perhaps for the first time in their life, the students of our school got an opportunity to interact with a person outside their mother tongue; and they made the full use of it. On 27 August 2022, an English Proficiency Program was conducted in Government Excellence Higher Secondary School, MHOW (MP).

The program started with the welcoming of the chief resource person Prof. Bhaskaran Nair from Kerala (President of ELTIF) and all the dignitaries by Principal, Naresh Kumar Verma and Vice Principal, Mrs. Archana Joshi, with beautiful flowers. About 150 students took part in the session. Besides Dr. Nair, we also had dignitaries from the prestigious institution IPS Academy Indore, Dr. Shalini Mathur (Head of Humanity Department), and her colleagues Dr. Jyoti Jaiswal, Dr. ShalooManocha, Dr. Mamta Gokhe and Dr. Preeti Vyas. It was this department that connected ELTIF with our school. About 20 students of IPS Academy too came with their teachers. The main purpose was to provide a platform for interaction between the senior students of the Academy and the children of our school.

English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum (ELTIF) has been organizing various programmes for students, teachers and parents- for about two decades, we were told. Our school too became a beneficiary of ELTIF programmes.

The objectives of the programme were

- To make students understand the importance of English as a common link language for communication, and
- To explain the importance of learning and studying English to give a boost to their career.

Since the program was for English proficiency, the host Ms.Deepmala Pathak recited a poem on English language,(which is given on page 31).

The chief resource person Prof. Bhaskaran Nair runs an organization aimed at making students familiar with English in most easy and convenient ways. In his lecture, he aimed at making students understand the advantages of mastering English, its use in day-to-day life and most importantly in their career. He motivated the children to always aim the highest and keep reminding it to oneself daily to achieve it. He presented many day-to-day life examples to express the importance of English. The lecture was interactive. Children listened to him very carefully and thoroughly enjoyed his lecture along with getting highly motivated for their future career prospects.

Dr. Shalini Mathur, Head Department of Humanities, IPS Academy Indore-, said that moral behavior should not be dependent upon whether one is being watched or not. As grown-ups, students must observe their deeds and behavior as right or wrong and always follow the path of truth and honesty.

Many of the IPS Academy students narrated various motivational stories, sang songs and recited poems, as well. Students of IPS Academy as well as students of Govt. Excellence HSS, MHOW showed their talents of singing songs and prayersand playing musical instruments such as guitar. The environment and aura of the program became highly intellectual as well as pleasingly musical. The experience of the program for the students was a rare combination of learning, interacting and entertainment.

Principal Mr. Naresh Kumar Verma whole heartedly appreciated the works of ELTIF and the efforts of Ms.Deepmala Pathak and Ms. Priyanka Rai for making this program a truly successful and an absolutely fruitful one.

Ms. Deepmala Pathak anchored the programme and Ms. Priyanka Rai proposed vote of thanks.

Reports from the field

Children Got Engaged; Parents Got Empowered: Thanks to ELTIF.

Ajitha U,

Headmistress, Elangode LP School, Panoor, Kannur, ajiuchu20@gmail.com

First of all, let me thank ELTIF for reaching out us in a remote village that cannot boast of even normal public transport service. One has to hire an autorickshaw to reach our school. It is to this place ELTIF came voluntarily to help the teachers, children and their parents.

The meeting between ELTIF and our school was rather by chance. One of my colleagues Ms. Subeena the Arabic teacher, had been attending a programme of ELTIF called 'Women Empowerment through English Language Education', organized by the Muslim Service Society (MSS) in Kadavatur, a small town, some ten kilometre from our school. She informed about the weekly English classes in progress there and that made me think of requesting ELTIF for a similar kind of help for our children and parents too. Other colleagues earnestly agreed with this proposal, and offered support.

The request was favourably considered by ELTIF and the inauguration of the 'Teacher Empowerment Programme' took place on Sunday, 27th March in which the teachers of our school and a few from outside too participated. The resource person was Dr. P. Bhaskaran Nair, the president of ELTIF. We fully realized the meaning of his message: "If a school has to survive in the days of competition,if more parents should send their children to a school, infrastructure facilities and publicity modes alone will not work. Only if the school offers good communication skills in English along with good knowledge of other subjects, parents may be willing to send their children. Otherwise, they may send children to distant schools labelled as English medium, by paying heavy amount as fees, not realizing that there too the situation is the same as far as communication in English is concerned." That means a concerted, collective effort on the part of teachers and parents alone can save a school

from getting the stigma on it as 'uneconomic; school, which eventually leads to the closure of the school.

It was also decided at the first meeting to organize a 'Parental Awareness Programme' at the earliest so that the support of the parents at home can be ensured. Accordingly, the first meeting of parents was held on Sunday, 3rd April. About 30 parents—women and men attended the class. Considering the socio-educational backwardness of the village, parents were urged by the resource person, Dr.Bhaskaran Nair, to pay additional attention to their children's studies.

At the third meeting, since the resource person was unable to attend, parents and teachers together discussed the ways and means of enriching the children's learning experience.

At the fourth ELTIF session, a 'Basic Proficiency Programme' began for the children of Class 3 to 5, which was handled by Mr. Pavithran (Rtd. HM, Eruvatty UP School). Children were found very much engaged in his play-way teaching activities. In a parallel session, Dr. Bhaskaran Nair engaged the parents for two hours.

The fifth session on 24th April had Mr. Pavithran for the children's class and Mr. Sahadevan (Rtd. Principal, GVHSS Kadirur) interacted with the parents. Both sessions were well-appreciated by the participants.

The sixth ELTIF session at our school on 8th May was engaged by Mr. Pavithran (for children) and Mr. C. Gangadharan, Rtd. HM, Olavilam UP School, for parents. Children were showing considerable improvement in communication.

On 15th May, the class for children continued by Mr. Pavithran. Discussion based on pictures, word game (the word 'plate' and words associated with it), introducing parents were

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 elicitated, 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.

It works in my classroom

Let Both –thinking and language--develop simultaneously

P. Bhaskaran Nair
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Activity 1

Let's walk into a first year English learners' class. Age of the learners: three or four years. The teacher sits on the floor surrounded by her learners. So many things—real objects, models, toys and pictures are scattered around. Children pick up one by one and approaches the teacher. After studying the object or picture, the teacher asks the child to show it to the class. She says: *A jeep. A big jeep. A blue jeep. A big blue jeep. This is Athul's*(name of the child who holds the toy/picture) *jeep.This jeep runs very fast. Drrrrrrr…*. (Asks the child to drive the jeep fast.) *Look, Athul is driving his jeep. His jeep is big. It's blue. It runs very fast. Drrrr…*.

Next, another child approaches the teacher with the toy/picture she has chosen. As earlier, the teacher studies it and then tells the class: *Look, here's a car. It's a red car. It's a small car. It's a small, red car. This is Sunita's car. Come Sunita, you drive the car. Look. Sunita is driving her car.* (Sunita sounds horn—*beep, beep*.) *This is a good car. A small red car. This is Sunita's car. She is driving the car. The car runs fast.*

Another child goes to the teacher with an apple. The teacher introduces the fruit using colour words (red, yellow), size words (small, big), possessive words(his/her), taste words (sweet), growth words (ripe, tender) etc. Then she washes the apple, peels it and cuts into small pieces. At every stage, she tells what she does: *I'm washing / peeling / cutting the apple.* Instruct the children through gestures, not to repeat after her. Then all of them eat the apple saying *We are eating the apple.*

The teacher instructs another child to do the same tasks with a banana. The teacher tells the class: Nitu is washing a banana. Now she is peeling the banana. Now look, Nitu is cutting the big banana into small pieces. How many pieces? Eight.

Activity 2

Children, with the help of the teacher, prepare a sand map of their village/town. While drawing the sketch, to begin with, the teacher tells the children what they are going to do / what they are doing. For example, while drawing the small river that runs through their village or town, the teacher identifies each small place on either bank of the river. This is X (place). Viju comes from this place. His house is somewhere here. He comes to school, cycling. On the north of X, is D (place). Sheenu's house is here. She comes to school walking. Her grandfather comes with her. He goes back at the school gate. Still north of D (place) is G (place) Four children—three girls and one boy—come from G. They always come together on cycles. Who are they?

By the time the rough geographical sketch is over, it is the turn of the children to mark their respective locations with coloured sand, strictly following the border lines drawn by the teacher. When the 'construction' is in progress each group tells others; "This is X; This is my place." "This is G. Riju, Leena, Sheema and I come from this place. We come cycling" " D is north of X. Sheenu comes from D. She comes to school with her grandfather.

Activity 3

One day let children bring ahandful of various types of rice, wheat, maize, ragi, millet, and their flours. Teach them their names. Then ask the classby pointing to the cereals (foodgrains).

1. What is our main food in…(name of the state)?
2. Which rice is used for making dosa and idly?
3. Tell the names of a few varieties of rice.
4. Which rice is used for making kanji (gruel)?

5. Do we use boiled rice to make idlies?
6. Name a few breakfast dishes we make out of raw rice.
7. What rice is used for pongal?
8. What varieties of rice are used for making ghee rice or biriyani?
9. What is chapathi made of?
10. Tell a few food items made of wheat flour.
11. What is the food item made of maida?
12. Can we make porotta with wheat?
13. Which porotta is better for health—wheat or maida?
14. In the list, which is served to old people or patients?
15. Which is best as a baby food?
16. Have you seen or tasted ragi noodles?
17. Do we grow maize in … (name of the state)?
18. What is paani poori made of?
19. Where is paani poori more popular—in North or South India?
20. Do you buy wheat flour or do you buy wheat and get it into flour at a mill?

(Let children answer only those questions that they know well; let the remaining ones be given as take-home assignment so that they can answer them with the help of elders at home.)

In all the three activities, children are first involved in inquiring. Inquiry can be treated as the first stage of constructing one's own knowledge, because it follows an answer. Further inquiries in future, as the child matures, provides him/her with mor accurate answers. That means, cognitively the child is growing. Side by side, linguistically too, since the language is used for a purpose—not learning for the sake of learning.

Let's study the following situation. "What was the number of the autorikshaw that met with an accident at the school gate?" Nobody remembers. "OK. Just go and find out. Note down the number and come back. Don't go outside the gate." Does anyone among my readers think that there will be children at schools, who don't understand this piece of discourse, given in that specific situation? Four crucial words (autorikshaw, number, accident, school gate)together provide the comprehensible input, supported by the teacher's facial expression and gestures ("Don't go outside" accompanied by the gesture of prohibition). Still, why do we blame children? Research results show that children learn a language better when they are engaged in an activity that demands some amount of thinking and acting.

some of the activities of the day.

We were forced to suspend the ELTIF sessions for the rest of May, because of bad weather and Red Alert declaration by the District administration.It was decided that instead of Sunday, it may be more convenient for children to have a two-hour session any working day.

From the reopening of the school in June till October Mr. Pavithran has been conducting proficiency classes regularly. Children have started communicating freely and fearlessly.

The discontinued 'Parental Awareness Programme' started again on 29th October with more participation from parents.

We, the following teaching and support staff of Elangoe LP School. express our sincere thanks to ELTIF for organizing the Communicative English Course and the Parental Awareness Programme at our school. Ajitha U , Subeena P K, Suneesh P, Ramya. TC, Dilsha D, Punnyachandren CN, Dinisha, and Sabira.

ELTIF Teaching-Learning Materials

ELTIF is planning to develop a 'Material Bank for Rural and Disadvantaged 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