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## From the Editor's Desk

### **The English class: Viewing from the learner's perspective**

The absurdity of teaching English—both the content and the way it is taught—is something like the presence of water for the fish. The fish is not at all aware of the water that surrounds it, that engulfs it, that provides food for it, that keeps the fish living. Water is present inside the fish too—for breathing, and may be drinking, too. The absurdity of teaching English for the learner is something like the presence of water for the fish—in and out. The learner of English is immersed in absurdity, from the beginning till the end.

Let's begin with the earliest days of English at school. Most of the things, may be all of them, that the teacher holds and ask the class, "What is this?" are quite familiar to both parties. And the child knows very well that her teacher knows very well that it is nothing but a pen. Then why this question?

The same child may get surprised or even shocked when, in immediate or remote future, her teacher would ask the class pointing to a strange thing or being, "What's this?". Just imagine, one fine morning, the teacher enters the class riding comfortably on a rhinoceros or a hippopotamus, and ask the class, pointing at her 'vehicle', "What's this?" (and not "What iiiiiiis this"). Definitely, there's curiosity on all innocent faces! After the initial shock or surprise dies down, they will be looking at one another for naming the 'guest beast' and thereby greeting the majestic being, the Bharathiya way (formerly known as 'the Indian way'), "Namaste ...jii", or the old and stale colonial way, "Good morning Mr./Ms...". They themselves want to fill in the blanks.

There is all likelihood that someone in the class (who may, in future, bring trophies for the school, in quiz competitions) answers the question, may not be as bold as on earlier occasions he or she shouted "It's a pen/ pencil/ book". The element of unfamiliarity or strangeness enthralls the children to look for a name for the newly presented being or object. In the absolute absence of unfamiliarity, the learners simply shout in chorus—shouting in chorus or clapping for a long time etc. need not be taken as children's enthusiasm or involvement; it is a part of children's package of natural self-inventory, for getting rid of

monotony. On the other hand, when something unfamiliar is introduced, there is an effort on everyone's side to know the name, to know more about it. Familiarity breeds contempt, not only towards the teacher, but to the subject, too. Thus, children start disliking, if not hating English class (not English). After ten or twelve years, when those children reach the college English class, they make the best use of all the windows and backdoors of the classroom for making a comfortable exit. They still like, no, love English. Don't you notice, after saving themselves from the boredom of the English class, they are 'searching' many things under the sun on their smart phones, using English language. Yes, they hate only the English class; not the language. I firmly believe they possess a small element of Gandhiji in their attitude: "Don't hate English people or their language, fight against their rule", something like that.

But, many teachers may not be able to, nor feel comfortable to enter their class every morning riding on newer and newer beasts, since the number of beasts on the surface of the earth is likely to be less than the total number of English periods at schools and colleges, put together for about seventeen years). What is the use of this 17 years' teaching? (Pre-KG, LKG, UKG 3 years+ school 12 years+ undergraduate minimum 2 years). Let the rhetorical question be discussed by writers and 'producers' of dissertations in ELT; (self-styled teacher-scholars of literature at the UG and PG level are excused, and exonerated).

My dear teachers of English, let's forget about taking beasts to classes. Shall we think of carrying something new—both in our hands and minds—to every class? A newspaper, an advertisement, a brochure, a book other than the prescribed 'holy' text, a 'situation vacant' column, a sales memo, a collage, a painting, a recorded version of a speech, song or poem, anything print or electronic that has some relevance or connection to the unit that you are going to teach. Then, you are a teacher with a difference.

**P. Bhaskaran Nair** (Editor)

## **\*Musings of a Global Teacher on Indian Teachers' Day**

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I feel especially blessed on this auspicious teachers' day because recently I gave away to my friends, colleagues and former and present students 700 books, books on English language; books on linguistics; books on literary and critical theories; novels, short stories, plays, etc.; and books on the teaching of language and literature from my personal library. I believe that each one of those books carried with it a bit of me, a part of my existence, a little bit of my being. I thank these books for giving me their delightful company for nearly 50 years. I am happy that these books are in reading hands.

I still have another 1000 books in my personal library. These books surround me in my bedroom and my study room. I feel their intellectual and physical aroma all the time, like those that have found new habitats used to spread in my house. I am proud that we have more books than we have material things in our house. I look at them and they smile at me. I have never heard them cry or complain. They are equally comfortable with Hindu readers and Muslim readers. To them it does not matter whether they were written by Christians or Buddhists or Jews, whether they were born in Bharat or in India. They have been living together shoulder to shoulder on the same racks, absolutely harmoniously. They have given me their pleasant company in good and in trying times. They silently converse with me, try to understand me and in turn I try to interact with them. We are in secret communion with each other. They are my confidantes. They never take me to task or ridicule me or make fun of me for my crazy interpretations. They never backbite. We share a special and rare bonding. As John Keats says, "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter".

I am happy that my biological and intellectual children and grandchildren understand the importance of these generous companions because they understand that the "value" of

books is more precious than their "price".

I am sure books wonder why people wish one another teachers' day in a routine way. I am sure they think it would be a great idea for teachers and students to share in 50 words the contents of the book each one has recently read. My books and I understand that greetings and wishes serve a purpose, but personally, we find it an empty ritual to just say "Happy Teachers' Day". There are two issues here. One, it is too impersonal a gesture. There is no warmth, no personal touch. Two, there is no creativity and no novelty in the exercise.

\*\*\*

Here is another piece of good news. Ambassador Aftab Seth, who served as Ambassador of India to more than half a dozen countries including Vietnam and Japan, and who is elder brother to Roshan Seth, who presented *Discovery of India* on Door Darshan several years ago, and who acted as Nehru in the movie *Gandhi*, has written a memoir (*Half a Century: My Connections with Japan, a Memoir*) and an autobiography (*A Diplomat's Garden*). It is his magnanimity that he has written a couple of paragraphs in his two books appreciating my humble contribution as an informal good will ambassador, as an English language teaching expert and as a senior English language adviser during my Vietnam assignment from 1999 to 2002 and my Japan assignment from 2003 to 2006 respectively. On September 5, 2023, which happens to be celebrated as teachers' day in India, Ambassador Aftab Seth told me about my little presence in his books. For me, this news is a priceless and invaluable teachers' day gift! To me, this documented recognition by one of the best diplomats of our country is as precious as a Sahitya Academy Award for literature is to a writer or a Dadasaheb Phalke Award for contribution to Indian (sorry, Bharatiya) cinema is to a film star. I was fortunate to work under the

extraordinary leadership of Ambassador Aftab Seth in Vietnam and later in Japan.!

\*\*\*

Friends and Indians and countrymen! Lend me your eyes! By Indians I mean Bharatians. Would you want me to apologize for the word "Indians"? If you think I should say sorry, then I am faced with the question! "To B or not To B?" That is, "to say 'Bharat' or not to say 'Bharat'." Let me try to explain the origin of the two names of our incredible nation-- INDIA and BHARAT. As you know, we were a civilization that flourished along the banks of the Indus river or Sindhu river. Our ancestors could have named our country as Industhan or Sindhusthan. They named it as Hindusthan, which to me seems a beautiful confluence of Indu, Sindhu and Hindu. I don't know whether this explanation is etymologically authentic. If it is not, then it stands open to correction. The other name is BHARAT derived from the name of Emperor Bharat. It seems that the name INDIA was derived from the river names INDUS or SINDHU. So, it looks to me that both INDIA and BHARAT both are indigenous names. I don't see any colonial connotations here.

Let us go back to the quote from Shakespeare. The quote 'To B or not to B' echoes William Shakespeare's "To be or not to be?" from HAMLET. Hamlet's uncle kills Hamlet's father and marries his mother. From the time Hamlet comes to know about this act of treachery and debauchery and incest committed by his uncle as the main criminal and by his mother as an accomplice, Hamlet is haunted by a desire to take revenge, but repeatedly throughout the play, he misses opportunities to avenge his father's assassination. This indecisiveness is epitomized in the richly pregnant words "To be or not to be", which fruitfully lend themselves to multiple meanings such as 'to live or to die' and 'to kill Claudius now or to kill him later'. Incidentally, during the years the Telangana movement for a separate state was gaining momentum, I coined the expression "To T or not to T", that is, to have Telangana as an independent state or not to have Telangana as a new state.

In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare poses a rhetorical question "What's in a name?" The question doesn't expect any answer, but implies that there is nothing in a name. A rose remains a rose, whether you call it a marigold or a daffodil or by some other name. Its qualities don't change. After all, language is a conventional system. There is no inherent and logical connection between a word and what it stands for or what it refers to. If all users of the English language decide to call a rose a sunflower, they can do so and very soon roses will be called sunflowers, won't they? It's a matter of conventional associations between words and objects, animals, people, places, etc. The Marathi saying "NaavSonubai, haatikathlaachaawaalaa!" proves this arbitrary relationship between a signifier and its signified.

However, all said and done, names serve various purposes. They indicate identities and express social perceptions. In this sense, they are loaded with denotations and connotations, significations and values, etc. Nevertheless, the fact remains that despite having names and faces, many of us, including people holding ministerial portfolios remain faceless and nameless due to terror and fear or are silenced and rendered voiceless and faceless and nameless by highhanded power concentrates. Language and thinking are as inseparable from one another as a dance from a dancer. We use language for a variety of purposes. In totalitarian countries, it is used to brainwash people, to control perceptions, to manufacture consent, to spread fake news, to distort and victimize truth, and so on. In George Orwell's novel titled *Nineteen Eighty Four*, the Big Brother, who represents suppressive and oppressiverégimes, keeps watch on his citizens through various agencies. He invents languages called NewSpeak and DoubleSpeak and reduces vocabulary with a view to curtailing people's thinking skills. Words such as 'uncold' for 'warm' and 'ungood' for 'bad' are examples of NewSpeak. Some examples of DoubleSpeak are 'War is Peace', 'Freedom is Slavery' and 'Ignorance is Strength'. These and such words and expressions are used to confuse the public,

reduce people's thinking abilities, critical thinking skills, and their ability to challenge and to question the authority so that power hungry dictators can rule perpetually.

\*These three pieces were received as personal WhatsApp messages from Professor Z N Patil, with an interval of a few hours among them, on 5th Sept. The next day, I thought of putting them together and publishing them as a 'single piece' in the Journal, because there was something running through the three messages that ELTIF too has been 'musing' over the last two decades. Thanks to Professor Patil --Editor

### **Signpost for researchers**

## **What are some current trends and topics in ESL teacher action research and inquiry?**

If you are an ESL teacher, you might be interested in exploring your own classroom practices and challenges through action research and inquiry. Action research and inquiry are forms of professional development that involve systematic and reflective investigation of your own teaching and learning contexts, with the aim of improving your practice and your students' outcomes. In this article, we will look at some current trends and topics in ESL teacher action research and inquiry, and how you can apply them to your own context.

### **Collaborative inquiry**

One of the current trends in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is collaborative inquiry, which involves working with other teachers, students, or stakeholders to identify and address common issues or questions. Collaborative inquiry can foster a culture of learning, sharing, and support among teachers, as well as enhance student engagement and voice. Some examples of collaborative inquiry topics in ESL are: how to integrate digital tools into language learning, how to promote intercultural communication and awareness, and how to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

This is where invited experts will be adding contributions.

Experts are selected based on on their experience and skills.

Learn more about how members become contributors.

### **Classroom-based assessment**

Another current trend in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is classroom-based assessment, which refers to the use of assessment tools and strategies

that are designed and implemented by teachers and students in the classroom, rather than by external authorities or standardized tests. Classroom-based assessment can provide more authentic, relevant, and meaningful feedback to teachers and students, as well as encourage student autonomy and self-regulation. Some examples of classroom-based assessment topics in ESL are: how to design and use portfolios, rubrics, or peer feedback, how to align assessment with learning objectives and outcomes, and how to involve students in co-constructing assessment criteria and goals.

This is where invited experts will be adding contributions.

Experts are selected based on on their experience and skills.

Learn more about how members become contributors.

### **Teacher identity and agency**

A third current trend in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is teacher identity and agency, which refers to the way teachers perceive themselves and their roles, as well as the extent to which they can exercise choice and control over their professional actions and development.

Teacher identity and agency can influence teachers' motivation, beliefs, and practices, as well as their relationships with students, colleagues, and institutions. Some examples of teacher identity and agency topics in ESL are: how to cope with challenges and changes in the teaching context, how to balance personal and professional values and expectations, and how to develop a sense of belonging and community among teachers.

*(Contd. on p.23)*

## **Unpacking the Mystery of Researching: Part 2**

### **What is not research!**

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\* Thought seed :

Many of us love to cook and feed people, while some of us love to be fed. Our country is famous for its very tasty cuisine. We are masters of sweets and savouries that are very unique to us and the wide spread of dishes we have for our festivals are unheard of in other 'forward' countries. With just a few common ingredients we make many different dishes by just altering the proportions and sequence of adding the ingredients. With the same besan, ghee, jaggery and cardamom we make mysorepak, soanpadi, soan halwa, boondi laddu, motichur laddu, burfi, mohanthal barfi, besan laddu etc. At the same time, would any of these dishes be possible if we add chilli powder or salt instead of sugar, vegetables instead of cashew nuts, or jeera instead of cardamom? If we retain the procedure but change the ingredients, will we get the same dishes? Alternatively, what would happen if we retain the ingredients but change the procedure, say, fry the boondi in water instead of ghee? However bizarre as this sounds, try altering the proportion of the ingredients; instead of using one kilo of jaggery for one kilo of besan if we use just one gram, what will the end product look and taste like? Will it be the same as we had envisioned earlier? Why? Why not? What roles do

ingredients, proportions and procedures play in the making of these dishes? To what extent can alterations be safely experimented with? Suppose we replace jaggery with processed sugar, will the dishes change? Why/Why not? Suppose instead of ten cardamoms, we use only eight, will it change the taste? In case we add badams along with cashew nuts, what change will it bring about in the taste? How does one decide, what the limits of change are, what is optional and how much we can alter? Do all of us follow written rules like a professional chef or do we use logic? Think deeply about ingredients, procedure and alterations. We go by our gut feelings many times, don't we? Think deeply. Do the ingredients aid in making the dish or become the dish themselves when just combined? As a counter point, think of how salads are made, when some vegetables are merely cut and combined in a specific manner. Think of the relationship that the ingredients and the final dish have and how they behave. What is the role of plating and presentation in all of this? Does garnishing enhance the taste of the dishes? Is it necessary to add the oomph to the plate on which these are served? If yes, why do we do that?

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\* This notion of thought seeds for the first time has been used in the field of language education by Dr. Shree Deepa, who was inspired by the idea of dropping seed balls in a forest for them to germinate at will. (Deepa, S. 2022. Thought seeds in Anthrologic Learning Contexts. Journal of Indian Education. Vol.48, Issue No.2. (forthcoming)). A thought seed is just that: a seed that is planted in the mind of the reader, left to grow, and fruit when it will. Thought seeds are anthrologic (meant for adults) in nature, unlike tasks, which are often pedagogic. Thought seeds are open ended; they may present a problem, but there need not be a clear solution that has to be found.



### **How do we go about researching?**

Research has two different and equally important threads. One is doing the actual research after carefully planning or carrying out what is now termed 'action research' in our own classrooms. When we do this, we can work meticulously on maintaining the documentation using proper tools and then also meticulously keep a record of the procedures followed. When we are finished with our 'data collection' or rather planned for research teaching, we can also critically view the records we have maintained, our results, and then interpret them at leisure to help us to further this thread of research. The next important thread is writing up the research that we have carried out for either a paper presentation or for a publication.

### **Doing the research: The classroom connection.**

As teachers, every one of our classroom teachings can become a research opportunity because more often than not we are required to think on our toes and handle or solve various issues that crop up in class which require immediate solutions. We routinely come up with innovative ways of moulding or modifying our teaching-learning activities through varied tasks. We just enter the classroom, try our best to make it interesting and useful for our students and then move on to the next lesson, or task, or activity. But more often than not, we do not perceive this as research or let alone a research opportunity. We rarely keep records of our

tasks or procedures; we don't pay any attention to what we have done, and do not bother to spend time in either documenting these activities or think deeply about the effect that these innovations had on our students. This is primarily because we see all the teaching we do as a routine matter and come to the conclusion that it is nothing out of the ordinary. This is where all of us as teachers make a mistake! When we are able to enable our students to learn, move forward and help them get on with their academic lives, then, what we do with them in class is definitely important and should be valued!

### **The One fine day! Let me publish**

When this thought hits us, then, comes that '*one-fine-day*' when we are inspired to write up our work and publish it as a paper. But then, we just write up something in a hotch-potch manner quoting from our faint memory. We probably describe what we did and then assume that the 'paper' will get published.

This mere description from our memory and then saying, 'oh believe me, I did some great things in my class. I did this, that and these' is a very good practice as far as sharing our work with our colleagues, but by itself it cannot become a research paper or article.

We submit our paper to a refereed journal, and then, when we get to know that our paper gets rejected, we learn that we must include some citations. We probably hit Google Scholar, type in a few key words and randomly bring in some 'fellows', garnish our paper like how we would add dry fruit flakes on the barfis. We send it up again for publication, hoping that we get accepted as a '*published author*'. But, no, that does not happen! Not yet! We are told that we need some more citations, more relevant ones and that a theoretical framework is missing. We add more garnish and submit, not knowing how much or what to add. Google becomes our saviour. We add all the citations we can find, again hoping that we get published. It still doesn't happen. Sometimes, a random friend or a '*published author*' will tell us very firmly that we need to establish a 'research gap' in our article by adding a literature review. We

will also get told, particularly in the context of a doctoral thesis or even a research paper that we need to '*read, read, read, and read some more, before you begin to write*'; these people will scare you, saying that writing a research paper is a long drawn process and you need to read for at least three or four years before you begin writing, if you are PhD student! This would push the '*one-fine-day*' and your dream farther away, deep into the sea and you will be left wondering where you went wrong and why no one told you all these!

Don't worry! This column will come to your rescue.

### **The missing links**

The missing links, the shoreless feeling and the confusion arise because our 'advisors' have not told us the differences between teaching, using the teaching-learning experiences as research possibilities and the actual procedures that are needed to help us convert our research work as a paper. The classroom activities and tasks are like the ingredients referred to in the thought seed, when we set out to make the sweets. The ingredients cannot become the final barfi all by themselves. They need to be processed according to a certain procedure in the right proportion. Similarly, our classroom tasks and activities need to be processed and documented in certain ways to lead to either a semi-finished barfi or a laddu or a soanpapdi. After that comes the plating, by cutting or rolling or pressing them into different shapes and sizes. This will be the first draft of your paper or thesis. If we try to publish it at the ingredient stage or the plating stage, it will not be the best version and

is not ready for our readers to enjoy fully. They might just taste the ghee or worse, plain besan flour! The ingredients alone do not take on the role of the sweet though they do aid in the finished product. In a similar manner, we need to use our classroom tasks as data, as the ingredients, process them either qualitatively or quantitatively, plate and then finally garnish them presentably. This is when it becomes a complete research paper, and publish-worthy.

If we are serious about being published or getting a research degree we need our data (ingredients), documentation of the data and procedures, (cooking), data interpretation (looking at the dishes for its readiness for plating) and then actually writing it up (further plating and garnishing). Some writers pay too much attention to garnishing and include too many citations that are unnecessarily instrumental in spoiling the originality of the basic premise of the actual research. They overshadow it so much that the identity is lost. When this happens, these become the papers that are mere catalogues of '*what that study said and what else this study said*'. Some others only talk of '*what I did, I did this and I did that*'. Yet others without a reason add '*a bit of what I did and what they said and so I write a paper*'. It is like a hurriedly cooked besan laddu that is either burnt or undercooked and thrown into a cup and garnished with citations that may not even be useful for our research context, like replacing cardamom with jeera and the trying to argue that both are seasonings and hence can be alternately used in our laddu!

Happy cooking and happy researching!

### **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.

Mail : [eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com](mailto:eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com)



## **How Professional is Tamil Nadu State-mandated General English?**

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### **Abstract**

No language is acquired or instructed as a second or foreign language within an academic context without a clearly defined objective. In India, English is a compulsory subject in universities, and obtaining a passing grade in it is a prerequisite for graduation. Universities have continuously updated their General English curriculum to accommodate specific local requirements. However, TANSCHER has assumed authority over the Board of Studies (BoS) and Academic Council of all universities affiliated with arts and science colleges. They have developed a standardized curriculum on behalf of these institutions. A thorough examination of the four General English courses uncovers several deficiencies that undermine the optimistic prospects it initially offers. An analysis of the perceived issue indicates that the suggested solution might actually be worse than the problem itself. The article concludes by presenting ten recommendations directed at educators in the field of ESL teaching.

**Keywords:** basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), academic English, library language, communicative competence.

### **Introduction**

The role of English in India has undergone dynamic shifts over time. Initially regarded as a “library language” (as stated in the Kothari Commission Report of 1964-66), it then evolved into a language for higher education, and currently, it is seen as a catalyst for development, progress, and an improved quality of life. Its demand is pervasive across all sectors. As students enter higher education, there is an immediate need for practical application within their major coursework. They seek a seamless integration between what they learn in English classes (often referred to as General English or Part II English) and the knowledge required in their other major subjects. Their interest lies less in acquiring English for humanistic or aesthetic reasons, contrary to the perception of English course designers and teachers.

Paradoxically, English is instructed as a second language in India by English teachers who are trained and certified in English literature instruction. However, for the majority of learners, it is akin to learning a foreign language. These learners have typically

approached English as another academic subject, akin to science or geography, focusing on the structural and literary aspects. When compared to their international peers, Indian students significantly lag behind in their grasp of English language proficiency. While critiquing the efforts of educators in Indian educational institutions, many observers assert the necessity of aligning the teaching methodologies of Indian English teachers with the needs of the students.

In colleges within Tamil Nadu, English has now become an obligatory secondary language, leaving even Tamil literature students with no alternatives. This mandate extends throughout the initial four semesters of an undergraduate program. Remarkably, universities formulate the General English curriculum without soliciting input or feedback from students, resulting in a design primarily influenced by the preferences of educators. Regrettably, this curriculum often emphasizes elements such as literature and structural grammar rather than focusing on essential language skills. Students, however, express a desire to enhance their fundamental language skills

encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW), along with effective communication abilities. An English course failure carries the consequence of rendering a student ineligible for degree attainment. Numerous students encounter challenges in coping with these mandatory courses as they find themselves grappling with the content of English textbooks. Consequently, many turn to readily available supplementary study guides that flood the market well in advance of official textbooks. These guides experience substantial demand due to their utilization by both teachers for instruction and assessment purposes.

### **Background of the Study**

In 1978, a significant revolution occurred in Indian higher education as the principle of academic autonomy, inspired by Western ideals, was officially adopted and put into practice at a national level within the state of Tamil Nadu (TN). This transformative step followed the insightful suggestions of the Kothari Commission in 1964. Initially, eight arts and science colleges affiliated with the then two state universities were granted academic autonomy by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Overtime, the number of autonomous colleges in the state has increased to 193 out of 708 in India, and out of them, 132 are arts and science colleges. Both autonomous institutions and universities are tasked with curriculum design and periodic updates through the oversight of the Board of Studies and the Academic Council. However, a rather peculiar situation has arisen within the realm of higher education in Tamil Nadu. The State has taken an unprecedented step by dictating the specific aims, objectives, content, units, and even the prescribed books for curriculum implementation. The authority to formulate course curricula for all disciplines within universities now rests with the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCHÉ). Notably, TANSCHÉ has mandated the adoption of a uniform General English (GE) curriculum across all colleges in the state. This article endeavors to conduct a comprehensive critique of the aims,

achievements, components, and recommended textbooks encompassed within the four General English courses.

### **Methodology**

The study aims to possess qualitative, descriptive, analytical, and critical attributes.

### **Aim and Objectives**

Its primary objective is to conduct a critical analysis of the four General English courses, which have been mandated by TANSCHÉ for implementation across all higher education arts and science colleges. This analysis will be carried out through textual examination, focusing on their functional aspects.

### **Research Questions**

The subsequent research inquiries were formulated to be addressed throughout the course of the analytical investigation:

1. What encompass the diverse facets of the General English course?
2. What are the principles of ESL teaching?
3. To what extent does the TANSCHÉ model cater to students' aspirations and requirements?
4. How effectively does this model align with the learning objectives and course outcomes, concerning the course contents?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The ensuing hypotheses have been formulated for verification within this study:

1. The TANSCHÉ model fails to meet the anticipated standards of an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) module.
2. There exists a substantial disparity between the course offerings and the actual requirements of the students.

### **Theoretical Framework**

1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of communication as the primary goal of language learning. Researchers like Dell Hymes and Michael Canale have contributed to the development of CLT principles.
2. Input Hypothesis proposed by Stephen

Krashen suggests that language is acquired through exposure to comprehensible input. It underscores the role of meaningful and understandable language input in language learning.

3. Interaction Hypothesis developed by Michael Long emphasizes the importance of interactive communication and negotiation of meaning in language learning.
4. Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory highlights the role of social interactions, cultural contexts, and collaborative learning in language development.
5. Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) developed by Jim Cummins and Anna Uhl Chamot integrates cognitive and metacognitive strategies with language learning to enhance academic language skills.
6. Jim Cummins introduced the distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to learners' ability to understand and express concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in their chosen fields. He defines academic language proficiency as "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling." (2000: 67)
7. Noticing Hypothesis by Richard Schmidt proposes that language learners need to actively notice language features in input to facilitate acquisition.
8. Zone of Proximal Development by Lev Vygotsky underscores the importance of instruction that targets a learner's level of readiness, promoting optimal learning.
9. Lexical Approach by Michael Lewis advocates for the importance of teaching vocabulary and collocations as a fundamental aspect of language learning.

While these theories are not exclusive to General English, they underpin various aspects of language learning and teaching, including the development of communication skills, language proficiency, and effective teaching

methodologies for General English courses.

### **Review of the Related Literature**

Diane Larsen-Freeman is a renowned linguist who has conducted extensive research in second language acquisition, language teaching methodologies, and the relationship between language and the mind. Her work has greatly influenced language teaching and curriculum design. Stephen Krashen is known for his work on second language acquisition theory, and he has contributed significantly to understanding how language is acquired and how it can be effectively taught. His theories, such as the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis, have had a profound impact on language teaching practices. H. Douglas Brown, an authority in the field of language teaching and applied linguistics, has authored influential textbooks on language teaching methods and language assessment. His research covers a wide range of topics, including language testing, teacher education, and classroom strategies.

Jack C. Richards is an expert in English language teaching and curriculum development, and he has authored numerous books and research papers on language teaching methodology, materials design, and language assessment. His work has contributed to shaping modern language teaching practices. Paul Nation's research has focused on vocabulary acquisition and language learning strategies. His contributions include the development of vocabulary size tests and research on effective vocabulary teaching techniques. Adrian Underhill is known for his work on pronunciation teaching, and has developed the Sound Foundations phonemic chart, which is widely used by English language teachers to teach accurate pronunciation. Rod Ellis is prominent researcher in second language acquisition, and has explored various aspects of language learning, including the role of explicit instruction, input enhancement, and corrective feedback. Barbara M. Birch has contributed to the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and has researched effective teaching methods for academic writing,

reading, and critical thinking skills. These specialists have made significant contributions to the field of General English and have influenced language teaching practices, curriculum design, and our understanding of language acquisition and pedagogy.

### **Research Design & Results**

The standardized syllabus model, initially mandated for all educational institutions, with the exception of autonomous colleges later exempted due to objections from administration and faculty on grounds of academic autonomy and freedom, asserted its potential to narrow the communication skills gap between industry and educational institutions. The rationale behind General English is elucidated in terms of programme specific outcomes (PSO) as follows:

- i. identify words, grammar items and structures in English to use them in specific contexts;
- ii. recognize, explore and use a range of vocabulary to formulate sentences, paragraphs, letters and other forms of narratives;
- iii. list, distinguish and practice different ways of sharing ideas in spoken and written forms' and
- iv. prepare written composition in real life contexts and engage in a range of interactions in the real world.

Nevertheless, the content of the four obligatory courses, designated merely as General English from Paper 1 to Paper 4, does not align with these four Program Specific Outcomes (PSOs). Furthermore, the PSOs themselves are rudimentary and lacking in detail, yet they are intended to be fulfilled through substantial and exemplary works from significant literary genres. The PSOs do not address the utilization of literary texts.

### **Analysis of the Course Structure**

This section furnishes details regarding course objectives, unit contents, and course outcomes, which exhibit a lack of coherence or relevance among themselves.

## **Paper 1**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To enable learners to acquire self-awareness and positive thinking required in various life situations.
2. To help them acquire the attribute of empathy.
3. To assist them in acquiring creative & critical thinking abilities.
4. To enable them to learn the basic grammar
5. To assist them in developing LSRW skills.

### **Unit Contents**

1. Extracts from personal narratives
2. Five poems
3. Four short stories
4. Parts of speech
5. Four types of writing
6. Reading comprehension sans materials & micro-skills

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Acquire self-awareness and positive thinking required in various situations
2. Acquire the attribute of empathy
3. Acquire creative and critical thinking abilities
4. Learn basic grammar
5. Develop and integrate the use of four language skills

### **Observations**

1. Course outcomes lack clear and accessible language for learners.
2. No distinction between Los and COs is made.
3. The objectives and outcomes are not connected to the core focus of any General English course, which is centred around communication and language skills.
4. The unit contents exist as isolated entities.
5. There are no clues to the learners, teachers, and the question setters, and examiners what constitutes the four language skills and what each of them consists of.

## **Paper 2**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To make students realize the importance of

- resilience
2. To enable them to become good decision makers
  3. To enable them to imbibe problem-solving skills
  4. To enable them to use tenses appropriately
  5. To help them use English effectively at the workplace.

### **Unit Contents**

1. Four poems
2. Four short stories
3. Three extracts from personal narrative
4. 'Three' tenses and concord
5. Email: invitation, enquiry, seeking clarification; circular, memo, and minutes of the meeting.

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Realize the importance of resilience
2. Become good decision-makers
3. Imbibe problem-solving skills
4. Use tenses appropriately
5. Use English effectively at the workplace

### **Observations**

1. No textbooks are given. There will be chaos and confusion among all stakeholders in implementing the course in the absence of textbooks.
2. By just reading poems, short stories and autobiographical narratives, students cannot be expected to acquire psychological dispositions such as resilience, decision-making, and problem-solving.
3. Basics of grammar start from Grade V and there is no specific role of basic grammar at graduate level.
4. Reference books have nothing to do with the course contents, objectives, and outcomes.

## **Paper 3**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To make them [learners] active listeners.
2. To enhance the interpersonal relationship skills
3. To embolden them to cope with stress
4. To master grammar skills

5. To help them to use English effectively in a business environment

### **Unit Contents**

1. Four short stories
2. Four prose pieces
3. Four poems
4. Grammar: Phrasal verbs & idioms, modals & auxiliaries, and verb phrases (gerund, participle & infinitive)
5. Composition Skills: leave letter, letter of application, permission letter; drafting invitations; and brochures for programmes and events.

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Listen actively
2. Develop interpersonal relationship skills
3. Acquire self-confidence to cope with stress
4. Master grammar skills
5. Carry out business communication effectively

### **Observations**

1. Textbooks are not provided for the initial three units, which encompass listening skills and psychological traits such as stress management and rapport building.
2. The selection of literary works seems to precede the formulation of learning objectives and course outcomes, potentially leading to justifications after the fact.
3. The teacher and the learner are not provide with guidance on specific listening micro-skills, learning strategies, and styles. Devoid of these intricacies and specifics, meaningful classroom interactions become challenging.
4. The assessment method for evaluating listening skills and the development of psychological attributes is not specified.
5. Case studies ought to have been seamlessly integrated as essential elements within the units.

## **Paper 4**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To help learners imbibe goal-setting attitude
2. To enable them to understand the value of integrity

3. To help them deal with emotions
4. To teach the learners to frame sentences using tenses
5. To enhance reporting skills

### **Unit Contents**

1. Seven short stories
2. Two personal narratives
3. Two poems
4. Extract from Shakespeare's play
5. Three basic sentence structures and two speeches
6. Report writing and drafting speeches

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Determine their (learners') goals
2. Identify the value of integrity
3. Deal with emotions
4. Frame grammatically correct sentences
5. Write cohesive reports

### **Observations**

1. It would have been beneficial to recommend speeches by renowned world leaders.
2. The presumption is that students possess a deficient foundation in English grammar and communication skills. If this assumption holds true, how can they be expected to proficiently engage with fictional texts where literary language holds significant importance?
3. With the exception of grammar, the learning objectives and course outcomes predominantly focus on study skills and career-related abilities, leaving minimal room for language and communication skills.
4. Literary texts have been somewhat contrivedly incorporated into the units, whereas non-literary discourses could have better aligned with the intended outcomes and objectives.
5. Paradoxically, not a single textbook or reference material on study skills and career skills, as stipulated in the objectives, is available.

### **Discussion**

#### **General English**

"General English" is a term used to refer to a

type of English language course or curriculum that is designed to provide learners with a broad and foundational understanding of the English language. The term "General" implies that the focus of the course is not specialized or specific to a particular field or industry. Instead, it aims to develop essential language skills that can be applied in various contexts of communication, both formal and informal. Its objective is typically to enhance learners' overall language proficiency, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. It aims to equip learners with the ability to communicate effectively in everyday situations, whether for personal, social, academic, or professional purposes.

The term "General English" distinguishes these courses from more specialized or domain-specific English courses that might be tailored for specific professions, such as Business English, Medical English, or Legal English or academic disciplines, such as English for Engineering or English for Literature. While General English provides a well-rounded foundation, learners may eventually choose to delve into more specialized areas based on their individual needs and goals.

The overarching goals of General English encompass two main aspects: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Initially, learners acquire English language skills to facilitate everyday communication, followed by the development of language abilities for academic and cognitive purposes. To elaborate, they require English both to engage socially in a multilingual environment and to excel in their educational and professional pursuits. It is assumed that learners have already acquired fundamental interpersonal communication skills in English during their schooling. Consequently, upon entering college, their focus shifts towards mastering the use of English for absorbing knowledge within their chosen field. This involves activities like attentively listening to lectures, engaging in independent and supplementary reading both physically and digitally, and effectively conveying their

comprehension of the subject matter in written form, be it for examinations or publication purposes. Therefore, the scope of General English does not align with the artistic and humanistic objectives held by English teachers with a background in English literature.

### **Principles of ESL Teaching**

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) involves a set of principles and strategies that teachers follow to facilitate effective language learning. While these principles may vary based on context and learner needs, here are some commonly recognized principles of teaching ESL:

1. Focus should be on real communication and meaningful interaction in English. Everything else is secondary. Teachers should therefore create opportunities for students to engage in authentic conversations and activities that mirror real-life language use.
2. Teachers and textbooks should create an immersive environment where learners are exposed to English as much as possible. This includes using English for instruction, classroom routines, and interactions.
3. They should also promote cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity by integrating cultural elements into lessons and discussions, helping students navigate cultural nuances in language use.
4. Teachers and course designers should tailor instruction to individual learners' needs, interests, and proficiency levels, and allow students to take an active role in their learning process.
5. Teachers and textbooks should design activities and tasks that require learners to use English in context to accomplish specific goals, fostering language acquisition through meaningful tasks.
6. They should utilize authentic materials such as newspapers, videos, podcasts, and literature to expose learners to real-world language use and cultural contexts.
7. Textbooks should integrate the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—into lessons to

provide a holistic language learning experience.

8. Teachers should provide gradual support and guidance as learners progress in language proficiency, and gradually reduce scaffolding as learners become more independent.
9. They should offer constructive feedback on language use, both oral and written, to help learners improve accuracy and fluency. They should also correct errors in a way that supports ongoing learning.
10. They should encourage active participation and interaction among learners through group discussions, pair work, role-plays, and collaborative projects.
11. They should foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative expression through language activities that challenge learners' cognitive abilities.
12. They should create a motivating and engaging learning environment by connecting lessons to learners' interests, goals, and real-world experiences.
13. They should provide ample opportunities for language practice in authentic contexts, both inside and outside the classroom, to reinforce language skills.
14. They can integrate technology tools, digital resources, and language learning apps to enhance engagement and provide additional language practice since students belong to a tech-savvy generation.
15. They should regularly assess learners' progress through various forms of assessment, such as quizzes, presentations, projects, and written assignments, to inform instruction.

These principles guide ESL teachers in creating effective and engaging learning experiences that promote language acquisition, cultural understanding, and communication competence in English.

### **Students' Aspirations and Requirements**

In an ESL classroom in India, students' aspirations and requirements can vary based on factors such as age, background, proficiency level, and individual goals. However, here are

some common aspirations and requirements of students in an Indian ESL classroom:

1. A vast majority of students aspire to achieve a high level of English language proficiency, which can enhance their academic and professional prospects in an increasingly globalized world.
2. They often seek to improve their communication skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, to confidently interact in various real-life situations.
3. Many ESL students aim to excel academically, especially when their medium of instruction is English. They need English skills to understand lectures, participate in discussions, and complete assignments.
4. English proficiency is often considered a valuable skill in the job market, and students aspire to enhance their language skills to increase their employability and career opportunities.
5. Students preparing for standardized English language proficiency exams, such as TOEFL or IELTS, have a specific requirement to achieve a certain score for academic or immigration purposes.
6. Building confidence in using English is a common aspiration, enabling students to overcome language barriers and interact more comfortably with native speakers.
7. English is often the medium of instruction for accessing a wealth of information, including academic resources, online content, and literature, which motivates students to improve their language skills.
8. Learning English can contribute to personal growth, cognitive development, and broader exposure to different cultures and ideas.
9. Students require guidance on effective, academic and para-academic study strategies and research skills to succeed in their academic pursuits.
10. Many ESL students have specific challenges related to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or cultural understanding that they wish to overcome.

Understanding and addressing these aspirations and requirements can help ESL educators design effective and relevant instruction that

caters to the diverse needs and goals of students in an Indian ESL classroom. The TANSCHÉ curriculum fails to align with these goals and is not constructed based on the principles of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). It does not endorse the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Instead, it leverages English literary texts primarily as a conduit for instilling specific psychological attitudes that bear no relevance to effective communication capabilities. This approach places unnecessary stress on students and subjects them to perplexing and unrelated content.

### **Course Objectives vs. Course Outcomes**

Course objectives outline the broader goals and intentions of the course. They describe what learners are expected to achieve, learn, or understand by the end of the course. Objectives are usually more general and abstract, setting the direction for the course and guiding the overall instructional design. They often address the “big picture” of what the course aims to accomplish in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. They help instructors and curriculum designers establish the overall framework and scope of the course. Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) encompasses a range of objectives aimed at enabling non-native speakers to effectively communicate in English. These objectives may vary depending on the context and specific goals of the learners, but generally, the objectives of teaching ESL are to

- i. help learners develop effective communication skills in English, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This involves teaching them vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the ability to express themselves clearly and confidently.
- ii. helps them acquire the language skills necessary to excel in academic settings, including understanding lectures, reading academic texts, writing essays, and participating in discussions.
- iii. equip learners with the language skills needed to function in real-life situations,



such as ordering food, asking for directions, making appointments, and engaging in everyday conversations.

- iv. help learners develop the language skills needed to succeed in a global job market. Proficiency in English often opens up various career opportunities as many international businesses, organizations, and industries use English as a primary language for communication. ESL instruction.
- v. enhance cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and memory. It can also boost self-confidence and foster a sense of achievement, contributing to personal growth and development.
- vi. help learners understand the cultural nuances and social norms associated with English-speaking communities. This understanding is essential for successful communication and integration.
- vii. promote the idea of being a global citizen who can connect with people from different cultures and backgrounds. It encourages understanding, empathy, and tolerance across cultures.
- viii. help learners gain insight into the structure and mechanics of language, leading to improved communication skills in their native language as well. In addition, it fosters an appreciation for linguistic diversity and cultural richness.
- ix. encourage the maintenance of multilingualism, allowing individuals to preserve and use their native languages while also gaining proficiency in English.
- x. help them prepare for standardized language proficiency exams, such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System), which are often required for academic and immigration purposes.

Course outcomes, on the other hand, are specific and measurable statements that describe what learners will be able to do or demonstrate as a result of successfully completing the course. These outcomes are concrete and observable, making it easier to assess whether learning has occurred. They provide a clear picture of the skills, knowledge,

or behaviours that students should exhibit by the end of the course. They are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction and to ensure that the course is aligned with its objectives. The outcomes of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes can vary based on the specific goals, needs, and context of the learners. However, some common desired outcomes of ESL classes are that learners will be able to

- i. communicate fluently and accurately in English, both verbally and in writing, for a range of purposes and contexts;
- ii. demonstrate a certain level of language proficiency, as measured by standardized language proficiency exams like TOEFL or IELTS, if applicable to the learners' goals;
- iii. use a strong vocabulary and understanding of English grammar rules to enable clear and coherent expression;
- iv. employ improved listening skills to understand a variety of accents and spoken English in various situations, such as lectures, conversations, and media;
- v. read and comprehend a variety of texts, including academic, professional, and everyday materials;
- vi. demonstrate proficiency in writing various types of texts, such as essays, reports, emails, and creative pieces, with appropriate structure, coherence, and style;
- vii. understand cultural nuances and norms associated with English-speaking communities, enabling effective cross-cultural communication;
- viii. use critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate information, arguments, and ideas presented in English;
- ix. display increased self-assurance in using English for communication, whether in personal, academic, or professional settings;
- x. integrate into English-speaking environments, engage in social interactions, and participate actively in various activities;
- xi. excel in coursework, participate in discussions, and understand lectures;
- xii. employ improved language skills that expand career opportunities and increase employability in a global job market; and

xiii. use strategies and resources for continued language learning beyond formal ESL classes.

The TANSCHÉ curriculum falls short due to a discrepancy between the objectives specific to the program and the learning objectives, as well as between the learning objectives and the intended course outcomes. The ostensibly structured alignment chart, which appears to be grounded in numerical precision, ultimately serves no meaningful purpose. It suggests that the curriculum designers might lack experience or familiarity with teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). The alignment between objectives and outcomes fails to correlate with the organized progression of content in individual course units. Moreover, the curriculum includes provisions for assessment methods and formats; paradoxically, this aspect remains unaddressed. Textbooks should cater to both educators and learners. However, the commercial guide industry has already begun producing resources like textbooks and study guides, intended for use by both teachers and students alike.

### **Conclusions**

The TANSCHÉ General English curriculum falls short in delivering its stated promises on various fronts. First, it lacks alignment with the principles of ESL teaching and the genuine requirements of learners. Second, it does not effectively foster the development of essential skills such as basic interpersonal communication abilities and cognitive academic language proficiency. Third, the utilization of literary materials as a medium seems impractical and incongruous for the objectives of a general English module. Fourth, a significant disparity exists between the objectives of the program, the intended learning outcomes, and the actual course achievements. Fifth, there is an absence of any mention regarding the methods and structures for assessment. Sixth, a uniform set of textbooks suitable for students, teachers, and question-setters is conspicuously absent. Last, it fails to bridge the gap between academic instruction and real-world industry demands. The research inquiries have been effectively

tackled, and the hypotheses have been substantiated through a thorough examination of the curriculum, a comprehensive review of ESL theories, and an in-depth exploration of pertinent matters.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations warrant serious consideration:

1. The government should establish a structured training schedule for teachers, encompassing both online and offline platforms, to familiarize them with the principles of teaching English as a second language.
2. Teachers must demonstrate a keen awareness of learners' individual needs and preferences. Their instruction should align with actual student requirements rather than relying on assumptions.
3. Teachers could be encouraged to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching of English at the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad. State authorities have already granted permission for teachers to take on-duty leave for this purpose.
4. Organize in-service workshops through HRD Centers to update teachers on the latest developments and trends in ESL teaching at the university level.
5. Comprehensive training in English language curriculum design and updates should be provided for all teachers.
6. TANSCHÉ's role should be limited to providing policy guidelines for ESL teaching, while curriculum decisions should be entrusted to educators and academics within the respective universities.
7. The primary focus of General English courses should be on developing Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICs) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), with other objectives being secondary.
8. Courses should be assigned specific titles that clearly indicate the skills to be acquired. Examples include Conversational Skills,

- Reading Skills, Writing Skills, and Study Skills.
9. Course materials should be designed to be directly beneficial to students without the need for supplementary resources like commercial guidebooks.
10. Curriculum updates should be undertaken periodically, with a deliberate effort to gather students' feedback at regular intervals before making changes.

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### **Signposts for researchers on curriculum reforms**

#### **Implementing Curriculum Change: A Bottom-up Approach** Tanya M. McCarthy

Research suggests that despite attempts by the Ministry of Education to promote a more communicative style of teaching in classrooms across Japan, instigating curricular innovations generally remains difficult due to top-down policies designed without clear guidelines. This paper describes a successful curriculum innovation carried out in a junior high school from 2005 to 2007 where the Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) incorporated a communicative approach within the traditional grammar-structured system. Success was seen as a direct result of collaboration between the ALT, the learners and the Japanese teachers of English (JTEs). As the top-down approach to curriculum development, where the main stakeholders were presented with one-size-fits-all materials, was seen as ineffective in bringing about educational reform, a bottom-up approach was taken to raise awareness of different teaching methodologies and to encourage classroom observation and collaboration. The paper concludes that successful curriculum reform is possible if teachers are made aware of their power as change agents. **Source:** <https://www.academia.edu/2065020/>

## **Enabling Students to Cope with Academic Deficiency: A Study Among the M.A. Students of Rural Odisha**

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### **Abstract**

It is a matter of great concern that most rural, non-English medium and socially deprived students at the PG level in Indian universities are not able to cope with their academic demands due to lack of academic proficiency and academic skills in English. As a result, they are not been able to perform well in their prescribed courses and not been able to qualify for employment. Because of their under-performance and inability to be employed, the teachers of English at the university levels are unnecessarily blamed. After observing the situations the researchers tried to go deeper into the problems and realized that students mainly from deprived background who came from non-English medium background and from the rural areas faced this problem. Such students find it difficult to read and understand texts prescribed for them, take notes, make notes, summarize texts, write good assignments interact in the class and make short presentations. There are no institutional inputs to enhance their skills in these fields. Keeping these problems in mind, the researchers designed a course in academic reading and writing and taught them for one month for forty hours after conducting a pre-test. After that, a post-test was taken and scores of the pre-test and post-test were compared. The researchers also got feedback from the learners about their experience in learning these skills. The students shared that they were not aware of the skills and strategies of reading and writing earlier. The sessions helped them a great deal in reading, writing and speaking in their academic contexts. The pre-test and post-test results showed improvement in the performance of the learners. In this paper the researchers would like to report the study they have conducted. First they have explained the problems faced by P.G students in their academic set up, then identified areas of intervention, and then reported the study conducted. The research questions involved:

- (a) What kinds of problems do M.A students face in coping with their courses?
- (b) Can a course in academic reading and writing be helpful in addressing their problems?

**Keywords:** Academic efficiency, disparity, employment, improvement, academic set up

### **Introduction**

The M.A English syllabus in India is largely inherited from the colonial education system. Although it has been modified from time to time, the colonial legacy has not been completely wiped out. When English education was introduced in India, the objective of it was to create a group of people who would serve the British administration. The syllabus was prepared keeping this goal in mind. At the initial stage, the M.A English syllabus was heavily Anglo-centric. Many texts written by the British writers were included. If we take a look at the syllabi of that time we will find that only British writers like Bacon, Milton, and Dickens were prescribed. For instance, following was the syllabus of Hindu College,

Calcutta in 1847:

#### **A. The Curriculum of Hindu College, Calcutta, 1847**

As Alok Mukherjee states the academic programme of Hindu College was divided into two divisions:

College and Collegiate School. The College Programme consisted of a First Class and Second Class.

#### **COLLEGE- First Class**

**Literature:** Richardson's Selections; Bacon's Advancement of Learning; Bacon's Novum Organum; Milton's Poetical Works; Addison's Essays; Johnson's Rambler and Rasselas; Goldsmith's Essays; Hallam's Introduction to the Literature of Europe in Fifteenth, Sixteenth

and Seventeenth Centuries; Cambell's Rhetoric; Schlegel's History of Literature.

(Mukherjee, p.318).

Students were expected to read these masters. Students who joined the programme had proficiency in English. They came from the feudal and princely class. So they had no problem in reading the texts and enjoying the masters. This continued till the independence of India. After independence, the syllabus was revamped to some extent. Some texts from Indian, the Commonwealth and American Literature were incorporated but the syllabus was dominated by texts by the English writers. Students who took admission were interested in literature and also had proficiency in English as they were taught English by private tutors before joining their M.A courses.

Since 1990s, the composition of the classroom changed. A lot of students from the rural areas and non-English medium backgrounds including deprived sections also enrolled in the M.A English programme. Most of them lacked Proficiency in English. But they were expected to learn the masters on their own and enjoy them. They were keen to learn English as it was "associated with upward mobility and international communication" (Mahanand, Kumar & Nanda, p.22). It is a different matter that the courses were not oriented towards exclusively for language development of the students. They faced challenges in accessing the texts prescribed for them and meet the academic demands. There was hardly any course to equip them with academic skills to enable them to cope with the English language skills required for them though there were attempts made at the individual levels to help students overcome such challenges. At the institutional levels too, there were no initiatives to help them develop their proficiency. Universities abroad have Writing Centres to assist such needy students and tackle such challenges.

### **Needs Analysis**

Students at this level are required to read texts in poetry, novel, play, prose and texts on Linguistics, ELT and so on. In addition to these, they are required to read essays and

articles from books and journals. For reading these, they not only need language proficiency in English but also skills and strategies of reading academic texts. They also need to take notes from lectures, make notes from books and articles they read, summarize, paraphrase texts and write assignments, and so on. These can be grouped as the following:

I. Academic Reading

II. Academic Writing

III. Speaking for Academic Purposes

Needs analysis conducted among students through questionnaires and interviews revealed that students lack these skills and would like to improve in these areas.

### **Profile of the learners**

Students who participated in the study were from the M.A English class. Most of them came from rural areas of Western Odisha and most of them were from non-English medium schooling. However, they had two years of Intermediate and three years of UG studies in English medium. Their Intermediate and UG syllabi in English revealed that they were not exposed to writing processes. They were also not given practice in speaking in their regular classes. Informal interactions with them and through needs analysis questionnaire, the researchers gathered that all of them needed support in academic skills and they were willing to undergo a course and improve their skills.

### **Research Design**

A Needs Analysis was conducted through structured questionnaire to find out the needs of the learners. Based on their needs a one month course for forty hours was designed. They were taught academic reading, academic writing and speaking in academic contexts. Under academic reading, they were taught reading strategies, types of reading, models of reading and sub-skills of reading. Materials were tailor-made for them. For academic writing they were taught how to make notes from books and journals, they also learned taking notes from lectures, skills of summarizing, paraphrasing and so on. In addition to these, they were taught the recent APA and MLA style of documentation. They were also given practice

in presentations. A pre-test was conducted to find out their present level of proficiency in these three areas.

### **Results**

After intervention, a post-test was conducted. Then their scores were compared. It was found that they had scored better in the post-test. Thus the intervention showed significant improvement. The students also shared their experience as to how they learned and benefitted from the sessions and commented on the effectiveness of materials used in the intervention. It is to be added that though quantitative data has been included to supplement the qualitative method, the

researchers largely followed qualitative method in the study. The feedback received from students was quite positive. Two students' responses have been appended.

### **Conclusion**

The needs analysis stated that most of the students pursuing their M.A. needed help in academic English. The areas included academic reading, academic writing and speaking in academic contexts. When they were given inputs in these areas, they improved in the weak areas. It is recommended that courses in academic reading, writing and speaking be made part of the M.A. syllabus. These will help students cope with their studies well.

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### **Appendix A:**

#### **Student Feedback-1**

The Dept. of English, Sambalpur University had organised a co-curricular and ability enhancing course titled Academic Reading and Writing. It was conducted by one of the most efficient and extraordinary content creator and resource material coordinator, Shri Prof. Anand Mahanand, The course guided and helped me a lot in various areas such as content writing, research aptitude and methodology, note making and note taking, summarising, critical analysis of content, organization of content, reading and analysing academic texts. Previously, I had no experience in analysing texts, the course helped me in doing that. I learned various types of sorting techniques, fast note taking, effective mind mapping of various ideas. The art of summarising and note taking helped to write the major points of a text and later expanding the ideas covering all its aspects. The teacher also helped me in realizing and correcting the mistakes through cooperative learning and competing with other participants. I gained a lot more information and confidence. The course helped me in writing seminar papers and gave the conviction that the papers could be presented and well discussed about.

It was a great forum for cooperative participation and learning. Looking forward to many more such ability enhancement courses.

### **Appendix B**

#### **Student Feedback-2**

Prof. Anand Mahanand sir is a brilliant resource person. His academic reading and writing classes helped me make strategic reading of academic texts. I learnt the proper way of taking notes, making notes and summarising which always helps me. From his classes I learnt to read difficult essays and articles in a simple manner. It not only enhanced my reading and writing skills but also enabled me to speak in the classroom with confidence. Prior to the classes I was afraid of public speaking and I'm grateful to be able to attend Prof. Mahanand's classes through the Department of English, Sambalpur University. The knowledge we receive is always going to help us in academics. Despite doing masters in English many of the students are not able to write or

speak properly in English, I think Prof.Mahanand's classes can certainly help them improve the way it helped all of us who attended his classes. He is somebody who doesn't scold anyone for their mistakes rather happily invites wrong answers as well to encourage the students to think and speak. This makes the students more participative in the session. No student is scolded for giving wrong answers, his warm way of dealing with mistakes of the students is very appreciable. It helped me and I believe it can help others as well.

### **Signpost for researchers**

#### **Topics in ESL teacher action research and inquiry** *(Contd. from p.5)*

This is where invited experts will be adding contributions.

Experts are selected based on on their experience and skills.

Learn more about how members become contributors.

#### **Language awareness and development**

A fourth current trend in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is language awareness and development, which refers to the knowledge and skills that teachers have about the language they teach, as well as their own language learning processes and needs. Language awareness and development can enhance teachers' confidence, competence, and creativity in teaching language, as well as their ability to model and scaffold language learning for their students. Some examples of language awareness and development topics in ESL are: how to improve teachers' own language proficiency and accuracy, how to explore and reflect on language use and variation, and how to integrate language awareness activities into the curriculum.

This is where invited experts will be adding contributions.

Experts are selected based on on their experience and skills.

Learn more about how members become contributors.

#### **Inquiry cycles and methods**

A fifth current trend in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is inquiry cycles and methods, which refers to the steps and procedures that teachers follow to plan, conduct, analyze, and share their action research and inquiry projects. Inquiry cycles and methods can vary depending on the purpose, scope, and context of the inquiry, but they generally involve identifying a question or problem, collecting and interpreting

data, implementing and evaluating actions, and disseminating and applying findings. Some examples of inquiry cycles and methods in ESL are: how to use different types of data sources and tools, such as observations, interviews, surveys, or journals, how to apply different types of data analysis techniques, such as descriptive, thematic, or narrative analysis, and how to communicate and disseminate findings to different audiences, such as students, colleagues, or researchers.

This is where invited experts will be adding contributions.

Experts are selected based on on their experience and skills.

Learn more about how members become contributors.

#### **Inquiry challenges and opportunities**

A sixth current trend in ESL teacher action research and inquiry is inquiry challenges and opportunities, which refers to the factors that can facilitate or hinder teachers' engagement in action research and inquiry, as well as the benefits and outcomes that can result from it. Inquiry challenges and opportunities can depend on the individual, organizational, or contextual conditions that teachers face, such as time, resources, support, or policies. Some examples of inquiry challenges and opportunities in ESL are: how to overcome barriers and constraints to inquiry, such as lack of time, training, or recognition, how to leverage resources and support for inquiry, such as networks, mentors, or grants, and how to measure and demonstrate the impact of inquiry on teaching and learning, such as through student achievement, teacher satisfaction, or professional growth.

**Source :** <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/topics/teaching-english-as-a-second-language-s4139/>

## **Investigating Blocks and Failures in Communication: What Goes Wrong?**

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### **Abstract**

This paper attempts to trace the sources of the psychological blocks while communicating in English—a crucial factor that spoils the future of Indian youth in general, and the socially and economically backward students in universities. There are certain factors other than the complexity of the language that pulls the adolescents backward in situations wherein they are supposed to be forced to communicate exclusively through English. The paper goes into some detail, into those factors other than the linguistic ones and tries to offer a few guidelines on how to overcome those communication barriers.

### **Introduction**

One crucial factor that decides the course of the future of the Indian youth today is the ability to communicate in the 'language of opportunities', that is, English. Many other deficiencies, including lack of sufficient knowledge in the discipline concerned, are compensated to some extent in the fields of higher studies and job markets, by a fairly good command over the international language of technology, trade and commerce and so on. Truly so, because content knowledge can be picked up while in the course of studies, or while on job, if one has that essential tool for gaining that content knowledge—communication skills in the global language.

Of the four language skills, speaking and writing are productive skills, since they involve producing words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs; and listening and reading are receptive skills since they involve receiving information. Of these two productive skills, speaking is the one that most people are more apprehensive and anxious about.

### **Speech anxiety**

Speech anxiety is manifested physically in terms of shivering, sweating, dry mouth, dry lips, choking throat, faster heartbeat, and forgetfulness etc.

Let's look at the possible reasons for speech

anxiety. The first and the foremost, I think, is our culture. Our culture is considered to be a 'silent culture', and our forefathers revealed in silence, meditation and spirituality so that we inherited certain customary characteristics that became our nature, that is we were not encouraged to speak overtly in public, or in private places, and girls were supposed to speak politely and quietly. Emotions and feelings were better shown through body language or through some simple actions. This has resulted in our being inhibited from exhibiting our personality and expressing our ideas in public.

The educational and financial background is of course important but will not be so deep rooted to affect a child mentally so as to act as a strong barrier to speech communication.

### **Cultural conflicts**

Culture is the specialized life style of a group of people, their beliefs, values, attitudes, customs, rituals, way of behaving and way of dressing, passed from one generation to the next through communication, and not through genes. *Caste* within a culture plays an important role in building anxiety, affecting communication in a foreign tongue. 70-75% of the Indian population belongs to dalits (scheduled castes and Tribes), backward classes, other backward classes, and Muslims. Most of these so-called lower caste people (may or may not include



Muslims) suffer from an acute attitudinal syndrome imposed upon them through centuries of oppression and maltreatment. They have a very low self-esteem (value they place on themselves), low self concept (image they have about themselves), and low self confidence (confidence in themselves and in their abilities) which mar them to initiate a speech action in a foreign language in public.

They have apprehension and anxiety in learning a language that belongs to a highly sophisticated, financially sound and socially elevated people whose custom and social life are nowhere near or even comprehensible, and comparable to the life style of their lives. Most of them suffer from a cultural shock, mainly those students who hail from North India, where they are not exposed to any images of a foreign culture such as churches, Christian rituals and customs, especially in the rural areas. Unable even to stand up and open their mouth publically, and over-conscious about their low social position, they are inhibited by an inferiority complex that hinders their performance in a foreign language like English. Conversely, and interestingly, it has been found that children of those people converted from OBC, BC, ST and SC to Christianity show better resilience to the culture shock in learning English, and their self esteem is relatively high which help them perform in English better than before conversion.

The second reason seems to be our *clannish behavior* which makes us to be friendly with each other within our society and our language group, but not to people outside the group of other cultures. So intermingling that fosters acquisition of other language has been limited even though we claim that we are capable of learning many languages.

The third reason is apprehension, fear and anxiety in speaking out in public or in private in English or even in mother tongue. There are two types of apprehension: one is state apprehension and the other is trait apprehension. The state apprehension is marked by fear about the surroundings, settings, climate and noise (both physical noise outside and psychological distractions inside) and also stage fright. Once

these hurdles are removed from the surroundings and the mind, the person is able to speak, and the stage fright can be removed by practice. The trait apprehension is an inborn characteristic: these people are born shy and apprehensive, are reticent by nature and are afraid of crowds, even though they are more intelligent and more organized. The state apprehension is not a big issue as it can be rectified by practice, but trait may take prolonged period-months or years of maturation and practice, or they need an urgent or strong need to speak. They are good listeners, pick up things very fast, and would become good speakers later in life. The more you try to persuade them to speak, the more resistant they become, and may ultimately quit the class or school. So better leave them and let them be better listeners to begin with, and be initiated to the speech act in a slow and phased manner.

This *trait and state apprehension* stages are a continuum, and most people come in between these two extremes.

### **Linguistic factors**

*Lack of language proficiency* is the fourth reason for the malaise. Reading is the only activity that equips the speaker with correct patterns unique to that particular language. Once the pattern is embedded in the brain, it is easy to fill the brain with ideas which are fed into it in that particular language and the ideas will flow out naturally without unnecessary breaks. The structure of sentences in the Indian languages is different from that of English or other foreign languages. Reading provides the reader with vocabulary, syntax, ideas, and concepts that they require for their speech. The collected knowledge through reading enriches the speech. Correct English is not effective English. Effective English needs exactitude of syntax (proper choice and arrangement of words), which is possible only through reading. The English language is so rich in its vocabulary that there are a number of words available for expressing various shades of meaning with minute differences. For example, suppose I would like to describe the eyes of a small girl of four or five years, I have in front

of me words such as shine, glow, glimmer, gleam, shimmer, flicker, glare, blaze, sparkle, flash etc. My choice is 'gleam', as I think that this word is the proper choice for that given context. The ability to capture the nuances of language and such exactitude and accuracy in the choice of words in speech is possible only if we have good reading habit. Listening to the dialogues in English films or videos gives us broken sentences and utterances that may help us in our daily use, but of limited use directly in a public speech. There is a lot of automaticity in speech delivery which is possible only through reading or listening to good speeches/podcasts/seminars etc. For a good speaker words comes out sometimes even before the concept is formed in the brain, may be because of a subconscious programming enabled by constant reading and speaking.

*Pronunciation* is an ever fearful problem for a second language user as he/she has to be aware of the pronunciation of each and every word in English of which most of the words are borrowed ones from other languages. The pronunciation of these borrowed words is different from the English words. The result is that the speaker is always apprehensive about making glaring mistakes which in turn affects his speech. To capture the concept and techniques of rhythm in English and the changing stress patterns according to the use of the word is not a small issue for us.

Lack of *organization skills* is the fifth barrier to speech communication. The language deficiencies of the speaker may often be overlooked by the listener if he or she finds that the speech is well organized with an impressive beginning and a natural ending with methodically arranged ideas in between. Human brain always seek proper configuration in comprehending anything fed to it. Many times one may feel that organization is more important than language proficiency.

Keeping a very *clear purpose* in mind is another requirement for an effective speech. The speaker should know why and for what and for whom she is giving the speech. If the purpose is clear, then the speaker can plan his language and arrangement of ideas, and her body

language to calibrate as to whether to 'inform', 'persuade'(requiring testimony /statistics/data/charts/graphs to support his claim), 'actuate'(requiring videos/pictures/photographs), 'entertain'(a special skill/talent), 'demonstrate'(multi skills), or to 'motivate'(requiring effective language skills, experience, body language etc). So the speaker has to hone his/her skills according to the purpose of speech. A purposeless speech is always distracting to the audience. In this distraction, it is easy to find fault with the language, organization and purpose of the speaker.

### **Are learners alone to be blamed?**

*Lack of opportunities and training* is another hurdle in speaking. Neither the school nor the college provides proper training in public speaking. The so called project presentations in the classrooms are just reading out sessions, with the least interaction between the speaker and the listener; the PPT presentation being the least interesting, often a boring affair. School classrooms are the best arena for training in public speaking since at this age the students will be less conscious about their personality which might have inhibited them from speaking, contrary to colleges where the students are more conscious about themselves which act as a hindrance to public speaking. In the classroom, they can go wrong, have trial and error and improve upon themselves under the proper guidance of an expert teacher.

*Mother tongue influence* is not an unimportant factor. We are shy of speaking in English with our people who share the same mother tongue, even though we don't mind speaking in English to other people of other tongues within the state or outside. Speaking in English with our people is considered improper and rather awkward. The fear of being dubbed as stylish, proud, fashionable, egoistic and even impolite deter us from attempting to speak with our people. Nobody would like to *fail in public*; we don't mind it in private, is the last reason for speech failure. A speech failure in front of an audience is considered to be the most debilitating experience for a speaker especially after his school and college days. Sometimes it may

affect the speaker throughout his or her life.

The features of the tongue, lips, and throat will have a say on the delivery of speech. A thick tongue with a tie beneath a little farther from the tip of the tongue is a constraint in giving speech. Some people have a dry throat and dry lips marring the efficacy of speech.

*So in conclusion, speech anxiety and the resultant speech failure are not language specific alone: it has more of social, psychological and physiological reasons.*

### **How to overcome speech anxiety?**

*Improve language proficiency.* This is possible through inculcating a regular and steady reading habit. As reading is a transferable skill, the techniques of skimming (fast reading to get a gist of the material read), scanning (reading for specific information with slow speed for that purpose while reading fast the other part of the material) and other intensive/ extensive reading techniques can be captured in the mother tongue than in the foreign tongue, and can be transferred to the latter easily later. So let the students start with their mother tongue first to have the habit of reading. The syntactical patterning of sentences though goes differently in these two tongues, a good reading habit in the mother tongue can remediate it by accommodating effectively both the patterns. The brain is capable of accommodating any number of patterns, and that may be the reason why even a not-so educated person can speak several languages since his /her living situation warrants them to intermingle/ interact with people of different languages.

*Avoid tension and apprehension.* Realize that tension and nervousness and speech failures are normal and natural and that fear of public speaking is a common form of anxiety which can range from slight nervousness to paralyzing fear and panic, and a little amount of tension has been found good as it can activate our brain cells which help us generate new/novel/ innovative /original ideas (especially during speech/exams). We should know that even the best speaker will have tension and anxiety at times- depending upon his/her moods/situation and surroundings. Some good speakers always

have tension, but they are able to disguise it because of regular practice and constant updating. So, we have to 'be ourselves' by putting up a pleasant demeanor and avoiding aggressive posture. We have to look at audience (though during an effective speech we seldom see the audience- we can only look at them) from one end to the other, focusing on our ideas. Speaking in public as often as we can, talking about topics that interest us, not worrying about failures are some of the ways to reduce tension and apprehension. Practicing yoga and meditation, joining a support group, seeking professional help from experts are some of the good options to get relieved of stress. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a skill based approach that can help reduce the fear of public speaking.

*Identify the root cause of our failure to speak;* is it from within or without?. Remedies are there in both the cases. If we can identify the real cause of our speech anxiety we can start working on it to get it redressed.

We need to trust ourselves. Instill confidence by telling ourselves that I/we will succeed in due course, and one day I will be the a very effective speaker.

*Acting out as a funny person* who is unable to speak well, and who does not care the result of his/her speeches, to begin with, will help you to be casual in your approach so that nobody will expect anything special from you. This is the time when you can slowly but steadily whet your skills and come out with miraculous success.

*Follow a speech process.* If we mentally process the speech-act following certain well defined steps can assure you success in speech. So, first prepare an outline of your speech (an outline shows the soundness of your logic), an outline following the international convention of arithmetic division and classification of your speech ideas, all in one page. Writing an outline logically arranging your ideas in words in a page is not as simple as writing a detailed synopsis in pages. Once the outline is written, you have already made the ideational pattern of speech in your brain. The more thinking goes into the preparation of speech outline; the

clearer will be the organization in the brain, which easifies the delivery of the speech. After the outline, develop the full speech in a few pages, and go through it two three times and then prepare a *speaking outline* in one or two pages according to the time allotted for the speech. Practice only with the speaking outline a few times, and now you are ready for the speech.

*Learn to arrange and organize your ideas.* It has been found that a speech without proper organization of ideas is prone to a failure, and a well arranged speech is often appreciated and well rated by the audience ignoring and overlooking language deficiencies. The ideas can be arranged chronologically, causally (cause and effect, e.g., acid rain), comparison and contrast, definition and classification, process description etc

*Have a clear purpose of speech.* Be clear about the purpose of your speech; am I going to inform/persuade/actuate/entertain/demonstrate/motivate the audience? An informative speech requires minimum of our skills in comparison with persuasive speech which demands convincing ideas supported by data, statistics etc. An actuate speech calls for not only data and statistics, but also authentic videos and impressive visuals to initiate the audience to act out in the line and the demands of the speaker. Entertaining speech requires special talents in presenting his/her ideas, since at any time a speech of this type may fail. A demonstrative speech demands better body language and hands-on experience, and a motivational speech goes beyond all these and requires all the skills mentioned above to inspire, educate and motivate.

*Destroy caste inhibitions.* We need to ignore our caste and religious status, and come out of the inhibitions in connection with that. Instead of thinking about caste and lower social status, people have to be aware of their rights (claims) and responsibilities, and not to waste our prospects in life. Over- consciousness about caste will adversely affect us, haunting us throughout our life, and we will never be able to stand up or sit down to speak in public in our entire life.

*Choose a method of delivery.* One of the methods such as *manuscript speech* (reading out the speech kept in your hand), *memorized speech* (speaking from one's memory), impromptu (speech without any prior preparation- done off the cuff), *extempore speech* (fully prepared and practiced speech, but not memorized – notes cards can be used to aid the speech), can be followed as a method of delivery. People who have very good exposure to the world in terms of listening and reading, an impromptu method will be suitable and will look very natural and most impressive as it is done without any preparation. The extempore method is widely used as an effective method in speech since it is a fully prepared and practiced speech.

*Recourse to Source materials.* Since tons of materials are available in the *print media* (textbooks, journals, newspapers etc,) and *social media* (internet, whatsapp, twitter, instagram, telegram etc), TV and Radio, we need to use all these resources available to make our speech both informative and effective.

*Supporting techniques* to develop our ideas such as explanation compare and contrast, illustration, referring to specific instances, statistics, testimony, visuals, graphs, and charts will make our points amply highlighted, clear and well focused.

Effective use of *body language* featuring proper movement, posture, facial expression, constant eye-contact, and dynamism ensures attention of the audience and control of speech situation. It has been found that in many situations and in many countries, comprehension of a speech depends more on body language than on voice. We need to get trained in the *supra segmental/paralinguistic features* (sound information that is above the level of a segment, added over consonants and vowels), features of English language, such as stress, rhythm, intonation, volume, tone, pause, pitch etc to make the speech intelligible, comprehensible and interesting. The subtle shades of meaning, nuances and ironies involved in the message can only be captured using these features.

At higher levels of speaking *understanding and analyzing the audience's background demographically and psychologically* prior to

speaking will benefit the speaker to channelize his ideas without hurting the feelings of the audience, and avoiding the resistance in accepting his ideas, the ignorance of which would have spoiled his speech.

Standard ways of *beginning and ending* the speech should be followed by referring to a situation, specific instances, using quotations, throwing a challenge etc, in order to capture the attention and excite the audience

Finally, we have to listen to speeches by good speakers and great personalities, watch BBC/ CNN News, and join Toast Masters or TED group to get international exposure.

### **Speech failure and its effect on one's personality**

*Misunderstanding:* you are a misunderstood person because nobody knows you, your ideas, your attitude, and your personality. Your personality is expressed primary through your words and actions. Only when you interact with people, stand up and talk will they understand you. Shyness /anxiety leads to limited socialization which in turn restricts schema/ background knowledge which helps us speak effectively.

*Depression and disappointment:* You are depressed when you find that your ideas have already been spoken by somebody or nobody spoke your ideas, as you also failed to stand up and talk. Even when you were asked to give out your opinion, you were reluctant to do so as you were so shy, apprehensive and anxious. As you kept quiet in the meeting, others'

ideas have been accepted to your utter dismay and disappointment though you had more innovative and practical suggestions.

*Other's voice overheard:* I you don't speak out in your office or at home you will slowly start overhearing the voice of others: your subordinates, office assistants, even cleaners, and controlling them will become an issue. You will have a low image in front of them. Instead of you controlling them, they will control you!

*Difficulty in realizing aspirations, and Inability to reach up to your expectations.* The only one essential skill in any industry is effective communication skills. In this present world you will have to address an audience/your subordinates frequently when you reach at higher levels, and you tend to shift your priority from the subject you have learnt in your college to effective communication of your ideas: writing projects, proposals or reports, talking to clients, sending them mails etc., and your ultimate survival depends on excellent communication, both oral and written.

*We need to talk.* We talk to share our ideas, attitudes, values, plans, projects, or images we hold in common. We want to bring about individual and group change. Otherwise, we don't need to talk. So talk and talk and talk without any hesitation, and create opportunities to talk and exhibit your ideas.

Once you find that you can talk well, you will also find that you are growing, you are becoming a warm personality you are being respected, talked about, and that you are a special person.

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## **Book Review**

### **J. John Sekar : *Improving Academic and Professional Writing: Strategies for Writing Right and Tight***

(Authors Press, New Delhi, India, First published in 2023)

Reviewed by

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Many books have been written in India about the teaching and learning of English in this country. But this one, *Improving Academic and Professional Writing: Strategies for Writing Right and Tight* by Jeyaraj John Sekar, which in the words of the author, is “a comprehensive guidebook... to empower students and aspiring professionals,” and is a book with a difference. It is the net result of the author’s lifetime work in the field.

The book has ten chapters including sentence structure, paragraph and essay writing, drafting letters, business emails, memos, technical and advertising writing and content creation. Each chapter is broken down into theme-based units with clear objectives and self-learning material that requires minimal teacher intervention. In addition, the book includes an extensive list of further reading materials for readers to explore for advance level of expertise in the field. The first section of the book deals with the academic writing and the second section, on professional writing. The first chapter of the book starts with definition and scope of writing, where the author provides the basic principles of effective writing, myths about writing and writers, sub-skills of writing, attributes of successful writer, creative writing and academic writing, academic writing versus professional writing and mechanics of writing. Second chapter onward, the book elaborately deals with each element of the academic and professional writing in a structured way.

Each chapter begins with general objectives of the chapter and specific objectives. Each unit outlines what the readers are going to achieve

in the chapter with concrete examples for better understanding and further practice. The second chapter talks about ‘Sentence Skills’ where the aspects of simple, complex and compound sentences along with their combination. In addition, the chapter also deals with aspects of parallel sentence structure, rhetorical questions, imagery, metaphor, similes and active-passive construction and their contexts. Chapter three elaborates ‘Paragraph Writing,’ where the author talks about issues like writing an effective paragraph, techniques of developing a paragraph, writing the topic sentence, unity of a paragraph, coherence of a paragraph, adequate development of a paragraph, introductory paragraph of an essay, developing supporting paragraph, concluding paragraph of an essay along with cohesive and transitional markers with concrete examples both for a good paragraph and an ineffective paragraph. In chapter four, the author talks about ‘Essay Writing Skills’, where the focus is given on academic essay writing, its key features, challenges and tips for practices with example essays on variegated topics. The chapter also highlights types of the essay like descriptive essay and its use, narrative essay and its requirements, argumentative essay and its importance, expository essay through process and its steps, expository essay through cause and effect, expository essay through comparison and contrast, expository essay through definition, division and classification, assignment writing and research writing with ample amount of example texts.

The second section on ‘professional writing’

comprises six chapters. They are 'Letter Writing, Business Emails, Memo Writing, Technical Writing, Advertisement Writing and Content Writing'. In each chapter, there are 9 to 10 units; like in chapter five, there are units on letter writing, e.g., letter writing, personal letters, business letters, cover letters, recommendation letters, thank you letters, complain letters, legal letters, sales letters and resignation letters with specific objectives and processes and steps like salutation, opening, body, closing, postscript, etc., with example letters on different topics and contexts. Chapter six on 'Business Emails' deals with specific objectives, benefits, skills necessary for effective email with variegated forms of emails written in business contexts. Chapter seven on 'Memo Writing' is another area which has been elaborately dealt with in it. Chapter eight is on 'Technical Writing,' where a host of elements of technical writing are discussed in details; types of technical writing like forms of technical writing, writing user manuals and guides, writing white papers, writing proposals, writing procedures and policies, writing online help systems, writing scientific and academic papers, etc. Chapter nine, discusses 'Advertising Writing,' in which the author details the types of advertising writing, like, print advertising writing, broadcast advertising writing, digital advertising writing, outdoor advertising writing, direct mail advertising writing, content marketing writing with a host of examples and tips. The last chapter on 'Content Writing' begins with objectives, skills required for mastery on content writing, possible ways of content writing, challenges in content writing, language needed for content writing, types of content writing, writing blog posts, SEO Content writing, copywriting, social media content writing, creative writing and writing press releases. In short everything that a reader, a student, a researcher and a teacher of English is expected to know is here, between the covers of this book.

Having spent quite some years at the CIEFL

doing PGDTE and Ph. D. in ELT, learning from and with some of the most outstanding scholars and practitioners of English Language and ELT, Dr J. John Sekar with a host of degrees and Diploma from various other universities and working at one of the best colleges in India guiding many Ph. D. scholars, has authored many titles in ELT. The author is an experienced teacher of English and an active researcher. From all this rich and varied experience, one would naturally expect an 'authoritative' book, a compendium of what and how to approach the subject which the researchers and students and other teachers could blindly follow in order to enter into the realm of academic and professional writing on their own. But this one is not like that; when one reads this book, one feels that in spite of its authenticity, scholarliness and exhaustiveness, it provides one with wholesome fare with lot of persuasiveness. This is because the author himself had experienced in his early years, the same trials and tribulations that a new entrant in the profession of English teaching feels now. This book, therefore, aims at equipping readers with the tools required for an academic and professional writing of literary as well as non-literary discourse. This book avoids contentious issues raised by critics of academic and professional writing, as its primary objective is to help readers form a strong foundation in the subject. The book will prompt readers to explore the wonderful world of literary as well as non-literary texts with the help of academic and professional writing. The practical exercises following each chapter would help consolidate their acquired skills in academic and professional writing.

It is indeed gratifying to note that a long-felt need has been fulfilled by the publication of this book. The Indian teacher of English, students and research scholars would gladly receive this book which is a user-friendly, comprehensive and thorough-going. It is hoped that the teachers, students and researchers would make optimum use of it.

## **Vishwajyoti Ghosh : *Delhi Calm***

Illustration by: Vishwajyoti Ghosh      Publisher : HarperCollins India  
Genre: Satirical Graphic Novel      Year of Publication : 2010

Reviewed by

**Akanksha Prajapati**

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Vishwajyoti Ghosh's "Delhi Calm" showcases his talents as both a writer and illustrator, offering readers a satirical and visually captivating exploration of the political and social dynamics of Delhi during a tumultuous era. This satirical piece of literature is a thought-provoking graphic novel that offers a satirical take on the political and social landscape of Delhi in the 1970s. The book cover showcases a vibrant illustration of iconic Delhi landmarks, hinting at the city's tumultuous atmosphere during that era. With a title that captures both the geographical and emotional state of the city, "Delhi Calm" piques the reader's curiosity from the outset.

Ghosh's graphic novel provides a unique perspective on the political and social climate of Delhi in the 1970s, shedding light on the complexities and contradictions of the time. The illustrations in "Delhi Calm" are done by Vishwajyoti Ghosh himself. As both the author and illustrator of the graphic novel, Ghosh brings his artistic vision to life through his unique visual style. Through a blend of vivid illustrations and astute storytelling, the author presents a narrative that challenges conventions and prompts readers to question the power structures at play.

"They decided Delhi was just as good a place as any to throw things in the garbage. People had their eyes and ears tightly shut. The smell would never penetrate their homes." This quote portrays the indifference and apathy prevalent in Delhi during that period. Ghosh's vivid description reflects the social disconnect and lack of awareness among the city's inhabitants. Ghosh highlights the disparity between the powerful elite and the common people. The author captures the cynicism that prevailed in Delhi, where promises made by those in authority were often empty and went unquestioned by the masses."From people to

bricks, everything is coated with a fine layer of grime, unifying the whole place in one loathsome embrace." This quote showcases Ghosh's ability to evoke vivid imagery. The layer of grime symbolizes the corruption and decay that permeated the city during that time, serving as a metaphor for the moral decay and filth present in the political and social spheres. Overall, Ghosh's "Delhi Calm" successfully captures the essence of Delhi in the 1970s. The author's use of satire and sharp observations highlights the disillusionment and decay prevalent in the city's political and social landscape.

Conclusion: In "Delhi Calm," Vishwajyoti Ghosh masterfully presents a satirical graphic novel that delves into the political and social complexities of Delhi in the 1970s. Through powerful illustrations and thought-provoking storytelling, Ghosh shines a light on the indifference, corruption, and moral decay that characterized the city during that time..

Delhi during the mid-1970s is reimagined, with distinct perspective of three men young and their shared dreams of change, meet each other. The question arises: will they succumb as individuals or thrive as a collective? The author, Vishwajyoti Ghosh, delves into this pivotal moment in Indian democracy, exploring the notion that democracy perishes first in the hearts of its proponents. Ghosh's powerful illustrations in the graphic novel challenges readers to contemplate the consequences of surrendering personal freedoms and the potential for resilience in the face of oppressive regimes. Through his reimagining of this significant historical era, Ghosh sparks a thoughtful examination of democracy, its fragility, and the role of its citizens."Delhi Calm" is a compelling read that invites readers to reflect on the past while drawing parallels to the present.



## **Parenting**

### **Familiarizing Children with Their Immediate Surroundings from Early Days**

**Dr. Dhanya Bhaskaran**

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Something that we forget—a deliberate decision on our part to introduce our children to anything and everything around them. One may wonder whether all the things around them may interest them. Well, leave those things those enthuse them at that stage; give more and more details about which attracts them. No need of attaching equal importance; let both of us—the child and parent—prioritize. Still, common sense may tell us that quite a few things in our surroundings—pets, domestic animals, birds, flowers—are interesting to any child of two years. This wilful act on our side may begin with the subconscious acts on their side. For example, instead of straight away taking a child to the road and showing the vehicle rushing through, it may be better the child begins with the processes of knowing the world from toy buses, cars and so on. Direct exposure to an approaching roaring truck is most likely to give shock to the child. And, as I told you, commonsense tells us that after driving his own lorry at home for some time, the child knows the real one.

Concept formation first (an inanimate thing, mobility, some force at work, some effort on his side etc.) followed by the real shape, size, sound, and functioning of a real truck. Even before seeing a real concrete object—a vehicle—the child assimilates the abstract notions of speed, load, power of machines, their sound, functions and so on. Similarly with domestic animals—how they depend on us (“Amma or Appa has to feed them regularly, like both of them take care of me”), what they give us in turn, how one is different from the other, not only in shape but in terms of ‘service providers’ (the child knows about the ‘concrete’ reward

given by her cow: milk), but it takes time to know about the return payments done by her dog (security personnel), and still later by the cat (constant companion and playmate).

One thing in addition to this familiarity-making process, I would also suggest language enrichment. Research has shown that exposure to language, both in terms of quantity and quality-- plays a crucial role in the child’s language input-intake-output (reception, processing, production respectively). The more the caretaker talk, the more the input; the more the input, the faster the processing; the faster the processing; the more the urge to produce language. Please don’t take this statement as a well-balanced equation—no, not at all; hundreds of other social, psychological and intellectual elements together decide the language learning process; I was just oversimplifying.

If exposure plays a crucial role, why not a little English too from the beginning? We all know, English as a global language and a language of opportunities is going to help our child in immediate future and in the long run too.

Then why not, the names of all these animals and birds and objects and edible things in English too, in bits and pieces along with their names in mother tongue. Slowly and gradually, in natural contexts, their actions too—from nouns to verbs. No harm. Thus, the child refers to her kitchen-companion in her mother tongue and occasionally as ‘cat’ too. So is the case with the dog—At first, it was ‘bow-vow’, the second name in mother tongue, and then ‘dog’ too. The first label is thrown out of currency by the time the official name in mother tongue dominates; later the mother tongue and the other tongue co-exist! Happy parenting!

## **Report from the field**

### **Cultural Exchange-cum-English Language Acquisition Programme (CEELAP)**

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#### **Introduction**

Inspired by the success of a previous programme, SDNB Vaishnav College for Women, Chrompet Chennai is gearing up for a Cultural Exchange - cum-English Language Acquisition Programme (CEELAP) in association with English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum (ELTIF). The College's Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell has been assigned the duty of implementing the unique language-culture-awareness programme for the benefit of the students.

As stated at the outset, our earlier visit to St. Joseph's High School, Chathiath Kochi in Kerala gave tremendous self-confidence to the Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell in taking up the new project. As on the earlier occasion, the Management and Principal not only encouraged this unique and novel mode of providing inter-cultural exposure to the students, but provided the necessary financial support too.

The programme was originally scheduled for the second week of September, but now it stands postponed to the last week of December, due to some unanticipated technical problems in the northern part of Kerala where we are planning spend about a week this time. (Last time we had the programme in central Kerala.)

#### **Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell of SDNB Vaishnav College**

It seems to be relevant at this point to outline the structure and functions of the Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell of SDNB Vaishnav College, since many educational institutions may not be familiar with such an essential aspect of higher education, namely, intercultural exposure. While most of the institutions in the higher education sector are fully engaged in the rat-race of producing exam results, getting the top positions in

accreditations, and getting the college ranked among the top few, the Management and the administration of our college are keen on enabling the girls to fly beyond the syllabus and question papers. The Cell was created under the spectrum of Students' Progression Body (SPB) in the academic year 2021- 22 with the broad aim of series journeys beyond mother tongue, and the native culture. An inaugural Webinar was conducted by Dr. Bhaskaran Nair (former faculty of Pondicherry University & President of ELTIF) on Multilingualism and Multiculturalism: Adaptations and Advantages on 20th Feb.2022. Later two guest lectures were conducted by Dr. A.C Sreehari (Payyanur College, Kerala) and Dr. Deepesh Chandrasekharan (Shiv Nadar University, Chennai) as resource persons, online and offline, respectively. These two sessions were highly useful to students in understanding the uniqueness of languages, literatures and cultures of neighbouring states. A workshop on Translation: Intricacies and Nuances was conducted in collaboration with the Tamil Department with Dr. Muthuvel and Dr. Rajeshwari as the resource persons. A Ramp walk with a difference; a unique competition was conducted in collaboration with the Heritage Club of SDNBVC with the Jury Dr. Latha Velavan. Then followed the first-of its -kind Cultural Exchange Outreach Program September 2022 by taking 14 Students to St. Joseph HS, Chathiath in Kochi.

#### **Objectives**

This program has been designed on the key concept of Design Thinking – Collaboration. This best exemplifies the interaction between the Academic Institution SDNB Vaishnav College for Women and the NGO named ELTIF both of which have functional, linguistic, geographic and cultural diversity.

This program encourages students to appreciate and understand the nuances of more Indian languages and cultures. The linguistic unification of north, east, west and south of India will pave way to understand the legacy of India and her languages. City college students, especially girls get few opportunities to move beyond certain limits—both geographically and culturally. Though dozens of languages and cultures are comfortably accommodated in the historical city of Madars/Chennai, students still do not get direct exposure to them because of the nature and structure of the academic calendars. Even if some of them are exposed to other language and cultures, they are not taught or told on how to approach interculturalism in a scientific way.

### **Rationale**

Going beyond mother tongue and knowing other tongues open up more avenues for interaction and opportunities. Language and culture are like the two sides of a coin. Students' exposure to other languages gives them the glimpse of culture, values and custom from other states. This enables them to appreciate the nuances of other languages, literature and cultural values and to contribute and co-exist harmoniously in the society. Students shed their inhibitions in this interlinguistic interactions and gain confidence. It is here the functioning of Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell of SDNB Vaishnav College assumes special significance—educating girls in such a way that they are made aware of their potentials in full through more and greater exposure to the world.

### **Participants and faculty**

The participants are 18 students and two faculty members from the college. 4 students out of 18 are from II MA (English) (SFS), 4 students from UG who belong to the Departments of BCA, BCom, and Bsc Psychology (SFS) respectively and 8 students from BA (English) Aided stream. The two Staff Coordinators are Dr. Nagalakshmi, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English (SFS), Vice- President of the club and Mrs. K. Thangam, Associate Professor, Dept. of English (Aided), Staff Member of the Club.

### **Tentative schedule**

Though the exact details are still being worked out in consultation with our host organization (ELTIF) in Kerala, a tentative schedule has been proposed for the last week of December, without losing any working days for students. A five-day stay has been planned in Thalassery, the headquarters of the British Malabar district part of the erstwhile Madras Province. We are expected to visit at least two schools—one in a village on the outskirts of the town, and the other close to a tribal hamlet. The novice tutors will be interacting with children of Class 5 to 9 by presenting various activities and interacting through the only medium available commonly to both groups; that is English language. We perceive the programme as a 'mutual benefit scheme' through which both stakeholders get benefited. On the one side, our UG and PG students will be overcoming their inhibition in communicating through the English they possess. On the other side, the school children feel more at home in showcasing whatever little communication skills that they have 'secretly' kept with them. We have noticed on the earlier occasion in Kochi, that the school children were free and frank in interacting informally with their 'elder sisters'.

### **Planning and preparation in progress**

The students were divided into 6 groups with three members in each group. Each team is suggested to create a google drive link and to upload a single file of list of activities by each member of the group based on the inputs they received through training sessions. In addition to these administrative aspects of the academic activities, they are asked to prepare some cultural activities such as folk song, classical dance, skit in simple costumes and settings. Each student is given a notebook to use it as diary, with a label and details of the program, their name and department etc. to keep a record of the planning, training and teaching sessions, activities, reflection writing and thereby promoting the skills of academic writing - writing a journal.

### **Online training sessions**

A fifteen -hour our online training session, with one hour in the evening each day was suggested

by ELTIF of which 7 are already over. These sessions, meant for the 'novice tutors' (students of SDNBVC) are being conducted through Google meet under the guidance of ELTIF resource persons—Dr. Bhaskaran Nair (Trivandrum), Dr. NS Vinija (Thrissur), Mrs. Anita Manohari (Mysore) and Dr. Dhanya Bhaskaran (Kochi).

Dr. Bhaskaran Nair led the first two sessions on 25 & 27 August by briefing the nature of the program. With the support of interesting illustrations, he explained the various modes of greeting in our regional cultures and in western contexts. He also related the culture of local and global and how ELTIF is mediating school children and college students through cultures using the global language. He shared authentic video and print materials and explained how to ignite critical thinking skills by interacting with the children using these materials. On 28.8.23, Mrs. Anita Manohari, a teacher trainer-cum-resourceful resource person from Mysore made a demo on how to create a wealth of teaching-learning materials (TLM) from waste by displaying her own teaching materials. She emphasized on the use of simple narratives—real and imaginative—during the online session. The fourth online session was handled by Dr. Vinija N.S, a professional teacher trainer from the District Centre for English Thrissur. She focused on storytelling, by using illustrations from a picture story book published by the Childrens' Book Trust of India and from the sourcebook of the NGO, Pratham--Story Weavers --to explain how to enable children to narrate and interact using stories.

Dr. Dhanya Bhaskaran, another professional trainer of teachers and educational administrators, affiliated to Macmillan Education, India led the 5th session in which she demonstrated activity- based learning, beginning with its objectives. The session

started with a brief lecture on the importance of activities in ESL classrooms. The learner centric methods and their impact were discussed and the following sample activities were demonstrated for the trainees: 1. Back to the board activity - for enhancing vocabulary and speaking and listening skills 2. Board games- for teaching grammar and vocabulary 3. Fill the gap- for enhancing creativity and reading and writing skills 4. Build a story - for enhancing creativity and reading and writing skills. 5. Word cloud - for developing vocabulary and speaking skills.

#### **Expected outcome on both sides**

Students will develop the skillsets needed to work in a diverse culture in future. This equips the students to make seamless collaboration with people from diverse linguistic and cultural background. Students develop confidence in the process of interaction. They also will develop interest in community outreach activities so that they may give back to society in the future and become responsible citizens. Students' Report on reflecting their experiences would be a testimony to their writing skills, experiential learning and progress.

On behalf of the Vintage Cross-Literary Awareness Cell, I thank the SDNB Management and the college authorities for the support and encouragement. My profound thanks to ELTIF for providing all facilities in Thalassery, Kerala—accommodation, food, local transport, platform for interaction cultural exchange. I also acknowledge the valuable guidance offered by the ELTIF resource persons through the online training sessions. We at SDNBVC are waiting for saying a big THANK YOU to all, at the end of the programme, towards the end of this year. And, this year-end, we are also eagerly waiting to receive hundreds of 'Happy New Year' greetings from the school children in Kerala.

#### **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. Mail : [eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com](mailto:eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com)

It works in my classroom

**Don't have teaching materials for teaching  
an extra hour in another class? Don't worry.**

**P. Bhaskaran Nair**  
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In the absence of a colleague, an extra hour of teaching imposed on a teacher, may not be something welcome to many. First, you have not prepared for the class. Secondly, you don't have any material at hand to suit that class – lower or higher than the class you teach.

But, you may have some materials with you for teaching English-- pictures, charts, maps, stories, language games... Any material— instructional or real life(authentic)--can be used in any class, at any level, at any time. The teacher must be resourceful, imaginative and creative—that's all. Here is a three-level activity meant for early ESL learners, using the same materials.

**Level 1. (LKG to Class1)**The activity meant for the lowest level is based on semantic grouping. First, children have to group the jumbled cards of pictures (with the name below each picture) into four groups: plants, animals, birds and insects. Then they name them, tell others whatever they know about each picture they have with them (of course, with the help of the teacher and picture). Example: 1. *This is a parrot. It's green. Its beak is red. The parrot is a beautiful bird.* 2. *These are ants. Ants come to our kitchen. They like sugar. Ants come in a line. They go back carrying sugar.* Similarly, let children talk about plants, and animals of their choice.

Group A. Plants: coconut tree, wheat, tamarind tree, paddy, neem tree, banana tree, aricanut tree, palm, cashew tree, tulasi, rose, teak, jackfruit tree, papaya tree, mango tree... (All plants and trees familiar to children can be used in this activity)

Activity 1. Group them into 2 sub-groups: Trees and small plants

Activity 2. Group trees into 2 sub-groups: Those have branches and those don't

Let them talk about each, their fruits, flowers, special features etc.

Group B (animals), Group C (birds) and group D (insects). The same activities can be done with these groups of picture cards—animals, birds and insects.

Examples of interaction based on Group D (Insects): Cockroach: *We can see this insect in our kitchen and store. It has wings, but it is not a bird. It has four legs, but not an animal. It can run fast. It is dark brown. It has a pair of antlers. It can creep through very small holes and gaps. We drive it away from our kitchen.*

Level 2 (Class 2 to 4) The same picture cards. Working in pairs they choose two from each group (plants, animals, birds and insects) and compare and contrast between the two in each pair: Examples: coconut tree and aricanut tree / lion and elephant/ eagle and parrot/cockroach and honey bee. When each pair of students finishes the comparing-contrasting activity with their first pairs of plants, animals, birds and insects, then they can choose more pairs— banana tree and palm tree/ camel and zebra/ duck and crane/ mosquito and centipede.

Level 3 (Class 5-6) The same picture cards. This time, the learners are going to make use of their creative imagination. Working in pairs, they are going to make stories of their own. Each story should have minimum one pair from each group—two trees or plants, two animals, two birds, and two insects.

Example: *Once there lived in a paddy field, two friends—a frog and a grasshopper. The frog used to catch mosquitos, and water flies, and the grasshopper would drink the juice of tender paddy grains. She was a vegetarian. They used to sing aloud when their stomach was full. Very good singers, both of them. Both lived happily. One nearby farm, there lived a parrot in a*

*mango tree and a crow in a neem tree. But, they were not friends. The parrot considered herself beautiful. The crow was sad because she thought she was not good-looking. But, the crow used to get up early in the morning and therefore she used to get a lot of food from here and there. "The early bird catches the worm." She came home with her beak full of food for her babies.*

*The parrot was a little lazy and she would get up a little late. Therefore, she didn't get much to eat or take home for her babies. By the time the parrot reached the farm or field, the early birds would have finished everything.*

*One rainy morning, the lazy parrot didn't go out. She waited for the rain to stop. But, by that time, her babies woke up and started crying for food. There was no food. The baby parrots were very hungry and started crying louder and louder. The mother didn't know what to do. At that time, they saw the crow returning home with her beak full of food grains—small bunches of paddy and maize. As she neared her nest, she heard the loud cry of the baby parrots.*

*She knew why they were crying. She flew to the parrot's nest, and placed the food grains at the entrance. The baby birds were very happy. The mother parrot said "Thank you. Crow ma" many times.*

*He crow flew back smiling, to collect breakfast for her babies.*

All that the teachers of English at the lower level, who are interested in promoting their students' communication skills, is to explore things around them—anything and everything—not only books and online materials, but even a spider net on the classroom wall, the rain outside, the new autorickshaw parked in front of the school office, the cloudy sky, the stray dog on the campus, the festival of the previous day, a tiny feather falling off the roof... Each has a root, source, family, origin; each underwent a change, each has a different future. Now, the teacher can step in and encourage learners to make use of their creativity. The result may be a dialogue, a story, a narration, a description, a skit, a four-line poem and so on.

### **Signposts for researchers**

#### **Authentic Material and Created Material (Teacher-Made) for English Language Teaching (ELT): Benefits and Limitations**

Tira Nur Fitria

#### **Abstract**

This research describes authentic materials and created materials (teacher-made materials) especially their benefits and limitations in English Language Teaching (ELT). This research is library research. The researcher collects data from books and articles published in journals related to authentic material and created material. The analysis shows considerations in English Language Teaching (ELT) are whether to use authentic or created material. Authentic materials refer to manuscripts, photos, videos, and other sources that are not prepared specifically for educational purposes. Meanwhile, created materials refer to textbooks or others specifically developed as teaching materials. In practice, two methods for teachers/lecturers use teaching materials such as adapting and adopting. Any course books or commercial textbooks can be utilized to be adapted as created materials. Authentic materials from a variety of sources that incorporate real language use also can be adopted. They also can use these two types of materials together in a language class to meet the requirements and interests of the students. But teachers/lecturers have to consider both authentic materials and created materials (teacher-made materials) related to the benefits and limitations. Teaching materials are very important for teachers and students in the learning process to improve the quality of learning. Without teaching materials, it will be difficult for teachers to increase the effectiveness of learning, and it will be difficult for students to follow the learning process in class.

**Source:** JADEs Journal of Academia in English Educations Volume 3 No 2, December 2022, (p. 117-140) <https://journal.iainlangsa.ac.id/index.php/jades>

**Signposts for researchers**

**Judit Kormos : *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition***

First Published 2006. Pages 248

DOI <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203763964>

eBook ISBN 9780203763964

Subjects: Behavioral Sciences, Education, Language & Literature

**Abstract**

This extremely up-to-date book, *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition*, is the first volume in the exciting new series, *Cognitive Science and Second Language Acquisition*. This new volume provides a thorough overview of the field and proposes a new integrative model of how L2 speech is produced.

The study of speech production is its own subfield within cognitive science. One of the aims of this new book, as is true of the series, is to make cognitive science theory accessible to second language acquisition. *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* examines how research on second language and bilingual speech production can be grounded in L1 research conducted in cognitive science and in psycholinguistics. Highlighted is a coherent and straightforward introduction to the bilingual lexicon and its role in spoken language performance.

Like the rest of the series, *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* is tutorial in style, intended as a supplementary textbook for undergraduates and graduate students in programs of cognitive science, second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and language pedagogy.

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**Review**

“One of the excellent aspects of the book is the references. Kormos has certainly done her homework. Among the approximately 400 citations are many European researchers and journals not widely known in the United States.”

**—PsycCRITIQUES**

“The main virtues of this book are that it is extremely thorough and up-to-date in its coverage of production research. It will acquaint the reader with the various models and approaches in the L1 literature, the kinds of studies that have been done, the kinds of methods that have been used, and the issues that remain unresolved. It provides a balanced overview of the psycholinguistic study of production. The discussion of L2 research is very well grounded in this work, offers enormous coverage, and shows how the same kinds of questions that have inspired L1 studies can be extended to the L2 context. The material covered is entirely appropriate for this series in

that it certainly does not shy away from the basic psycholinguistic research agenda.”

—**John Williams**

Cambridge University

### **Abstract**

This timely and accessible book is the first volume in the new series, Cognitive Science and Second Language Acquisition (CSSLA). In *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* the author, JuditKormos, proposes a new integrative model of how L2 speech is acquired and produced. The study of speech production is its own subfield within cognitive science. One of the aims of this new book, as is true of the series, is to make cognitive science theory accessible to second language acquisition. *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* examines how research on second language and bilingual speech production can be grounded in the L1 research conducted in cognitive science and in psycholinguistics. Highlighted is a coherent and straight-forward introduction to the bilingual lexicon and its role in spoken language performance. Throughout the book, the author relates research to issues of current importance in SLA theory and pedagogy, such as the cognitive processes involved in pushed output; the role of attention and awareness of grammatical and phonological form; the nature of encoding and retrieval processes in the bilingual lexicon; and the cognitive factors contributing to the variation in accuracy, complexity, and fluency of speech production in instructed L2 settings. Like the rest of the series, *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* is tutorial in style,

intended as a supplementary textbook for undergraduates and graduate students in programs of cognitive science, second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and language pedagogy. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2016 APA, all rights reserved)

### **The author speaks**

#### **Professor JuditKormos**

Psychological aspects of second language learning. I investigate the speech production and monitoring processes of second language learners. I conduct studies on the role of language aptitude and working memory capacity in language learning.

*Language learners with special educational needs.* I was the chief investigator of a project that explored the foreign language learning processes of dyslexic students. I authored a course-book on specific learning difficulties and language teaching and was part of an award-winning teacher training project in the field of dyslexia and language learning.

I worked on a digital English and German task bank for young dyslexic language learners in the Erasmus+ sponsored EnGaGe project and the Comics for Inclusive Language Learning project which won the British Council's ELTon award.

You can find a lot of useful resources, video lectures, articles and further links on my website: Specific learning difficulties and the learning of additional languages.

#### **Citation**

Kormos, J. (2006). *Speech production and second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

### **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](mailto: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