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From the Editor's Desk

Why Continuous Professional Development ?

"Good heavens! For more than forty years, I have been speaking prose without knowing it" —exclaims, a character in a play written by Molière, the 17th century French dramatist. Similarly, children when initiated into the formal grammar of their mother tongue at school may be wondering: "That means, we had been using grammar even before coming to school!"

I said, using grammar; not learning it. They are two processes, though mutually related. You can learn something; and use it later. For example, you read a new recipe carefully in the afternoon, and later in the evening you apply what you have learnt or, you use the newly learnt knowledge. Learning certain other processes go hand in hand with using it, for example, swimming. You use the swimming skills and learn how to swim. Language learning too follows the same pattern and process—learn a new language by using it. That is how we mastered our first language.

But, when it comes to a second or foreign language, we tend to move in some other directions. Children are forced to learn the rules of grammar first in the name of learning a new language. I used to ask myself: "Why do teachers begin with teaching grammar rules such as 'A noun is the name of a person, place or thing?" Examples are provided liberally. After a few classes, the teacher gives a test: Underline the nouns in the following sentence: This morning, our hen laid an egg. The child underlines one word: egg—and rightly so, because it is a thing, and therefore a noun. But, according to the teacher's 'hidden grammar', two more words need underline: morning and hen. The child, disappointed because of the poor grade she got, goes back to the exercise book, wherein she had copied from the board: "A noun is the name of a person, place or thing". She then consults her grammar book. No use. Morning and hen, according to her poor logic don't fit into any of the prescribed categories. She tries to work out: "Hentoo may be a thing; but what about morning?" Unaware of the learner's disbeliefs, disappointments and disillusions, the teacher proceeds to the next item on her grammar agenda.

Who's afraid of English grammar—the learner or the teacher?

If the learner (of any level) is afraid of the grammar of a new language, he is justified on many grounds. First, the grammar of a new language is not presented in meaningful contexts; the rules are introduced in vacuum. For example, "a noun is the name of a person, place or thing"—declares the teacher, all of a sudden, without any provocation on the part of the learner! That proclamation was in the UKG or UKG class. Fine. Two years later, the same teacher (if the poor learner is unfortunate enough to have the same teacher) oryet another teacher unambiguously states that 'wisdom' is a noun. She writes the word on the board as 'wisdom (n)'. As far as the teacher, "Here endeth the matter". But, the learners look at one another in disbelief: "Is 'wisdom' the name of a person, place or thing?". No idea!

In the next grammar class, the same teacher who had earlier asserted that 'doctor' is a noun, adds that 'doctor' is the subject in the sentence "A doctor works in a hospital". The child is doubly confused: Is 'doctor' the name of a person? His neighbour Harish uncle is a doctor; and he works in a hospital. Is his real name 'doctor' as the teacher says, or Harish as the child was once convinced? Secondly, in an earlier class, the teacher had said that 'doctor' falls under the category of nouns; but she has changed her stand by including all doctors in the list of subjects! Are all nouns subjects? Are all subjects nouns? Who to ask?

Does the teacher know that out of sheer ignorance she has mixed two grammatical categories—form and function—together? Noun is a formal label; whereas subject is a functional label. Will she ever be ready to study more grammar in better ways? Not necessarily. Teacher beliefs-- no, teacher convictions --are fossilized. Rocks. Stumbling blocks for learners.

Should teachers, especially teachers of English, of any level, improve their content knowledge as well as professional competence continuously?

P. Bhaskaran Nair
(Editor)

ELTIF: A View from a Vantage Point

Dr. A.C. Sreehari
(Joint Secretary, ELTIF)
Faculty, Dept. of English, Payyanur College, Kannur (Kerala)
acsreeharshan@gmail.com

When ELTIF is getting ready to 'grow young' into its third decade, and when it has established its 'self' through online mode, I think this is the right time to have a vantage view.

Languages, like literatures and cultures, always carry an invisible ideological baggage, invariably hierarchical, whether it is our local language or a global one. The ideological function that English served right from the days of Macaulay was well understood by ELTIF and radical changes in English language learning were effected by looking at it from Caliban's perspective, instead of Prospero's.

Those who could see into the ideology make interventions in various ways like imagining a new classroom or introducing new curriculum. In this context, learning is not simply bound to classrooms alone. Attempts of ELTIF thus help students learn English sharing everyday and ordinary experiences, outside the classroom, reducing the usual monotony of learning. Various means have been discovered for (i) wiping out from the children's mind, the fear towards English before they enter the classroom, and (ii) ELTIF makes use children' access to mobile phone and the internet to learn English and also makes their parents be co-learners or enable them to support their children in their learning process, back at home. Teachers also are co-learners here, listening to the words and deeds of students who come with bundles of knowledge in their bags along with their notebooks and lunch box. They are knowledge-generating machines and they can make guided self-studies if teachers would let them do everything on their own.

English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum is a voluntary organisation of teacher and learners, of users and lovers of English, and of like–minded people, too. The prime motive of ELTIF is to "empowerrural India through English language education". ELTIF has been doing it right from its inception in a small village of Kankol in Kerala in the new millennium.

Learning our mother tongue is very important. Equally important is the learning of other tongues like English. Even Ngũgĩ waThiong'o went back to English after a short stint of writing in his native tongue Gikuyu. Kamala Das was shortlisted for the Nobel Prize along with Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing but she couldn't bag the much coveted prize as there was no good English translation available for her short stories written in Malayalam. Satchidanandan is translating his own poems to English nowadays as no one else is that well-equipped to render translations of his contributions in Malayalam to English. He too was shortlisted for the Nobel Prize and not only him but his mother tongue also would be honoured once he comes to the lime light of a global recognition.

English was once a language of job opportunities. Now the horizon has widened. In the last century, people went to typewriting institutes to learn some skills in using a machine that revolutionised transactions in our government offices and business firms. Things would get outdated and one has to update according to the demands of one's time. Instead of going abroad for job or anything for that matter, things have begun to come to us. 'Work from home' doesn't mean one can always converse in one's native tongue. One must be well versed in foreign tongues. Communication skill are still a barrier for many. Even graduates who come out with degrees from our prime institutions fail to articulate their ideas and educationalist are not able address or

solve the issues of failures in language learning. Private enterprises are minting money in between by exploiting the weakness of the masses.

The interventions of ELTIF become significant in such a context. Following the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, ELTIF goes to the villages to empower rural people who are denied opportunities of learning due to different levels of hardships, of money, marriage and other social conditions of our nation. In a true Marxian and to be specific, in a Vygotskian way, ELTIF takes its stakeholders as highly potent learners and help them express their ideas through an international link language. The focus is on the local even one thinks global. ELTIF has reached out not only to the students and parents, but to the marginalised sections of the society, local bodies and women's enterprises in Kerala by demonstrating how English language could help them empower themselves by providing ample examples from contemporary history. Quite a few village women,who were dropouts due to different reasons, have been encouraged to enrol for various Distance Education Programmes and they continue with their studies. An alternative system is to be maintained in the society functioning as corrective force so that even governments would be able to revamp the welfare measures they are slowly withdrawing from, due to globalisation and its wide acceptance of privatisation and commoditisation of language and culture of a community.

ELTIF has been reaching out to the tribal people with periodic classes, but of course not with the 'civilising mission' that the colonial masters had once undertaken. English is used not to iron out cultural diversity but to exchange ideas, retaining the local touch. Multiple and plural voices co-exist in a democratic way as the notion of 'Englishes' is accepted across the globe.

One of ELTIF's pre-Covid period programmes focussed on learning English with the help of new gadgets like mobile phone and computers, and it proved later very much useful during the days of physical distancing and online classes during the Pandemic and resultant lockdown times. Students from K.G. to P.G. could learn through this 'distant mode' and ELTIF is very happy to have pioneered it in the village where everything was begun some twenty years ago! Now the parents are willing to share hand phones with their children as an official sanctioning was accorded first by ELTIF and then by the governments themselves.

ELTIF is bringing out its quarterly journal with ISSN regularly even during these tough times and conduct lecture series fortnightly for more than a year, the resource persons of which hail mostly from reputed institutions of India and even abroad. ELTIF also organizes English Language Teacher Empowerment Programmes (ELTEP) in the form of interactive workshops, online. The lecture and workshop series together carry the ELTIF mission forward now to meet the different requirements of the needy and interested people which ultimately facilitate even budding scholars to equip themselves to conduct research in various universities across India.

ELTIF has great pleasure in reaching out to all now through the online platform when a blended mode of online and offline interaction has become a new normality. Certain foreign private universities have begun to encroach into even our villages as part of 'glocalisation' and a little resistance is to be made these days in a concerted way and ELTIF would like to grow young with the new generation of learners andwalk an extra mile together to achieve the goal.

Seminar-Conference-Workshop Notifications

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

Preparing Pre-service Teachers for Classroom Decision Making: Insights and Implications

Dr. K. Padmini Shankar
Professor, EFLUniversity, Hyderabad
padminishankar@efluniversity.ac.in

Abstract

Teaching is a complex cognitive process. In their everyday classroom teaching, teachers make innumerable decisions. Teacher decision-making is central to the delivery of instruction. Unarguably a critical factor in shaping the classroom experience of the learners, it can influence the achievement of learning outcomes. Eggleston (2018)postis that most of the activities of the individual classrooms are a consequence of the decisions of the individual teacher. Teachers make decisions at all the crucial stages of a lesson – before, during, and after –termed as planning decisions, interactive decisions, and evaluative decisions (Richards & Lockhart 1996) spanning a range of issues such as materials, tasks, classroom environment, seating arrangement, interaction patterns, teacher roles, and learner roles. This paper documents how a group of pre-service teachers (PSTs) is trained to examine classroom decision-making vis-à-vis the planning decisions, i.e., the decisions made before the lesson is conducted in class.

Nineteen PSTs enrolled in a teacher training course, Teaching English to Young Learners, of the MA ELT Programme at The English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad, India, participated in the study. PSTs are assigned tasks that enable them to explore the planning decisions teachers take through a set of questions that teachers can ask themselves. Data are gathered from two tools: a) responses of PSTs to tasks and b) trainer feedback to PSTs. Findings reveal that PSTs can frame pertinent and thought-provoking questions that demonstrate their ability to understand and gauge the decisions that teachers make while planning lessons. The study offers insights into classroom decision-making that are potentially beneficial for all pre-service teachers and teacher educators.

Key Words: pre-service teachers, teacher decision making, language classrooms

Introduction

The classroom is a complex, unscripted world. Teaching is a risk-taking enterprise that entails the challenge of deciding the best option at any given moment. The equilibrium of the classroom can be disrupted by a single inappropriate decision. What is at risk? The teacher's confidence, the students' sense of self-worth and the potential of the classroom as a personal and interactive space where learning is facilitated – all can be destroyed with a wrong move on the part of the teacher. Productive uncertainty (Roberts, 2021) forms the quintessential reality of a classroom.Often, there is no one best way to do anything, no time-tested recipes that are sure to work. Rather, there exist several alternatives and teachers have to decide what works best for their unique set of students. Teacher decision-making therefore is of paramount importance.

Teacher decision-making

Aho et al. (2010) contend, "Through their profession teachers are continuously confronted with challenging situations that demand decision making" (p.395). They make decisions at every stage of the lesson. Before the lesson is conducted, teachers make planning decisions – whether the learning outcomes are clearly specified, whether the materials are suitable, whether the tasks are level-appropriate, if any teaching aids are required, how feedback can be offered on learner performance are some among them. While the lesson is in progression, teachers are sensitive to the incoming signals from their students and make many on-

the-spot, unpremeditated decisions termed as interactive decisions modifying their plans, for example, extending the time allotted for an activity(Richards & Lockhart 1996). In addition, teachers also make some evaluative decisions after the lesson is conducted in order to assess its effectiveness which feed into subsequent planning decisions. It perhaps will not be an exaggeration to argue that students' classroom experience is nothing but an inverted bouquet of assorted teachers' decisions. The process and the outcome of decisions made in a classroom are important, considering teachers are estimated to make a new decision every 15 seconds (Wittrock 1986). More importantly, as Blackley et al. (2021) contend, decision-making requires 'different levels of cognition' dependent on the complexity of the problem identified and the prior experiences in similar situations. Thus teacher decision-making is a pervasive theme occupying a ubiquitous place in the enterprise of teaching and learning. And,understanding of teacher decision-making becomes a key to understanding teaching practice.

Pre-service teachers
Pre-service teachers (PSTs) are student-teachers or trainee teachers enrolled in a teacher education programme (TEP) with very little or no formal teaching experience. PSTs carry 'memories, experiences and beliefs formed during their time' at school with them when they commence teacher education(Balli, 2011). Their prior language learning experiences bear an impact on their conceptions of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, their notions of what constitutes effective teaching still remains fluid. The ways in which they experience the TEP contributes to the 'development of cognitions' – beliefs and knowledge about teaching (Borg, 2014). Therefore, TEPs aim to build both the subject matter knowledge (SMK, the 'what' of teaching i.e., content) as well as the pedagogic content knowledge (PCK, the 'how' of teaching, i.e., methodology) of the PSTs. PSTs are required to work with students in schools during the Practicum which contributes to their 'practical knowledge of what it means to be a teacher' (Busher, et.al,

2015). They begin to make sense of the often baffling enterprise of teaching, 'developing complex professional knowledge to become successful teachers' (Glazier, 2009). As explained earlier, in their everyday teaching, classroom teachers make a plethora of decisions at any given moment. It is important to make PSTs aware of the importance of teacher decision-making and the process involved in it such that they are able to make informed choices in their future teaching.

Review of literature
As an area of research, teacher decision-making has attracted tremendous attention over the decades. McCarty et al. (2021) investigated teacher decision-making in the classroom vis-à-vis cognitive load and teacher affect among eight Australian secondary teachers. They found that decisions made in a state of positive affect increased proactive teacher actions and reduced cognitive load. Findings also revealed that reduced cognitive load, increased positive affect, and improved awareness in available choices in classroom decisions resulted in creating positive classroom environments. Oo CZ, Alonzo & Davison (2021) examined 30 pre-service teachers' decision-making vis-à-vis their classroom assessment practices in Myanmar. Results revealed some key factors that influenced classroom assessment decision-making: PST assessment knowledge, PST beliefs and values of using assessment, and their supervising teachers, students' responses, and classroom realities. Altan et al (2018) investigated the effect of design based learning on 42 pre-service science teachers' decision-making skills. Findings reveal that decision-making involved identification of the problem, evaluation of the alternatives, decision applications, and decision and application steps. Gun (2014) examined the interactive decisions made by 10 experienced tertiary teachers in Turkey. Findings revealed several modifications that teachers made both in terms of their pedagogical processes as well as affective attributes in their effort to make the lessons accessible to the students.Aho et al. (2010) explored the logic of teachers' action in their classroom management with three

primary school teachers in Finland. The findings were illustrated through six principles: knowledge of pupils, teacher personality, emotional state, caring, educational uniqueness, and the school's operational environment and the social context.

Theoretical framework

Teacher decision-making is a complex, context-specific, nonlinear and highly personal activity (Bernhardt 2018). Among the plethora of instructional tools at their disposal, teachers select a few to help students achieve academic outcomes. Several factors such as information about their students, the nature of the instructional task, their own personal characteristics, and institutional constraints influence the decisions that teachers make (Borko & Shavelson 1990). Santagata & Yeh (2016) emphasize the complexityof teacher actions in classrooms, noting that the institutional norms and requirements (as perceived byteachers) as well as the teachers' own espoused beliefs play a dominant role in deciding these actions. It is therefore significant to understand how these decisions are made – the factors and the questions that guide these. In other words, understanding teaching entails both a description of teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions, and an understanding of how these cognitions are translated into action. Further, teacher decision-making is tied to higher student achievement (Ingersoll et al 2018). Heyes (1999) contends that teachers' thinking, awareness and decision-making are crucial for the development of classroom teaching skills and strategies. He urges training providers to spend time exploring their significance when devising training programmes. Student teachers can 'get better at teaching' through enhanced decision-making capability. While PSTs who operate solely at the intellectual level lose vital time weighing up the options thereby failing to respond to the relative immediacy of the situation, those who have fully assimilated their experiences can react to classroom events and incidents in an unpremeditated way. When the process of decision-making transitions from 'purely intellectual' to 'subconsciously assimilated' spontaneous and innovative decisions are likely to emerge. Asserting that teachers' decisions have an impact on pupils' educational trajectories Vanlommel et al. (2017) establish that intuitive expertise forms the most important bases of teachers' decisions.

Aim

This paper documents how a group of pre-service teachers (PSTs) are trained to examine classroom decision making vis-à-vis the planning decisions i.e. the decisions made before the lesson is conducted in class.

Research questions

The following questions are addressed in the study:

1. How can PSTs be made aware of the planning decisions that teachers take?
2. What evidence do we have to demonstrate PSTs understanding of the planning decisions?
3. What scaffolding can be offered to enhance PSTs understanding of the planning decisions?

Methodology

The background to the study is as follows. 19 pre-service-teachers (PSTs) are enrolled in theteacher training course, Teaching English to Young Learners, offered as part of the MA ELT / TESL Programme at The English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad, India. The PSTsare young females and males in the age group of 25-30 years with no or very limited and sporadic teaching experience. The course content consists of twelve modules – understanding children' learning and development, basic principles of teaching young learners, materials and activities for young learners, classroom management, assessing young learners etc. One of the thrust areas is teacher decision-making, with a special focus on planning decisions regarding selecting language learning activities. Two tasks are designed to help PSTs understand the planning decisions that teachers take and the questions that guide these decisions.

Task input

Identifying criteria for selecting activities

Will it be difficult for children to carry it out?

How long does it take?

Will they use English or Spanish?

Can I use it with the children?

Is the language suitable for the level?

Is the material expensive?

Will my learners like it?

Which skills does it practise?

Does it make a lot of noise?

Does it help develop children's imagination?

Does it create a good atmosphere?

Does it take a lot of preparation?

Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc?

Is there enough space to do the activity?

Moon, J. (2000). Children Learning English (p.91)

Task input

Task A	Task B
Study the criteria for selecting language learning activities on page 91. Group these questions under three separate categories – teacher factors, learner factors and classroom factors. You can add additional categories if you like.	Add a minimum of three questions under each category. Help: the descriptors regarding the activities discussed (p. 89) and the commentary that follows (p.90) can give you ideas for questions.

Task description

As we can see, Task A above requires PSTs to study the questions provided in the task input and organize them as belonging to three categories: teacher, learner and classroom factors. They could also conceive of additional categories. Task B requires them to frame more questions for each factor.

Task support

As a preparation towards these tasks, PSTs are familiarized with task components through readings and class discussions. They are also offered scaffolding for ideas to frame additional questions (see 'Help' in task B above). Further they have a choice to work on the tasks individually or with peers.

Data presentation and interpretation

Data are gathered from two tools: a) responses of PSTs to tasks A and B, and b) trainer feedback to PSTs. These are presented and analyzed in the following sections.

Responses of PSTs to task A

Responses offourPSTs are presented below as a sample.

Responses of PST 1

Teacher factors	Learner factors	Classroom factors	Materials/activity factors
Can I use it with the children? Is the language suitable for the level? Does it take a lot of preparation?	Will it be difficult for children to carry it out? Will they use English or spanish? Will my learners like it?	Does it make a lot of noise? Does it create a good atmosphere? Is there enough space to do the activity? Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc.?	Is the material expensive? Does it help develop children's imagination? How long does it take? Which skill does it practice?

Responses of PST 2

Teacher factors	Learner factors	Classroom factors	Parental factors
Will it be difficult for children to carry it out? Does it take a lot of preparation? Will my learners like it? Can I use it with the children? Which skills does it practice? Will they use English or their L1? Does it develop children's imagination? Is the language suitable for the level?	How long does it take? Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc? Which skills does it practice? Does it take a lot of preparation?	Does it create a good atmosphere? Does it make a lot of noise? Is there enough space to do the activity? Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc?	Is the material expensive? Does it develop children's imagination? Will they use English or their L1? Will it be difficult for children to carry it out?

Responses of PST 3

Teacher factors	Learner factors	Classroom factors	Learning factors
Is the material expensive? Can I use it with the children? Does it take a lot of preparation? Will my learners like it?	Will they use English or Spanish? Is the language suitable for the level? Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc?	Is there enough space to do the activity? Does it make a lot of noise? Does it create a good atmosphere?	How long does it take? Will it be difficult for children to carry it out? Which skill does it practice? Does it help develop children's imagination?

Responses of PST 4

Teacher factors	Learner factors	Classroom factors
Is the language suitable for the level? Will my learners like it? Can I use it with the children? Which skill does it practice?	Will it be difficult for children to carry it out? Does it help develop children's imagination? Does it take a lot of preparation? Will they use English or Spanish? How long does it take? Will my learners like it?	Does it make a lot of noise? Does it create a good atmosphere? Is there enough space to do the activity? Is it for the whole class, pairs, etc.? Is the material expensive?

Discussion: The data above reveals that PSTs are able to categorize the questions in three categories as required. This clearly indicates that the PSTs have understood the areas which teachers focus attention on while planning the lessons. The class discussions, the peer support and their own cognitive frames shaped through classroom instruction may have contributed to the understanding. It is interesting to note that there are marked differences in the way they perceive the questions as well as the categories. For instance some questions (e.g. is the material expensive? Can I use it with the children) are understood as belonging to the teacher factors by some PSTs. The same questions are categorized under learner or classroom factors by some others and vice versa. Further, some questions are categorized under more than one factor simultaneously. For example the questions,will they use English or their L1 and does it develop children's imagination figure in both teacher and parental factors. The

questions which skill does it practice and will my learners like it are categorized under both teacher and learner factors.More significantly, the data above also reveal that some PSTs thought of additional factors to categorize the questions such as materials and activities, parents, and learning.This clearly indicates that the PSTs apprehend the decision-making process in diverse ways in consonance with their understanding of the inputs offered during the training programme as well as their own personal developing cognitive structures.

Responses of PSTs to task B

Task B requires PSTs to frame additional questions for all the categories of teachers, learners, classrooms and for any other additional categories that they have conceived of. These are presented below.

Teacher factors: additional questions
- Am I providing the learners with the required language input?
- Should I use translation as well?
- Am I going too fast?
- What queries will children have?
- Am I fully prepared for the lesson?
- Will the learners enjoy this task?
- Is this task beneficial and in what ways?
- What do the students already know?
- How can I make this work for everyone?
- How can I make this class interactive?
- How will the technology be integrated into the learning, if used?
- What do I want them to understand and be able to do at the end of class?
- If the students are not interested or if I ran out of time, what is the alternative plan?
- Will the learners enjoy this task?
- Is it relevant to the cultural values of my learner group?
- Can it be easily tweaked and adapted if it doesn't work out well in the first place?
- Do my learners have the required background knowledge and language skills to carry out this activity?
- Will it require monitoring of students or control?
- How will I make theinstructions simple and-clear?
- Do I have everything I need for the lesson?

- What is a purpose of the activity which I am choosing?
- Is it an appropriate and relevant activity for the students' needs?

Learner factors: additional questions
- Will I be able to finish the activity on time?
- Will the lesson be difficult?
- How will it be conducted?
- Will the learners be engaged in the task?
- Will my learners feel hesitated in groups?
- Will I have to take course to rote learning?
- Will children be able to apply the learnt skill in their language use?
- Will my learner be able to follow the instructions of the activities?
- Is the activity relevant in real life?
- How will it be carried out?
- Will I be able to complete the task in the allotted time?
- What will the difficulty level of the lesson?
- Will the students be able tolearn as well as enjoy theactivity?
- What are the challenges theymight face during theactivity?
- Will my learners be motivated to do this activity?
- How will this activity hold learners' attention and keep them engaged?
- Will my learners find this activity interesting and will it be meaningful for them?
- Can learners be given an option to choose the activities?
- Can they be assigned more than one task at the same time to sharpen their English?

Classroom factors: additional questions
- Does it make use of a smart board?
- Does the classroom have adequate supplies to carry out the activity?
- Will the noise disturb other classrooms?
- Will there be a safe learning environment for our learners?
- Is there healthy noise in the classroom?
- Is this creating chaos inside the classroom?
- Does the class have enough equipment required for the task?
- Does the classroom have access to technology?
- Does the classroom have proper ventilation and enough seats?
- Is the blackboard/whiteboard clearly

visible to everyone?
- Does the classroom furniture/seating arrangement need to be changed? Are such changes possible?
- Will all learners get a fair chance of participation?
- Does it require material to be placed on the walls of the classroom? Is such provision available?
- Does it integrate any multimedia tools?
- What seating arrangement will be most suitable?
- Which interaction pattern would be best for this activity?
- Should some materials be arranged on the walls (containing grammars or little topics)?
- Blackboard is better or projector?
- Is it important to explain task on the board by writing before starting it?

Materials/activity factors (additional factor): additional questions
- Can multimedia resources be used to conduct the activities?
- Did the materials keep the children engaged in the lesson?
- What supplementary materials can I use to make the lesson more effective?
- Do I have the resources to design tasks and materials?

Parental factors (additional factor): additional questions
- Will it benefit the children?
- How will children learn it?
- Is the teacher resourceful to teach it?
- Is the teacher capable of teaching it?
- Will the learning actually benefit the children?
- How to increase their motivation for learning?

Learning factors (additional factor): additional questions
- How can I sustain children's motivation?
- What rewards can I give children?
- How can I involve parents in children's learning?
- How can I help children take more responsibility for their own learning?

Barriers to learning (additional factor): additional questions
- How to prevent the distraction of pupils' attention during the activities?

- Can poor light decrease pupils' dynamic towards the activity?
- Can a lot of noise decrease the flexibility of the tasks?
- Can it lower students' enthusiasm towards the task, if teacher interferes during the task?
- Can it make pupils unmotivated, if they are told their mistakes by their teachers?

Discussion: The data above demonstrate the ability of the PSTs to frame pertinent questions in relation to the planning decisions. The PSTs have thought about four new factors – materials/activities, parental, learning and barriers to learning – in addition to the three factors included in the task (teacher, learner and classroom). What is interesting here is that for the three new factors – materials/activities, parental, and learning – PSTs have grouped the existing questions under these categories and have also included some new questions under each catogory. Whereas for the barriers to learning factor, although they have not found any existing questions as belonging to this category (see task input on p.4), they have thought of this category and included some questions of their own in it. The data thus provide evidence for the cognitive depth that underlines the PSTs' understanding of the planning decisions. The data also reveal their capability to focus on possible measures that enhance the classroom experience for the learners. Several themes emerge from the additional questions framed by PSTs – individual differences, equal distribution of teacher attention, maximizing the physical environment of the classroom, learner motivation and attention span, organization of the lesson and the learning material, class control and discipline, barriers for learning and parental concerns. Thus PSTs have considered planning decisions from multiple angles belonging to all the stakeholders of learning.

Trainer feedback to PSTs
Gaps are identified in PSTs understanding of some of the issues related to the planning decisions. For instance, some PSTs framed questions that focused on lesson evaluation which are addressed AFTER the lesson is conducted instead of framing ques-

tions that can be asked BEFORE the lesson is conducted.Through brainstorming and discussion, the trainer helped the PSTs distinguish between planning decisions and interactive and evaluative decisions. Further, PSTs framed questions for the learners such as: Do I know this and which parts are new to me?Is this lesson or task useful to me in anyway?What is my role in learning this? They are offered help in reframing such questions from the teacher's perspective in order to make them meaningful. For example the question is this lesson or task useful to me in any way is rephrased as will the learners find this lesson or task useful. PSTs are also offered well-deserved praise on occasions when they displayed remarkable cognitive agility in devising new categories as also framing appropriate questions, especially for the category of parents and the questions under this category. In an informal chat with the trainer PSTs shared that the tasks were engaging and gave them 'a chance to explore their creative side'.

Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions addressed:

How can PSTs be made aware of the planning decisions that teachers take?

PSTs can be made aware of the planning decisions that teachers takethrough tasks that promote active engagement such as the ones presented above. The tasks have enabled the PSTs to not only gauge the importance of the planning decisions but also to perceive the different aspects of the planning decisions – teacher, learner, classroom (not to mention issues related to materials/activities, parents,learning, and barriers to learning).

What evidence do we have to demonstrate PSTs understanding of the planning decisions?

PSTs demonstrated their understanding of the planning decisions in two ways: a) by devising more categories to group the questions – materials/activities, parents, learning and barriers to learning and b) by framing extremely pertinent and thought-provoking questions related to each of these categories.

What scaffolding can be offered to enhance PSTs understanding of the planning decisions?

PSTs needed scaffolding in differentiating between planning and evaluative decisions and in making finer distinctionsamong questions across categories. Optimal and discrete praise also functioned as scaffolding, motivating PSTs to demonstrate high task performance leading to satisfying achievement of learning outcomes.

Implications

- Task flexibility ensures achievement of learning goals – pushing the high-ability PSTs to expand their cognitive horizons while helping the mid and low-ability ones to maximize their existing potential thereby making task completion a rewarding experience for all parties concerned.
- Since the intrinsic nature of the tasks entails deep and active engagement on the part of the PSTs, creating a psychologically safe classroom environment where they can interact meaningfully with their peers as well as the trainer is crucial.
- Specific and focused feedback contributes to enhanced understanding of curricular concepts.

Limitations

- Of the three important types of decisions that teachers take, the study is limited to only the planning decisions. Including interactive and evaluative decisions could have made the study more comprehensive.
- Only two tools are used to collect data: PSTs responses to tasks and trainer feedback to PSTs. Other tools such as questionnaires and structured interviews could have yielded richer data.
- The participants of the study possess sound language proficiency coupled with a high cognitive ability as evidenced from their task performance. The tasks may not work with a different set of PSTs.

Further research

- The interactive and evaluative decisions that practicing teachers make can have significant impact on student learning. A study can be undertaken to explore these.
- A longitudinal study where the classroom practice of the PSTs is tracked to assess the

impact of the training on their real time teaching can be rewarding.

- A battery of tasks can be designed to investigate the types of tasks that can trigger maximum decision-making exploration on the part of the PSTs.

Conclusion

A significant aspect of a teacher education programme isto make the PSTs aware that language teaching demands spontaneous, unpremeditative decisions in the midst of several choices present in any given moment of classroom life. When provided the relevant academic inputs and the right amount of push, PSTs demonstrate the ability to understand and gauge the decisions that teachers have to make while planning lessons through pertinent and thought-provoking questions. Several factors have emerged as influencing teacher's classroom decisions – teacher, learner, classroom, materials/activities, parents, learning and barriers to learning. It is hoped that the theoretical knowledge related to these diverse factors and the ability to gauge and assess the critical moments in the classroom from multiple angles will equip the PSTs with the decision-making skills required to make learning fun as well as rewarding for their learners.

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Innovative Classroom Techniques

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

ELTIF is looking for tutors

RELTIF is looking for tutors who are willing to be part of its 'Rural development programmes through English language education'. Students of DTEd., B Ed., retired teachers and working teachers who can spare a little time during weekends and holidays are welcome to join us. ELTIF has been organizing communicative English programmes for students of all levels, self-empowerment programmes for teachers of English, training programmes for all teachers in English medium schools, awareness programmes for parents, support programmes for mothers, skill development programmes for women engaged in self employment, and so on. Those who would like to be volunteers, please contact the office bearers. (Addresses and contact numbers on the back cover page) –Secretary, ELTIF

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

ELTIF Teaching-Learning Materials

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

ELTIF Online Lecture Series on Language, Literature and Cultural Studies.
Lecture 27. Special Edition : **Prof.M.P.Bhaskaran Memorial Lecture**
Ms.Clare Sisisky
Executive Director of Global Education Benchmark Group, US

Report by Dr. A Devika HSST (English)
Moothedath HSS Taliparamba, Kannur (Kerala)
devika.rdh@gmail.com

Abstract

The intricate relation between language and culture has always ignited the inquiries of researchers of various disciplines, especially so in the field of language and language teaching. Bilingualism has become the norm of the world, and language carries the burden of culture wherever it goes. And, languages are always on the move, these days. It was in this context, ELTIF was happy to listen to a lecture 'Connecting Language and Cultures: Teaching English as Global Language' by Ms.Clare Sisisky,Executive Director of Global Education Benchmark Group, US. The platform was the 27th lecture of the ELTIF Fortnightly Online lecture series on 30th October, 2021.

The lecture, in addition to one in a series, was significant in two ways. First, it was the first anniversary lecture of the online series, and ELTIF was happy that as an alternate means to reach out teachers and researchers during the days of the pandemic, we were getting participation from inland and abroad. Secondly, the lecture was meant for commemorating one of the pioneers of Indian ELT, Prof. MP Bhaskaran (1921-87). MPB was a member of the Madras English Language Teaching (MELT) Project, perhaps, the first collective of its kind in India, when the nation was quite ambiguous about the role to be assigned to English language in the Constitution, which was getting drafted at that time. The argument put forward by him in favour of retaining English in the Indian soil was that "if we lose English, we would truly lose 350 years of cultural growth." He wanted to make English an Indian language.It is this 'cultural link' that linked ELTIF with the speaker of the lecture, Ms. Clare Sisisky.

One more reason why the lecture was well appreciated by ELTIF: With the rich experience of working in various parts of Asia and in rural India Ms. Sisisky's view of English was not exclusively academic, it was essentially sociocultural. This is another point of convergence for Ms. Sisisky and ELTIF, since we firmly believe the constraints of the four-walled classroom in mastering a language of opportunity. ELTIF has always been promoting the view of teaching English language in India as essentially a social work, more than academic ritual. -- **Editor**

The online programme of the day began with Dr. Stuart Salomon, a student of Prof. MP Bhaskaran, making a reference to MPB. Dr. Salomon said that he was introduced to the world of English language teaching when he arrived in India in 1969 as a Peace Corps volunteer and MPB was a teacher trainer at Regional Institute of English Bangalore.

The speaker, Ms. Clare Sisisky was introduced by Dr. Manjula Salomon, daughter of MPB, currently working as the Associate Head of School for Academic Affairs and the first Global Scholar in Residence at Palmer Trinity School in Miami, Florida.

Ms. Sisisky began her lecture by referring to the connection between language and culture and how we, language educators, can bring the world to our students. TheGlobal Education Benchmark Group is a member organization of schools and it has about 300 schools they work directly with, supporting their educators and their students in global education bringing global perspectives, global issues and global competencies or the skills that students need to

thrive in the world.

When thinking about language and culture, one of the issues related to classrooms, viewed from a wider perspective is understanding why and how languages differ. That discussion leads us to the range of what it means to be human, discovering what is universal about languages and helping us understand the core of our race. When we think about this issue in the context of English, weunderstand that there are many different 'Englishes' around the world and English is an Indian language too, just as it is a Canadian or a South African language and just as much as it is a British language. So, when thinking about what English language shares in common and how the varieties differ, it can give all students an idea that English is a window into the world not only of the cultural differences around the world but also in what it means to be human and in what is common in our humanity.

English is considered as a global language not as the one English that is spread and globalized around the world but as a language that is spoken and used by many different people in many different versions and many different cultures. It includes native speakers of English but also English speakers who learn English as a second third or fourth language. Of course, we can see here Hindi,Bengali, Marathi and other Indian languages are also widely spoken. So,students whospeak three or four languages, are well on the way to being global citizens.

From a global perspective, as students and teachers are concerned,there are four discrete benefits for the users of the global language, such as economic opportunity, understanding the world, learning about different cultures and collaborative sustainable development. When we look at another global trend of urbanization, English is the most commonly used language for communication between Africa and Asia. With urbanization on the rise globally, we will have people migrating to cities and towns, from different areas and they may be speaking different languages, with different culturesbringing together. English can be away for our students in order to have economic opportunity in an urban area with

multi-culture and multilingual.English tends to be the language, that allows for communication among Brazil which is a Portuguese speaking country and China with Mandarin the Arabic speaking countries like Morocco.We can also see that science is a field that offersmore collaborative efforts andis more global in nature, hence there is opportunity to address some of the world's greatest challenges throughcollaboration.One mode of higher level economic opportunities may be academic opportunities through exposure to English language that leads its speakers beyond our local community, and even beyond our nation and there is interconnectedness. This is something that we work a lot on education. Benchmark Group is making sure that this is a part of the students' education. One of the programmes that Benchmark Group has been doing is a series of student dialogues with students from all around the world where they come together and they discuss different topics like health and wellbeing.The main purpose of this dialogue is to allow students to share their own opinions but also to listen to the different perspectives and the different local context of students coming from all around the world. This proves that,communicating at this level, can provide greater opportunities for students and as they grow older and more educated.These days, even though the village student is confined to limited infrastructure facilities, they and their parents are aware of the facilities available in the wider world. They comprehend socio-economic-cultural-scientific-technological developments around them through the use of the global language.

For the speaker, getting connected tocultures and learning with students who were struggling to master English and to 'practice' English with them was an incredible opportunity to have a better understanding of the world. We often think about the labours behind interacting with nonnative speakers. But, if we take it in a positive way, connecting our students and teachers with native English speakers (need not be teachers) is worth rewarding.

Here is an opportunity for English language teachers to introduce their students to other

cultures and provide them access to their conversations of real life.Language can be viewed as a window to a culture and we can show our students a different way of looking at the world through teaching them that language. The speaker asserted that there are multiple 'Englishes'and each of them is equally important and valid. A reflection of the cultural context in which it is located can help students understand that in India, English is not a foreign language, it is one among the Indian languages. Being able to communicate across cultural differences, is really one of the most essential skills in today's world.We know that not just within South Asia but within East Africa, within the United States, Canada, UK and Australia especially in South Africa, there's a huge amount of cultural diversity. The books written in English by Indian authors, is in a way that opens up to adifferent culture of the world. The literatures of other cultures prompt students to think of the diversity of the world they live in. Such a world view frees them from narrow regionalism and border-bound nationalism through questioning and critiquing, through comparing and contrasting, through nurturing curiosity about the world in the language classroom. It is very important to bring in the excitement of understanding different cultures,different histories and different current events as a way to foster student engagement. Ms. Sisisky acknowledges that being a naïve speaker of English she was able to understand different cultures and connect the people around the world. By seeing the world in different ways, the students can understand how they can take more actions within their power and within their own community. Thus, they can contribute towards sustainable development. If communities all around the world could do that, our students will be better prepared to tackle some of the future challenges.We have to think about how English language learning canbe made an opportunity for students to work on some of the global competencies and skills. As teachers, we have to train them to comprehend different world views of others and in that way,we will able to contribute or play our part in educating the next generation for sustainable development. With this global socio-cultural perspective on English language teaching-learning, Ms. Sisisky concluded her lecture.

Obituary

"Teaching is my oxygen" – Prof. C. Jagannath Pai

Prof. C. Jagannath Pai of Payyanur College was a 'legend' as truly commemorated by Prof. P. Bhaskaran Nair. He joined the college in 1966 just one year after the inception of the college. After long 30 years of teaching he retired from service only to begin Vidyamandir College in Payyanur wherefrom he associated himself with ELTIF. Since then, he subscribed the journal of ELTIF and rang up the editor if any issue didn't reach him on time. He appreciated every effort taken by ELTIF in empowering the ordinary people of Payyanur and surroundings. Later he settled in Mumbai where he taught MBA students and celebrated his 50 years of English teaching making the statement in his own inimitable way that "Teaching is my oxygen". He later joined the management of Vidya Prakash Mandal, an educational institute, still continuing with his passion for cricket and company with young Turks. A great source of energy, Prof. Pai is no more with us, but will live in the hearts and minds of his students, colleagues, and especially in the ELTIF fraternity for long.

Dr. AC Sreehari
Dept.of English, Payyanur College

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 28. 13 November 2021 **Dr. P Nagraj**
(Prof. & Head, Dept.of English & Foreign Languages, BharathiarUnivrsity Coimbatore)

Topic : The Language of Quarantining

Report by Dr. Leena AK
(St. Joseph's High School Chathiath, Kochi)
leena4ak@gmail.com

The living organism called language grows, changes, and dies, too. Like any biological entity, it responds to the changes in the environment—in the case of language, these changes are mainly in the sociocultural, economic, political spheres. Science, technology, war, partition, migration—all have changed human communication, both in content and mode. Prof. Nagaraj began his presentation by alluding to the direction in which the English language is leading us, or, in other words, how we are travelling with English throughout the pandemic. He talked about the complicated trails of the English language, which was difficult to trace. The entire field of psychology, English language teachers, and language itself may be attempting to comprehend this intricacy, which has presented numerous difficulties to non-native learners.

According to prof. Nagaraj, there is a plethora of theoretical perspectives, as well as a wide range of language structures that are becoming reality—the difficult part is that human cognition tries to interact with language comprehension. He discussed the goals, including the public's impression of the English language during the pandemic, the virality of nature or context we live in, and integration of technology in English language. He believes that we could not avoid two World Wars while teaching English language and literature in any context. The prominence of two World Wars aided in the grooming of language teachers as well as the growth of language itself--he elaboratedthis ideas on how wars literally helped English language growth and development. We fought roughly 5,000 theories in these two battles, yet there are still many theories from the colonized

to the decolonized contesxt. He was confused as to why we were crying so much over these theories, and why we were dissatisfied with the theoretical standpoint. In today's academic environments, theories are given prominence in analyzing or appreciating any work of art. These theories have enslaved academics. Many of them are not prepared to move beyond these literary perspectives and works in other fields. The need of the hour is for language and literature to be integrated into social and personal understanding. In his point of view, we have to formulate theoretical perspectives that would help our children grow and learn the English language.

Later Dr. Nagaraj addressed existential questions that we all have encountered now. Within a short span of time, the whole human community experienced the phenomenon of the local becoming global and global becoming local. The speaker said that the whole world was closed during the pandemic and compelled human beings to put themselves into self quarantining. The experience they had was that they were possessed with fear of humanity. He talked about bio computers, man and machine at war, how machines over-ruling human intelligence and how artificial intelligence had become real and what real had become artificial.

He also talked about the need to keep a balanced emotional content. We accept the fact that we are half machines. The introduction of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence confirmed and agreed with that fact. The advancement in the field of genetic engineering demanded that human intelligence should act like super humans. These ripples could also be visible

in the academic forum too. Later, he quoted Ferdinand de Saussure, "Time changes all things, there is no reason why languages should escape this universal law" and elaborated why he chose the Saussurean quote about time.He continued that due to this reason we have varieties of English like ESP, English for cognitive development and so on. But he expressed his disagreement by making the remark that time was just an illusion, it was a human psychological construction.

The next point the speaker discussed was that whenever a great social change such as natural disasters and wars took place, it had proven to have a great impact on language. In other words, a great social change will bring about great linguistic change. Directly or indirectly these changes have tremendously contributed to the growth and development of the English language, because language is partly society and society is partly language. Then he raised a serious academic question: was grammar essential? Post colonial understanding of grammar allowed its users to go with a liberalised turn which in turn, challenged the functionality of grammar.

He discussed the experience of 'isolated awareness' and elaborated the great ideologies we formulate will be extended to self -learning, how some vocabulary during the pandemic had come into existence or prominence for example phrases like 'self- isolated learning' and 'quarantined learning'. He said that learning a language was a collaborative effort. During these learning modes, various tasks had been involved which encouraged meaningful learning.

Specific examples were discussed at this point- -the word corona and the language of corona.. He elaborated the phrases such as' novel corona', 'Covid19', 'pandemic', 'epidemic' etc. which come into life. The context might be devilish or severe. Though the context was severe, it had contributed tremendously in the particular language growth. The word corona became a beautiful/ interesting word for common man. People started to use it as they were using it in the normal context.

As the next point, Dr Nagaraj detailed how for the first time in history, the word God was replaced by corona or Covid., the word 'God' word was dead, at least for the time being. Corona had stopped us from going to church, temple and mosque. We have been groomed by so much of tradition, culture and ideologies, all the faith we had in religion got challenged for the first time because there were no large sermons, elaborate rituals...all that is being challenged.

Michigan University conducted a study on how people behave, what sort of language structures the students were using during the pandemic time. The university developed an app called Audio Diaries . They concluded that the language they used to express their likesand dislikes was directly associated with the context they live in. The speaker discussed the merits and demerits of machine-governed life of human beings and reminded us that we have to bring a balance between artificial intelligence and human intelligence. The early forms of language could have emerged from a desire to express oneself forcefully, to express one's emotions. He also talked about the idol of corona devi at Coimbatore and the manthra 'go corona go'and established how new structures had come into the forefront.

Then he talked about politics of language and emphasized the need for understanding George Orwell. He said that "word meaning changes with the person to person, in contact, climate, context and content". He gave the example in the political context- in America it is referred as Wuhan virus, in India, it is referred to as China virus and stressed how they were gaining momentum during the pandemic context. Language can be used to politicize one's own agenda. It can be used to manipulate what we want to propagate. He underlined the flexibility or fluidity of language which was capable of giving total freedom of expression.

By explaining varieties of languages, the speaker said that there were no more English but 'Englishes,' in the same way there were no more language but 'languaging' in the post-modern context. Regional, state, national or even individual impact can be traced among these varieties. Though we could find dark

shades of the pandemic such as -vanity, arrogance, deception, hypocrisy, scorn- it had proved good. He also detailed how these varieties came into being during the spread of English around the world. The native speakers of the English language were shocked to witness these varieties. It really questioned the ownership of this particular language. For them, their native language was being so much damaged or the new varieties have crucified the originality of thought process. He cited the famous writer Mark Twain . There is no such thing as Queen's English, the property has gone into the hands of a joint stock company (or IT Company).According to him, modern varieties of English, especially written English is full of bad habits which is afflicted with imitation. He expressed his surprise on evolving around PhD factories and said that Tamil Nadu was the state which produced largest number of PhDs during the pandemic.He concluded his lecture by reminding the participants that we have go beyond a language to understand, experience or appreciate that particular language—a realmin which culture, language and human cognition fuse themselves into one.

Post-script: One possible antonym for 'language', though metaphorically, could be 'isolation', because neither language exists in isolation, nor isolation needs language. The lecture was trying to explore the paradox of how language grows and changes when human beings were forbidden to interact. While imprisoned, or forced into exile in isolation, does language function more vigorously? The amount of lexical, syntactic, semantic and hermeneutic diversities that the global language called English passed through the last two years was enormous, though the use of English, or for that matter any human language, was reduced and restricted. Does language breed in quarantine?

Signpost for Researchers

David Crystal on Language Change
(Extracts from *A Little Book on Language* **)**

All living languages change. They have to. Languages have no existence apart from the people who use them. And because people are changing all the time, their language changes too, to keep up with them. The only languages that don't change are dead ones. Even so, it's possible to bring a language back from the grave and make it live – and change – again.

Why does a language change? Sometimes the reason is obvious. If we invent some-thing, we need a name for it, and at that point a new word comes into a language. Think of some of the words that have become widely used in English to talk about new developments during the early years of this century. Many of them are to do with the internet: Google, blogging, texting, SMS, iPhone, instant message, Facebook, Twitter. New words come into use. Old words go out of use. This is a pattern we see in every area of human knowledge and every part of society. The old words never disappear en-tirely, of course. We see them every time we read an old book, and hear them whenever we go to see a play written a long time ago.

Vocabulary is the area where we most often notice the way language changes, because each year hundreds of new words arrive in a language. We only come across a few of them in everyday life, of course. Most new words are technical terms to do with specialized areas of knowledge we don't know anything about, or they're slang words which are used by a very small group of people.

Every part of language changes. It's not just the words. Grammar changes. Pronuncia-tion changes. The way we talk to each other changes. Even spelling and punctuation change. But not everything changes at the same rate.

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 29. 27 November 2021 **Dr. Ganesh Krishnamoorthy**
Former Professor &HoD(English) of Madras Christian College, Chennai.

Topic: Making Beauty: Transforming Literary Sensibilities

Report by Dr. B. Nagalakshmi
(Asst. Professor, Dept. of English SDNB Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai)
nageethirumalai@yahoo.co.in

Dr. Ganesh Krishnamoorthy's mellowed experience of teaching literature was captured in a microcosmic way in his ELTIF lecture. He talked about the change in the concept of literary sensibilities over the years, the impact of literature on human consciousness citing the words of I. A Richards who said literature is the record of valuable state of consciousness.He also related the impact of creativity of people from different parts of the world from Greece, Europe and Asia upon human conscience. He pointed out the obvious shift in perception from what is literature and what literature can do to us. He gave the roadmap of his talk in the first part of the talk --from apoliticized aesthetics which means liberal humanist take on literature; and the conceptual framework and the paradigmatic shift enumerating with references from literature. In the context of apoliticizedliterariness, he traced back to the 1930s, the concepts of Marxism and Feminism. He explained how the term literature came into being and how literature had been used for a long period of time using the conceptual framework that had the first segment 'world' which is circumambient to every poet.

Traditionally the purpose of literature, he pointed out, was to make us understand the reality and the essence through spirituality. He routed back to the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato to substantiate his point. Though Plato banished art from his 'Republic', it was he who emphasized upon the trinity of values as truth- beauty-goodness. The moment one sees reality, it is the way one perceives or going beyond what one sees. To understand literature is an unidimensional process, or capturing the spiritual essence is the purpose of literature. We live in a time of simulated reality and multi-dimensional realities. We need to explore these muti-dimensional realties perceived through literature as each may have a grain of truth of falsehood. When it comes to representation, the poet's job is to create an ideal world. And there is always the binary that exists as the past ideal world and the presently existing real one. The ideal world establishes supremacy over the real world. When this ideal world becomes the consciousness and the inspiration in the creations, the artistic world comes into being. Today truth is being re-presented as ideal phenomenon in multiple ways. We begin to suspect the grand conception of truth. The poet becomes a visionary and being pedestalized. The poet becomes the unacknowledged legislator of the world as said by Shelly. We expect poets to re-present reality to know the socio, political sub-text. The epistemology of this is that the imagination becomes the fountainhead or source of reality. With the exalted sense of imagination, the poet becomes a prophet to capture the essence of philosophy. The speaker asserted the fact that poets are discredited of this sacred power of imagination presently and no more associated with the divine state of consciousness for the creation. It is not that present day literature is uncreative or unimaginative. We are more interested in juxtaposing the binaries. Harold Bloom termed figuration as non-verbal as poetry is a departure from literal as the vision was wordless initially. Those flashes are articulated later and become literature. Today, literature is perceived as constructed structures of meaning. Literature becomes a social fabric with politically informed or uninformed writing and becomes

a community activity as theatre. Aesthetics is beauty and every part in literature contributes to the whole beauty of literature. A terrific amalgam of disparate elements constitutes whole of a poem. The term 'aesthetics' is derived from the Greek term 'aesthesis' which means sense perception and coined by Baumgarten, the predecessor of Immanuel Kant. Aesthetics deals with the realm of beauty and literature considers to be making and creating beauty. Poetry deals with invisible spiritual reality captured through the medium of language. It embeds and enshrines the truth which can't be found by our limitedness of reason. Imagination is privileged and contrasted over reason. On the contrary, in politicized aesthetics, we have the perpetration of false consciousness through emphasis, reiteration, and power structures in aesthetics. This forms the ideological constructs underpinned in literature. Literature is dragged into the polemic of ideas.

Then the speaker urged the listeners to meditate upon the supreme thought of Pablo Neruda, "I want to do with you what spring does to the Cherry trees". Humanist Paradigm ultimately spoke about how literature gets regenerated and transformative. It becomes a solitary preoccupation and not being collective catharsis as seen before. According to Indian 'Natya Sastra', purgation or catharsis is not the community response but individual response. The power of literature widens your horizon of understanding and perception of this world to a greater level of cosmos by kindling the sensibilities.It transforms the readers as a co-sharer of the creator's vision. In the words of I A Richards, the readers are into the poet's valuable state of consciousness. Literature transforms our deadness into wonderful vegetation as how spring transforms cherry trees from deadness to vegetation. Shelly's 'Ode to the West Wind' equates this driving away of dead thoughts to pestilence stricken multitude with the power of recreation and regeneration.

The speaker illustrated the hierarchy of fine arts provided by Friedrich Hegel in which music occupies the top most place followed by literature, painting, sculpture and architecture in the order. The purpose of art is to provide self-knowledge which is different from the knowledge one gets from history and philosophy. Aristotle was the first to talk about truth offered by literature and differentiated it from the truth offered by philosophy and history. The Delphic maxim, 'know thyself' reiterated by Socrates, is also about self-knowledge. The purpose of literature as per humanistic and apolitical perspective is to transport the human from mundane, natural to supranatural and not to create awareness. Every artistic expression is self-realization and thereby poetic truth differs from philosophy and religion. It is this expression about the freedom of speech through literature with its transcendental state becomes more visible and audible than it is being expressed through other mediums like music, architecture and painting. In the words of Tagore human beings are not imperfect but incomplete. Achieving completeness is what literature is providing with. Literature provides you with the quest or existential question for life similar to Hamlet's soliloquy 'to be or not to be'. This may not include socio, cultural and political conditions which create a problem for an individual. Transcendence, transformative and transportation are watch words of humanistic paradigm and our sensibilities are linked with the process of transformation. If a poet is born, so is the critic. Alexander Pope said, poets derive their life from heaven. He also said that the poet and the critic do not differ in kind, but in degrees as there is terrific kinship between our consciousness and the poet's consciousness at the time of his creation. The speaker moved to the three orders of beauty as beauty, sensibility and the canon. Though natural beauty inspires many poets, it is subject to time and destruction as described by Keats' in 'Endymion'. In both oriental and occidental traditions, cosmic beauty is described as the beauty captured in the microcosmic artistic beauty. Aristotle who spoke about unity in a work of art stated the source of aesthetic beauty as perceived by arts is the source of aesthetic delight and terms it as microcosmic beauty as it reminds the cosmic beauty. The speaker illustrated form Longinus who spoke about sublimity and analogized with NatyaSastra

which is an unalloyed bliss consequent on co-sharing the aesthetic vision with the poet. Harold Bloom clung to the humanistic paradigm, universality, the autonomy of imaginative literature and the sovereignty of solitary soul till his death, though he was ridiculed as it was the age when theory took the academic world by storm. Autonomy of imaginative literature had no connection with socio-political world. An individual is not seen as a member of the society but experiences solitary sensibility. Readers realize the deep world within their inner self.

The speaker,then discussed elaborately about imagination and representation. Mimesis though refers to imitation; it is actually an imaginative process of re-creation of the visible world, looking for an invisible, invisible spiritual reality which is the essence of cosmos. He elaborately illustrated from Wordsworth, Keats' aesthetic delectation and T. S. Eliot's paradigm of language-as-symbolic-exchange which consequently loses itself in the age of information-as-code. He described Plato's principle of truth, beauty and goodness by drawing illustrations from the poems of John Keats, Marianne Moore and Archibald MacLeish. He delved deep into the various shades of Liberal Humanism, Literary sensibility, Canonical Literature and the New Critical Paradigm. He juxtaposed apolitical aesthetics and New Historicism. He threw light on Derrida's 'Acts of Literature' and Self- Reflectivity. He concluded by explaining all adjoining areas of criticism and sensibility represented through a pyramid with the components of Gender Studies & Queer Theory, Ethnic Studies & Post-Colonialism, New Historicism & Cultural Materialism, Structuralism & Post Structuralism, Marxism & Feminism, and Formalism & New Criticism. The Speaker almost enthralled and captivated the participants for one and a half hours with exotic illustrations, citations and references by darting through all literary theories. For the listeners it was a message on how literary sensibilities can be distilled from the study of literature.

Signpost for Researchers

Postmodernism and Literary Sensibilities: A Reading List

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Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 30. 11 December 2021 **Dr. Sanjay Arora**
(Professor & Head, Dept. of English, Central University of Rajasthan)

Topic: 'Skill Integration in ESL Classrooms with Low-proficiency Learners in Focus'

Report by Dr. Leena AK
(St. Joseph's High School Chathiath, Kochi)
leena4ak@gmail.com

Dr Sanjay Arora started his lecture Skill Integration in ESL Classrooms with Low-proficiency Learners in Focus by laying out his overall plan which focuses on integration of all four skills while teaching literature because English courses in schools and colleges across the country are predominantly literature-loaded. The talk was divided into five sections: (a) brainstorming, (b) ESL classrooms, (c) skill integration, (d) tips, and (e) questions. The speaker brainstormed the participants in the first section by asking them to react to some questions he had posed concerning the syllabus, learner backgrounds, the need to develop a cultural connection, learner skill enhancement, and how to achieve skill integration while teaching. He offered his experiences when CLT was adopted during the initial years of his service in the secondary level and explained the current situation. He saw that there wasn't much of a difference between the teaching strategies. The teachers did not use a communicative strategy; instead, they followed the traditional method. The speaker continued by asserting that teachers are not trained properly, methods and approaches are traditional rather than communicative, and teachers emphasise literature not language components in the ESL classroom. He reinstated that the learner needs to keep on changing.

During the first section of the lecture 'ESL classroom' he interacted with the participants and settled the answers of his questions regarding the status of English, difference between EFL and ESL classroom. discussed where the speaker emphasised the fact that the status of English language goes beyond the classroom. He further stated that Teachers teaching Hindi, take pride in speaking English more than their mother tongue. He opined that it is a language of respect irrespective of whatever language we speak or whatever language we use. He talked about the importance of the English language in Punjab. Most of the marital relationship taking place on the basis of English Language -if the girl can score Band 7 in IELTS, OET and other exams, can be accetedwithour dowry. All of them want to migrate. Hence, they think that English is a passport to Canada.So English is a preferred course not only in Punjab but also in any state in India. Then he elaborated the approaches/ methods that we use in our ESL classroom such as grammar translation, Direct method, natural approach, etc. He also discussed the method based on multiple intelligences of the learners. Later, he asked what kind of approaches we should take. What strategy will work in our classroom, and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for teaching English in a multilingual, multicultural, multidimensional society like India. Later, he discussed the Indian students' abilities as well as comparing and contrasting them. Students from Kerala, he says, excel at writing, but students from Bihar and Rajasthan do not. Similarly, their verbal abilities differ significantly. Teachers must determine which method, whether a single method or a combination of methods, is most effective in their classroom.The method/approach we are attempting will be entirely dependent on the type of students we are actually teaching.Then the speaker elaborated the changed classroom and discussed student-centred classroom, non-challenging activities, NVC, audio-visual mix, the need to incorporate comprehension check and adaptability as per the situation and level of the learners. The speaker opined that teachers are talking most of the time in the ESL classroom, if the teacher really wants a change

in the classroom, they want to put extra effort for skill integration. For the skill integration in the language classroom, the teachers can use songs, games and literature. Later, he played and analysed a YouTube song called 'Count on me.' He examined the song and inquired as to what aspect of the language element could be extracted from it or what the song's focus was. Then he explained how the song's pedagogical perspective was represented by conditional sentences (open condition) and adverb clauses. The speaker also discussed cohesion and coherence, as well as the importance of, rather than talking directly from a grammar or language perspective, the teacher can simply try to familiarise some of these songs to teach language. Furthermore, he demonstrated how to construct a serpentine story by framing sentences with the words provided by the speaker, and he showed the speaker's version of the same, titled Animal Farm. According to the speaker, teachers could use this strategy in the classroom while keeping the context in mind. He added that while doing these activities, they are able to express their creativity, thoughts, and ideas. Later, Mark Antony's speech was played, and students were asked to paraphrase it in the form of a newspaper report. He also discussed a speaking example (eulogy) from Barack Obama's speech and attempted to incorporate the activity of speaking for one minute on a sad or happy occasion.

Dr. Sanjay also gave teachers some tips on how to incorporate various skills into the classroom. Teachers, in his opinion, must be creative and innovative—whether a picture or audio/video will work in the classroom situation or a game/song will serve the purpose—all depends on the teacher's creativity and innovation. Learners with low levels of competence may believe they are not up to the mark or the teachers' expectations. To make them easier, teachers must accept/appreciate even the most illogical responses from students, and create an environment in which they understand that they are acceptable (rather than dismissive) in the classroom. He also recommended to use the activities which have contemporary relevance and direct connection to their life. He also provided the audience with a quick overview of PQB technique which stands for praise, question and polish. He concluded his lecture by suggesting that the teachers must adapt themselves to incorporate real life situations and give the students more opportunities rather than the teacher taking the role of limelight.

Tips for Teachers

'How to Structure an Integrated SkillsClass'by Amer E (2015)

Usually integrated skills lessons are topic-based (health, food, ecology, sports etc.) and are, as the name suggests, a smooth integration of the 4 skills (reading/writing/listening/speaking).

Lead-in (approx. 5- 10mins)
A short activity designed to arouse interest in the topic of the lesson. For example, a game or puzzle, paired or mingle question task, paired or group sharing of experiences or class-wide brainstorm.

Pre-teaching of vocabulary (approx. 10-15mins)
Remember that you will still need to cover difficult vocabulary if you do a listening/reading. Useful vocabulary may also be covered in a separate vocabulary exercise before speaking/writing.

Skills tasks (approx. 10-15mins)

Speaking: Remember that this could be a role-play, info-gap or discussion and to rotate ss/groups to get maximum benefit from the task. Take notes for correction later. Include feedback. Check instructions. If it's a role play you may want to do some work on questions intonation first.

Writing: As this is usually the most complex skill to learn and teach, spend at least 10 mins on this activity. Make sure you set it up properly by pre-teaching vocabulary, eliciting useful expressions and language appropriate to the type of writing (e.g. for holiday brochure – elicit suggestion language "You could . . .", "Watch the sun set . . ." or "Rent a car and cruise along . . ."etc
  Remember to monitor the writing, preferably correcting mistakes as you go. Avoid artificial writing tasks; try postcards, letters, reports, recipes, brochures, articles etc.

Reports of ELTIF Fortnightly Online Lectures
Lecture 31. 25 December 2021 **Dr. Venkateswaran**
(Former Professor, Regional Institute of English, South India, Bangalore)

Topic: Language through Literature or Literature through Language:That is the Question

Report by Mohanan. P
(Convenor, ELTEP Online Workshops)
mohanputhi2@gmail.com

The role of literature in the classroom is yet to be defined. The question is how language and literature can complementarily contribute to the second language acquisition. How far can this be achieved in L2 instruction contexts? Such questions were addressed in the online lecture delivered by Dr. Venkateswaran, former professor at RIESI, Bangalore , on 25 December 2021on the topic 'Language through Literature or Literature through Language- that is the Question' .

The speaker started his lecture by sharing his experiences as a language teacher and a teacher trainer for a long time. His ideas about language teaching were strengthened by his experiences in teaching English at all level, from Primary to University. His knowledge about pedagogical contents, instructional strategies, various approaches and methodologies, and latest innovations in the field of education were all due to his active involvement in English Language Teacher Professional Development activities at RIESI.

According to Dr. Venkateswaran, there is no specific answer to the question whether language is taught through literature or literature is taught through language. Language and literature are two complement constructs. Language itself is a construct or an idea. Language can be meaning. Language can be a system. Or language can be skills. No single definition of language is practically possible. Literature incorporates language or literature is composed using language. The question is whether language or language competence is acquired through literature or literary competence is acquired through language. H

further explains that the question is whether language nuances can be acquired through the study of literature or by undergoing a course in literature. The debatable question is whether language competence comes first or literary competence comes first.

Dr. venkateswaran recollects that when he was young, his teachers used 'flowery language' in the classes, the language which has some kind of semblance with literary language. He still remembers some of their expressions because they had literariness in them. And then there was communicative revolution in 1970s or '80s which started with the notional syllabus concepts of D.A. Wilkins. Notional syllabus paved the way for looking at the pedagogy that has to be implemented in the English language classroom. They looked at language not in terms of Hornby's structures, but in terms of functions and notions. Wilkins's ideas of minimum adequate grammar did not negate the use of grammar in the classroom but advocated the development of minimum adequate grammar in the users of second language and the syllabus was according to this vision. Here comes the question which grammar is to be taught- whether it is the grammar of literature or grammar of spoken English or grammar of written English. But some poems were included in the syllabus – poems like The Miller of the Dee. The song uses a language that is not in any way connected with the everyday language. The speaker is of the opinion that we should not be contented with everyday language, though the functional language is curtailed needed in certain situations. What lacks in such contexts, according to him, is

the ability to express emotions or the ability to get connected with the psyche of the persons to be interacted with. Mere cognitive domain development will not help one connected with the fellow human beings. Emotions can be appropriately expressed only through the language of literature.

The question again, is whether the language of literature, the language that can be used to express emotions, need to be acquired or not. Literary language makes one the creative user of language. He cites an example for the use of literary language which is different from everyday language. The sentence 'I was born in Bangalore' is different from 'Born in Bangalore was I.' The line 'I saw her singing at work/ And o'er the sickle bending.' (Solitary Reaper by Wordsworth) is more effective and emotionally expressive than the normal speech. This effect is achieved through syntactic deviation. The language of literature is totally different from the language of everyday communication. This applies to regional languages too.

What Dr. Venkateswaran is concerned with the issue whether the curricular objectives should focus on language competencies or literary competencies. There are a number of examples to show that language of literature is more powerful than the language that we use for every communication. Certain expressions like euphemism strengthen the power of language. For example, using 'breathed his last' for 'died'. The repeated question is what language is to be used. The speaker reiterates that the language of literature can be used to express the emotions more clearly and effectively. That is why a creative writer is different from the one who uses everyday language. We read a literary piece not merely to comprehend the meaning, but also for exploring the different level of possible meanings.

Language of literature is highly interpretable. 'Unsent part of communication' or 'out of the box thinking' makes literary language different. The speaker cites the example Tennyson's line, 'to strive, to seek and not to yield'. This part can be used to introduce the language element 'to infinitive'. Another example from the same poem is 'to drink life to the lees.' People love to quote these expressions because of their literary qualities. The speaker also differentiates between the language which is literary in organisation or structure and the language which is non-literary. It is interesting to note that the same language can be used in different ways for composing literary texts, although sometimes violating some norms of grammar. The use of metaphors in literature is another example for the use of literary language to express things in different ways. For example, the creative lines like 'Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' (Shakespeare) or 'Life is but a walking shadow.' (Shakespeare) This kind of poetic lines can be more appealing and expressive than the ordinary everyday language.

Dr. Venkateswaran speaks about how his mother's lullabies created an everlasting impression in his mind about the power of literature in language. They were all about relations. He strongly argues that what is needed today is the language for literature, assuming that the learners have the basics of language. Literature is needed because it creates some kind of creativity. Literature has the power to present the ordinary things in different ways. A literary piece is prescribed in the syllabus not just for language, but more for creating sensitivity or some kind feelings or emotions to the content. What makes ordinary everyday language different from literary language is that literature accommodates a different kind or form or structure or different diction of the same language. Non –literature usually may not have literary effect. Certainly, there are people who use literary language in everyday conversation.

Language and literature complement each other. Language, as a tool, is needed if one has to understand literature or to write a literary piece. To prepare a time table, non-literary language is sufficient. But to write on time table, different language is to be tried. The speaker quotes Roland Barthes to establish the idea that it is the reader who is to interpret a text because the author dies one the text is printed. Quoting Stanley Fish, he says that in

a class many texts can be created and children become interpreting communities. It is only literature that can produce different sub-texts. Learners should learn to use the interpretive aspect of literature.

Literature has the potential to make one sensitive to the content. Literature includes in it a totally different structure. The way of expressing the ideas in a quite different way is what distinguishes literature from everyday language. All stories are not written in the same way, although all stories may have the same features like plot, setting, dialogue, etc. He quotes the lines of the poem Past and Present by Thomas Hood: 'And where my brother set/ The laburnum on his birthday,/ The tree is living yet!' The speaker establishes his point that the poet used the interpretive language for suggesting that his brother died and this suggestiveness makes literature more enjoyable. He proposes the idea of teaching language through literature for helping the learners develop literary competence. Exposing to different models of literature can refine the language of the learners. It helps the learners to construct new languages. Language and literature cannot be separated from each other. Rather they should be treated as a single unit. The language of literature can help develop the ability to create. Only the language of literature can appeal to the affective domain, not the everyday language.

The speaker also discusses the reasons why some people argue that literature is not to be included in the syllabus. The complaint is that all pieces of literature selected are not appealing. He agrees with the idea that some pieces may be avoided, but there pieces of literature that need to be taught because they are very good sources for developing language competence. Another reason raised is that the diction may not be appropriate or may be difficult for learners to understand. But when the learners are allowed to learn the words in context, this problem may be settled. A practical difficulty that the teachers usually point out is that learners do not respond to literature. The suggestion was that children begin to respond when they are trained to be creative. A resourceful teacher can make learners understand and appreciate literature by using techniques that foster creative reponses.

It is also important to know how to teach literature. In order to decide how to teach, it is essential to know what to teach and why to teach. The use of instructional methodologies depend on the type of learners and the learning environments. No methodology fails, but only the implementation fails. It is to be admitted that each methodology has certain limitations. A classroom is a cultural space where various agendas are negotiated and contested. The first question how to address the cultural differences in the classroom where an alien culture may be out of the learners' experiential orbit. But since each region has parallel culture comparing it with the cultural setting in the text introduced can help learner understand better the new culture. In a multicultural and multilingual classroom a literary text can create opportunities to interact and help learner reconstruct literary pieces. Allowing learners to compose a literary text similar to the theme discussed may foster linguistic and literary competencies.

Literature offers chances for discussing the different agendas in-built in the text. Exposing a variety of literary pieces to the learners encourage the learners to explore and share the commonalities. The speaker proposes the use of the acronym of the word SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time-bound) as learning objectives for making learning easier and effective in the classroom. Dr. Venkateswaran concludes his lecture with a quote that literature is a way of knowing, but it knowing in the right hemisphere. It aptly sums up the importance of using language for literature and literature for language by addressing to the affective domains rather than the cognitive.

Enhancing Writing Skills of ELLs at Tertiary Level: A Constructivist Approach

K. Jefferson
Research Scholar
K S Rangasamy College of
Arts & Science, Tiruchengode

Dr. V. Radhakrishnan
Associate Professor & Head
K S Rangasamy College of Arts
& Science, Tiruchengode,

Abstract

The English language plays a pivotal role in all the fields like education, engineering, medical science, arts, commerce, and technology. This implies that the students of professional colleges need to be good at using the language. To make them good users of language and to meet professional and daily requirements, English should be taught based on the functional aspects. In professional development, spoken and written communication are crucial. This research study emphasizes on developing written communication skills of English Language Learners (ELLs) at tertiary level through Constructivist Approach. It supports the learners to comprehend the meaning and build sentences based on their earlier experience. This will help learners to understand the real-time usage and then apply it in writing skills. The study uses Constructivist tasks to make learning more interesting, cognitive, learner-centric, meaningful, and comprehensible. This study reveals the framing of such tasks make learning more active in the classroom and thereby drive the students towards acquiring the target language by conceptual understanding.

Keywords: Caste, Class, Discrimination, Gender, Marginalization, Patriarchy, Subjugation.

Introduction

Communication is essential for any professionals that enhances their quality in the workplace to convey the ideas widely. As far as engineering education is concerned communication both written and spoken are crucial in the professional milieu. Shikha (2012) states that good English Communication Skill plays a vital role in engineer's profession, lacking leads to undermine the image of an engineer. Another important prerequisite for writing is to serve various purposes like report writing, emails, manuals, job descriptions, and brochure. However, learning should take place based on the functional and communicative aspects rather than structural language usages. Language needs to be learnt with meaningful contextual usages instead of isolated sentences. That makes the learning active rather than passive (Hoover, 1996). This study makes an attempt to enhance writing skill of the tertiary level learners in real time context using constructivist approach. Basically, constructivist approach has three major divisions as cognitive, social and radical constructivism. From this cognitive constructivist principles are taken into account to make learners' proficient in writing. The idea of cognitive constructivism is to focus on learning which take place on the stages of cognitive development. This method facilitates learners to connect existing intelligence by making some modifications with the new information.

Literature Review

Constructivism is an idea to enhance knowledge from the collection of previous experience in one's life (Von Glasersfeld, Ernst, 2012). Royalty (2018) points out that knowledge and structure will be built from the existing memory of the previous experience of the student while organizing the new experience. Based on constructivist approach, a study was conducted to develop teaching material to enhance writing skill in writing scientific paper in classroom (Supriyadi 2013). Huitt (2003) opines that constructivism is

"existing information". In Wijayanti's (2013) words, it is all about the psychological beliefs of learning and cognition that includes one's own knowledge to construct information. Its one's own understanding by relating the prior knowledge and new information (Wijayanti's, 2013). Learners can construct knowledge through and it is an active mental process of development (Sharma, 2014). Cognitivism makes the learners to activate their inborn curiosity about the real world and to observe how things work (Shah, 2019).

Teaching Framework

Task:1 Picture Description
The objective of the task is to stimulate the learning based on the previous experience. A picture will be given to the students and will be asked to write a descriptive passage with their existing knowledge about the picture.

Observing the picture, learners should use appropriate words and sentences for the situation.

Task:2 Read and Reflect
Different thematic passages can be given to the students to familiarize with context and ask them to reflect the information that they observed in the passage which is to be applied in writing. Moreover, students can include their previous experience to make the passage more meaningful. This helps the learners to produce sentences.

Task:3 Listen and Write
Listening task will be given like listening to a news item in English, a short procedure, a short conversation, a brief lecture, and a short story. Students have to observe information and language structures by listening and reflect that in their own language structures in writing.

Methodology

Fig.1 Stages of Cognitive Constructivist Method to Develop Writing
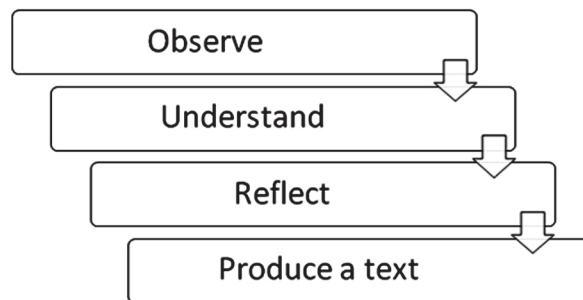
The methodology focuses on how the stages of Cognitive Constructivist Method facilitates learners to enhance proficiency in writing. Based on the teaching framework students have to observe the tasks to gain experience and understand the inner contextual meaning to correlate with cognitive constructivist principles. In reflection stage students have to reflect his/her own previous experience along with the real time tasks to make a passage. This stage allows students to exploit as much as existing intelligence based on the given tasks. The final stage is the production stage where students are asked to connect their earlier

experiences with the new information that they have gone through the tasks. The above are the four steps involved in this work to have influence upon the development of writing skills with cognitive constructivism.

Discussion
Cognitive constructivist method provides a lot of exposure for the students, where learning takes place based on their existing experiences and they use it with the new things. It is entirely a student-centric learning method that make the learning environment more interesting, interactive, active self-reliable and self-responsible. Language needs to be

understood properly by anyone so that this study brings out the way for the better understanding because of the correlation of the previous experience. The steps that are followed here, stimulates the learner to empower language proficiency especially in writing skills. Basically, for writing skills learners should use their previous experience so that this method paves a good path to utilize the opportunity on how the learners could connect existing experience with the previous ones.

Conclusion

This study touches upon the importance of written communication for tertiary level learners. So that, an approach called constructivist approach is proposed with the cognitive constructivist method. Tasks were framed for the enhancement of the learners and it provides a lot opportunity to use their previous experience as per the proposed method to develop the written efficiency.

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<u>**Tips for Teachers**</u>

Academic Writing: Theory & Practice (Recent books)

Writing Scientific Papers in English Successfully Ethel Schuster Editor, Haim Levkowitz Editor, Osvaldo N. Oliveira Jr Editor (2014)

Academic Writing in a Global Context Theresa Lillis, Mary Jane Curry (2010|

Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article:
Howard S. Becker, Pamela Richards (2007|

Back to the Lake: A Reader and Guide Thomas Cooley (2017)

English for Academic Study: Extended Writing & Research Skills -John Slaght Joan McCormack (2012)

Academic writing: A handbook for international studentsS Bailey - 2014

The semi-periphery of academic writing: Discourses, communities and practices K Bennett 2014 **Great Writing 3. From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays** Keith S. Folse, Elena Vestri Solomon, David Clabeaux2019

The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students Stephen Bailey 2015

Steps to Writing Well Jean Wyrick 2016

Embrace Mindfulness by Enhancing Language Competencies: The Art of Teaching Mindfulness through English Language Classes

Usha Krishnan
Educationist & Life Coach
Formerly Asst. Professor in Education, M.I.T Group of Institutions, Pune
usharika89@gmail.com

Abstract

English being the universal language of communication can reach more effectively to the students when it is taught through activities, real life situations, and also by giving them many occasions for interactions such as interaction with the self, peer to peer and between the teacher and the student. It has been proven that learning English through communication helps students to carve a niche for themselves in each and every path of their journey in life during their interactions with others. The present paper talks about the role of a firm background in the English classes using mindfulness to mould a student's personality to think independently, to be creative in the world of words and letters, to share their ideas with their peers, to express their views boldly, and to be fluent in their expression.

Introduction

"Language is the dress of thoughts" observed the 18th century English writer, Samuel Johnson. English classes are the suitable places for the students to express their thoughts in a beautiful manner with all its adornments of English. English language, which is widely used all over the world and by the multitude of people here is considered the lingua franca, a common language that connects people across the world, and an international language of communication also. Getting a competent hold over English language is very important for students as it broadens their visions, increases their level of emotional quotient, and promises them opportunities to excel in their profession. English is a global language. A language has no existence if it is not being used by people. "Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users" (Crystal, 2012, p.7). Hence it is the duty of the teacher to create occasions for the students to use English mindfully in real life situations going through real life experience. A language teacher has a vital role in motivating the students by developing in them a growth mindset in getting acquainted with English, to keep instore a special affinity towards learning English with passion and thus to accomplish a commendable mastery in using English effectively in their everyday life. According to Paul Nation (2014), in order to learn any foreign language, we need to focus on the four strands of learning and it is called the principle of four strands i.e., learning from meaning focused input (listening & reading), learning from meaning focused output (speaking & writing), language focused learning (studying pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar) and fluency development (getting good at what one already knows).

"A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge and wisdom." Ever Garrison

A teacher shall effectively and strategically plan their language classes to incorporate various activities so as to create a genuine interest and an ardent desire in the students for accomplishing an appreciable command over English. Through the various classroom situations given in the English language classes, the students get well equipped to be mindful. Being mindful, opens the avenues for them to embrace the true essence of mindfulness, an essential skill to survive challenges.

Mindfulness

Kabat-Zinn has defined mindfulness as "the awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally" (Mindful Communications, 2021).

In other words, mindfulness is the state of being aware about the present. It is a conscious effort to get an awareness of our surrounding environment, feelings, thoughts and observations, through a gentle nurturing lens. Mindfulness teaches us to observe what is happening around, and to be non-judgemental about them. To be in the present, is the core message one can get from the state of mindfulness (Mindful Staff, 2020). Mindfulness if practised in the classrooms, will help the students to boost their creative potentials. It also strengthens their power of concentration, flexibility and awareness. A pleasant state of emotional wellbeing which will indirectly lead to physical wellbeing is a reward for us from including classroom activities related to mindfulness in the curriculum, which is no doubt, the need of the hour. Being mindful, will enhance the self-esteem of the students and their perspectives on life itself would be restructured through the mindfulness practice. It reduces stress and enhances the performance of the students. It helps them to gain more insights about the present and to develop their observation skills along with being empathetic towards others and to be aware about others' feelings. Thus, in one way being mindful will inculcate good values in the students and help them to be with a high self-esteem.

As Language and Literature are closely related to the portrayal of life, including mindfulness related activities and assignments in English language teaching classes would be commendable. This article presents some strategies that can be used in English classes to make the students practice mindfulness along with the ability to express well, speak fluently and write well in English. Thus, a kind of holistic development can be achieved by them through the English language classes.

Benefits of mindfulness strategies for students in the English classes:

Teaching English through mindfulness strategies and activities will help the students to deal with the anxiety and frustrations of not being able to cope with the language's accent, pronunciation, intonation and enunciation and to deal with the grammatical patterns. It will also help them to deal with the obstacles they face in being good at creative writing. In other words, to break the blocks or barriers in learning English, the strategies including mindfulness opportunities used in classrooms would be instrumental (TRVST, 2020).

Thus, mindfulness can help students to perform well in the language activities, to ease out their tension about dealing with another language along with their native language.

As the key word in mindfulness is 'awareness of the present', in English language classes, while doing the activities assigned, students will get an opportunity to be aware about their own proficiency in English. They would be encouraged to find the answers for the questions that arise in their mind: why am I using this particular word here in my answer? Why am I not using the synonymous word? How can I create impressive sentences and expressions in English and how can I speak English with an ease and a commendable array of beautiful words used in a memorable style followed? The well-chosen prose, poems and dramas used in the books would make them to be mindful on why they want to improve English, how to go about it and create a strong bond between English and their parental language and thus to stay present and focused.

Awareness about the typical characteristics in its grammar, words, pronunciation and in the rhythm of articulation are the essence of learning any language. If a child gets the opportunity to be aware of the features of English and also on observing the world around through the so thoughtfully designed activities and writing assignments on what is happening around, automatically the child gets the practice to be mindful in life. They get the technique of mastering the 'living in the moment' experience and this will help the child to cope well with the present, if they come across any changes and challenges in their everyday life.

Some strategies that can be used in English classes to enhance Mindfulness in Students:
Learning a language effectively happens when there are situations in front of the students; the real-life situations which are deliberately created as well as which are there for incidental learning. One such activity is the Ten-Minute writing activity. In this, the students are at liberty to choose any easy a topic that they are interested to write about. They have to maintain the time limit of ten minutes fixed and to write what all ideas that come to their mind within those ten minutes' time. At the end of exactly ten minutes, they have to count the number of words they could write and save it in a graph. Give this ten-minute activity two or three times in a week for them. This is a good activity to improve the students' fluency in writing and confidence in expressing their ideas and it improves their mindfulness also as they have to be aware of those 10 minutes available to them while doing this activity.

Another interesting activity is the Linked Skill activity. It is one of the most useful activities for language learning. It is an activity with the same content material is linked to practise three different skills. For example students have to read a passage, listen to the same passage and they have to also write a few sentences about the passage. Making the students familiar with the same content in a repeated manner, reinforces the content and naturally helps them to be mindful on the related. Simultaneously, this activity helps them develop their fluency in English and helps them comprehend better.

Some other interesting activities that can promote mindfulness and English language competencies in the students are as given below.

1. LSRW Skills - Language classes mainly focus on the development of the four skills in students - the LSRW Skills - the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Most of the classroom activities and assignments based on these four skills certainly create mindfulness in students. Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken words. This skill improves the students' ability to focus on a particular material presented to them, to understand the gist of it, to remember the main points from that, to remember the information shared and then to evaluate the relevance of the matter by seeing what is needed and what is to be avoided. Speaking is defined as "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, and receiving and processing information" (Brown, 1994; Burns and Joyce, 1997). Speaking can be effective and impressive only when the speaker is able to know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and to understand when to use them, why to use them, how to use them and in what ways to use them, to express their ideas clearly. Reading "is an interactive process in which the reader's prior knowledge of the world interacts with the message conveyed directly or indirectly by the text" (Smith, 1995). Reading is an interactive process between the mind of the reader and the active engagement between the reader and the text, to decode, interpret and to grasp the main idea conveyed. While reading a paragraph, students are completely in sync with the information given and at the same time they develop their skill of being mindful. Writing skills help the students to improve their language competencies through putting their thoughts and ideas into meaningful words and elaborate them into meaningful messages. "Writing is conveying information or expression of original ideas in a consecutive way in the new language" Rivers (1981). Elbow (1973) says that "writing is a two-step process. The first process is figuring out the meaning and the second process is putting the meaning into language." Urquhart and McIver (2005) state that "writing is a recursive process, which means students revise throughout the process, frequently moving back and forth among the stages." While practising a writing task in the class, the students are going through a thoughtful process of putting their ideas into words, to convey

their ideas meaningfully as per the definitions given above. Students get an opportunity to think freely, to express their ideas in black and white, and to be aware and well-focused during this process. By practising these skills, they get well equipped to overcome the barriers of learning English as a new language and also become aware of where to focus more and how to improve themselves to get a good command over English. Learning English through LSRW skills developing activities, would make the students aware of the need of English in the present scenario as well.

2. Ven Diagram Activity – This is a pair activity that can also be conducted as a small group activity with four students in one group. Two circles intersecting are drawn and students have to sit together to jot down their common interests, talents, tastes and the like in the intersecting space of the two circles. Whatever is common for them as per the cue words given by the teacher, can be written in the shared place in the Ven diagram. This activity will make them think about what is in front of them as a reality and to accept that. Mindfulness also teaches us the same.

3. Gratitude Journal - Writing one post in the Gratitude Journal can be given as a fortnightly activity in English classes, where students are given some time to write about all the events that took place in the past two weeks that they are thankful for. Practicing this activity regularly every two weeks would make the students aware and observe the activities that take place around them, and help them to be mindful. At the same time, the students also express what they see and think about, in the journal, which makes them confident about their writing skills eventually.

4. Interactive Notebook - Students of any age from Primary to Higher Secondary classes can be encouraged to maintain an Interactive Notebook with them in which they have to record their observations as per the cue words given by the teacher. For example, they can be given a topic such as "About Myself " to begin with and as per the levels of the classes, the difficulty level and the word limit can be increased. This way, the students are getting an opportunity to have Self Reflection, and also to be aware of their feelings, habits and emotions. This activity will help them "to accept things non judgementally' which is again a benefit of being mindful. Mindfulness also stands for acceptance.

5. Focusing on Nature - To pay attention to nature and to acknowledge the countless blessings from it, as there is nothing required than getting an opportunity to observe it and to express the feelings and thankfulness to nature, through our own words. An English classroom is the right platform for students to unleash their creativity through their words to nature, by talking about their perspectives on nature, by writing small poems or having discussion on nature .

6. A Stroll in the Forest – Students can be asked to imagine taking a stroll in the forest and have conversations with each living and non-living organism there. Later they can be given creative writing tasks or the activity can be extended as dramatization, roleplay, extempore speech, poster presentation followed by discussion, debate or panel discussion. Thus, in this activity, mindfulness can also be brought in along with enhancement of creativity and imagination.

7. Mindful Walk – This is an interesting activity that can be given to higher classes. Students are asked to deliberate on what is happening around them. Through such mental awareness, they can practise journaling their awareness.

8. Listening activities - All the different types of listening activities that can be used in language classes right from listening to the audio scripts or watching relevant videos would improve the students' English listening and comprehending skills. Listening to TedTalk, News Broadcasts and Podcasts, summarising what they just heard in their own words and getting engaged in a discussion with the whole class is another

wonderful exercise for the students to inculcate the attitude of mindfulness.

9. 5-4-3-2-1 - The famous Mindfulness strategy in which one has to focus on 5 things one can see, 4 things one can touch, 3 things one can hear, 2 things one can smell and 1 thing one can taste can be conducted as a highly creative activity in language classes. Here, after practising the activity, the students can write more about each of them or can share their thoughts with the whole class. This activity can be extended as different types of learning practises from simple ones to some more thought provoking and expressive ones, as per the levels of the students.

10. Meditative Listening -Any soulful music can be played in the class and students can be encouraged to write what all they imagine and think while listening to the music. Any soothing instrumental music with themes like Nature, or on the Five elements of Nature like Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space can also be played in the class.

In this paper we saw that embracing Mindfulness, a state of mind which involves acceptance, acknowledgement, realisation and close observation of things happening in our surroundings, and being in the present, paying attention to one's own thoughts and feelings without judging them would always be acceptable in English language classes, as it encourages the students to enhance their proficiency in English as well as to empower themselves. On practising mindfulness, one can get the power within to live in the present with proper emotional and social intelligence. Practising mindfulness helps us to create our own space to think and to make decisions. Mindfulness sparks innovation in our mind, and thus the students can retain a thirst for the quest of excellence, whenever they are dealing with any mindfulness associated activities in an English language class.

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Factors Affecting Students' Public Speaking Skills

Dr. T. Sunand Emmanuel
Assistant Professor in English, H&SS
Vasavi College of Engineering (A), Hyderabad-31
sunandt@yahoo.com

Abstract

Why are students so afraid of public speaking when opportunities are given to them? What prevents our students from volunteering to speak with eagerness and interest? What are the factors that inhibit our students from participating in public speaking? Is it just fear of facing the audience? Is it the fear of being judged? Is it the fear of being exposed to the audience as somebody who does not know anything about topic? Is it the fear of being ridiculed? Or does public speaking apprehension begin the moment a student's name is called out? Why do most students show unwillingness to come in front of the class, stand on the dais and enjoy the public speaking activity? One of the most important goals of language teaching is to help our students become fluent in English. They must become communicatively competent and handle varied types of situations reasonably well with the requisite communicative competence. As teachers, we want our students to develop confidence, speak on topics given to them. We expect them to speak confidently with adequate knowledge and convincing ability. We want our students interact well, speak well, and able to handle every day communicative situations with the requisite skill sets. This paper discusses the factors that affect public speaking skills of students and attempts to suggest some solutions through experimental research.

Key words: Public speaking, apprehension, competence, knowledge, effectiveness, motivational strategies.

Introduction

"In an orator, the acuteness of the logicians, the wisdom of the philosophers, the language almost of poetry, the memory of lawyers, the voice of tragedians, the gesture almost of the best actors, is required. Nothing, therefore, is more rarely found among mankind than a consummate orator." ---- **Cicero**

In the context of language teaching, one of the best things when it comes to classroom learning is when teachers are happy with their students' performance. However, what is performance? We are, of course, talking about language performance. The goal of teachers is to help their students improve their communication competence. Teachers are happy when their students' writing, speaking, reading, and listening skills range from good to remarkable. This is the ideal picture. How far this gets materialized is up to every teacher, his/her innovative teaching methodologies based on their respective literature review. One of the most intriguing things in life is why human beings are unable to achieve their full potential and achieve their goals. Does fear inhibit people from achieving goals? Are human beings genetically predisposed to do some things and not do other things? For example, some students are very friendly and get along with others. Whereas, some students are too shy to come forward to speak or express themselves. This paper tries to understand why students are so apprehensive about public speaking. The thought of public speaking scares students and leaves some of them with scars. Public speaking is an activity students have shunned, have been non-committal, and always wanted 'others' to go on to the dais to speak. Why do most people avoid public speaking? Why do most people want 'others' to take part in public speaking, but not themselves? Why do students get nervous? Why do they experience memory loss? In spite of reading and preparing fairly well, why do they still say they 'forgot' what they wanted to speak in front of the class?

Methodology: With the above unresolved questions in mind, the teacher researcher approached this activity with a more research-oriented objective. Since these questions took on a research-oriented dimension, this time, the

teacher researcher discussed the importance of public speaking with the students in the class. The benefits of public speaking for self and others were also explained.

Classroom discussion: Public speaking allows people to let their ideas be known to others. It is through public speaking that one's career prospects can increase. Public speaking helps people to become more confident, dynamic, and knowledgeable. To be able to speak in front of an audience, one needs to prepare a lot. The following steps need to be taken into cognisance when it comes to public speaking:

1. Plan
2. Prepare
3. Practice
4. Perform

The students were informed that public speaking is one of the best skills that can be acquired in one's professional life. A good public speaker possesses self-confidence. However, students gain self-confidence when they narrow down the scope of their talk, effectively read material pertaining to that topic, make notes, reflect on what they have studied. Further, they must come up with their own ideas apart from what others have said on that particular topic. During the session, the following steps were explained.

Students responded positively to the steps enunciated by the researcher. The next day, in the class, students were informed that there would be a public speaking session. Anyone interested could speak. There would be no element of force. That means, nobody would be asked to speak by being called out by their roll numbers or names. Freedom would be given to the class. The students could speak on the topics they chose on the previous day.

Despite the encouragement, and waiting for a while, no student came forward to speak.

At this time, the teacher researcher encouraged the students once again to take public speaking seriously. They were informed that they had to speak sooner or later in life. In fact, they were told that this would be an item for assessment in the exam very soon. They were once again given some more time to prepare and speak. Still, there was no response from the 60 students.

Here, the teacher researcher in fact informed the students that they could take some more time to speak. They were once again given 10 minutes more to speak. They could speak with their friends and gather ideas before going on to the dais. They could 'Google' the topic and note down the main points on a piece of paper or in a notebook. They were further told that they could speak by bringing the notebook along with them in which they noted down the main points. Despite all these measures, a majority of the students could not utilize the opportunity to give a speech. Almost 50-55 students did not utilize the opportunity despite being given so much encouragement.

In the next step, the teacher researcher played some good speeches from YouTube channel. Students were asked to watch those speeches. Two to three speeches were played. The whole class watched these speeches. After this, the teacher researcher asked some students whom he knew had extremely good communication skills to speak on their chosen topics. These students were amiable and confident. Further, they came from good English medium schools where public speaking was a regular norm. The teacher researcher then asked them if they would come and speak on the dais. They requested the teacher to give them some time to prepare. And after five minutes, these chosen students went on to the dais to speak one after another, they and spoke almost without any inhibitions.

After this activity was over, the teacher researcher then called some students specifically to come on to the dais to speak. With a bit of reluctance, they finally seized the opportunity to speak. At this point, the following qualities were observed:

1. Some students began on a confident note but stopped abruptly.
2. Some students went on to the dais, but did not do public speaking.
3. Some students did not follow any rules of public speaking.
4. Some students finished the topic in just 40 seconds.
5. No discourse markers/linkers/signposts

were used.

Findings: In this research study, the teacher found some interesting aspects in students who spoke well, and students who did not speak optimally. What were the qualities of these competent public speakers? Some of the things observed by the author in these students were as follows:

1. Fluency in language.
2. Accuracy in language.
3. Knowledge of the topic.
4. Self-confidence.
5. Desire to share their knowledge with their classmates.
6. Enjoying the act of public speaking.
7. Speaking to share more than an act of self-aggrandisement
8. Using the occasion to test their own self-confidence levels.
9. Using the occasion to test their own competence in public speaking.
10. Openness to feedback despite speaking very competently.

Recommendations: Public speaking is an activity/skill that most students would generally avoid, unless it is made mandatory from an examination point of view. Given a chance, the students would rather participate in group discussions, role plays, or a debate, but not in public speaking.

The following are the recommendations based on the study done:

1. Teachers must sensitize the students about the importance of public speaking skill.
2. Students need to be informed that public speaking is not an impossible skill. Anybody can become a good public speaker by reading, researching, planning and practicing.
3. Sufficient time should be given to students to prepare.
4. They should not be made to feel that if they do not speak well, they are failures in life.
5. Students competent in the art of public speaking could be used as role models by the teacher.
6. These students could be asked to speak first for the benefit of others.
7. The teacher could allot the topics to the students or by discussing with them.

8. Students should be encouraged to take part in public speaking.
9. Public speaking exercise should be a regular and frequent activity in classroom teaching-learning process.
10. Students should be encouraged to discuss with one another on topics of their choice.
11. They should be encouraged to record their own voices or practise in front of their friends before speaking in front of their classmates in a formal situation.
12. They should be also informed that inability to speak in front of their classmates in a formal situation is not a failure. They need not be guilty or embarrassed.
13. They need to be given sufficient motivation to speak. Even moderate efforts on their part should be complimented.
14. Speeches of great personalities could be played as a motivational exercise.
15. Students who have an inherent flair to speak could be used a role models for the rest of the class.

It may be noted that public speaking is not as difficult an exercise as is imagined. It is just like another skill that people can master with practice and commitment. A passion for public speaking should be inculcated by the teacher in the students. Every small step taken by the students should be whole heartedly encouraged by the teacher as well as the class. Mutual encouragement can go a long way in helping students improve their public speaking skills. Most importantly, it must be noted that like any skilled activity, public speaking requires a lot of preparation on the part of the students. It requires a lot of planning, preparing, practicing, and finally performing when it comes to public speaking. Hence, students should be guided to explore resources in finding the right topic to choose. From the choice of the topic to planning, preparing, practicing, and performing, the teachers must give all the support and encouragement that students need. Students will always be thankful to teachers for their encouragement. Note making skills, gathering important points on the chosen topic should be taught to the students. All these steps can go a long way in helping students learn the art of

public speaking till it becomes an activity where students themselves can come on to the dais of their own volition to speak on topics of their own choice or topics given by the teacher.

Conclusions

This study showed that many students have public speaking apprehension. They were willing to participate in group activities but not in public speaking. Public speaking was least on their agenda in the classroom. Public speaking essentially involves one person standing in front of an audience. This was a scary proposition to them. Out of 60 students, hardly 5-10 students responded positively to the idea of doing public speaking in front of a class. They had no apprehensions, no uneasiness. They had self-confidence. These students used the occasion to try how well they could speak on topic. Their goal was not to impress the teacher or their classmates but to share their knowledge (Bodie, 2009). It was the thrill of public speaking that drove them to the dais to speak. In their view, trying and failing at public speaking is better than not speaking at all when given an opportunity by the teacher!

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Obituary

Prof. CN Viswanathan

After retiring from Puducherry UT government service as Lecturer in English at NettappakkamKambar Govt. HSS in 2006, Mr. CN Viswanathan worked as Assistant Professor of English at Cooperative Arts College, Mahe --his native place. . During his thirty-three year-long teaching career, he had worked in several schools in Mahe and Puducherry. He was associated with ELTIF for more than a decade and was a member of the Executive Committee of ELTIF.

As a teacher of English, he was a learner of English, as well—always trying to grasp whatever new came across at workshops and conferences. While in service, as part of his self-motivated professional improvement, CNV did the PGCTE and PGDTE courses of the then CIEFL Hyderabad, through distance mode. He also obtained an MEd. Degree for enriching his professional competence. He had done certificate and diploma courses in French and possessed basic qualifications in Hindi, too—thus, a master of five languages: Malayalam, Tamil, English, French and Hindi.

CNV received the Best Censor award (Silver Medel) from the President of India in 2001 and the Hon. Education Minister's Regional Award from the Lt. Governor of Pududcherry in 2003.

Growing beyond the four walls of classrooms, CN Viswanathan had deep-rooted connections with several charitable and social organizations, such as Viswa Sanathana Vedanta Trust Trivandrum (Patron), Stage Artists' Association Mahe (Executive Council Member) etc. He was the founder member and later the secretary of Alliance Franciase, Mahe. As a resource person of ELTIF he had engaged many sessions for students in remote villages (in spite of some ailments), and for teachers in and around Mahe. His simplicity and friendly approach made him popular among students and co-workers.

ELTIF pays its respectful homage to his dedicated, selfless services.

Bhagesh VC, Lecturer (English)
CE Bharathan Govt. Hr. Sec School, Mahe (Puducherry)

Strategies to Enhance the Word Power of Tertiary Level Students

R. Ramya Sri
Research Scholar
K S Rangasamy College of Arts
& Science, Tiruchengode.

Dr. V. Radhakrishnan
Associate Professor & Head
K S Rangasamy College of Arts
& Science, Tiruchengode.

Abstract

In many professional environments, the English language has become an essential element. In the language learning process, vocabulary plays a major role in connecting ideas and making meaningful sentences in appropriate situations. Knowing words will not only enable learners to meet the proficiency level in any language but learning to use it in appropriate place will also help them to use it better. One of the requirements of written communication is to use suitable vocabulary in the context to make it effective. For this study, relevant tasks are framed to gain and use words while producing a text. Since, writing is a cognitive skill, keeping a good word stock is significant for learners. Considering this background, the present study reflects the perspectives of cognitive learning concepts in enhancing the writing skills of the tertiary level learners.

Keywords: vocabulary, productive skill, writing skill, Cognitive approach

Introduction

Achieving proficiency in English language is very important for engineering graduates to perform well in academics and in professional life. However, students generally have difficulties in learning the language especially the productive skills like reading and writing. This study focuses only on the writing skills which is one of the most difficult skills of all. Writing is very difficult to master since it has various elements like, grammar, form, meaning, structure, punctuation, and most importantly vocabulary. Students, who do not learn to write well, can limit their academic, professional, and personal attainments. Writing skills is grounded in cognitive realm because it involves so many processes like planning, organizing, understanding, applying of ideas, and revising and editing. Rewriting and revising the text frequently will help the students to reach the target writing level (Kellogg, 2008). This shows that writing is a cognitive and metacognitive process (Flower & Hayes, 1984). Vocabulary plays a crucial role in developing writing skills.

It is not that students should know the words alone but they should know how to use it in appropriate places. It is the basic building block of any language. Therefore, second language learners should possess a good range of vocabulary if they have to master the language. Knowing the vocabulary includes aspects like its meaning, spelling, pronunciation, function of a word, degree of frequency, register, word associations. (Nation, 2001). Hence, students who come across problems when they write in a second language do not possess sufficient vocabulary knowledge (Raims, 1985). This paper tries to explore the influence of vocabulary in developing writing skills through cognitive approach. The paper also proposes effective tasks that can be employed in the classroom by English language teachers to train their students.

Literature Review

Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning. When one has sufficient vocabulary one can express their ideas easily. Without

words, intended meaning cannot be expressed. Researches in the field of vocabulary have focused on this area very recently and so many theories and approaches have been made available in the field of this research. Vocabulary influences all the four skills like reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Especially in writing, when producing a piece of text, one must choose appropriate words to convey the specific ideas. Language learning and vocabulary learning are reciprocal as knowledge about vocabulary helps to use language and usage of language helps to increase the vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001). Knowledge of vocabulary is not based on multitude of words rather it requires different types of knowledge about each word (Cremer, Dingshoff, de Beer and Schoonen, 2010). Johnson, Acevedo, and Mercado (2016) states that there is a positive association between the productive knowledge of high-frequency word-families and the L2 writing performance. Vocabulary learning strategy plays a major role in developing language acquisition is stated as learning of vocabularies enhances the process of acquisition (Ahmed, 2017). Mitchell & Myles (2004) point that in language acquisition process, paying attention to vocabulary learning is important. Knowledge about vocabularies is fundamental to writing comprehension (Nagy, 1981). In the process of vocabulary development, the forthcoming steps like cognitive, metacognitive, memory and activation strategies are involved (Gu and Johnson, 1996). In language acquisition process, learners should understand their cognitive ability and memory methods (Weintraub & Amy, 2015). Chang et.al., (2021) quote American psychologist Holston to state that the process of cognition is thinking and the study of language involves cognitive problems.

Teaching Framework

Task:1 Scrambled words

Specific theme like sports, science, movie, name of a famous person and invention based scrambled words will be given to identify correct word and then the learners can be made to write a sentence based on each word to retain it for a long-term memory.

Task:2 Identification of noun/verb

A paragraph will be given to identify nouns and verbs. After locating the word classes students can be asked to create sentences on their own.

### Task: 3 Find Out Adjectives from Descriptive Passage

A descriptive passage will be given to students to locate appropriate adjectives. The objective of this activity is to make learners familiar with adjectives.

Task:4 Writing Task

The students will be given writing tasks based on the specific theme which has been already chosen for preparing the previous tasks. This helps the students to reflect on the cognitive skills.

Methodology

Fig.1. Process of Word Stock and Reflection
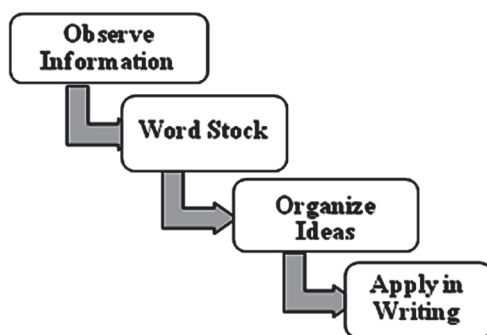
Production is a process of reflection thus, in language learning writing is a product that needs to be reflected in the form of passages with the help of appropriate words in context. Teaching tasks were framed to get exposure towards different types of words and its uses in the process of language acquisition. From the tasks students have to observe the usages of words and get the inner contextual understanding of the words. With this activity, students also get a chance to learn words in context. They can use it further by having them as a word stock. Later, collecting those words and making as stock learners should organize the ideas and apply it in the writing skills. Students can be asked to write passages by employing the words that they have learnt. Teachers should test the cognitive ability of the learners by giving descriptive tests.

Discussion: Tasks and methodology are relevant to enhance the knowledge in vocabulary. Tasks that are framed to engage students in language classroom at the same time, it is learner-centric. If the teacher uses these tasks in the right way towards the development of vocabulary learning process, they can succeed in paragraph development. This method improves the word stock, students' ability to understand to use in correct context, increases the long-term memory, enhance cognitive ability in writing and understand the appropriate meaning of words. Make the learning ambience more interesting and more apt for second language learners at the tertiary level learners to retain and reflect words in writing. On the whole, this proposed method conceptualizes the learning by observing information, analyzing the inner meaning in context. While organizing ideas students get the chance to reconstruct the information with logical connection and get back the words from the memory to apply in writing by incorporating word retention in the cognitive learning.

Conclusion : The researcher touches upon the cognitive perspectives in language acquisition especially with special focus on developing vocabulary to enhance writing skills. Cognition based tasks were framed and a suitable methodology like process of word stock and reflection is proposed. Overall, as seen in the study, it is helpful to apply words with cognitive perspectives in the writing process.

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English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 2 (6th October 2021)

Creative and Critical Thinking through Pictures

Resource Person:
Dr. Gururaj. S
Former faculty at RIESI
Bangalore
guru.tsgr@gmail.com

Report by:
Dr. A Devika
HSST (English) Moothedath HSS
Taliparamba, Kannur
devika.rdh@gmail.com

Educators, among them materials developers, have always tried to include as many pictures as possible, in readers and practice books, realizing the strength of visual effect in conceptualization and memorization—both are integral parts of primary learning stage. Teacher beliefs about the potentials of pictures too promoted faster learning—something that needed a long description in the class could get compressed into a picture.

But, the function of this conventional treatment of pictures usually was aimed at, as stated earlier, faster conceptualization and easier memorization. Later, pictures especially in language practice books promoted creative thinking—different colours for flowers, whereas limited set of colours for leaves in the child's mind, later got reflected in her realistic drawings and paintings. Creative thinking, thus was enhanced.

Dr. Gururaj convincingly argues through his one-hour long workshop presentation that a third function, may be more important than the first two, can be fruitfully fulfilled, especially in the later stages of education. He demonstrates how critical thinking can be promoted using pictures—black and white, and colured ones. Dr Gururaj introduces the topic 'Creative and Critical Thinking through Pictures' on a workshop (one among a series) organized by ELTIF. Thinking critically and seeing things from different angles, students become more open minded and empathetic. Critical thinking involves reflection and analysis of ideas. Dr. Gururaj finds pictures as an effective source in providing meaningful context and an opportunity of interaction at all levels. The session focuses on a few interesting ways of exploring pictures to foster creativity and critical thinking among the participants.
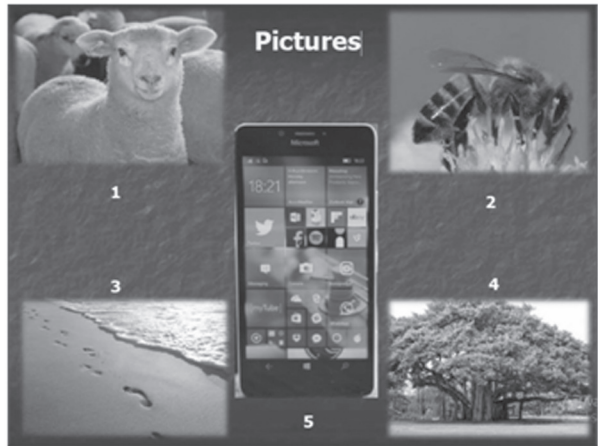
Activity 1
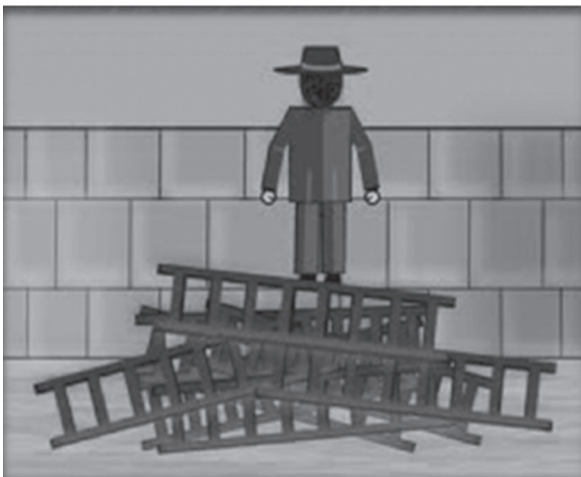
As the first activity, theresource person presents a picture in which several ladders are placed on the floor. A person stands behind a big wall. He is expected to climb over the wall using the easiest resource provided. Multiple options may prove a bane rather than a boon, sometimes. If there is only one option, you solve the problem the stereotyped way. But, if there are multiple options you are loaded with responsibilities and risks. Which one is the best? Why not the other? Will I be regretting later? Will I be blamed for opting for this one? Should I take risk? Only critical thinking alone can save you from the predicament of having too many ladders. Your complacency may lead you throughout your life carrying just one ladder for all heights to reach.
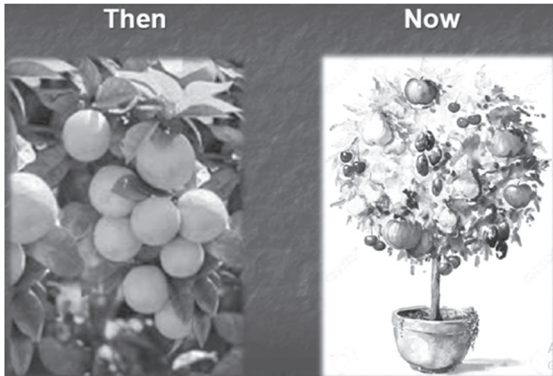
Activity 2

A collage of five pictures is presented on the screen and the participants are asked to explain what each picture is, how it is related to others and the reasons they couldsuggest for their response.

| No.	Who do you relate it to?	Reason	Which place do you relate it to	Reason
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Activity 3

A The first picture displays a bunch of oranges on a branch. The second picture presents a variety of fruits on a single tree. The participants are expected to present the theme behind this exposure. The first refers to an olden time. There weren't choices whether one likes or not, he/she is expected to consume. The second one a variety of choice is given;a wide choice. One can choose whichever he/she likes. The interpretations may vary based on the individual differences.

Activity 4

W Question words	Focus	H Questions	Focus
What	Things/Content	How	Process
Where	Place	How many	Countable
When	Time	How much	Uncountable
Which	Specific	How long	Duration
Who	Person	How far	Distance / Extent
Whose	Belonging	How often	Frequency
Whom (Who... to?)	Person		
Why	Reason		

The table presents a number of words to ask questions .The speaker wants to convince the participants on what ground each question word is to be used.

45
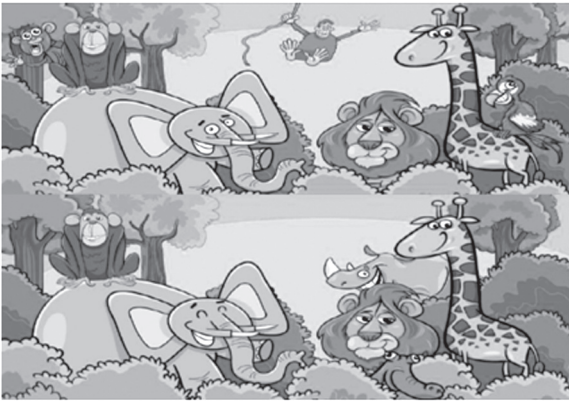
Activity 5

The table presents a number of words to ask questions .The speaker wants to convince the participants on what ground each question word is to be used.

Activity 6

Participants are asked to prepare a list of words that can be written on the basis of the things provided on the screen. A gift was offered to the participant, who finds maximum number of words, based on the things seen in the picture. It was really encouraging for the participants.

Activity 7

Participants are asked to compare and contrast, how the two pictures are related to one another, but retaining a common theme to both.
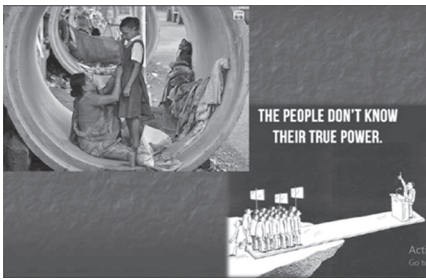
Activity 8

Certain pictures provide opportunities for higher order socialization—for example, how the expanded and contracted chest measurements are going to decide one's career prospects. "Objects appearing on the screen may be larger than life!" Is it a small member or a big one of the cat family

Activity 9

Certain pictures provide opportunities for higher order socialization—for example, how the expanded and contracted chest measurements are going to decide one's career prospects. "Objects appearing on the screen may be larger than life!" Is it a small member or a big one of the cat family
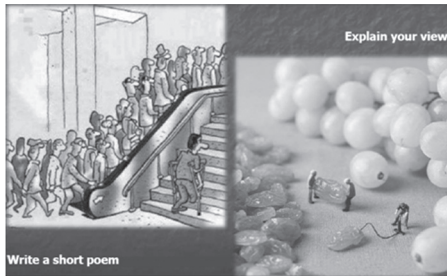

Activity 10

The picture shows a wooden plank. On one side of the plank, a crowd, and on the other side, a man speaking. A dig at Indian democracy?

Activity 11

How does social justice work in Indian democracy? Doubt? Have a look at the disadvantaged man.

The speaker shows the picture to the participants and asks to write a short poem based on the theme. Also they were asked to explain their view about the picture shown.

Activity 12

Four pictures are shown and participants are asked to sequence them logically and also to give an explanation for the reason behind sequencing.

Activity 13

In order to find the difference between teaching and learning, the facilitator displayed two pictures. The speaker wanted to elicit the responses from the participants. On the whole, the session was entirely interactive. Almost all the participants contributed their part with discussions and interpretations. Dr. Gururaj proved that any teacher can make the class lively and interesting through classroom interaction.

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 3 ((3rd November 2021)

Classroom Management and Communication

Resource Person:
Dr. K. Padmini Shankar
Professor, EFL University,
Hyderabad
padminishankar@efluniversity.ac.in

Report by:
Rathamany. K
Former PGT (English) Syrian Jacobite
Public School, Thiruvalla, Kerala
rathakukku@gmail.com

The third workshop in the English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP) series organized by ELTIF was on 'Classroom Management and Communication' led by Dr. Padmini Shankar, Professor, EFLUniversity Hyderabad. It was a virtual treat for both eyes and ears, apart from its enriching content. Radio type classes of the initial stages of online classes have given way to lively online classroom interaction ensuring active participation of all the participants. Combined effort makes a concert grand; so is the role of the participants and the teacher in the classroom. Dr. Padmini, in her session , has rightly pinned this message. The session was a true demonstration on how teachers can overcome the limitations of online classes, and make the language class perhaps more learner-engaged and learner-oriented.

The workshop focused on pertinent classroom management issues such as seating arrangement, grouping learners, handling critical moments, giving instructions, garnering learner attention, using gestures, capitalizing on the physical classroom environment, etc. Dr.Padmini defined classroom management as organizing the resources, pupils and helpers to make teaching and learning in an efficient and safe manner. She emphasized the need to make the classroom a psychologically safe place; create a bond between students and teacher and among themselves to remove their inhibition.

Positive classroom environment requires integration of multiple skills and techniques which are the prerogative of a teacher. She sought the attention of participants to a host of essential qualities for teacher empowerment. A teacher patiently listens to his/her students, shows respect, gives clear and positive feedback, inspires confidence,and trusts people.

The teacher ispatient, by and large, authentically her/himself, does not complicate things unnecessarily, is well-organised, is honest, is approachable, is enthusiastic and inspires enthusiasm, can be authoritative without being distant etc. to create the said environment, and has a good sense of humour, The resource personraised queries whether these qualities are' natural' or can be 'nurtured'. The participants responded saying that some were natural, inborn; whereas some others could be nurtured. She complimented them for their bubbling enthusiasm which would generate a positive atmosphere conducive for learning.

Handling critical situations is another impediment in creating a congenial atmosphere. She placed four such situations on screen to lay a platform for discussion. What will you do if…
a) a student says 'I don't want to do this exercise'.
b) an activity of 5 minutes covered 20 minutes and still lags. Something should be done before the lesson ends in 10 minutes.
c) an activity that demands change of pupils' position creates chaos.
d) students are working in groups of three. Two groups have finished the task assigned and are looking bored. The other groups still struggle to finish.

The discussion churned out certain solutions for the above situations. The teacher has to identify the real reason, analyse the problem (whether the task is too easy/difficult, improper selection of group members, etc.) and give suit able suggestions or support to get it cleared. 'How can we decide what is the best to do?' was another task she assigned to the partcipants. Her screen shared a long list of questions out of which they had to pick out three that they would consider the best before deciding their options. They were:

a) What is the aim of this activity?
b) What is the aim of this whole lesson?
c) Is what the learners are doing useful?
d) What is hindering the effectiveness of what are we doing?
e) What have I planned to do?
f) What would be the best thing to do?
g) Is it time for a change of mood or pace?
h) Are we using tmie efficiently?
i) How do the students feel?
j) What are the possible outcomes of my doing something?

Doubtless to say, her objective was to evoke out the best in the teachers.

Her observation on the darker side also finds a place here under the title 'Any other possibilities?' where she mentions two remarkable points to ponder.

a) I don't know any other options.
b) I know some other options, but I am avoiding them because they are difficult or trouble some or nerve wracking.

Dr. Padmini presented three types of classroom (seating) arrangement such as

a) students in two opposite rows and teacher in the middle,
b) students form a circle where teacher is also a part,
c) students sitting in horse-shoe form and teacher facing them in the front.

The participants rightly selected the horse-shoe type because it facilitates more interaction, more learning experience and helps breaking the learners' inhibition to talk to the teacher. Here, she said, the teacher gives a message - 'effective filter'- which helps creating a good rapport between the teacher and the pupils.

She further displayed different ways of grouping the students for classroom activities like pairs, enemy corners, opposing teams, face to face/ back to back, panel, public meeting, buzz groups (people change groups occasionally), wheels(the outer wheel can move round, changing pairings), etc. She prompted the participants to bring out the teaching objectives behind these groups .They opined that pairs can be used for conducting interviews, opposing team for debate, buzz groups for reading activity, etc. She cautioned the teachers of selecting the task depending on the level of the members in a group and of ensuring the involvement of all the pupils in the given activities.

Creating interest in learning and retaining it throughout lays the foundation of a positive classroom. Instructions to students play a vital role as it can make or mar the positive environment. Dr. Padmini cautioned the teachers of giving multiple and elongated instructions, citing an example which set the ball for detailed deliberation. Their response was to:

a) get the learners' attention first
b) give the instructions step by step; avoid ambiguity
c) demonstrate the instruction; use the blackboard/involve students
d) simplify it; break into small sequences or chunks

The role of teacher is pivotal in pair and group activities to yield better results. She displayed four options – monitor discretely, vanish, monitor actively and participate – for the participants to choose the best one. Teachers discussed and presented their views. 'Monitor discretely', she said, means supply help if they need and ' monitor actively' means supply help even if they don't need. Teacher's role is not tailor made; act as the situation demands. Teacher works as a catalyst as too much interference/involvement will make the students disturbed.

In a learner-centered education system, tools and techniques have great significance. Gestures is one of the tools to help reduce teacher's talk time (TTT) and maximise learner participation. She encouraged consistent use of gestures to convey meaning more effectively but cautioned them of its various interpretations. Black/white board is another major tool which should be used judiciously. The position of the teacher by the side of the board – as shown on the screen – enables the teacher to use it and observe the pupils simultaneously. Proper utilization of the space on the board - as if items placed in a fridge or parking a car in the parking slot – improves the quality of teaching.

Teaching and learning become easier and more interesting with match-stick drawings. It is clear that the basic skill is to draw people in

some form, and stick people are in many ways better than detailed figures because they are quick to do so. Drawings like a boy climbing up a ladder, playing ball, riding bicycle, etc. can be used to teach vocabulary, preposition, action verbs, tense and so on. Teacher can:

a) add character by giving different shapes of head, fattening up the bodies a little, drawing in simple clothes, adding expression on the face and eyes.

b) add locations by a few simple props, for example ,a railway line and a platform makes a railway station; a table, knife and fork and a vase of flowers make a restaurant.

Interpretation of pictures enhances communicative skills as well as creativity and imagination. Pictures can be used for writing activities too. Teacher's skill in eliciting ideas from the learners and in accepting all their responses maximizes learner participation.

Teacher's Action Zone (TAZ) was the concluding part of the session. Sharing her screen, Dr. Padmini clearly illustrated how a teacher's action zone usually works (concentrating a section of pupils) and how the pupils feel, hence she urged the teachers to expand their actions and make all the students feel that they are in the action zone of the teacher. The resource person could win the hearts of the participants through her lively and interesting interactive session. Vote of thanks by one of the participants was a testimony to it. To conclude, the workshop was a special Diwali gift for the teachers encompassing excellent tools and techniques to create positive classroom environment to make teaching and learning a wonderful experience

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Report from the field

Walking an Extra Mile during the Pandemic

(Report of English Club Activities, 2021: VP Oriental High School, Chokli Thalassery)

P. K. Jayathilakan (Club Convener)

jayathilakapk@gmail.com

Miseries and calamities may come and go, but humanity has to continue—decided the Parent Teacher Association, Headmaster and teachers of VP Oriental HS Chokli. They decided to walk an extra mile during the pandemic—or, better to say, they together took the students of the school for an extra mile-walk during the Covid days.

The activities of the Club were inaugurated on 15th August 15th, 2021 at 7: 00 pm, by Mr. P. Mohanan, Kuthuparamba H.S.S, (SCERT - Text book Committee Member). P. Ramesh Babu, (PTA -President), presided over the function. Sri. P. P. Rameshan (H.M), welcomed the gathering. P. K. Jayathilakan, (Club Convener and Staff Secretary), V. C. Rajani, (SRG Convener- HS), Shijina, (SRG Convener - UP) and Misbha Fathima VI. A along with 68 members including students, parents and teachers were the participants of the inaugural function.

As a part of the club activity, English Enrichment Programme 2021-- for students was inaugurated on 26th August 2021 at 7: 30pm, by Dr. Bhaskaran Nair, (Former Professor, English Dept., Central University - Pondicherry). Sri. V. K. Sudhi (AEO - Chokli) presided over the session and the HM welcomed the gathering. P. K. Jayathilakan,V. P. Ramesh Babu and Aryananda IX. A –spoke on the occasion. And 62 members includingstudents, parents and teachers participated. Sri. P. V. Vasudevan Nambudiri Former Principal Govt. H.S.S Kuthuparamba & Academic Coordinator of ELTIF engaged the first session of the series.

Experienced resource persons of ELTIF handled the sessions from 26-8-21 onwards. Besides the office bearers of ELTIF such as T. A. Mathew, P. V. Vasudevan Nambudri, P. Mohanan, and M. Sahadevan, Sreejith of GUPS Mattanur, Sumesh of GVHSS Kasaragod, Hiran of Vengad South UPS engaged the sessions. Whether old or young, all RPs were keen on making their classes learner-engaged, and lively. Occasionally, parents were seen encouraging their children to unmute their devices and speak to the tutor.

English Language Teacher Empowerment Programme (ELTEP)
Report of Workshop 4 (1 Dec. 2021)

Theatre in / and the Language Classroom:
Samuel Beckett's *Act without Words* -II

Resource Person:
Dr. Prabhath Bhaskaran
Faculty, Dept.of Performing Arts
Pondicherry University
prabhathbharatha@gmail.com

Report by:
Dr. A.C. Sreehari
Faclaty, Dept of English
Payyannur Collage, Kannur, Kerala
acsreeharshan@gmail.com

Dr Prabhath Bhaskaran has been learning and teaching multiple forms in the development of the actor's autonomy in performance, most notably practicing Kalaripayatu since childhood and Butoh the Japanese dance theatre for more than a decade. Currently, Dr. Bhaskaran is based in Japan, where he works exclusively with farmers and artists to understand the natural way of farming, cooking and serving as part of theatre-making.

His farm named 'Chance Meeting Anandam; is a Performance Art Practice and Research Center in Tokigawa Village (Japan), primarily focusing on sustainable life and performance making, what ELTIF has been doing for the last more than 18 years in Indian villages. Teaching and learning is a 'Koottukrishi,'(joint farming), like the one performed by Keralites thanks to the renowned Malayalam poet-dramatist Edasseri. Learners, like farmers are the real producers.

The author-centered literature and director-centered art underwent a drastic change in the second half of the twentieth century and the learner-centeredness of the classroom is a happy result of such decentralizations that happened in our public sphere. The age-old convention of categorizing people according to the hierarchical structure of vocation confined farmersto farm, and teachers and students to classrooms. Dr. Bhaskaran is trying to 'deconstruct' such falsified myths by fusing teaching into self-learning, and then, higher order learning into 'life-learning'. He eloquently, but silently argues that the culmination of learning is when the learnt knowledge gets transformed into lived experience.

The workshop also envisioned an alternative classroom which considered teachers as facilitators and co-learners, and students are to ask questions and teachers should give answers. During the entire first half of the session, the resource person willfully refused to 'transmit knowledge' a paradigm as we have been familiar with, and as we have been waiting for at the workshop session. On the other hand, the stage was left for the participants for 'performing' on their own. In fact, while the participants were waiting for the show to begin (by the actor), the real show was half way through—the resource person was demonstrating how negotiations, interactions and discussions between script writer-director-actor team on the one side and audience on the other side could decide the course a stage performance. Yes, teaching is such a stage performance, demonstrates Dr. Prabhath Bhaskaran.

Even in the second half of the session, when the director-cum-actor stated really performing with costumes, the script was to be 'supplied' by the audience or spectators. The message was clear: a theatrical performance is not a finished artefact; it is an evolving process in which the performer and the audience together participate, and jointly decide the future course of action. If prompts wouldn't come from the audience, from behind the side curtains or technically known as the wings, the play comes to a standstill.

The message was clear: In a classroom 'performance', the spectator (the learner) is expected to naturally and spontaneously or even subconsciously leave his 'back bench' and slowly get himself amalgamated into the smooth flow of action in progress on the stage. *" Naatakame ulagam"* or "All the world is a stage", to put it in the global language.

The workshop aimed at interaction among teachers, researchers and theatre activists for exploring the potentials of theatre in the language classroom. ELTIF was following an eminent theatre activist in exploringhow we can make words in print get out of pages and communicate directly with the learner-audience live and lively. How the learners couldbe led to the centre stage from the back benches acting with and without words.The workshop enquired if there was an existence for a one act play in a textbook beyond the ritualistic grammar teaching and comprehension questions attached to it, and the memory tests and tedious exams appended to it.

Instead of the lecturing method that one would use in the traditional classroom, it is argued whether a situation could be created in the class through action. Shakespeare's dramas were meant for his 'audience' whereas Samuel Beckett's were for 'spectators'. The audible voice, the dialogues and not the visuals, are that important in Shakespeare, explained Dr Bhaskaran. Radio plays also have this feature. Act *Without Words- II,* its plot, theme and characterization are discussed in detail. The workshop explored the idea of physical possibilities of creating this play for intimate spectators. The participants were asked to read the script and Dr Bhaskaran enacted and made his teacher-spectators act out certain very common activities like sleeping, praying and brooding. Brooding is an act that requires some more attention as he explained how the people of Japan still brood over the days of the World War when they see a helicopter hovering above them. The fear of war is aroused by the sound of a helicopter. Praying has a non-religious aspect as people in distress do, like the prayer made by Qutubuddin Ansarito people in front of him, whose photograph became the emblematic image of the 2002 Gujarat riots, he continued.

In Beckett, two men on the stage are in sacks. A long stick enters from the right side of the stage and pokes one of the sacks. Character A struggles out of his sack and elaborately gets dressed before picking up the second sack and placing it farther from the stick, before undressing and getting back into his sack. The same procedure is then applied to the other sack containing Character B, who is poked, struggles out of his sack, does exercises, brushes his teeth and gets dressed and so on. His job is to move the other sack, containing Character A further along the stage, before he, too, undresses and gets back into his sack.

Albert Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" inspired the Theater of the Absurd. Beckett was known for his minimalist style with the minimum number of characters, little to no dialogue, and the use of stage directions, and bare set in Act *Without WordsII.* The play is no longer than four pages, but, in those few pages, Beckett confronts humanity's unceasing struggle with its disturbingly absurd, thrown condition. Beckett discovered a symbol for the futility, frustration and absurdity of all man's labours in Camus' Sisyphus who suffered eternal punishment, having to perpetually roll a great stone to the top of a hill, only to see it roll back down again. Being born to enact and endure an eternal cycle of arousal-activity-rest, without any meaningful progress being achieved, is the sin that afflicts A and B in *Beckett.Act Without Words II* shows that life must be endured, if not understood.

Teaching itself is theatrical. Which play is to be selected for teaching in a classroom is significant. Canonical literature won't do to discuss contemporary issues. Act *without Words II* of Dr Bhaskaranhas the focused intensity of the best of Beckett's theatre. A mime featuring two male protagonists, A and B, is done as solo here as in a classroomby a teacher. It delineates the routines of everyday life circumscribed within the movement of ordinary people. In Beckett's Act Without Words II, A and B share the same wardrobe, the

Resources/Resourcefulness

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

Time: An Enigmatic Persistence

C. Gangadharan
(Rtd. Headmaster, ELTIF Thalassery)
ganganch00@gmail.com

All our life dealings are advertently or inadvertently appertained to the time factor. It won't relyon any of our likes or dislikes. To be precise, the' when' factoris more important than the'where' factor. The mode and code of life vary with the period we live in. It was well-pronounced by poets that "yesterday's blunders are today's ethos". As such, every action of human beings has the prevalence of time.

It is well agreed that past has a bearing on present,which in turn proceeds tofuture. Presentisonly a sector of the long train of events- an incessant torrent from an unknown source to an unknown ending.The evaluability (or not) of the moment only can remindus of the transitory nature of it.One-off chance in one's life is too crucial to be ignored. Each moment in the whole life spangains uniqueness. If there levants panis fairly long, there will be little regard forits loss.

The passing nature of life usually doesn't come to hinderourday-to- day life proceedings, norisit acceptable for the smooth and peaceful flow of our life movements. From there ligious and ethical stand point it can be a radar for gaining self-direction in our life-journey. The words of Gandhiji get relevance in this context: " Live today thinking that you will die tomorrow; learn thinking that you will be living forever".

The life of a simple common man never gets significance in the whole cycle of the long life-chain of the universe. Each passing man leaves be hindafoot-print with certain shades.Those who can make an in delible imprintmay come for the regard and respect of the futurity; others are faded out into oblivion.

No doubt, it is not the span that counts,but the gleamand glamour that it pervades all around. We have instances of unnoticed births which blossomed themselves to give out scent, and with eredaway prematurely. Still, the reare births which resonate the whole world repeating year-long.

It is said that the running stream of a water body never has the same quality, or in every passing second, it varies its quality in all respects. Same is the case with a society of humans.The socio-cultural status is the netresult of the interaction of the individual citizens in a given period of time.

One of the greatest gifts that man is endowed with is his capacity to have dreams of his own moulding and making,interwoven with fact sand fancies. Dreaming can be either during sleepor in the broad day light with a different mindset of one's own. Great pieces of art and literature are the chemical product of such process.

One of the ancient poets of our state wonderfully creates a world where there is no scope ford eath for the whole lot of people. Result: parents, grand parents and great grand parents live with the new-born generation with little scope for death. Through a fanciful idea, beautifully drawn with words, it brings out the well-admitted fact of human life.

Almost every man, though little possibility for it in reality, can just imagine that a rebirth or areunion of one's own family or its vicinity will cause immeasurable fervour. Consider thisconditional descent of a person only years after his demise. The soul throbs itself like anything as the moment of entry becomes a reality. The quick succession of the visibility gives way toconfusion, despair and even embarrassment. None of the wayfarers pays least heed to thepassing soul. His much expected home- coming very soon turns out to be an exasperating experience. Much to his surprise, even the whole neighbouring quarters presented themselves an extraneous

look. Roads, buildings, lanes and fields have been recast to the utter confusion of the new comer. His own old house and its proximity have left no trace of their previousexistence, but in its place, there stands an expansive shopping complex. In no time, fervour forthe reunion of his associates gives way to utter frustration and disappointment. With nore thinking, the tortured soul soonflies back to its former abode.

All types of art and literature unfold life in its manifold ways, revealing the mysteries andmischief as well as upheavals and downfalls. The life span of an individual or the period of anation or the era of the human race, when considered partly, is a succession of events or eventualities. No partial reference of any of the said constituentsis possible, ignoring the period of time concerned. Events are very much intertwined with the time factor ! There are literarypieces where the turn of events related to the span of time conspicuously. Let's consider the short story 'After Twenty Years' by OHenry in this context.

At the very out set, two friends, Boband Jimmy make an appointment at as hopver and atomeet together after twentyyears at the same place and time. One of them left for thewest, seeking his fortune and the other chose to stay back. Years pass by, but fortuneembraced them in different ways. The reader would be kept in suspense till the end of thestory. So each word of exchange at the reunionis are velation of the wholeplot. The man who went abroad turned out to be a robber, who was much sought after by the Interpol. The other fellow happened to get into the uniform of apoliceofficerof an exceptional mould.

The police officer was a little earlier to keep the appointment. After an exchange of greetings, the two made self-revelation of their past life. The lightening of the cigar in the shrouded darkness helped the police officer to mark out the face notified by the west. Keeping the word and performing the duty have been successfully fulfilled by the friend. Read ersarestunned by the unexpected twist of the events in the end.

The sametopic,when comes for there flection of the gifted, yields fruits of in conceivable form.

Same is the case with Khalil Gibran,the great Poet and philosopher who considers time factor in his short poem" Time".His thoughts extends from alphilosophical plane to a layman's line of vision. It again ranges from a physical pole to ametaphysicalone. One can sort out relevance ranging from universal level to personal level.

It opens with a talk between an astronomer and a Master, which itself seems to have unseen significance. Though time is counted as"measur eless and immeasurable",one should consider it in terms of smaller units like hours and seasons. Yesterday and tomorrow are the different aspects of today. The first Big Bang dwells and finds expression even now in each and every living being.The Poet remind sus of the divine love that encompasses the supreme, doesn't letfreeany from it srapture. Both this love and time are" undivided and paceless". Here the subject matter of time identifies with the heavenly love of the supreme.

We derive and deduce assumptions and conclusions not from anywhere else, but from this world and this life.The day break and the sunset repeatedly remind us of the ticking away of the moments of life with no scope for repeating itself. The enigma of time still remains to be elusive for our concern.

Theatre in / and the Language.....

same common Beckettian carrot, and rely wholly on each other's invisible efforts to travel across the stage which is their world. When Sarah Jane Scaife produced it in 2011 in London, she did it in St. Alfege Park,where the homeless spend their time. Dr Bhaskaran takes this to the common classroom where the students from our village, who come from afar, of poor peasant-parents, are there not to be failed but to be filled with confidence to survive disasters of life. This reminds us of how important Beckett's theatre is for our understanding of contemporary times. The absurdity of life after the Second World War is felt in the pandemic situation as well, when the world faces the trauma of suffering and death, he concluded.

While leaving 'the home-theatre' after Dr. Bhaskaran's show, each of us was reflecting on our past career, and soliloquizing: " How not to teach drama."

Don't try to fool children; they are smarter than us

Dr. Dhanya Bhaskaran Education Product Manager,
Macmillan Education India, Kochi dhanyabn@gmail.com

This is what we, teacher trainers used to tell teachers: "Don't try to fool children; they are smarter than us." I would like to repeat the same to parents, as well. In fact, many of the things that teachers do at school can be repeated or replicated by parents at home. Parents can add their own practical wisdom too while helping children with their studies. Here is an example of how a motherhelps her son develop his listening ability by telling stories in a different way. Let's listen to them.

Mother: Would you like to listen to a story.?

Child: Yes, yes.

Mother: But, as usual, I may make a few mistakes while telling the story. You have to correct

them. OK?

Child: OK. Agreed.

Mother: Once in a small pond, there lived a goldfish. The water in the pond was very clear and good. Nobody spoiled the water. And the goldfish was very happy to have such a nice pond to live in. One bright morning, the goldfish noticed something moving among the water lilies. Could it be a lizard?

Child: No, Amma. Lizards won't live in water.

Mother: True, true. It was a water snake. The snake was trying to catch a small frog. The frog was hiding behind a tree.

Child: How can there be a tree in a pond?

Mother: Oh, sorry. Not a tree. The snake was hiding behind a water lily. The frog was leaping from one plant to the other. Suddenly, the snake noticed the goldfish. Leaving the snake, the frog turned to the fish.

Child: No, no. Leaving the frog, the snake turned to the fish.

Mother: OK, OK. Thank you. Now the goldfish didn't know what to do. It was for the first

time it met a snake. And, it was a very big one—maybe, some ten feet long.

Child: Ma, water snakes won't grow that long. Just one or two feet. Those living on land may be longer.

Mother: Right. Anyway, the snake was much bigger than the fish. And, it was fast swimming towards the fish. Suddenly, they heard a noise: "quack, quack, quack". A mother duck and three ducklings were coming to the pond. First, they stepped into the water, and drank the dirty, puddle water because they were all thirsty.

Child: Mom, you told in the beginning that the water in the pond was clear and good.

Now, how can you say that the ducklings drank the dirty puddle water?

Mother: Oh, sorry. I made a mistake. The pond had clear water in it. Ok. The duck and the ducklings drank as much water as they wanted. Then, all of them started swimming. The goldfish hid behind the lilies, and neither the ducklings or the mother duck noticed the fish. But, the mother duck saw the snake, and stared at it for some time. The snake smelt danger. It crawled into the muddy bottom of the pond. The fish came out from its hiding, and thanked the duck.

Dear parents,

What was the technique employed by the mother in telling a story in a different way? Introducing some mismatch into the story, here and there, purposefully.

What were the objective?

(i) To motivate the child to sustain interest in the story till the end.

(ii) To enable the child to think critically.

(iii) To enhance the child's language ability by providing opportunities to raise doubts, get things clarified, to correct where necessary.

(iv) To develop in the child, the basics of social metacognition—The child will be trying to trace how the mother is going to introduce a mismatch in the story. Thinking about how others are thinking, especially about oneself—simply put it, that's social metacognition.

Of course, the mother was not aware of any of these objectives. But, these are the outcomes of this special type of storytelling.

Dear teachers,

Can you invent a new story for each of your English classes, or can you give a twist to the old stories so that they progress on a new route and end in a different way? This is perhaps one very effective way of developing the learner's listening skill, and critical thinking skill, as demonstrated above.

It works in my classroom

"How did I manage to do it?"
Metacognitive Inquiry into the Processes of Learning

P. Bhaskaran Nair
nairpbhaskaran@gmail.com

Student1: "Last evening, when I was coming back from school, I saw a dog chase a tiger."

Student 2: "No, no. It was not a tiger; it was a lion."

S1 : "How do you know?'

S3 : "We were walking just behind you. And, all three of us had guns with us".

S1 : "So, you were hunting that lion?"

S4 : "No, no. We were chasing that dog."

S1 : "Why, why?"

S2 : "It was that dog who bit our elephant."

S1 : "Your elephant? Do you keep one?"

S3 : "One? We have half a dozen at home. That dog attacked one of our elephants."

S2 : "It was that elephant who smashed our new car last week."

S3 : "The same elephant smashed our cowshed last night and drove our cows away. We are yet to get them back."

S1 : "It means, that elephant is a wicked one. That's why the dog bit it."

S4 : "No, no. Not that. Yesterday, the elephant was taking bath."

S1 : "In a pond or river?"

S2 : "Oh, no. In a bathtub. We have bathtubs for elephants."

S1 : "Really?"

S3 : "Why not? Our grandfather built one in granite in front of our house".

S4 : "And water would be pumped into it from the nearby river."

S1 : " Was your grandpa very rich?"

S2 : " Rich! He was the king of this region".

S3 : "He had a cellar, full of gold!"

S1 : "So, what did the dog do when your elephant was taking bath?"

S4 : "It jumped into the bathtub, and started swimming."

S3 : "The elephant turned angry and caught the dog by its neck and threw it away into the farm."

Dear teachers,

What is nonsense for us may be sense for children. Imagination does not require a certificate from sense or logic. Perhaps, it's the other way round. Fine imagination does not follow logic or sense. Do you doubt? Then, read further.

According to the story, the Treasurer of Gods, Kubera had a group of divine attendants working for him, called the Yakshas. One of these Yakshas was so obsessed with his newly wedded wife that he ignored his duties. He was cursed and banished into the woods on earth. Thoroughly dejected, he kept thinking about his wife and missed her a lot. His wife also kept thinking about him all day and all night.

Then one day, monsoons arrived on earth. The Yaksha saw a rain cloud pass by and requested it to carry a message to his wife. The Yaksha then starts to describe the route the cloud should be taking. The Yaksha makes the route seem as attractive as possible so that the cloud takes his message to his wife. The emotions portrayed are so beautiful that it couldn't have been given a better treatment by any other poet. Now you know that what you just read above is a gist of one of the greatest works in Indian literature—Meghaduta, composed by the Sanskrit poet-playwright, Kalidasa. A few in the west, for example the great German poet Goethe, considered Kalidasa as one of the greatest in world literature. Do you find a grain of truth, sense or logical thinking in the following?

(a) There were(or, are) numerous gods.

(b) Gods had a treasurer--Kubera.

(c) He had attendants called Yakshas.

(d) One of them neglected his duty and was cursed.

(e) He was banished from the world of kings to the earth.

(f) On a rainy day, he summoned a cloud.

(g) He requested the cloud to take a message to his wife, who lived far away.

Imagination is not bound by borders made of logical thinking. We are free to imagine anything—flying in the sky, diving into the bottom of the ocean, having breakfast with dinosaurs, sleeping by the side of the mummies in pyramids… . Let students migrate into the world of fantasy. We are only concerned about their language and communication skills.