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From the Editor's Desk

When Children Interact with Like-minded Adults

Lev Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist (1896-1934) remarked in the context of child language learning that language (first, second or foreign) is best learnt when children get opportunities to interact with like-minded adults and peers, on topics of their own choice and interest. To be in the company of better informed persons is a pleasure for children; especially if hundreds of their inquisitive queries are going to be discussed and answered.

About fifty students of Class XI of Govt. Victoria Girls' Higher Secondary School Chittur (Palakkad district, Kerala) assumed the role of adults and, for twenty days they interacted with the younger learners of the same school (Class V to IX). Summer vacation became something different for them. Stories, games, rhymes, action songs, translation of film songs, watching TV, reading newspapers, conducting morning assembly, interviewing strangers—all were planned by adult resource persons, but implemented by the 'novice tutors' (Class XII students). Their proficiency level was above average. Part of the learners belonged to backward areas and classes. The twenty day programme was a combined effort of teachers of that school, parents, local MLA, and academic support (study materials: print and CDs) was provided by ELTIF.

The number of learners increased day by day. Quite a few who had their own usual way of enjoying holidays, those who planned visiting relatives, those who joined tuition classes, those didn't have any idea of the English camp—most of them joined the camp, knowing about it from their friends who had been attending the camp from the beginning. The same was the case with young tutors as well.

The young tutors were given an orientation programme on 'How not to teach English'. (it was later revealed by the teachers of that school who too attended the orientation programme, that the 'don't's' prescribed to the novice tutors

were new information to them as well.) Some of them were as follows: (i) Learning atmosphere must be fear-free and friendly. (ii) No punishment of any sort. (iii) Let learners ask questions; not tutors. (iv) No need of a textbook to teach communication skills. (v) No need of teaching grammar rules. (vi) Maximize activities. (vii) Minimize traditional teaching. (viii) Not just indoor activities, but outdoor, as well. (ix) Let learners too have a say on what activity to do. (x) No test or exam.

The valedictory session echoed much confidence in the words of the young tutors and witnessed more enthusiasm among the learners. (A detailed report by the Coordinator is given elsewhere in this issue.)

What I personally felt after studying and evaluating the twenty-day programme was (i) the novice teachers are not prejudiced against their learners, (ii) they are concerned about the duty assigned to them with adequate support and guidelines, (iii) they have no external pressure on them since they are not bothered about documentation of what they do or did since they are not bound by their students' marks, percentage of pass, moderation, prestige of their school etc. (iv) the novice tutors are open minded to criticism—at the end of each day's teaching, there used to be a session in which self and peer evaluation of teacher-performance was done, (v) they are willing to change in any direction, something which is difficult if not impossible for regular teachers, (vi) right or wrong, novice teachers don't have unconditional faith in the divinity of textbooks, (vii) novice teachers are not slaves to their own teacher beliefs, and above all, (viii) they didn't inflict fear of English in their students.

I was just telling myself, learning would be slightly better if the so called 'experienced teachers' were able to function like these novice tutors, at least once a week !

P.Bhaskaran Nair (Editor)

Guest's Column

Assessment That Fosters Our Understanding of Learners: One Strand of Professional Growth

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Teachers report that practices related to CCE (its inconsistencies notwithstanding) helps them 'understand' learners better. This points to a role of assessment different from *e-valuation* i.e., the application of a pre-set criterion to *judge* the worth (value) of a learner's performance. A test irrespective of its structure/modality is a research tool, a means of obtaining information that helps answer a *question* of pedagogic relevance. Data has to be described qualitatively first; even quantitative scores are based on qualitative differences. Qualitative data relating to learning in school is a potentially valuable resource for understanding the nature of learning better. Teachers are well positioned to generate such data, since children are around them most of the time. Ongoing observation of performances during lessons (as for cce) can stop with description; no judgement applied to award marks or grades. The descriptive data base teachers can thus create over time would be a valuable resource for research into learning. The analysis of data, and model building based thereon initial by experts can go on to include teachers. Inquiry oriented practices of teachers with some autonomy is a prerequisite for professional development.

Caveat These ideas were first put together as the base for a live presentation to be followed by a small interaction phase. Converting it to a stand alone and decontextualized written text has involved some thinning of tonal variation. But written texts have the advantage of potential to reach a wider audience. It is hoped that readers will imagine there is a conversation or dialogue beneath the surface of this necessarily one way communication.

The school curriculum in India –the perspective on learning-teaching and what happens in ordinary classrooms – has changed remarkably in the wake of NCF2005. Classroom practices promoted by current syllabi and textbooks followed in all the states provide a helpful and hopeful setting. It is possible to say with some confidence that there is wider and more varied learner participation during lessons now, as compared with what was typical at the beginning of the this century. Child-friendly and attractive materials textbooks following the model of the NCERT textbooks of 2006 and 2007 have supported this change in the nature of classroom of transactions. Many books invite spontaneous engagement with at least some of their contents. The emphasis on 'activities' including open ended ones promote collaboration among learners. The label CCE has come to represent the whole new orientation to the curriculum in common discussion. It is quite true that the official CCE package promulgated by the CBSE and various states seen as is a cumbersome machinery. Many observers have highlighted conceptual and practical problems with the scheme. Even so the essential principles of CCE are sound, and its positive aspects are spreading even if very slowly. Remember that it was seen as a powerful enough component of quality education to be specifically endorsed in the RTE 2009.

One noteworthy feature of the present scheme (with an emphasis on cce) is the markedly reduced the scope for *didactic* teacher talk. Classroom management oriented teacher talk has possibly increased. But interestingly this has

an element of genuine communication. Instructions relating to activities *need to be understood*—in the here and now— and not memorized for reproduction later. The enhanced level of activity and participation of students calls for attention to their ongoing performance from the teacher. Also, something *other than* standard explanations and single correct answer is heard in classrooms. This is because there is some space now for children's voices. Of course, much needs to be done to capture and bring to life and promote the spirit of the NCF and of cce. Two ideas are associated with the elusive notion of cce are explored in this essay: the formative mode of assessment and the aim of bringing assessment closer to teaching.

Newer perspectives on evaluation in education

Evaluation, assessment, testing are generally used interchangeably in the context of education. The primary focus is on the progress made by students. The key feature of the process is the application of a criterion or *standard* when scoring or *valuing* students' answers. Tests should have relevant scoring guidelines. This makes sense: we all accept that scoring must be consistent. However, there are significant aspects of such standards/criteria that we take for granted. One is that they are pre-set and fixed. In a way this makes sense. They represent learning objectives and what we test should match them. But let us look closely at objectives. We see that a learning objective is an *expected* learning outcome—something based on a *hope*, and not on any law of psychology. Teachers transacting the curriculum hope (along with its designers) that their efforts (inputs) will lead to the expected outcomes. When a test is administered after a unit has been completed some students will produce the expected performance, others will not. This is of course quite normal. What we fail to notice is that the formal system simply converts the hopes into external *requirements*. This leads to the declaration that students' performances are less or more satisfactory (bad or good). Some

students get the message: *You have failed*. Many sincere teachers finding that some have performed poorly would wonder whether this could also be because the *teaching input* taken as a whole was inadequate in some ways. However, the system virtually forces them (and experts and other stakeholders too) to say that poor performance was/is solely the student's responsibility or fault. Of course it is fashionable for luminaries to proclaim that teaching is not the same as learning, but this is usually done on safe ceremonial occasions. The entry made in the marks register (sometimes countersigned by higher authority) stays with the child forever. The system thus treats learning objectives as fixed criteria (requirements) applicable to one and all.

A second aspect of objectives is that they are decided upon (*pre-set*) in advance. The hidden and quite problematic assumption here is that we can predict the nature of learning. The claim is that since we know (control) the teaching inputs we also know the appropriate learning outcome. In other words, every student *should learn what is taught*. This comes from the axiom: Teaching = learning (for normal children). Thus a range of good to poor *learners* are created. The stress is always on the qualities (often apparent inadequacies) of the individual learner. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the curriculum is not questioned. The simplistic premise that the curriculum is 'good' is something that teachers should be worried about, and many are. But they have to comply with many things specified by the system, its service rules. The *system* based on a prescribed syllabus with pre-set objectives cannot easily be changed. But better ways of dealing with evaluation can be introduced. One of these is approach of formative assessment.

Formative assessment

The term formative assessment is familiar and much is already known. A couple of points are worth stressing. Firstly, formative applies to how test results are *interpreted and used* not to the instruments. Tests (sets of items) used

formatively are not necessarily different from other tests, though they should ideally be closely related to the current syllabus segment and handled in a user friendly manner. The key notion in the formative perspective is feedback: *information* about progress going to the teacher and to the learner. This information comes from the *past*: the test has already been administered. But the true value of this information lies in the potential link to the *future*. Making entries in the marks register is a trivial backward looking clerical operation. In a pedagogic perspective, the focus would be on clues to what might be desirable as the 'next step'. For the teacher this could be a quick revision of some specific topic, or re-teaching it using a different strategy, modifying what was planned for a subsequent lesson, and so on. For the student what is useful is endorsement relating to how questions were tackled, or alerts about apparently having gone astray. Such feedback could influence future study patterns. Formative assessment is rightly seen as a resource for quality enhancement since feedback can suggest ways of doing things better—in the future.

Bringing assessment closer to teaching is a more complex matter. At the surface it is easy to see and practice. In fact the continuous dimension of CCE is based on such a process. The problem with many mandated CCE packages was the heavy emphasis on recording scores (high or low) for each student many times in a term. This reduced it to a series of mini-unit tests. Students very rightly complained about being tested in every lesson every day. The recent policy decision to bring back external board level examinations and detention at the elementary level is regrettable. This does not automatically lead to scrapping CCE, though there is considerable confusion about this matter. It should be possible to reclaim a space for the *spirit* of CCE in which teaching and assessment come together meaningfully. This will be a long process but certainly worth our commitment as a community. In the section that follows contributions teachers can make to the larger

discourse of learning and learning objectives in education are explored. This perspective goes beyond that of formative assessment as a specific procedure.

Observing children in class

One salient aspect of the setting of teachers' work is the close contact they have every day with a large number of children of different ages and from different cultural backgrounds. The extent of direct face to face interaction may be limited. Even so, being there allows the teacher to observe children in varied contexts over and over again. Most of the non-scholastic qualities of students (under 'comprehensive' in CCE) cannot be captured through structured tests. This is what led to the stress on observation of learners' performance as it occurred. Leaving aside what is needed for assessment under cce, how can we take advantage of the opportunity lying in teachers' ongoing proximity to children? What can we learn from the more comprehensive picture of children engaging in learning activities that can be built up through observation? A little more information about the nature of observation will help here.

Ways of studying the social world—methods of social science

Research tools such as the questionnaire, interview, test, are quite familiar. These are used to get answers (statements) from the persons (respondents) being studied. Observation is another widely used method. This has its origins in anthropology. Early anthropologists studied communities that were different and relatively isolated from so called 'modern' societies. The former preserved most of their old traditions that have little in common with urbanized and 'modernized' societies, as for example in 18th century Europe. Anthropologists studying the culture of these communities preferred or, rather, found it necessary to use *observation* as the method of obtaining information (data). Why?

The need to know the local language is obviously a major pre-requisite for field research. Even

with that taken care of, researchers can use questionnaires or interview schedules, only when they already have a fair amount of knowledge about the contexts of their respondents. Each item or question is related to a topic. This would be something the researcher has some knowledge about in her/his own context. Assuming the cultures have common features, the effort is to find out what 'they' (the respondents) know or feel about this topic, or some aspect of it. In other words they are building on an assumed base of shared knowledge and experiences. This makes it reasonable to expect that the questions will make some sense to the respondents. The anthropologists who went to remote and strange communities could not safely make any such assumptions about the target cultures. They could not start with questions such as: Do you prefer cooked or raw food? Do you have female goddesses? How do you choose your leader? They had to 'be there' quietly (after obtaining permission or acceptance) — observing and listening. This was the first step in the effort to get some idea about the local culture. Interestingly, the field of astronomy has some similarities. For the study of the heavenly bodies, only observation—from very far off! — was possible. After hours and hours of observation or stargazing certain patterns were noticed, and then it was possible to formulate theories or hypotheses.

Observation in the teacher's setting

What has all this got to do with sincere and honest teachers trying to do their demanding jobs well in spite of many difficulties? In one sense, nothing; teachers do not make policy or engage in fundamental psychological research. But from the perspective of educationists (experts making theories) *everything*.

If we pause to reflect on the process of formal education, we will see that children's *learning in instructional contexts* is something quite unknown and mysterious, just like strange cultures and the stars. Even after decades, centuries rather, of formal instruction we know

very little about classroom *learning* in general, let alone its realization in specific settings: level and subject area. Schooling covers children of many ages, from many psychological and cultural backgrounds, engaging with a range of material entities and ideas associated with the curriculum. The formal system based on learning objectives and achievement tests simply declares that 'this input will normally lead to this learning outcome' with regard to each segment of the syllabus. We have to live with this in order to survive, but we need not stop with accepting it. We can and must strive for better understanding of the processes of learning.

Where do teachers come in? One thing teachers can do is collect data from the classroom to contribute to better understanding of learning. The models of learning we have now, like all models, need to be reviewed and revised as relevant empirical data is available. Formal education policy has no provision for any such 'scientific' approach. An obsession with maintaining supposedly high standards from the distant past (the good old days) ensures that learning objectives-demands-requirements are never analyzed. At best, they are made even heavier. This is a problem that lies in the realm of cultural politics not educational theory. There is no simple solution or even any clear strategy for tackling it. It is in this context that we might look to teachers.

Teachers as observers of children in an unobtrusive bystander role can collect rich data pertaining to various aspects of *learning*. In this quest, we have a powerful and unfailing ally: the children in our schools, every last one of them. They are rightly called **learners** because one thing they do and always will do is **learn**. The worry many parents and often authorities obsessed with control have is that they could learn *wrong* things, never that they will not learn. Thus even without declarations about diversity, it is true that children will learn in diverse ways from the textbook and teacher, and life outside school as *co-constructors* of

knowledge. *Learning* cannot of course be studied directly. The internal process of learning presumably involves multiple components and stages supported by teaching-learning activities. Some clues (*only clues*) to these hidden processes lie in students' visible and hence observable performances—what they say, write, ask about, overtly do, express as feelings and emotions. These could be elicited responses or those occurring spontaneously. Teachers naturally located amongst children have privileged access to these performances. There is a whole range of possibilities for them to observe in a continuous mode. The wonderful thing about such engagement on the teacher's part is it does not require approval (permission) from above. It lies safely in the teacher's sacred space.

This image of teachers observing children and coming up almost effortlessly with potentially significant information admittedly seems quite naïve and romantic. Even so it is important to identify and celebrate this possibility. It points to an area of brightness and initiative standing out against the long standing dreary background narrative of teachers wearily struggling to cope with endless, mindless tasks hour after hour. Wherever it is possible we need to assert that teachers are not just existing, but are alive and proactive. And go on to find ways of promoting their autonomy and sense of self efficacy.

It is important to note that any meaningful social study requires planning, attention and sustained effort. Not long ago, eager and self-consciously open minded (anti-numbers oriented) researchers occasionally needed to be reminded that a collection of teachers stories, audio or video recordings of language learners (users) in authentic settings did not in themselves comprise research findings. Such data sets need to be framed by general aims, questions, selected strategies for analysis and frames for interpretation. By the same token, observations by teachers (in focus here) need to be planned. A useful move is to begin with what the individual

teacher sees as feasible, and gradually extending the scope of the exercise. One scholastic or co-scholastic area and within it a narrower theme, at a specific grade level is an illustrative starting point. (It should be clear that no detailed plan is being worked out here: only a listing of some options.)

Teachers as researchers

Efforts to involve teachers in educational research has a fairly long (not wholly unblemished) history. Experience shows that teachers can easily be relegated to the role of field assistants in expert guided research, even 'situated' action research. The well meant position 'experts take is that they/we should support teachers to study problems relevant to them. This is important, but there is often a lurking strand focused on 'solving' a practical problem usually an impediment to higher achievement levels. Officials higher up in the system are looking for good practices that can be upscaled. Local concerns and the authenticity of the emerging practice can get submerged.

The suggestion here relating to observation by teachers does not come from a clear research question. This is not any form of apology. There is a conscious attempt to invoke a new perspective on the value of a rich descriptive data base. Its relevance is argued first.

We have reached a point in our history of public education (framed also by the recent Right to Education Act) where we desperately need new ideas to tackle the challenges before us. We have been confronted consistently over several years with massive shortfalls in achievement levels, added to which are stubbornly high dropout rates. All this in spite of the enormous resources including human effort (much if it sincere, it must be acknowledged) —going into school education further supported through SSA, RMSA. A major round of syllabus revision was completed a few years ago. Technology aided innovations in instruction — both materials and techniques—have been promoted. The chanting

of the promise of salvation through ICT continues, even as unused TV monitors and even desktop systems are being displaced by smart phones and tablets. But the facts on the ground relating to learning levels remain grim. It is increasingly difficult to explain (explain away) low learning levels to any significant level using learner factors (motivation, ability(merit), parental support—all low, of course). The curriculum is good but student are not 'suitable' argument is not tenable. (It is indeed deplorable that the main argument in support of bringing back external examinations and detention is that the absence of the 'fear of failure' among students can be rectified.) The 'new' ideas needed will have to come from efforts closer to fundamental research, not tinkering.

This is where a data base of teachers' observations (seen and noted) holds great promise. It would include descriptions of performances associated with children's learning in its myriad forms that occurs in school settings. Subsets from this huge and multi-layered data base can be analyzed to locate trends and relationships—pointers to diverse patterns of learning. Ideas and insights emerging here could stimulate the formulation of many different small models of 'learning from instruction in school' to study further. The initiative at this later stage here would need to come from experts—trying to do *their job* sincerely and honestly. Specific small studies can then be worked out that could go back teachers. One necessary condition for this process to move forward is a willingness on the part of experts to recognize teachers as co-constructors of research knowledge on learning, and *work with* them.

A message of hope

The main argument in this essay is that planned observations during lessons by teachers both enhances their knowledge (in its best sense) of children and is a potential contribution to research that feeds into curriculum renewal. It seems reasonable to claim that this fosters professional growth. A less proper claim is that experts (especially in ELT) would benefit, possibly more from involvement in this process.

For teachers, the suggestion here endorses the freedom to act in small ways on *the teachers sense of plausibility*—an elegant phrase that N S Prabhu gave us. Moments where choices/decisions have to be made do come up often in the classroom. It is not a matter of choice if it is all pre-ordained. The small measure of freedom here is important for teachers. Inputs from outside aimed at promoting professional development (especially the continuing variety) need some *existing* professional practice to build on.

For experts stagnating in the practice of peddling knowledge produced elsewhere and finished (packaged nicely which also means made static), a new mode of interaction with teachers is offered. A highly desirable initial condition (mindset) is a willingness to listen. This does not come easily. However, generations of students have been fidgeting and listening to teachers, and teachers have been listening (more docilely) to experts at seminars and in-service short courses. The time for listening practice to be carried to the next hierarchical level has come, perhaps.

Collaborative learning involving various types of partners is one bright hope for our future.

Guidance & Assistance in Organizing Workshops & Conferences

ELTIF offers guidance and help in organizing workshops and conferences. Those Departments of English in colleges which plan such academic events may please contact us. Panel of resource persons (both inland and abroad) competent in each branch of Language and Literature will be suggested. Help will be provided in publishing the selected papers, as well. Please contact: englangforum2010@gmail.com

Notes from an Educator's Diary

Evaluating Running, Walking, Hopping and Jogging

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About a fortnight ago, I was asked to talk about the basics of evaluation to a group of post-graduate students. I spoke about evaluation and how it is a part of our everyday lives; about the roles of evaluation within and outside education and then went on to talk about the differences between testing and evaluation; how we need an instrument to test, but can evaluate using a rule of thumb measure etc. As a part of the discussion on testing, we were looking at differences between subjective and objective type items. Categorizing the various item types under these two headings was very easy, but the group was not very clear about what made an item type subjective or objective.

As is my wont, I created an example and wrote it up on the board. (I believe that an example speaks a thousand words!) The example was a vocabulary item where the student had to find the odd man out. The two items were:

1. a. run b. walk c swim d. jog
2. a. run b. jog c. walk d. hop

I had about 40 odd students in class and asked for a show of hands to find out who had chosen which answer. (As I always do, I kept a poker face and did not give out the answer, to make students decide and to let everyone participate).

About half the class remained silent and passive and did not raise their hands. I counted hands, repeated, asked for answers and got no reply!

Since it was a one-off lecture, I decided not to press for answers and was just going to continue, when the penny dropped!

I got a research associate who was also attending the lecture to actually run, hop and jog and show the difference... and then, in a shot, all hands went up.

I felt mortified for I had taken something for granted which I should not have done!

I had assumed that at the post-graduate level, such simple mono syllabic words would be easy to access; in fact it never occurred to me that words like 'jog' and 'hop' would not be understood!

Although I had been told that a large number of students in this class were from regional medium backgrounds and also from rural areas, I had not paused to think of 'easy' and 'not easy to access' words...

When everyday life includes running to catch a bus or train, and where one walks a few kilometers to reach the nearest bus stop, the notion of jogging does not exist! It does only along with Nike, Reebok and Puma... and the metros and well-to-do people who have the luxury of going for a jog every morning (and that too by taking out the car and parking it somewhere first...)

Two simple vocabulary items and I learnt that one has to hop into a learner's mind and jog in his shoes, to problematise learner-centredness and understand what it truly means.

How to Integrate Language Skills through Andragogy?

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Abstract

English language classrooms in India should facilitate learners to become skilled in English language communication. English is the international communication tool among non-native English users around the world, and with native speakers. It is seen as the language of development at personal and societal levels. Skills, therefore, acquired in EL classrooms should enable learners to use them in their majors and thereafter at workplaces in life. English is also viewed as the language of promotion. The need of the hour is not acquisition of knowledge about English, but of skills of English language communication for academic study, careers, and promotion. The National Skill Development Corporation of India aims at promoting skills development. One of the basic soft skills is English language skills. Indian economy is one of the fastest growing economies in the world with the projected GDP growth rate of 7%. India's demographic dividend is expected to increase to 1.14 billion in 2026 and 83% of the increase is expected to be in the age group of 15-59. If this dividend is harnessed by 2025, India will have 25% of the world's total workforce and India's per capita income will be around \$4000 and it is currently less than \$1000. It is expected to go up to \$9802 in 2040 and \$20,836 by 2050. The United Nations Development Programme advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build better life. It is in the hands of thousands of English language teachers in India to help learners of English realize their life goals by enhancing their communication power in English. This qualitative research paper argues for integrating four language skills through a shift from pedagogy to heutagogy to turn students into productive and industry-ready prospective employees and entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Integration of Language Skills, andragogy, heutagogy, discreet skill, segregated approach, content-based instruction

Introduction

ELT in India has been practised through exploitation of literature as medium of acquisition of language competency from the secondary level onwards. A paradigm shift in English language curriculum was felt in 1980s when CLT made inroads into teaching first at the tertiary level and then at secondary level. Four macro-skills replaced literary content to a significant extent in the language curriculum though literary

pieces continued and continue to dominate the General English language curriculum in a majority of universities and their affiliated colleges. However, a very few autonomous colleges were bold enough to introduce skills-based English language courses skills. Unfortunately, one of the major drawbacks of skills-based curriculum is the treatment of these four skills in isolation as if they were totally unrelated. CLT research compartmentalized language into four discrete

skills for the sake of convenience, but such a division has pedagogical disadvantages with unequal or disproportionate importance being given to one and neglecting the other. Moreover, teachers and learners have mistaken the teaching-learning of a specific skill for the acquisition of language as a whole. They fail to realize that language does not function in terms of skills in isolation. CLT treats all skills working together in an integrated manner and it does not mean the teaching of skills in isolation for their own sake. The shift appears to be a transition from bad to worse. CLT stresses the mantra 'language is communication' and not 'language for communication' as it is often (mis)understood. Again, it does treat language both as medium and communication. Above all, teachers cannot be present all through students' life for scaffolding their learning of English. Hence, there is a dire need for inculcating learning skills to learn independent of teachers.

Research Questions

The questions that are addressed in the reflective study are

1. What is the difference between pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy?
2. What are the major components of LSRW?
3. Why should skills be integrated in the curriculum?
4. How can integration be achieved?

Review of Literature

Language skills integration refers to two or more inter-related skills. It combines production (speaking and written) and reception (reading and listening). Rebacca (2001) compares skill integrated teaching to a tapestry. Along with teacher, learner, and setting, four skills becomes the most important strand in weaving. Skills are also integrated with knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, syntax, meaning, and usage. Desta Kebede and Getachew Seyoum (2012) compare skills integration with building blocks and claim that it is essential component of language teaching. Moreover, integrating language skills helps

language learners develop their ability in using two or more of the four skills in contexts and real life situations. According to Hinkel (2006), communication becomes meaningful if it happens in integrated language skills and not through an isolated one. In other words, communication does not run well if people use only one language skill at a time. Language skills should therefore also be integrated in the language teaching process and in real life. Abraham (2012) asserts that the good command graduates possess in integrating these skills could have a significant and long-lasting effect in enhancing their academic success. The implementation of skills integration in a learner-centred, realistic mode is therefore vital as it enables learners to develop their communication skills.

Discussion

The terms "pedagogy," "andragogy," and "heutagogy" may look like high sounding words due to their foreign etymology, but they simply mean dependent learning, self-directed learning, and self-determined learning. Since 'peda' means child, pedagogy concerns children being taught and their learning in schools. 'Andra' means adults and therefore helping adults learning while 'heuta' means lifelong and therefore learning lifelong. Children depend on teachers for their learning while adults are independent of teachers but direct their learning and if learning is to take place lifelong, there learners should be determined to learn.

Pedagogy and andragogy enjoy academic and institutional value when English is taught and learnt. However, whatever English language skills they learn should be complemented and supplemented by adult learners outside of the classroom. It can be the virtual learning, or online learning, or learning at libraries, or at the language laboratory, or at home with books and e-sources. They direct their learning with the possible inputs from teachers in classes. Pedagogy treats learners as dependent children while androgogy recognizes learners as adults. The following table illustrates the important features of pedagogy and andragogy:

Pedagogy	Andragogy
For children	For adults
Dependent upon teachers for learning	Self-directed
Teachers assume full responsibility for how of and what of teaching	Learners are responsible
Teachers evaluate learning	Self-evaluation by learners
Learners face tasks with little experience	Learners bring greater volume & quantity of experience
Teachers' experience is more influential	Learner experience becomes the source of identity
Learners are told what they have to learn	Learners' ability assesses gaps between where one is and where one needs to be
Learning is a process of acquiring prescribed matter	Learners want to perform a task, solve a problem, and live in a satisfying way
Content units are sequenced according to subject matter	Content is relevant to real-life tasks and is organized around life/work situation
Learners are motivated by external pressure, competition for marks/grades motivators such as	Learners are influenced by internal self-esteem, recognition, better quality life, self-confidence, and self-actualization

Learning English communication skills is a lifelong process since it is infinite and it cannot be learnt only in classes and outside classes during the academic period in learners' life. Learners must learn skills to learn lifelong. They should be self-determined. Technology has come to their help in the twenty first century where knowledge and skills learnt at college become outdated within the following five years. Graduates cannot go back to colleges for further learning from their workplace. They should have acquired the culture of learning themselves lifelong. Bill Ford (1997) explains the objective of heutagogy as "knowledge sharing and not knowledge hoarding." When they are students, they acquire both competency and capability. Cairns (2000) as quoted in Gardner (1007: 252) makes a distinction between competency and capability: "Competency is a proven ability in

acquiring knowledge and skills while capability is characterized by learner confidence in their competency and as a result the ability, to take appropriate and effective action to formulate and solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar and changing settings." Hence, lifelong learning is viewed as a progression from earlier methodologies like capability development. It is required to appropriate learners' needs at workplace in the present century.

The European Commission (2000) defines lifelong learning as "all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence." Hence students in colleges should be prepared to develop five dispositions: curiosity, initiative, independence, transfer, and reflection. These qualities are further explained:

Disposition	Rubric
Curiosity	Explores a topic in depth, yielding a rich awareness and/or little-known information indicating intense interest in the subject
Initiative	Completes required work, generates and pursues opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities
Independence	Educational interest and pursuits exist and flourish outside classroom requirements. Knowledge and/or experiences are pursued independently
Transfer	Makes explicit references to previous learning and applies in an innovative (new & creative) way that knowledge and those skills to demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations
Reflection	Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) in depth to reveal significantly changed perspectives about educational and life experiences, which provide foundation for expanded knowledge, growth, and maturity over time

Lifelong learning is largely a consequence of the changes in society that have been brought about by information technology. Knowledge is being produced at an increasingly rapid rate to the extent that knowledge and skills acquired at colleges become outdated sooner than knowledge produced. Moreover, lifelong learning enriches human life since learning and education are not necessarily just linked to work but life.

Language Skills

Language was disintegrated into listening, speaking, reading, and writing in that order on the sound rationale that children start the acquisition that way in all cultures. The order moves from the social to the academic and from the informal to the formal. Here are some of the thoughts associated with skills:

Listening

1. Human beings use their ears to receive individual sounds and use their brain to convert them into messages that mean something to them in a speech community.

2. Listening requires focus and attention, and people who have difficulty in concentration are poor listeners.
3. Listeners therefore need to listen to a variety of voices as often as possible.
4. By listening they learn how to speak. Listening not only helps them understand what others say, but also help them speak clearly (pronunciation, word & sentence stresses, and intonations).
5. Good listening skills bring benefits to their personal lives: a greater number of friends, social network, improved self-esteem and confidence, better grades and the like.

Speaking

1. Learners need at least one listener.
2. There are three kinds of speaking situation: interactive, partially interactive, and non-interactive.
3. Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversation and telephone calls in which they have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, and slower speech from their conversation partner.

4. Partially interactive speaking situations involve giving a speech to the audience with no interruption during the speech. Nevertheless, the speaker can see the audiences and judge from the expressions on their faces if they are being understood.
5. Non-interactive speaking situations mean recorded speech for broadcasting and finally,
6. Speaking is a skill that most language learners wish to perfect as soon as possible because speaking fluently can build up their confidence level while speaking to others.

Reading

1. Reading can develop independent of listening and speaking but it develops along with them in societies with a highly developed literary tradition. It can help build vocabulary that helps listening.
2. Learners use their eyes to receive written symbols and brain to convert them into messages that mean something to them in a speech community.
3. It is an important way to gain information in English language learning and therefore it is a highly valued skill.
4. It is a complex cognitive process of meaning-making: complex interaction between the text and the reader; shaped by the reader's previous knowledge, experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and language community which socially and culturally situated.
5. It is a process that requires continuous practice, development, refinement, creativity, and critical analysis.

Writing

1. Writing is the process of using symbols to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form.
2. It is hardest skill since it involves the development and presentation of thoughts.
3. Knowledge of grammar, punctuation, choice of vocabulary and sentence fluency are involved and the result of writing is called 'text.'
4. Motivation for writing includes research and scholarship, publication, correspondence,

examinations, networking, keeping history, dissemination of knowledge and the formation of legal system, translation.

5. Purpose may be a personal enjoyment or use: taking notes for study and exam (personal), blogging publicly (unknown audience), a letter to friend (targeted audience).

Background to Segregated Approach

English was taught in India through what is popularly patronized by teachers as Grammar Translation method. Due to the influence of Structural and Behaviourist approaches prevalent during the first half of the twentieth century, it was taken for granted that language teaching could be naturally divided into LSRW skills and such a division was reinforced by approaches and methods including Communicative Language Teaching. Fifty years after the adoption of CLT in India, the desired results are far from ordinary learners of English. However, the current pedagogy is to integrate them wherever possible. The shift was seen in CLT that advocated acquisition of "communicative competence" (Dell Hymes, 1972). Canale and Swain (1980) developed a theory that language competence included communicative competence, grammatical competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Current research verifies that the central innovative characteristic of CLT is the integration.

Disadvantages of Segregated Approach

Skills-based approach was understood to be a welcome alternative to literature-based language teaching. Several terms are employed to refer to the teaching of language on the basis of skills. Some of them are discrete skill, isolated skill, single skill, and segregated skill. However, disintegration of language into four skills also had its own pedagogical problems. One, it emphasizes one skill at a time in the language classroom and therefore it leads to communication deadlock. Two, classroom highlights a given skill intentionally oriented toward the development of only that skill. It

therefore sounds artificial. Three, each skill is treated separately as if other skills are no way related to the one that is focussed in the class. Four, all the four skills are not separated in reality. For instance, listening precedes speaking and reading precedes writing. Five and finally, motivation, interest, and class motivation plummet when language is presented or taught in a fragmented way. Learners do not see the connection between skills because they do not use any one of these skills in isolation. Moreover, they do not know where and how vocabulary and grammar play a role in such a discrete approach. It results in the compounding of confusion.

Rationale for Integration

It is rare in real life to use language in terms of isolable and discrete structural elements. Widdowson (1978) is the first linguist to call for integration to raise learners' proficiency levels and to enable advanced language learning. He argued that although separation is "administratively convenient as in divide and rule," language comprehension and production do not take place in discrete units. On the other hand, it takes place in the form of discourse in specific social contexts. Moreover, English is learnt and taught for purposeful communication. Purposeful communication can not be served if English is viewed as a single at a time ignoring other three skills. On the other hand, it permits more focused teaching and more intensive learning. The pragmatic objectives of English language learning underscore the importance of integrated and flexible instruction. The objective is to enable learners to gain access to social, vocational, educational, or professional opportunities. Integration leads to the use of authentic language and learners are exposed to authentic language and are involved in activities that are interesting and meaningful. Learners rapidly gain a true picture of the richness and complexity of English when they use it for communication. English thus becomes not just as an object of academic interest but a real means of interaction among learners. Besides,

teachers get an opportunity to track students' progress in multiple skills at the same time. Skills integration allows mutually supportive growth in all the four macro and micro skills because language instruction promotes the learning of real content rather than the dissection of language forms. Consequently, the learning of authentic content through language is highly motivating to students of all age groups. Finally, the significant role of background knowledge becomes evident when language skills are integrated communicatively.

Modes of Skills Integration

Teachers and researchers need to choose the appropriate models of modes for integrating skills in a way that is beneficial to learners. The most familiar mode to teachers of English in India is language through literature module which was experimented in 1980s, but teachers' attitude was that of teaching literature for aesthetic purposes and not using it as a mode for enhancing learners' communicative competence. Thus there was almost nil difference between English Major Classes and General English Classes as far as their approach to literature was concerned. The universities' question paper model bears a witness to this piquant reality. Some of the models that teachers can try without compromising on the communication objectives of General English curriculum are

1. Content-based (sometimes also called theme-based)
2. Task-based
3. Text-based (also called genre-based)
4. Discourse-based
5. Project-based
6. Network-based
7. Technology-based
8. Corpus-based
9. Interaction-based
10. Literature-based
11. Literacy-based
12. Community-based
13. Competency-based or
14. Standards-based

This paper investigates why the first two modes can be used for skills integration: content-based (CBI) and Task-based (TBI). CBI is otherwise known as Content Integrated Language Instruction.

Content-based Instruction (CBI) is the most important mode of skills integration. Learners practise in a highly integrated way all the language skills while participating in activities and tasks that focus on important content in areas such as science, math, and social study. The goals of CBI

- i. help students develop communicative competence
- ii. introduce concepts and terminology relevant to a subject area
- iii. reinforce content-area information learnt elsewhere
- iv. teach specific learning strategies for reading and writing or general study via the means of interesting content

There are three models of content based instruction.

1. Theme-based: Skills are fully integrated in the study of a theme and it works effectively because themes are chosen for their relevance, importance, and interests to the students, a key factor for their motivation.
2. Adjunct: Language and content courses are linked through instructor and curriculum coordination. Two separate courses are conducted but they are carefully linked.
3. Sheltered: Learners are taught the subject matter and the language course work is modified to students' level of proficiency.

Task-based Instruction (TBI) can simply be understood as learning-by-doing method. It reflects the natural process of language acquisition by children in all cultures. Parents and elders at home ask children to do several actions like 'open the door and see who knocked the door?' or 'call the mom who is in kitchen,' or 'open the window, child,' and the like. Children listen and carry out the instruction and in this process they internalize language structures and use them for communication unconsciously. TBI can therefore be characterised as follows:

1. It involves communicative tasks in the target language.
2. Activities require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language.
3. Attention is oriented to meaning rather than form.
4. Pair work and group work are often used.
5. Tasks become increasingly complex and multifaceted at higher levels of skill development when students are more able to handle such transactions.

Task-based teaching is the closest classroom simulation of real-life integration. Such integrated classroom activities called 'tasks' include listening to/watching tapes/TV/You tube, playing games, working on information gaps, and problem-solving exercises. Group work or pair work demand the use of language (LSRW), share and discuss information, and pool information. Language practice exercises for groups and pairs of learners combine

- i. listening and speaking
 - ii. reading and speaking
 - iii. reading, writing and speaking
- Nunan (1989) outlines the principles of designing teaching materials and modules for integrating a variety of language skills:
- i. Use of authentic language models
 - ii. Continuity of language work from comprehension to production
 - iii. Explicit connections of classroom language practice to real world uses (presentation & interviews)
 - iv. A systematic language focus that enables learners to identify and analyze language regularities

According to Nunan (2001), in integrated instruction, language skills are taught and practised on the basis of learning objectives. Teaching learning objectives are

- i. language features needed for communication and used in the context of communication
- ii. thematic and cohesive stretches of discourse for language input, rather than a focus on

discrete vocabulary items, patterns, or grammar points

- iii. Discourse-based approaches to instruction afford an opportunity to learners to focus on organizing and presenting information in particular contexts. For example, learning to organize and explain one's ideas in writing can prove to be highly useful in structuring oral presentations

Challenges in Skills Integration

Skills integration is not without its own challenges. In the Indian context, most teachers of English are not familiar with skills teaching since the university English language curriculum continues to be literature-based and –biased. In institutions where skills-based instruction has been introduced under autonomy, teachers pine for going back to teach literature in language classrooms since they believe that students need to be exposed to human values rather than communication that is anyhow not assured through skills-based instruction. Richards and Rogers (2001) say that teachers and learners resist integration in certain cultures. Teachers think that complex integrated instruction with more than two skills places greater demands on them. Teachers therefore need to be versatile and well-trained. They need to be familiar with discourse-based instructional models and they must pay more time and effort to prepare integrated teaching materials. Large classroom is the main problem where individual attention of acquisition of language competence could not be assured nor monitored. Moreover, uneven acquisition of skills by learners creates a serious problem. For instance, a particular skill may get more or less attention than learners' proficiency might require. Some contend that integrated approach might overlook the quality of the learning product since it focuses on the learning process. Above all, integrated tests and testing have become a failure since language proficiency is not a unitary trait.

Suggestions

The following can be given some serious thought as part of follow-up action:

- i. Research guides can encourage their wards working in colleges to undertake research on modes of skills integration, teachers' attitude to integration, and problems related to testing as well in the Indian context.
- ii. National level workshops to English teachers can be conducted on materials production and teaching strategies using different modes of skills integration.
- iii. Skills integration can be included as a component in MA English curriculum and B.Ed English curriculum for training prospective college and school teachers.
- iv. English teachers of autonomous colleges in a particular region can network among themselves through consortium in an effort to promote awareness for professional development in the area of skills integration.
- v. Professional Associations like ELTIF and ELTAI can hold conferences and workshops to their members on the theme.
- vi. English teachers can undertake action research on the different aspects of skills integration: teaching, learning, testing, and materials production.
- vii. MPhil scholars can be encouraged to address the issue as part of their dissertation.

Conclusions

With current emphasis on both fluency and accuracy in English language learning, integrated language teaching-learning and integrative teaching models need to be encouraged for research in the first instance and experiment in teacher training institutes before it is implemented in institutions. English language instruction lacks depth and substance when it is tried through literature. Four macro-skills are related and connected in two ways: the direction of communication (in or out) & the method of communication (spoken or written). Skills integration is a necessity and not a luxury for learning English as a foreign or a second language in India. Teachers and learners must be encouraged to move from pedagogy to heutagogy through andagogy in acquisition of English language competency and capability for communication purposes throughout their life. Learners should become independent of teachers with the help of technology.

Task-based Approach in Second Language Teaching: Role-play in the Classroom

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Abstract

Language teaching is not just about teaching languages, it is also about helping students to develop themselves as people. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) proposes the use of tasks as a central component in the language classroom because they provide better contexts for activating learner learning processes and promoting second language learning. Task-Based language teaching has attracted the attention of second language learning which was coined and later developed by second language researchers and educators in reaction to other teacher-dominated, form-oriented methods. Role play is a technique in which students are presented with a real or artificial environment and they are exposed with some kind of case or situation and they need to exhibit the same in form of roles. A brief outline of task-based teaching and a brief historical sketch of role-play are given in this paper.

This paper focuses on the need of task-based language teaching in classrooms and role play as a instructive method which serves as a multi-skill developing weapon where the students not only develop a broader perspective about a task or new role but also the horizon of understanding others behavior resulting into empathy, teamwork, better communication and interpersonal skills.

Keywords: Task-based Language Teaching, Role-play.

Introduction

English becomes the most essential language in the world. Almost all the people from many different countries around the world use it to communicate. The area of English has always become a special interest. Among the recent innovations in the field of second language teaching, task-based language teaching is probably the most promising and productive one, the one which has drawn much attention from both second language teaching profession and second language researchers.

Task is "...an activity which involves the use of language but in which the focus is on the outcome of the activity rather than on the language used to achieve that outcome."

Role-play is an effective technique to animate the teaching and learning atmosphere, arouse the interests of learners, and make the language learning impressive. Role play is very important

in teaching English because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. In addition, it also allows students to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while.

Why use a Task-based approach?

- » Tasks can be easily related to students real-life language needs.
- » Tasks create contexts that facilitate second language acquisition (i.e. an L2 is best learned through communicating).
- » Tasks create opportunities for focusing on form.
- » Students are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation in a task-based approach.

- » A task-based approach enables teachers to see if students are developing the ability to communicate in an L2.

Definition of Role-Play:

Role-play refers to activities where students simulate a scenario by assuming specific roles. In the classroom, students can work through a situation and practice behavior for the real world. Alternatively, the role-playing activities may be used to shed light on any complicated topic. To be effective, students must take on the roles that they are assigned and assume the vantage point of a specific character. Some students may play themselves while others are given roles that require them to behave in a way that they would not normally conduct themselves.

History of role-play

The idea of Role play as a medium for instruction can be traced back to the Greeks. Probably the first role-play session was run when a master teaching a pupil, said to him: "*Act as if I am a customer and you are serving me*". The pupil played his role. The master played his role as a would-be-customer. When they discussed their roles afterwards, play was used as method of instruction (Corsini, Shaw & Blake, 1961). The Viennese psychiatrist Moreno was the first to examine role-play in a scientific way. Moreno (1946) created the psychometric measure, a technique that studies interpersonal attraction and group membership in institutional settings (e.g., reform schools). He used role-play for psychiatric objectives. These plays are known under the names of psycho-drama and socio-drama. In psycho-drama, the enactment and its emotional and behavioral confrontations are the central activity; discussion and analysis are minimal (Joyce & Weil, 1980). The educational use of role-play became more and more widespread. During the 1970s and 1980s the use of role-play increased even further and role-play is now common-place in university curricula, business, and industrial training programs.

Reasons for using Role-plays in Class

There are many good reasons for using role-plays in class:

- » Role-plays help students cope with real-life situations, commonly used expressions, forcing them to think "on their feet";
- » Role-plays help students work together as a team or group, and communicate in order to understand each other, because role-plays are not simple acts of reading or reproduction the information from a piece of paper;
- » Role-plays can be adapted to the needs of the students, they may use specific vocabulary for specific situations, as learning English is sometimes done for a specific purpose;
- » Role-plays give learners more responsibility in their learning, encouraging interaction;
- » Role-plays offer students the chance to evaluate their learning progress and their level of English.

Role play can improve learners speaking skills in any situation, and helps learners to interact. As for the shy learners, role play helps by providing a mask, where learners with difficulty in conversation are liberated. In addition, it is fun and most learners will agree that enjoyment leads to better learning.

How to teach using Role-play?

- » The teacher should prepare the students by asking questions before performing a role play.
- » The questions should incorporate the major parts of the role play and the vocabulary/ idioms involved. After the question answer session the students should be comfortable with what they need to do.
- » Allow the students a few minutes to study the role cards and work out some key sentences. The teacher can help the students where ever needed.
- » Each role play should be performed at least twice with the students changing roles.
- » In group situations the stronger students can act out the role play to the whole class.

- » The teacher can take one of the roles if needed.
- » Avoid making corrections until the role play is finished.

Role-play Cards

Role play cards can be a very useful tool. Role-play cards invite students to assume the role of a specific person or character and to react to a stimulus or prompt as that person.

Values of Role-plays

Role playing allows people to make mistakes in a non-threatening environment. They can test several solutions to very realistic problems, and the application is immediate. It also fulfills some of the very basic principles of the teaching-learning process such as learner involvement and intrinsic motivation. A positive climate often results in which one can see himself as others see him. The involvement of the role playing participants can create both an emotional and intellectual attachment to the subject matter at hand. Role playing can often create a sense of community within the class.

Problems in Role Playing

The major drawback in role playing is the insecurity of class members. Some may react negatively to participating in a situation which will be discussed and possibly criticized by other members of the class. And role playing takes time. The class discussion of a five-to-ten-minute role playing situation may extend to several times the length of the situation itself. The relationship of the people in the group is a crucial factor in the success of role playing. At times it may emerge as a negative factor. For example, previous interpersonal difficulties experienced by group members may arise in class to corrupt the role playing situation. Also, if the group has people of different status, they may be reluctant to become involved for fear of being humiliated before the members of the class who are smarter or more popular. These difficulties with the method are formidable, but they are not insurmountable. Nor are they so extensive that

they should prohibit us from experimenting with role playing. The potential benefits of the method quickly overbalance the difficulties which seem so apparent in the initial preparation stages.

Principles for Effective Role Playing

As a teaching technique, role playing is based on the philosophy that meanings are in people, not in words or symbols. If that philosophy is accurate, we must first of all share the meanings, then clarify our understandings of each other's meanings, and finally, if necessary, change our meanings. In the language of phenomenological psychology, this has to do with changing the self concept. The self concept is best changed through direct involvement in a realistic and life-related problem situation rather than through hearing about such situations from others. Creating a teaching situation which can lead to the change of self concepts requires a distinct organizational pattern

The Role of a Teacher (Some of the possible Teacher roles):

Facilitator - students may need new language to be 'fed' in by the teacher. If rehearsal time is appropriate the feeding in of new language should take place at this stage. As students practice the role-play they might find that they are stuck for words and phrases. In the practice stage the teacher has a chance to 'feed-in' the appropriate language. This may need the teacher to act as a sort of 'walking dictionary', monitoring the class and offering assistance as and when necessary.

Spectator - The teacher watches the role-play and offers comments and advice at the end.

Participant - It is sometimes appropriate to get involved and take part in the role-play yourself.

Error Correction

There are many ways to correct mistakes when using role-play. It is rarely appropriate for the teacher to jump in and correct every mistake. This could be incredibly de-motivating! Some students do like to be corrected straight after a role-play activity, while the language is still fresh in their minds. Sentences with errors can be

written on the board for the group to correct together.

Self-correction - If you have the equipment to record the role-plays either on audiocassette or on video, students can be given the opportunity to listen to the dialogue again and reflect on the language used. They may find it easy to spot their own mistakes.

Peer-correction - Fellow students may be able to correct some mistakes made by their peers. Students could be asked to listen out for both great bits of language they'd like to use themselves, and some mistakes they hear. Be careful to keep peer-correction a positive and profitable experience for all involved. Making a note of common mistakes yourself and dealing with them in future classes ensures that the students don't lose motivation by being corrected on the spot or straight after the role-play. Negotiate with students and ask them how they would like to be corrected.

Methodology of Task-based Language Teaching:

a. Pre-task (e.g. opportunity for pre-task planning)

Below are some of the ways to do Pre-task:

- 1) Allow the students time to plan

- 2) Provide a model

- 3) Do a similar task

- 4) Pre-teach key linguistic items

b. Main-task (e.g. pre-emptive and reactive focus on form).

- 1) Whole class vs. small group work

- 2) Set a time for completing the task

- 3) Vary the number of participants

- 4) Introduce a surprise element

- 5) Presentation by each group at the end of the Task.

c. Post-task (e.g. language practice activities).

- 1) Students give a report

- 2) Repeat task

Putting it into practice:

The example is based on Task-based approach with a simple and straight-forward structure. The task included in this paper involves easy and deliberate integration of various skills for language learning.

Task-: Role Play: Doctor Vs. Patient

Level: Beginner/ Intermediate

Time: 30-40 minutes

Material: Cards

Language Functions: Giving & taking advice, narration, discussing, expressing views.

Pre-Task

Brainstorm by asking the following questions on the topic 'Seeing a Doctor'.

- a. Why do people visit a doctor? Or why do you visit a doctor?
- b. What are some common sicknesses that take people to a doctor?
- c. What do you do when you catch cold?
- d. Do you always visit a doctor when you have a headache?
- e. Have you ever been bitten by a dog? What should you do when beaten by a dog?

Task Preparation

1. Pair students in groups of two: patients vs. doctors.
2. Make one student a patient, the other a doctor.
3. Cut out a patient card on **A** and a doctor's card on **B** and hand it over to learners accordingly.
4. Allow the participants some time to study the cards.

Task-Realization

Patients: Based on their cards, the participants write down possible short-dialogues to describe their situations to the doctors.

Doctors: Based on their cards, participants write down and practice possible short dialogues to advise patients on his/her health problems.

Post-Task

1. Learners can use internet or library to read some more information on remedies for the sickness they have.
2. Learners' groups take turn to role play their dialogues.
3. The facilitator can collect the written dialogues as a part of over-all assessment.

Patient's Card: 1**Illness Description:** You have caught cold, fever and headache for two weeks. You have been taking medicine at home, but your situation hasn't improved. Your body hurts and you don't feel like eating or drinking anything. Every time you eat something, you vomit it out. **Task:** You are going to see the doctor today. Plan a dialogue with the doctor.

Doctor's Card: 1**Illness Description:** Your patient has been suffering from bad cold, headache and fever for two weeks. The patient has taken medicines, but does not feel better still. To make things worse, the patient can't eat. Every time the patient eats, he/she vomits. **Task:** Plan a dialogue with the patient, giving him/her at least five remedies.

Patient's Card: 2**Illness Description:** You have serious food poisoning and your stomach hurts badly. You visit the toilet at least five times in 30 minutes. You have been taking medicine at home, but your situation hasn't improved. You don't feel like eating or drinking anything. Every time you eat something, you rush to the toilet. **Task:** You are going to see the doctor today. Plan a dialogue with the doctor telling him/her how you feel.

Doctor's Card: 2**Illness Description:** Your patient has been suffering from serious food poisoning. The patient visits the toilet frequently. He/She has taken medicine and still does not feel better. To make things worse, the patient can't eat. Every time the patient eats, he/she visits the toilet. **Task:** Plan a dialogue with the patient, giving him/her at least five remedies to the problem.

Patient's Card: 3**Illness Description:** You feel very sick. You have fever and headache. You feel tired, your joints hurt badly and you feel very weak. You don't feel like eating anything. You have been keeping warm, but still feel bad. **Task:** You are going to see the doctor today. Plan a dialogue with the doctor.

Doctor's Card: 3**Illness Description:** Your patient has fever and headache. The patient feels tired and his/her joints hurt. He/She has lost his/her appetite. **Task:** Plan a dialogue with the patient, giving him/her remedies to the problem.

<p>Patient's Card: 4Illness Description: A sore throat is making you feel terrible. You have had a sore throat for a day now and it only gets worse. Now you can't eat anything or else your throat hurts badly. Your situation is very discomforting and you had passed a sleepless night. Task: You are going to see the doctor today. Plan a dialogue with the doctor detailing your situation.</p>	<p>Doctor's Card: 4Illness Description: Your patient has a sore throat and he/she can neither eat nor sleep at night. The patient feels terribly bad. To make it worse, fever and headache have worsen the situation. Task: It is your job to help the patient. Plan a dialogue with the patient, giving him/her at least five solutions to the patient.</p>
<p>Patient's Card: 5Illness Description: The last time you went playing football you broke your leg. The broken leg hurts badly. You can only walk when someone supports you. You feel uncomfortable and spend most of the time in bed. Task: You are going to see the doctor today. Plan a dialogue with the doctor detailing your situation.</p>	<p>Doctor's Card: 5Illness Description: Your patient has a broken leg. It hurts badly and the patient can't walk. Task: It is your job to help the patient. Plan a dialogue with the patient, giving him/her at least five solutions to the patient.</p>

Conclusion

To sum up, incorporating role-play into the classroom adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production and also a lot of fun! It can be an integral part of the class and not a 'one-off' event. It's fun and motivating; quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more forthright way; the world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world - thus offering a much wider range of language opportunities. In addition to these reasons, students who will at some point travel to an English speaking country are given a chance to rehearse their English in a safe

environment. Real situations can be created and students can benefit from the practice. Mistakes can be made with no drastic consequences.

Role-playing can boost self-esteem, increase classroom morale, encourage participation and create confidence. Children who engage in creative learning learn faster, retain more of what they learn, and are more prone to apply their learning outside the classroom. The techniques of role playing afford another approach to involving students in their own learning process toward the clarification of self concepts, evaluation of behavior, and aligning of that behavior with reality.

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Enhancing the Vocabulary Knowledge of ESL Learners: Findings on Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Vocabulary knowledge is a dominant means to explicit ones understanding and perception, either verbally or drafted. Indeed, neither literature nor language survives without vocabulary. It shows words are mighty weapon. Therefore, the study of vocabulary is essential for English as second language learners in India. One cannot be fully proficient in vocabulary knowledge but can broaden the knowledge. The present study is an attempt in improving English vocabulary knowledge of the ESL students of Mysore, Karnataka; it is also intended to find the effectiveness of vocabulary knowledge through different techniques useful for secondary school students. The procedure worked for this research is by the way of pre-test session and post-test session. Therefore in pre-test, an effort was made to examine the area of difficulty of the students. The error made by the students were observed and examined closely. After the pre-test session, the post-test was administered. Then through statistical analysis the data collected is analyzed. The result through statistical analysis explains that teaching vocabulary words benefits the school students through various techniques. So presenting the target vocabulary words through makes a remarkable difference in terms of overall performance of the students.

Keywords: ESL Learners, Secondary school students, Vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary knowledge is central to any languages, its learning and function acts as a critical importance in learning a language especially for English as Second Language (ESL) Learners. Zimmerman (2009) states vocabulary learning as a prolonged course of action throughout one's life. It is a very important means to express ones understanding and perception, either verbally or drafted. Indeed, neither literature nor language survives without vocabulary. Therefore, the study of vocabulary is essential for English as second language learners in India. Vocabulary efficiency is vital for reading comprehension, one cannot understand text without what most of the words mean. Efficiency over a required knowledge of vocabulary can make a second language learner as effective speaker, good listener, reader and writer. Therefore, the vocabulary knowledge of secondary school students should be enhanced by giving them proper method to develop their vocabulary skills. Hence an effective approach for an ESL learner must be administered. By evidence through various vocabulary learning

techniques, students could enrich their vocabulary knowledge. However, the success of any methodology, material and strategy is determined by the results these all produce while achieving the stated aims and objectives. As the general aim of any ESL learners is to develop their vocabulary efficiency, the present paper investigates the results produced by the various vocabulary techniques so as increase their vocabulary efficiency level.

Currently, the research on the significance of vocabulary knowledge has been improved (Herman, 2003; Jones, 1995; Laufer, 1986; Read, 1988; Zareva, 2005). The research on the renaissance of vocabulary learning and is expecting that the outcome of this development will bring advanced awareness into the frame of vocabulary and the vocabulary aspect will bring a widened perceptive in language application states Bachman (2000). In the matter of fact many researchers are giving their thought to vocabulary learning states Zahar, Cobb and Spada (2001) and Meara (1980) the vocabulary learning is no longer an ignored field.

The view of ESL learners in learning vocabulary knowledge acts as one of the substantial element and at the same time crucial condition for learning a language (Laufer, 1986). Nonetheless, the area of language research was ignored to a great extent by many great researchers (Harlech-Jones, 1983; Laufer, 1986; Read, 1988).

Vocabulary development among genders is one of the most significant factors used in ESL research to distinguish among male and female learners. The results of these studies indicate contradictory findings, because some focus the superiority of males over females, others insists on girls being better language learners than boys and still some others exhibit that gender is inessential in second language learning. Regarding, the field of vocabulary learning, the role of gender has also taken up a prominent place. Studies that address gender differences in the several aspects related to lexical acquisition are vast. Results are uncertain within this area as well, with changeability depending on the aspect examined. A number of studies have examined perceptive and effective vocabulary knowledge of learners, and have reached different inferences. Nyikos' (1990, cited in Sunderland, 2000, p. 206) study women performed better than men in recollection test of German vocabulary. Meara and Fitzpatrick (2000) and Jiménez and Moreno (2004) also pointed out that female learners performed better than males in productive vocabulary. By in contrast, Boyle (1987) determined that, exceptionally, boys are superior to girls in the comprehension of heard vocabulary. Furthermore, exceptional variations were found in consideration of females in the mean number of words produced in reaction to the lexical availability test (Jiménez & Ojeda, 2009). A set of recent studies compiled in Jimenez (2010) also point to mixed results on gender differences or tendencies. Gender is acknowledged as a complicated and delicate issue. Likewise, regarding the role of gender in vocabulary learning method, Jiménez (2003) observed that girls were superior to boys in quantitative and qualitative terms.

From a qualitative perspective, Jiménez (1992) claimed differences in favour of females in productive vocabulary in written exercises. Jiménez (1997) states that woman outperforms men in the election of word topics related to public matters. In a quantitative study of the same data, these authors (2007, 2008) also found out that female learners developed considerably new evidences than their male gender, and considerably more types in their written forms. However, there were very slight differences in the most common words used by girls and boys to which these belong. Also, the type of word knowledge examined, the learning context, or the assignment used for data gathering seem to play a significant role in the establishment of gender dispositions. Moreover, the vast numbers of studies address second language vocabulary learning in secondary school contexts. In this paper we present a study which analyses the vocabulary efficiency of secondary school students of ESL learners. Our main aims are firstly to investigate the between whole of vocabulary techniques and gender of ESL learners, secondly to investigate between each vocabulary techniques on male and female gender.

Research Question

Based on the objectives that were going to be achieved in the current study, the following questions were posed

1. Is there any significant difference between male and female students in vocabulary efficiency of secondary school students?
2. Is there any significant difference in various vocabulary tests between male and female secondary school students' vocabulary proficiency?

Research Hypotheses

With regard to the research questions posted above, the following hypotheses were formulated to be tested through the current study

1. There is significant difference between male and female students in vocabulary efficiency of secondary school students.

2. There is not any significant difference in the test between male and female secondary school students' vocabulary proficiency.

Method

This study used a qualitative study which used classroom action research design. Qualitative approach was applied since the study was trying to capture the process that happened from the actors involved in the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1979, cited in Hatch, 2002:7). The process captured were how far is the efficiency level by administering various techniques helped to improve the student's vocabulary efficiency level. Classroom action research was employed as the researcher tried to emphasize on action applied for improving some problems found especially in retrieving the words that had been learnt or stored in the memory. The study on each gender groups was compared through the administration of the vocabulary techniques.

Participants of the study

Based on the random sampling from 9th grade, student of 14 years of age a total of 40 available students participated from Government English medium school from Mysore, Karnataka whose consent were obtained to participate in this study.

In order to implement the treatment of the study and test the hypotheses of the study, the following materials were used:

Materials and Data Procedure

After receiving the authorities' cooperation at the school, the researcher started the research which lasted about three weeks to accomplish. A vocabulary test was developed by the researcher to test the initial vocabulary proficiency of the male and female student participants of the study prior main test. The initial test included a list of 50 various vocabulary word tests with a question and multiple choices in which students ought to choose one answer from the given multiple choice. This test was a researcher made test designed based from short stories of Panchatantra tales and from the text

books of the students to test vocabulary efficiency of the secondary school students.

Main Test

After the initial test, the secondary schools students took the main test. The test was similar version of initial test whose words had been revised to prevent testing effect. The test contained various vocabulary techniques like semantic feature analysis taken from the stories of Panchatantra tales consisted of five tables for test, Dolch word search puzzles consisted of five word search puzzles, Homophone pairs consisted of fifteen words, vocabulary words consisted of twenty words, cross out the odd ones that doesn't belong with the others in the group consisted of fifteen words were given to the male and female students. Data's were collected in single session in regular class time. A student has 60 minutes to complete the vocabulary efficiency test. At the beginning of the test, clear instructions were given both orally and in sample written form to make them understand what they were being asked to do. No dictionaries, no grammar books notes or any other help was permitted as support.

Results

The data obtained from the main test of secondary school students were analyzed by Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were used to answer the research questions.

Research Question 1: Is there any significant difference between male and female students in vocabulary efficiency of secondary school students?

Table 1 Chi-Square values between Gender and Vocabulary Proficiency words

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.158(a)	7	.242
Likelihood Ratio	11.383	7	.123
Linear-by-Linear Association	.091	1	.762
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

The Chi-Square value ($X^2=9.158$) of both male and female students of secondary school students, sig. value $p=.242$ (which is greater than .05).

Consequently, the first hypothesis is wrong which states there is significant difference between various Vocabulary techniques (semantic feature analysis , Dolch word search puzzles, Homophone pairs, vocabulary words, cross out the odd ones that doesn't belong with the others in the group) and the gender group (male and female) among the 9th grade students is confirmed.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference in various vocabulary tests between the gender group's male and female secondary school students' vocabulary proficiency?

1. Semantic Feature Analysis through Character Analysis

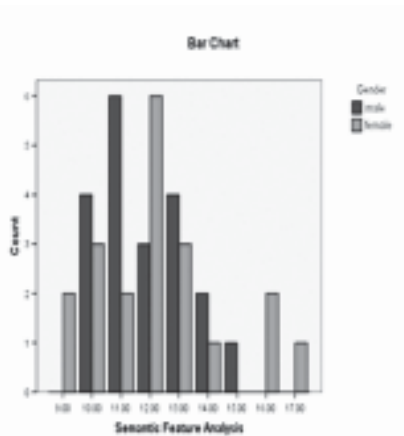


Table 2 Chi-Square Values between Gender and Semantic Feature Analysis Values

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.619(a)	8	.293
Likelihood Ratio	12.057	8	.149
Linear-by-Linear Association	.344	1	.558
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 18 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

The results of the Chi-Square test illustrated in Table 2 and the bar diagram shows that there are statistically no significant difference between the gender groups and the semantic feature analysis values.

2. Dolch Word Search Puzzle

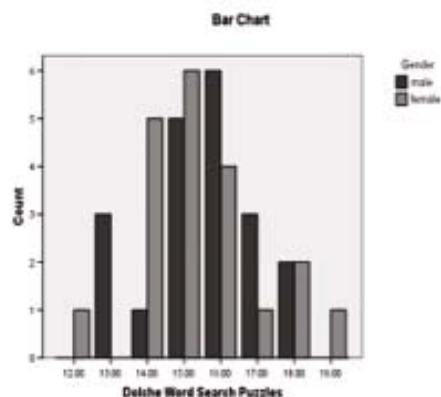


Table 3 Chi-Square Values between Gender and Dolch Word Search Puzzles

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.158(a)	7	.242
Likelihood Ratio	11.383	7	.123
Linear-by-Linear Association	.091	1	.762
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

The results of the Chi-Square test illustrated in Table 3 and the bar diagram shows that there are statistically no significant difference between the gender groups and the Dolch word search puzzle values.

3. Homophone Pairs

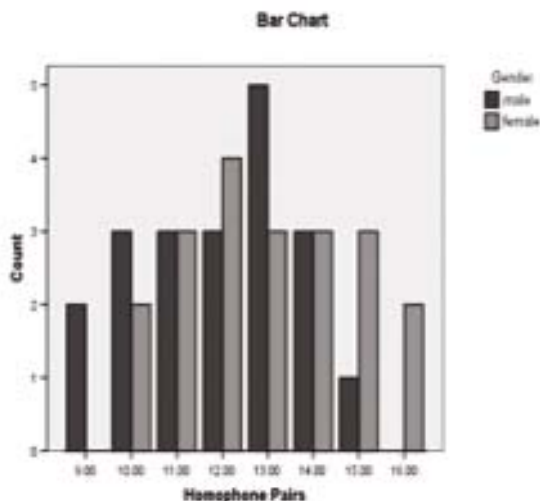


Table 4 Chi-Square Values between Gender and Homophone Pairs

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.843(a)	7	.558
Likelihood Ratio	7.442	7	.384
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.870	1	.090
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

The results of the Chi-Square test illustrated in Table 4 and the bar diagram shows that there are statistically no significant difference between the gender groups and the semantic feature analysis values. The Chi-Square value ($X^2 = 5.843$) and the sig.value $p = .558$ (which is

greater than .05). The findings do not provide evidence that gender matters in the performance of vocabulary knowledge in Homophone Pairs.

4. Vocabulary Words

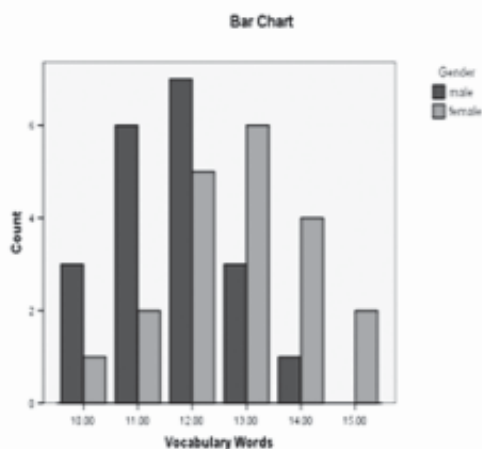


Table 5 Chi-Square Values between Gender and Vocabulary Words

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.133(a)	5	.149
Likelihood Ratio	9.194	5	.102
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.478	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 10 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

The results of the Chi-Square test illustrated in Table 5 and the bar diagram shows that there are statistically no significant difference between the gender groups and the semantic feature analysis values. The Chi-Square value ($X^2 = 8.133$) and the sig.value $p = .149$ (which is greater than .05). The findings do not provide evidence that gender matters in the performance of vocabulary knowledge in vocabulary word values.

5. Strike out the odd ones out

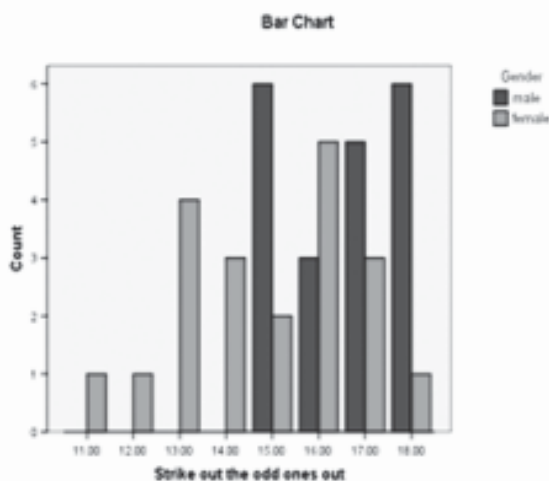


Table 6 Chi-Square Values between Gender and Strike out the odd ones out

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.571(a)	7	.029
Likelihood Ratio	19.543	7	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.275	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	40		

a 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50. The results of the Chi-Square test illustrated in Table 6 and bar diagram shows that there are statistically no significant difference between the gender groups and strike out the odd ones. The Chi-Square value ($X^2=15.571$) and sig.value $p=.029$ (which is greater than .05). The findings do not provide evidence that gender matters in the performance of strike out the odd ones. Consequently, the second hypothesis is right which states there is no significant difference between various Vocabulary techniques and the gender group (male and female) among the 9th grade students is confirmed.

Discussion & Conclusion This survey study among the students of government school in Mysore, Karnataka, helps to check the efficiency level of various vocabulary words of

ESL student. The research finding testifies to the hypothesis that through various vocabulary techniques had helped the researcher to find out the vocabulary proficiency of the students.

As Wright (2004, p.3) states “stories are particularly important in the lives of students: stories help students to broaden their vocabulary learning which additionally helps the students to become good readers.” So, the results of this study finalizes that the use of various vocabulary words techniques integrated into syllabus can highly improve the interest and creativity of very young learners and these kinds of activities can be used not just for young learners but for very young learners, as well.

Comparing the students’ performance of vocabulary tests between the genders led the researchers of the current study to conclude that there was no significant difference between male and female ESL learners’ vocabulary learning. Female students revealed slighter higher score and their interest to learn vocabulary than male students. Thus, we testify there is differences exist between male and female in terms of their vocabulary level after training.

On the whole, students appreciated the importance of vocabulary, that words are major building blocks for any language. This finding was similar to other research work such as Emadin & Moghadam (2007), Tabtimsai (2003) indicating that vocabulary learning techniques can help improve students’ learning outcome.

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Integrating the four skills in the English classroom

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Abstract

One major drawback of teaching English as a second language (TESL) has been identified as the treatment of the four language skills in isolation. This awareness came much late—may be in the post-structuralist era—but has been on the centre stage ever since the dawn of Communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology in the 1970s in the west, and in the following decade onwards in India. Efforts have been then on to present the second language in its totality. These changes of whether disintegration or integration affected only the school classrooms; college and university instruction went on as usual with its traditional Reading-Paraphrasing of literature. Still worse has been the case in professional colleges because of the inherent neglect of language in the technology curricula. It is against this backdrop, this paper proposes a curricular framework for a skill-integrated approach. Communication is not the sum total of language skills; the division is exclusively for analytical purposes for linguists, especially applied linguists, argues this paper.

The whole world is becoming a global market and businesses becoming diverse and result riveted professional and technocrats are facing newer challenges in communication every day, success in this competitive, environment depends not just on acquiring knowledge and hard skills, but also developing effective technical communication skills.

Listening is an important communicative process and is crucial to effective communication.

“You are not listening to me “ says the teacher
“Sir, I am listening to you “ the student replies
“No, you are not “. The teacher emphatically says. The problem is simple. The student is not able to focus 100% on what the teacher is speaking, and the teacher able to sense it, good listeners are good speakers. Listening begins with physical hearing of the message and taking notes of it.

Listening comprehension involves perceiving and interpreting the sounds, messages, Decoding of verbal messages requires the ability to perceive and recognize speech sounds and sound patterns accurately as well as the ability to recognize the way sounds combine to form syllables and utterances.

The listener has to recognize stress and intonation patterns.

Strategies for Effective Listening

Complete comprehension of an oral message is more challenging than reading & listening in a communication opportunity and taking advantage of such opportunities makes a person a dedicated professional.

Activities for Listening

Students should be provided in advance with a taste which leads to some kind of clear and visible or audible response. It is better to give an instruction like :

- 1) Listen and find out where the family are going for their summer holidays. Mark the places on your map, giving them a purpose means that the students can listen selectively for significant information, as we do in real life.
- 2) Stories: tell a joke or real life anecdote; retell a well known story, read a story from a book. If the story is well chosen students are likely to be motivated to pay attention and understand to enjoy it.
- 3) Songs :- Singing a song or playing a recording of it.
- 4) Using videos from the internet for texts of manageable length for lesson
- 5) Listening :- obeying instructions ; students perform actions or draw something in response to instructions. The listening

passage consists of a number of statements some of which are true and some false.

- 6) Detecting mistakes :- The teacher tells a story or describes something the class knows, but with a number of deliberate mistakes or inconsistencies.
- 7) Longer responses :- Answering questions note taking, paraphrasing and translating summarizing and long gap tilling.
- 8) Extended responses :- A problem is described orally. Students will suggest a solution.

Speaking

Like listening, speaking is crucial to effective communication. Students need to interact orally with their teachers and classmates, make explanations during tutorials, practical sessions, takes part in seminars and workshops, technical presentations, academic interactions, viva voce test and soon.

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and cannot; the other half have nothing to say and keep saying it.

Strategies for Speaking

Group discussion, presentation dialogues based on situations can be conducted for speaking. Presentation has to be planned, prepared, organized and rehearsed properly and systematically delivered. What is important is said in a presentation but how it is said is more Important. The most important element in a presentation the speaker's performance. Even good speakers like Kennedy and Churchill were extremely fearful of speaking in public knowing the purpose, audience and occasion helps to reduce speech anxiety knowing the introduction, body and conclusion well in advance gives the speakers the confidence to control his/ her speech anxiety.

Speech anxiety

Finally practice make one perfect, if the presentation is well rehearsed. There is nothing to fear and there may be. Little or no stage fright at the time of presentation because the speaker is familiar with the situation.

Activities

A simple dialogue is learnt by heart and students perform it in pairs and then again in various ways moods, roles, imaginary situations and contexts.

Describing pictures

Each student has to say as many sentences as possible and 2 minutes to say as many sentences as they can picture differences. Things in common and role play can be done in the class.

Solving problems : How to solve discipline problems in the college and giving suggestions. Short presentations like 'show and tell' describe. About me.

Reading

Reading makes a man complete — Francis Bacon quick efficient and imaginative reading techniques are essential in order to achieve performance depends on the quantity and quality of reading. Reading is a complex communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written word.

An engineering student has to read and interpret textbooks, research papers and articles in technical journals, web materials, directories, technical reports, laboratory instruction sheets, reference material etc.,

Different kinds of strategies are used for different kinds of reading A knowledge of between 95 % and 98 % of the words in necessary for fluent reading and understanding of a text. It is definitely helpful to raise students' awareness of them with explicit recommendation and class room discussion, eliciting individual students' experience of how they have used particular strategies for reading.

Writing

Writing is fundamentally different from other four skills, not only because it is visual as contrasted with oral/aural, but also because of how it is produced and the way it communicates. Writing cannot normally 'be picked' up but has to be systematically taught. In speech, students express their ideas in a linear fashion, as they occur to them. In writing, they have time to rewrite and edit.

Writing tasks

- 1) Creative writing a story based on a title, a pictures series of pictures or first or last sentence.
 - 2) Instruction : - Directions how to get some where (b) An instruction to prepare tea etc.,
 - 3) Describing a person, place, view, etc.,
 - 4) Writing E Mails, letters, reports etc.,
- The four skills can be integrated for teaching as well as testing purpose for example ' Reading comprehension ' tests reading a passage and understanding speaking at the answers orally and writing the answers for the purpose of examination.

Good task skills produces good learning. The tasks should activate students primarily in the language items it is meant to teach or practise. Roughly speaking, the more English the students actually engage with during the activity, the more they are likely to learn. If we are practising particular grammatical form, then students engage with it repeatedly in different contexts . We should try to activate as many students as possible simultaneously rather than one by one and to minimize time spent on classroom management or organization.

On the whole, we learn by doing things right. Continued inaccurate use of language items tends to result in fossilization of mistakes and

unsuccessful communication impedes progress in fluency.

It is therefore important to select, design and administer tasks in such a way that students are likely to succeed in doing them most the time after all practice makes a man perfect.

Ramachandra studied in Hindi medium in the school and then joined IIT, Roorkee. Now he is with Google, USA. He picked up English by repeating dialogues loudly from subtitles when he watched English films during college.

The integration of skills in the language classroom can be defined quite simply as a series of activities or tasks which use any combination of four skills:

Listening, speaking, reading and writing in a continuous and related sequence.

- a) Listening to a passage and note making. from the notes, learners can be asked to write a short note.

At an elementary level: Reading- speaking- listening activity

Later it can involve writing- conversation- listening- reading- speaking

- b) Information Gap Activity
- c) Cloze dialogues – (Reading& Writing)
- d) Information is transferred from one mode to the other – linguistic to tabular or tabular to linguistic.

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Book Reviews Invited

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

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Creating Visual Literacy through Picture-illustrated Story Books

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Abstract

To an onlooker, a 3 year- old little Johnny with a picture book in his hand means either he is looking at or staring at the pictures. but actually he is “reading” from the pictures. Most of the times the parents chide the children for only glancing through the pictures and not reading from the picture storybooks. Hardly are those aware of the cognitive processing and comprehension the pictures create in the children. Researchers in cognitive psychology, anthropology, and history have heightened the awareness of the fusion of image and word in knowledge. We live in age that we are awash by multimodal imagery existing both inside and out. With these images knowledge is construed and powerfully permeates into reading and writing. This paper throws light on the rationale for creating visual literacy, juxtaposition of pictures and texts in picture story books, colours used in picture books, brain processing of visuals and texts, harnessing both the hemispheres of the brain, developing comprehension skills using picture storybooks and take away techniques for teachers to design activities to help make picture storybooks in the classroom by the students.

Introduction

Let the children be part of the grand wedding ceremony of pictures and texts and become spellbound at the story unwind by the newlywed couple. Because a well crafted picture book is an exemplification of a dynamic marriage between pictures and words. The way visuals have cast a magic spell on the children is palpable in the revolutionary growth of children’s literature in the recent years. Children are baited by the colour, shapes, sheen and stuff of the picture books and drawn into the world of literature and reading. Creating visual literacy in the elementary level will snowball early literacy skills in the immediate future and digital literacy and performance literacy in their later period. Human beings’ life is surrounded by images at all times. Even a second of life is unimaginable without images, as right from one’s wake-up to till one goes to bed, even in dream we are carried away by a stream of mental images triggered by visual images. Damario (1999) connected this type of continuous stream of mental imagery accompanying our waking and sleeping lives

with the development of what he called our core and autobiographical identities.

A perfect blend and brew of pictures and texts in Picture storybooks

Leonard Marcus (2002) writes, “A picture book is a dialogue between two worlds: the world of images and the world of words.” (cited in Olshansky P.125)

Lee Galda and Kathy G. Short have defined, “a picture book is a book in which both illustrations and printed text are essential to the story, children must be able to ‘read’ pictures and text to understand the story in its fullest sense.” Illustrations are not only an extension of the text but also a necessary component for comprehension.

Olson’s (1992) following words captures the roles of picture and text in picture story books in a nutshell.

“Picture can provide additional information to words for the visual learner, and words can provide additional information to pictures for the verbal learner. One informs the other. When

children are educated with both the visual and the verbal modes of learning (the verbal mode of being presupposed), they can move back and between these domain without effort(p.51).

Although the two languages picture and words are used to make meaning, they function very differently. The relationship between pictures and words can be summarized simply as 'pictures, a visual medium can perform the verbal function of telling a story and words, a verbal medium can perform the visual function of painting a picture.' They are complementary to each other.

What is Visual Literacy?

The term visual literacy has no traces until 1969, when Debes described the concept as a set of competencies that "a human can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences". He further argued that these visual competencies enable individuals to communicate with others, establishing a clear connection between visual literacy and language education. (Cited in Lottie Baker, 2015)

Children of today are immersed in a visual culture of television, World Wide Web, videos, virtual reality games and other gadgets. With the too much exposure and use of these, children are unable to analyse, interpret or think critically about images. They should have the ability to see, and read the images in the fullest sense so that they can recognize the significance of what they are seeing. So it is high time to create visual literacy which will enable the children communicate effectively through both comprehending and creating images in a variety of visual images. The hybridisation of image-word demands a reconfiguration of pedagogy. This led the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) to establish a committee on visual literacy and to incorporate into their standards for the English language arts (IRA/ NCTE, 1996), jointly created by NCTE and IRA (International Reading Association), as emphasis on visual literacy. The standards

suggested the teachers to challenge the students to analyse critically the texts they view and to integrate their visual knowledge with their knowledge of other forms of language. This resulted in teaching of imagery and its myriad forms into the teaching, reading and writing. (cited in Fleckenstein preface xiv).

In order to cater to the multiplicity of intelligence of our students, Gardner said, 'education can no longer conduct business as usual'. It must be business as unusual. One step in that direction is acknowledging the play of imagery in forming our representation of the world, our sense of living in the world. Such a move provides us with a framework that we can use to shift our methodologies and attend to the different intelligences our students bring with them into their classrooms. Our classrooms become marked by opportunities not just for imagistic learning, but for the integration of imagistic and linguistic learning". (ibid, p.42)

Brain processing of visuals and texts

Robert Lindstrom (1999) has emphasized the importance of sight in perception and communication. Lindstrom, author of *The Business Week Guide to Multimedia Presentations*, explains:

'of all our sense receptors, the eyes are the most powerful information conduit to the brain. They send information to the cerebral cortex through two optic nerves, each consisting of 1 million nerve fibres. By comparison, each auditory nerve consists of a mere 30,000 fibres.

Nerve cells devoted to visual processing..... account for about 30% of the brain's cortex, compared to 8% for touch and 3% for hearing. With all the bandwidth the brain, it's no wonder we perceive the world and communicate in visual terms. We register a full-colour image, the equivalent of a mega byte of data, in a fraction of a second.' (cited in Nancy Fry and Douglas Fisher p.7)

Geoffrey and Renate Nummela Caine's research in neuroscience to educational theory and

practice challenges the previously accepted notions that the brain naturally separates emotion from cognition. They throw light on the importance of personal engagement and motivation in learning and also offering a visual, tactual or kinaesthetic learner the opportunity to engage in reading and writing activities that have picture-making at their core so as to enhance the student engagement and motivation and ultimately results in student learning. Based on current brain research, the Caines offer a wealth of guidelines for teachers which include establishing classrooms designed around the principles of orchestrated immersion in thinking, and active processing of the experience to deepen students' meaningful projects over time, relaxed alertness to support creative understanding through reflection.

Significance of harnessing both the hemispheres of Brain

Earlier researches on brain processing study reveal that the left hemisphere was thought to govern all sequential, logical, analytical, verbal thinking while the right hemisphere was thought to govern more intuitive processing and non-verbal holistic thinking. While there remains some truth to these distinctions, researchers now recognize that the brain functions in a much more complex and sophisticated manner, with involvement of both hemispheres in most activities, (Canine & Canine, 1994 cited in Beth Olshansky)

While a person performs the verbal tasks of reading or writing, he must create mental pictures in the process. In the same way an artist is planning out an art using his analytic skills. Recently most of the classroom activities are dominated by logical, analytical, verbal thinking, while the capacity to think in more intuitive, holistic ways remains virtually untapped, except during the occasional special arts classes. Schools have failed to harness the power of brain that underlie in non verbal realm and thereby underutilizing the students' available brain power. Though reading and writing are regarded as complex mental processing that

involves a certain amount of thinking in terms of pictures and the art of engaging in these processes is undeniably linear in nature. To read, the eyes move from left to right along defined lined words and sentences. Readers sound out individual letters or letter blends and then combine them to read individual words; they piece together words to read sentences; and they string together sentences to read paragraphs. Writers are arranging letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs in a sequential, liner fashion, to be read and understood. When words are arranged in non linear fashion like magnets scattered on a refrigerator door, readers find it difficult to read and attempt it to make sense as artistic expression. In both reading and writing, readers move from parts to whole in order to make meaning. In contrast to this, reading a picture or creating an art is a non linear activity. Readers of a picture get the whole image before their eyes look into various parts to digest and contribute to meaning making. The artists often envision the whole image before creating an art. The two distinct medium pictures and words engage their audience in very different kinds of thinking. Words work more as sequential parts-to-whole thinking whereas pictures fashion in non sequential, non linear whole-to-parts thinking.

Picture storybooks augment comprehension skills

Picture story books help develop the comprehension skills of the students. Glenda Rakes has claimed that by combining visuals and texts, comprehension skills can be developed to great extend.

‘Using positron emission tomography (PET scans), medical researchers have been able to demonstrate that different areas of the brain become active when individuals are exposed to verbal and visual information. When individuals were asked to look at and remember verbal information, two regions in the brain's verbal domain – the left hemisphere – become active and when presented with visual information, the right hemisphere is lit up.

Given this information, the use of visuals, in instructional materials takes on a larger dimension than when simply thought of as decorative supplements to texts. The use of visuals with text can provide that dual code that can, in turn, increase comprehension'. (cited in Nancy Fry and Douglas Fisher . p.11-12)

Power of colours in Pictures:

Children choose books based on pictures and attractive colours. Role of illustrators is predominant as the choice of pictures and use of colours are made by them. Choice and use of colours in pictures make a great impact. Recent research concerning, the benefits of using colour in presentations indicated:

- Colour visuals increase willingness to read by up to 80 percent
- Using colour can increase motivation and participation by up to 80 percent
- Colour enhances learning and improves retention by more than 75 percent (cited in Lyndell Burmark "The Power of Colour", 2007. P.15)

Activities for the students to make their own picture books

Teachers can design activities and tasks to nudge out the creativity of the students. The students can rise to the level of the authors and illustrators with the assigned tasks of making their own picture books. A journey of several miles starts with a single step. The students can be divided into small groups. One group of students can be assigned with a task of drawing pictures of animals, birds, scenery, objects of daily life, any other mythological characters, human figures or imaginative figures. Students can be suggested to draw the simple sketches of figures so that they may not pressurise themselves for perfection. The students may be given easy- to-follow instructions for producing their artwork

using paint, colour pencils, crayons and other materials usually they have. The artwork for the students can be collected and given to the other group of students to produce text and storyline. To begin with simple steps, like description of the drawings can be done by the students. This will develop and channelize the verbalizing skills of the students. This practise over a period of time can be flooded with innovations for improvisation and innovations. As a narrative structure involves a beginning, middle and end, a small story can be created with a few pictures and a sequential few lines comprising these narrative formulae. With an exotic variety of colour papers, charts, glitter pens and any such stationery that always drive the children crazy after can be made into good use for planning and designing of picture books such as rag books, zigzag books and scroll books. Any well designed picture book can provide children with experiences in exploring the physical elements of bookmaking such as the dust jacket, endpapers, print type, paper, and arrangement of print and illustrations.

With well planned strategies illustrations and text can be integrated effectively to make picture books into a 'seamless whole'.

Conclusion

This paper deals only with the printed version of the picture books and their digital cousin digital version of stories remain unexplored. Modern age children are digital natives and born up in the world of gadgets and technologies. As digital technologies are mushrooming and accessible to children, their use and abuse of this deserve a study. Hence the types, impacts of electronic visuals are reserved for future research. A comparative study on print version of storybooks and electronic versions such as CD ROM storybooks can be done in the future.

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Glimpses of a Disintegrating Society in Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*

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Abstract

English literature has a plethora of creative writings that has contributed immensely to understanding human beings, their relationships and the society they live in. Nadine Gordimer, an African writer belonging to the privileged class, in her long career has charted each stage of South African history with a daring refusal to compromise. She is a writer of extraordinary power and acuity. In her novel *The House Gun* (1998) she has depicted the post-apartheid society that is marginally racist and exposed to violence. It revolves around the life of a middle-class white couple Harald and Claudia, whose son Duncan, commits domestic murder with a house gun. Gordimer in her novel has dealt with some of the most pressing issues of today's world like: the complexities of sexual identity (homosexuality/heterosexuality) and its outcome (murder); the fragile parent-child relationship and the changing racial relationship. This paper scrutinizes two important problem areas in our society: changing relationship quotient and the deep roots of violence. The purity of relationship and marriage is being threatened by cultural stigmas like homosexuality, live-in relationships, with the gun culture being a major threat to our peaceful existence. Thus, the paper gives an insight into our disintegrating society drawing source from the novel.

We live in a fast moving, yet, chaotic world filled with momentous history which has always been amply chronicled by literature. The African society, in particular, is significant for its turbulent history. The African creative writers did not stop contributing even in their darkest hours. Nadine Gordimer, a one-time Booker Prize Winner and Nobel Laureate, is one such writer who has recorded the changing times of Africa-from apartheid to post-apartheid, efficiently through her novels and short stories. She is a guardian of the African conscience, having a clear vision of the ideal society. Some of her notable works are *A World of Strangers*(1958), *The Late Bourgeois World*(1966), *Burger's Daughter*(1979), *July's People* (1981), *The Pickup* (2001) and *Beethoven was One-Sixteenth Black* (2007). She died at the age of ninety in 2014.

Gordimer is a tenacious observer of the society around her and has evolved her response to the important social and historical developments through her novels. Her novel *The House Gun* (1998) dramatizes the events that occur after a murder committed with a house gun, in post-apartheid Africa. It closely follows the lives of the Lingards- Harald, an Executive Director of an insurance company and Claudia, a doctor and their son Duncan, an architect, who murders his friend Carl Jespersen in a fit of passionate rage using a house gun. The novel reflects the disintegration of relationship and disintegration of culture, were both are intertwined.

Gordimer dissects the various intricacies of the changing relationships. Marriage is slowly becoming an arrangement based on circumstances. The union of Claudia and Duncan

had been pushed forward by circumstances “when she found herself pregnant” (80). The couple had difference in belief – he, a Jesuit and she, an ardent believer in Freud and in choice of career, she in “healing the body” which “fulfilled herself and all possible human obligations” (80) and he “choosing an occupation that interested him for its influence over his own existence” (80). Time kept them together in spite of the oddness of their mismatch and through the different stages of their marriage, of loving one another; they fitted each other leading independent lives. It was a perfect convenient arrangement for both of them.

However, Isidore Diala observes that, “both Harald and Claudia are soon reclaimed by their old way of life: they sink back into a life of routines” (55), when the ordinary couple are transformed by extra-ordinary circumstances: the arrest of their son for murder. They had been miles apart, “separated”, but, “brought side by side again” (14) by the unusual tragedy that befell their lives. The Lingards are “enclosed together” (146) and probe together the situation in which they find themselves. “At night they talked in soft voices . . . They lay in the dark, no longer in isolation. Sorting together through the mess” (147). Harald and Claudia experience a breaking of the delusional world they seem to believe is perfect and journey through pain and anguish and get to make, “discoveries in one another’s being, than they had been since first they had met, when they were young and in the novelty of perilous human intimacy” (198). Hence, their relationship goes through the upheavals of life and emerges stronger being chiseled by time.

The novel gives an interesting demonstration of the complex parent-child relationship. The novel has a storyline that tells of “the stuff of parental nightmares” (Trapido 294) as the parents are trying to figure out what wrong they have done. They are unable to understand how Duncan could abandon his belief in sanctity of human life. The pre-trial period proves to be a re-evaluation period for the parents who recollect his childhood memories. They probe through the

choices they made for their son in the hope of isolating the stimuli and events that made him a killer.

A “sentimental searching back” (83) occurs naturally for the parents. Memories of Duncan sharing activities with each of them as a child flash through their mind. He had gone bird-watching, fishing and had been even to church with his father. The parents had made a promise to their child, “There’s nothing you cannot tell us. Nothing we’re always there for you. Always” (87). They recall this promise throughout the turmoil though their “Parental loyalty is in conflict with the revulsion they feel towards him for his act” (Easton 887). They support him by paying for his defense and Harald even attends public discussions on the implications of Death Penalty.

The parents are plunged headlong into the convoluted web of alien environments and relationships that govern their son’s life. When they meet him at the prison for the first time, “he’s smiling in a warning, there is to be no emotionalism. Signals fly like bats about the room” (37). “The catastrophe which throws their lives into disarray” (Medalie 636) brings to light some disquieting truths and contradictions about Duncan to his parents. The couple, for instance, discovers that the house Duncan shared with his friends includes blacks and whites, straights and gays and Duncan himself is bisexual. June Unjoo Yang in his *The Women’s Review of Books* gives an appraisal upon how the more the Lingards learn about the son, they believed they knew so intimately, the less they are able to comprehend of his fundamental character and motivations. Although, this parental recognition of a child’s autonomy and departure from ethos of family is common enough, for the Lingards the task of understanding their son is complicated by the question of culpability, as they are desperately seeking a rational explanation for the inexplicable act of their son.

Duncan expresses his relief towards the end of the trial, “Anyway, I’m glad it will be over for you two soon. Time for you to get back to work, I’m sure Take things up” (300). The parent-

child relationship goes through a period of probing and rediscovery as familial bonding is re-established at the apocalyptic hour. Previously, Gordimer had concentrated on the child's coming to terms with his or her parents, on the future's need to stare down the past. Here, however, it is the other way round. There is a delineation, where parents are knowing their children.

Gordimer has also enlightened about the new equations evolving in the man- woman relationship. A triangular relationship between Duncan, Carl Jespersion and Natalie exists. The very event which sparks the action, the murder, comes about through such a relationship, where Duncan is the pivotal point. Duncan is bisexual and his homosexual affair with Carl and heterosexual affair with Natalie puts him in a vulnerable situation. Clingman opines that, "This particular menage a trios is a version of the "eternal triangle" though the essential complication is a homosexual rather than the more usual heterosexual entanglement" (150). Duncan lives with his girlfriend Natalie whom he had "brought ... back to life" (141) when she had tried drowning herself after an unsuccessful affair. They were part of a "free-loving, mostly gay communal household" (Easton 887). Duncan and Natalie's relationship had not been all smooth, she had gone to other men but he had endured with her. She cohabits the house with him but finds him "more dreadful than the water" (58) imploring about his attitude of planning her life "according to his specifications" (229) she asserts her desire that she had wanted herself "back from him" (229). Duncan is aware of her ruthless life and behaviour but he is the one who steadies her to burn through he knows that choosing her was disastrous. He had been tortured, abused by her, not physically but by her words and deeds, still he endured since "he felt responsible for her" (272). Duncan loves her and even after all the terrible things, wants to accept her child.

On the other hand, the relationship that Duncan shared with Carl Jespersion had been one step

away from friendship. Duncan had been attracted and attached to Jespersion but after sometime they had broken off. Duncan for some time was unable to get over his gross mistake of getting involved emotionally and then being thrown over. Then he and Jespersion continued to live as friends till the last fatal moment. Jespersion had helped Duncan get a job for Natalie after this and had acted as an emissary between the two when they had differences. Natalie and Jespersion had a friendly relationship and Duncan was the only reason for their coming together. Duncan clarifies that he had never had a single percent doubt on the relationship between his ex-lover and girlfriend and he was convinced that "there was no affair" (252). They shared a friendly relationship and there was no mutual attraction towards each other, though they were colleagues at work and co-tenants.

The day of the heinous crime, January nineteenth proves a different story, when Duncan is faced with the scene of his girlfriend, Natalie having sex with Carl Jespersion. He is a spectator to their blatant act. It is obvious that Natalie and Jespersion had vented out their hidden malice on Duncan through their shameful act. Each had wanted to level their score with him to which Duncan falls a prey. Duncan realizes the hollowness of Jespersion via Thomas Mann's passage from *The Magic Mountain* : "Let him die then, for he has gratified his heart's deepest desire" (qtd. in Gordimer 88) and the murder is "an act of desire" (Clingman 155).

Duncan is baffled by the "double betrayal of an appalling nature" (281) where both had plotted to humiliate him. In this triangular relationship Natalie and Carl seem to harbour resentment towards Duncan which provokes their action. Duncan is unable to comprehend the emotions of both and he turns a blind eye to Natalie's desires which is the main reason of conflict between the couple.

The entangled relationships are the reason for violence and crime. The domestic murder is carried out with the house gun. The gun is available to any of the coterie young people in

the cottage on the same property as they “share a gun like a six-pack of beers” (142). Only during the trial does the fact emerge that the gun had been regarded casually and handled negligently. It had been “lying ... like a house cat” (330). It had been meant for protection against external threat but had been used on one of the inhabitants of the house by another. The incident is an example of how violence “may vitiate the opportunities presented ... in the world” (Medalie 638).

Violence is presented as a kind of “social recidivism” (Medalie 639), a mode of behaviour that has been discarded even after the end of the apartheid regime. Incidents of violence flashes through the television sets and newspapers, that reveal “the photograph of a child clinging to the body of its dead mother ... mortar fire” (35). Violence still persists in the society throwing the people off balance. The natural abhorrence to violence is suspended and violence is a way to discharge frustration, despair or injury, it is endemic. Duncan uses violence only to stop the inner rage mounting on him by the babbling of his friend, so he had “picked up the gun on the table ... The noise stopped” (261) as he had shot him. When Motsamai argues he stresses on the fact that Duncan had no criminal capacity but only “under severe emotional stress” (286) he had done the act. Motsami in his concluding defense argument remarks that, “The climate of violence bears some serious responsibility for the act the accused committed, yes; because of this climate, the gun was there ... But the accused bears no responsibility whatever for the prevalence of violence” (3330). So Gordimer suggests that if it had not been for the legacy of apartheid, which made South Africa such an unpredictable and violent society, that particular gun would never have been there and the crime would have been averted.

The judge at the end of the trial reinforces the same attitude to the gun, which made the crime so easy to be committed. He admonishes the society where violence has been “normalized and made it banal and mundane” (Medalie 638). All

the members in the community have “breathed violence along with cigarette smoke” (327). Gordimer has exposed the verity of the desperado nature of violence that is still driving the lives of the people and making them live in a vile world of fear and hell.

Violence leads to disruption of normal life with displacement, dislocation and relocation. Duncan goes through these various stages after he had committed the crime. He moves from his luxurious house into “A prison of darkness” (337), both physically and subconsciously. Whereas, for his parents there is a disarticulation in their social standing and a displacement of their tranquil mind that struggles to comprehend the situation.

The society bears the back lash of the dwindling relationships and the exacerbating rate in violence, which is symbolized as culture. Raymond Williams in his *Marxism and Literature*, proposes a three-tier model of culture: oppositional culture, residual culture and emergent culture. We find Gordimer’s novel has substantiated all the above, which is so much relevant to our present day world. The oppositional culture is an alternative culture that resists the dominant culture, here we find living together without marriage as an opposing cultural stigma among the young. Residual culture refers to some previous culture, the faith in marriage as an institution is reiterated by the strong relationship Claudia and Harald share. While emergent culture refers to new values that are constantly being suggested.

Gordimer presents some disturbing truths about the emergent culture. In the novel a few shocking cultural tenets have been presented like “gun culture”, “homosexuality/gay”. There are some more disturbing facts of the younger generation. Natalie gets pregnant without marriage, but the horrendous truth is she does not know the identity of the father. Duncan is unable to comprehend his sexuality. Infidelity demonstrates the moral declivity that exists. The communities they live in is apparent to the emerging society of “gated communities”, with security- monitored

entrances and no pets allowed. These make up the disintegrating nature of the society. The only saving grace is developing “cordial race relationship” between the whites and the blacks. They even share living space together. Duncan’s defense lawyer, Hamilton Motsamai was “a black man” (41). A tiny ray of hope in a detrimental society.

Thus the novel portrays the conflicts and contradictions of the emerging new South Africa

and also provides a glimpse of things for the future. The problems faced by the African society is very much relevant in this contemporary world. Relationships are at a great risk due to the emerging globalisation and new cultures that are being added on to everyone each and every day. Individual awakening grounded on old values can only save this morally rotting disintegrating society.

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An Introduction to 'Her' Feminine Sensibility: Reading Kamala Das' Poems in the English Classroom

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Abstract

Simone de Beauvoir opines in *The Second Sex* (1949) that it is the civilization which produces a creature known as the 'feminine'. Kamala Das, through her poetry, challenges this patriarchal tradition that silences the 'feminine' in women, for which women regard themselves as passive or the 'Other'. This paper, through her poems like "An Introduction", "Stone Age", "The Freak" and "Of Calcutta" intend to uphold the expressions of feminine sensibility and its suppression in the patriarchal Indian society. She being a post-colonial Indian English poet, elucidates the histories and struggles of the Third World women against colonialism, racism, sexism and economic forces, thereby creating a 'Third world Identity' for women, hinting on the 'Third world space' as suggested by Homi K. Bhabha. In an Indian English classroom, these poems arouse consciousness about the hegemonic power structure of the twentieth century Indian society, which is relevant even today. Through these poems, this paper also attempts to trace the feminist contours in relation to Helene Cixous' notion of 'Ecriture Feminine'.

Feminist consciousness and language find an exponent of sensuality and spirituality in Kamala Das and Sylvia Plath, who by representing women's desires and anguishes, challenging the accepted notions of the 'female' and redrafting the general opinion of the feminine mystique, provide a voice to innumerable voiceless women.

Key words : Postcolonial Feminism, Ecriture Feminine, Third World Women, Third World Space, Third World Identity, Colonialism, Racism, Sexism, Hybridism, Patriarchy, Indian Society.

"Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring on her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of husband." — Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Although often being raised to the pedestal of a Devi, in reality, a woman's role in the patriarchal society is primarily one of negation. She tends, by the very fact of her positioning in the social hierarchy, to negate whatever is considered

complete, ultimate, well-made and established in her society. Women's marginalized position in the male-dominated world while enfeebling and silencing them also provides an advantage to the survivors where women writers produce a fixed, authoritarian subject within their discourse; 'her' experiences forcing her to be an unformed subject, ever evolving and experimenting with itself. Modern Indian women poets, influenced by the Western Feminist trends, offer voice to the feminine desires, hopes, fears and frustrations of Indian women in their journey from tradition to modernity. A clear picture of the subaltern position of Indian womanhood rises from Kamala Das' poetry as she reveals her feminine sensibility through the eyes of a young girl, beloved, wife and

grandmother. Kamala Surayya, also known by Madhavikutty and Kamala Das, is an Indian English poet, who through her poetry, has marked a landmark of her female journey from victimization to consciousness. Feminist consciousness and language find an exponent of sensuality and spirituality in Kamala Das, who unmindful of brickbats and accolades, carried on untiringly creating poems of abiding charm, enduring empathy and inconceivable audacity. This paper by taking her poems “An Introduction” and “The Old Playhouse” into consideration, will uphold the expressions of feminine sensibility and its constant suppression in the patriarchal Indian society. Alongwith, this paper also attempts to trace the feminist contours in relation to Helene Cixous’ notion of ‘Ecriture Feminine’, by representing the female body as an inevitable necessity in her poems. As the patriarchal system tries to silence the female voice, the woman is left only with her body to protest and this paper will highlight how the body becomes the war-front as well as the tool of protest for Kamala Das.

Kamala Das conceives the male as a beast wallowing in lust with a monstrous ego under which the woman loses her identity. The strong desire for freedom, including the freedom to rebel, forms the central strain in many of her poems. She enumerates the male felonies in her poems and builds up a structure of protest and rebellion in her poetry. “An Introduction” is itself a polyphonic text with several of the poet’s voices, seeking articulation in a single verbal construct. Included first in *Summer in Calcutta* and then in *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*, the poem “An Introduction” voices the concerns of a woman rebelling against the norms and dictates of a patriarchal society that asks her to “fit in” and “belong” against her own wishes. The opening statement : “I don’t know Politics” has an ambiguous tone that comes from a woman’s marginalized position in the society. Reading this poem in the English classroom, we are made aware of the cultural differences in the context of the Indian society:

“I am Indian,
Very brown, born in Malabar,”
Being a post-colonial Indian English poet, Das elucidates the histories and struggles of the Third World women against colonialism, sexism and racism. A brown complexion for an Indian woman disqualifies her prospects of a good marriage, fairness being equated with beauty in this country. Then she recalls the unconscious terrors of her childhood and speaking about her adolescence, her ‘female’ inscribes itself on the text. References to the swelling limbs, growing hairs, the pitiful weight of breasts and womb and the “sad-woman body” emphasize the corporal ground of woman’s experience, where the female physicality is identified with female sexuality. Since the woman cannot change her body, the poet changes her dress to imitate men, “Then...I wore a shirt and my Brother’s trousers, cut my hair short and ignored my womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl, be wife, they said.”

No sooner does she attempt to dress in trousers than the tradition tries to pull her back to sarees, the sarees being a sign of her conventions. She is pushed back to her gender roles, to be a wife, a cook or an embroider, the gender roles which become her caste roles. As she seeks fulfillment of her adolescent passion, a young husband is forced upon her to traumatize and torture her female body, since this is the site for the patriarchy to display its power and authority over the woman. Articulating her anguish for being denied her emotional and intellectual space, she says, “I have no joys that are not yours,
No aches that are not yours I too call myself “I”

Literature mirrors the society and students reading it, develops the potential to identify its prejudiced hegemonic structure. The dependency of women over men is a social construct which has been worshipped and entertained to retain the patriarchal power structure of the society. John Stuart Mill explains this further in his book *The Subjection of Women*,

“The dependence, as it exists at present, is not an original institution, taking a fresh start from considerations of justice and social expediency – it is the primitive state of slavery lasting on...” The Indian poet, Kamala emphasizes on this nurturing of women to be a voluntary slave to the whims and fancies of the men in her life, thereby empowering themselves to protest against such domination and mental and physical exploitation.

Kamala Das's poems reflect an entire denial of the conventional form of poetic expression of the male dominant culture. The poem “An Introduction” encompasses the whole of Kamala Das' poetic journey including the post-colonial agenda, raising the key post-colonial feminist question of the identity of a woman of substance who also happens to be a poet. It voices her firm refusal of abandoned English as an alien tongue and on behalf of those choosing to use this language as a poetic medium, she identifies it as a vital and inseparable component of the Indian identity. The language she dreams in, is ambiguous to warrant many interpretations. It could be that of her imagination, woman's language, English, or Malayalam, her mother-tongue. She justifies her choice of English as she believes that she is using it with her own angularities and eccentricities, her human joys and longings. It is the voice of her instinct as is the lion's roar and the crow's cawing. Like Sylvia Plath, Das employs a frank, conversational tone and in this poem she advises us that the specificities of her psychological make-up determine the idiosyncracies of the poem's personal speaking voice :

“The Language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness,
All mine, mine alone.”

The language she produced with the amalgamation of Indian culture and English resulted in a sense of hybridism in her poems. Kamala Das wanted the liberty that language could give to articulate her feelings and experiences in her poems. Her revolt as a woman against the traditional concept of womanhood

is matched with her revolt as a poet against the conventional medium of mother tongue for poetry. She has preferred English as the poetic medium although she is at home with Malayalam in prose. It is difficult to separate Kamala the poet from Kamala, the woman, who suffered and expressed. The use of her own terminology, choice of words and some syntactical constructions are part of what has been termed as the ‘Indianization’ of English. This attainment is evocative in the growth and development of literature where the poets freed themselves from the linguistic principles of their colonizers and produced a literature based on local language. She wanted to generate a new role for the women in society and lend voice to the themes of loneliness and subaltern anguish. Colonization is a facet of patriarchy. While the Whites dominate the slaves, the slaves dominate the women who are colonized. Kamala Das, through her writings wanted to highlight this scenario of women where they are doubly marginalized and colonized.

It is evident that androcentricism inherently controls female bodies turning them into submissive ones and Kamala Das's poems tend to challenge this patriarchal domination which forces upon the docile female bodies. In her poems, body stands for sexuality which is in turn synonymous with the textuality of her poems. This mode of writing was theorized by Helene Cixous in the essay “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976) where she offered her theory of ‘*Écriture Feminine*’ (Feminine Writing). The entire history of writing is run by the phallogocentric tradition mirroring the social system that has undermined women. In the essay Cixous opines that women must write through their bodies, inventing the impregnable language that would wreck languages, partitions, classes, reservation and codes, thereby getting beyond the reverse-discourse. The female body has always been the property of men which they use to control and entrap women. Identifying the body as the prison of patriarchal entrapment, Das employs the female body as a symbol of protest in her

poems. Disclosure of frank sexuality is a direct attack to the lustful male ego and as the patriarchal system tries to suppress the female voice, the woman is left only with her body to make the protest. She deconstructs her body, exhibits different parts like a Cubist painter and enlivens each organ to shout in their own voice. "The Old Playhouse" published in *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*, is an example of positioning the 'female body' as a revolt against the male hegemony. The poem expresses the vehemence and fierceness of those women whose individuality and identity is crushed after marriage in the name of being the harbinger of domestic bliss in the family. A "playhouse" is usually known to be a miniature rendition of a house for young girls to play as home-makers and hence the title imagery questions the socio-cultural attempt to perpetuate and reinforce the patriarchal gender roles. The poem describes in detail about the naked reality of a traditional conjugal life where the wife pricks the balloon of an apparently happy life. She speaks about the domestication of a woman in the mask of a wife,

"You planned to tame swallow, to hold her
In the long summer of your love."

A man literally tames a woman in the disguise of love in order to exploit her and Das in her poems fearlessly disrobes the hypocrisy of a man's love underneath which, runs the conspiracy of granting a submissive role to the woman. At first the woman's freedom is brutally taken away and then her endless sky-reaching intellectual aspirations are brought down within the limits of perpetual confinement. She is reduced to a slave catering to the domestic and sexual needs of her husband. Conjugal life depressed Das and in her writings, she often used the female body to protest against such institutions which encouraged brutal subjugation of the female body at the cost of her psychic needs. She is

vituperative in presenting her naked body as a revolt against the forbidden issues which average Indian women are prohibited to question. Simone de Beauvoir observes in *The Second Sex* (1949),

"In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of the two electric poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas women represents only the negative, defined by limiting critic without reciprocity... A man is in the right of being the man, it is the woman who is the wrong..."

Kamala Das highlights this dichotomy of gender roles, thereby arousing consciousness about the hegemonic power structure of the twentieth century Indian society, which is relevant even today. Her confessional poems indeed opens a new dimension in the Indian English classroom as her contribution is a new phenomenon in Indo-Anglian poetry—a far cry indeed from Toru Dutt or Sarojini Naidu. Iyengar rightly points out that Das' is a fiercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibitions to articulate the hurts it has received in an insensitive largely man-made world. Besides bringing in facets of the Western Feminism in her works, Kamala Das is the voice of the modern Indian woman with the frequent use of the personal pronoun 'I', in her poems giving expression to the different aspects of contemporary Indian womanhood. By adopting a new idiom and an innovative way of expression, her poems provide wings to the readers to rise above the hegemonic patriarchal domains, echoing her lines from 'The Conflagration',

"Women, is this happiness, this lying buried
Beneath a man? It is time to come alive
This world extends a lot beyond this six foot
frame."

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Study of Literature: A Re-visiting

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study the importance of Literature from an academic perspective as a subject in the curriculum and why literature has to be treated on par with other areas of study. It gives an insight into the power of the 'word' and the role played by good literature in the formation of human beings. It says that students should be encouraged to take up the study of literature because knowledge and fundamental life skills, in particular academic skills are acquired through it. It discusses the impact of the study of literature on humankind, affecting human societies and especially individuals; the indispensability of learning and teaching of literature, as nothing can enrich the mind and encourage creativity the way it does. It shows that the aesthetic and simple approach endears the study of Literature to all human beings and recommends it to the present and also to the generation to come.

Key phrases: academic perspective, the indispensability of learning and teaching literature, aesthetic approach.

The proposal in this paper to reconsider the study of literature from an academic perspective and the advocating for treating as a subject in the curriculum has been prompted by the critical situation as observed very closely in one of the states in south India. It has been written in the context of a climate where great emphasis is laid only on the study of sciences, business and technical education at the expense of humanities. As a result, the choice of the study of literature is the last option for the students, they are forced to take it only when there is no other option.

Reasons for this situation to prevail is varied. There is a general notion that literature is studied only by those who aren't smart enough to study something real, something provable. The study of pure and applied sciences is deemed to be superior and the study of Commerce and Technology is more attractive as it is less demanding in terms of intellectual investment compared to the study of sciences and more fetching in terms of monetary benefits. Literature is considered to be just an art so it is unworthy of taking up for serious study.

There is a tendency to perceive the matter in this way because of social status or prestige one enjoys in the society when one takes up the study of sciences. The achievements of the students

who excel in other areas of study are highlighted and magnified while those of the students of literature are simply ignored. The lack of lucrative job opportunities meagerly paid teaching field, the dying reading habit, and lack of motivation for creativity leads to disinterest in the students to opt for the study of literature. In this competitive world, no parent would want her/his child to be considered less smart in any way or any one and no one would compromise on the child's future prospects. In such an environment students do not choose to study literature, it is usually chosen only by those who have a passion for it or those who know the real value of it.

This strange atmosphere can change when the general idea that only students who have no caliber take up literature, is eliminated and all those who are concerned will come to a consensus that no area of study can be despised or considered superior or inferior, because each area of study has its own merits and value. It is irrational indeed when monetary benefits alone become the criteria for choosing an area of study as in the case of choosing the study of Commerce or Technology. When the study of Literature is given its right place and students

are given some orientation to take it up they will choose it willingly.

The concern of laying emphasize on business and technical education at the expense of the humanities is not a new problem and it does not exist in just one part of the world, there were and are other parts of the world which face this same problem but only the problem's seriousness is manifested today. When one analyzes, one sees that the long term profits greatly influence the decisions while taking up a particular area of study.

Can one imagine a world inhabited only just by doctors, engineers, and accountants? Ultimately this is the situation which will ensue if too much emphasis is laid on sciences, business and technical education at the expense of the humanities and literature's educational importance is downplayed in favor of other areas of study considering it just a hobby.

One can arrive at a possible solution to this problem when the merits of Study of Literature are fully recognized. There is need for parents, young people and teachers to work together to promote the study of literature and also revive the dying reading habit, with a conviction that Literature is only an art, Yes, but it is the greatest expression of that which is human.

Literature has to be treated on par with all other areas of study because it: Enables one to think for oneself and to think critically about diverse social realities, teaches one to learn from others to engage oneself in meaningful ways, invites one to be an individual, unique and irreplaceable. It stimulates skills for development of the mind and the heart and trains a person to analyze thoughts and feelings, helps in a unique way in one's understanding of different social forms and relationships, and to exercise one's freedom and imaginative insight creatively, and also directs one to understand all that one sees in a more insightful manner and increases the aptitude to see things from perspectives of others points of view and values the joyous intellectual energy as a "celebration of the richness and variety of life" (Knights 230).

Anything that is written and all that which has a universal theme that can be applied to people in common and that which has an suggestive power of feeling, thought, or emotion, in allowing someone to believe in something that the person would not have thought of otherwise is considered Literature. It brings about an expressive response in the reader. The creation of this response depends on the degree of ingenuity the writer possesses. The beauty of literature is in it being universal and timeless in its appeal and the greatest lesson learnt by studying literature is what it means to be human.

If a student has to gain wholesome benefit from the study of literature and in order to taste and savor it to the full, **she/he has to be exposed to and introduced to good literature. Literature which is considered great is that which is a story that captures the time period in which it was written, while maintaining universal themes regarding human existence,** withstanding the test of time, connecting with every generation and audience, telling the story of one's growth and struggle as a person, whether it be against one's self, society or another universal antagonist. Uniquely communicating through words the beauty of intangible emotions, describing events or feelings within the character that makes the reader empathize with those within the story above all it leaves readers considering the story of their own lives.

When one reflects on the power of the "Word" one understands the great potential, a word possesses. The Holy Bible elucidates the power of **the word** to create, recreate and to transform. Good literature comprises powerful words that direct a human person to express oneself meaningfully in the society and moulds a human being into the person one is created to be.

Literature is one of the oldest human inventions which is still in use, it has been teaching one about how powerful language can be. By studying the use of language in literature, one learns how to use it to one's advantage. Ezra Pound, in *How to read*, Part II highlights, "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree". Literature plays a very

important role in teaching the English Language which is a universal and link language and in appreciating one's own culture and the culture of others thus building unity in diversity. Not many will differ when it is said, the need of the hour is to build a peaceful world and the study of literature paves way to it.

Here are a few reasons why literature should be used with students in the language classroom taken from Gillian Lazar list: Literature is very motivating, authentic material, has general educational value, encourages language acquisition, develops interpretative abilities, highly valued, has a high status, expands language awareness it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings, they enjoy it and it is fun. (Lazar 14-15) Literature has a wider function of educating the whole person it stimulates the imagination of the students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness, express their ideas with great confidence. They will feel empowered by their ability to grapple with the text and its language, and to relate it to the values and traditions of their own society (19)

The world in which one lives in today is a world where stress of all kinds' rules ones lives, literature provides pleasure to readers, for this ability it is so important, it continues to survive because its entertaining capacity offers readers the potential to escape from the problems of daily life. It has the power to provoke thought and develops critical thinking skills in readers, making a leisure activity intellectually productive as well. It has the power to impart and build a wide variety of experiences in readers, it exposes them to different places, time periods, view points and cultures and helps them gain experiences they would never have access to in ordinary life. Its ability to capture the imagination and depict the lives of others also increases readers' ability to empathize with others even with those who are unlike them.

L.C Knights says, the study of literature opens up a wide range of other intellectual interests, giving an insight into, other branches of human knowledge, and broadens our intellectual

horizons and enhances our ability to imagine human complexity too. Literature is a form of knowledge that teaches us the truths that are familiar to us but which we refuse to recognize, penetrating our subtle defenses, it teaches us something which we cannot receive or acquire by logical demonstration. It helps to assess different attitudes, different shades of egotism, of aggression overt or disguised, helps one arrive at truths that are of the highest importance to one in an irreplaceable way if one is to remain, or try to become, adequately human. (Knights 218).

Study of Literature offers a particular kind of knowledge which promotes self knowledge and Knowledge of God. One not only realizes what human beings can be like, but what one is capable of being and what one wants to be, or not to be. A course on Emotionally Healthy Spirituality adds more to the well known Ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself", it talks of "Know Yourself That You May Know God." It says that this is the first of the seven pathways to emotionally healthy spirituality, because an awareness of yourself and your relationship with God are so closely related. Whether one wants it or not the relationship between the Creator and creature is the ultimate goal which one needs to reach. The study of literature plays an important role in bringing about this great realization.

Literature sets free and protects the human imagination from running riot and helps is developing foresight and fosters the energies of the imagination which fill individual consciousness and activates, and saves one from the danger of the collective life from becoming mechanical and unreasonable. The learning and teaching of literature is indispensable for its personal enrichment, nothing can augment the mind and encourage creativity the way it does. Discerning the aesthetic and simple approach endears Study of Literature to all human beings and recommends it to the present and also to the future generations.

The age, that one lives in today is an age that seriously underestimates the power and importance of imagination. Some great thinkers

of the last two hundred years like Mill, Freud, Schweitzer, and Einstein have argued passionately for the importance of the study of literature in preserving the human imagination. The academicians should give a listening ear to these compelling practical arguments, it is Literature's power to broaden sympathies and stimulate imagination that makes its inclusion as a subject in the curriculum essential.

Considering the various advantages Literature offers and what one values it for, teaching and learning literature becomes unavoidable. The options available today for those who take up the study of Literature are galore, even when one does not chose to study literature for all its gifts and the values it promotes, one will choose it for the known fact that a person trained in the study of literature is better equipped than most to comprehend and analyze life and the dividends it pays is quite attractive. The study of literature enables even the most practical kind of student to know something beyond his or her own professional field.

To sum up, let me quote a few short extracts from a retired teacher of English Literature, for practical purposes.

Why Should We Read Literature? Jill Jenkins

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Albert Einstein

In education today, focus is on teaching students to acquire a list of skills so they can successfully complete an end of the year test. Is that really all it takes to be an educated person? In today's Language Arts classes instead of reading entire pieces of literature, the students read excerpts from novels, excerpts from speeches, excerpts from articles and answer specific questions that require the child to review the piece and select specific information. It is called closed reading. I call it closing minds. ...

Reading entire pieces of literature can help students deal with problems in their personal life. A quality education should prepare people for more than a career. ...

Students learn ethics from literature. For example, *To Kill A Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee teaches students that one must always do the right thing even if it costs your family dearly.

...
Teaching students how our society has changed because of the noble, honorable actions of its citizens is an important lesson. I love to share with my students that Charles Dickens changed the laws on child labor with his book, *Oliver Twist*. Writing is powerful tool and so is literature. ...

Giving students a sense of history is another important role of teaching literature. Books like *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier can teach students how the Civil War affected real people, their cultures and other human suffering.

Teaching literature can give students not only a connection to that past, but show students that we are not all that different.

Literature weaves a rich tapestry in our lives. It sparks our imagination by showing us people and places both familiar to us and unfamiliar. It teaches us that all of human kind is connected in our hopes, our joys, our sorrows, our needs and our troubles. It teaches us where we have been and where we might be going. It teaches us what it means to be human and values that we should uphold. Literature allows us to feel, and to have empathy for others and maybe even for ourselves. Literature gives us the lessons to hold us together during difficult trials in our lives and tools to handle those problems. An education should be more than a list of reading skills; an education should teach us how to behave as human being in a complex society.

Thanks,

Jill Jenkins

This paper would have served its purpose when it inspires someone to trim the lamp, which means to rejuvenate and give Literature its due share among the various fields of study, and by helping the society to reconsider the importance of the study of literature as a subject rather than put off the flickering flame that is, to undermine or even discard the study of literature.

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Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* – A Critique of Feminism

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Abstract

Popular culture identifies with the perspectives and images of ordinary people rather than the elite. In this 21st century, people are more aware of what they need and how they want to lead their life. With the increasing growth of the usage of social media in our lives, the common people find it very comfortable to talk about both personal and impersonal issues. Right from Politics to personal life, everything is being voiced out. Feminism is one such concept that is being discussed widely and variedly all over the world and particularly in India owing to the atrocities that are caused against Indian women. Indian Writing in English is full of such women writers and even some men writers who are the advocates of feminism. Chetan Bhagat is one such voice who is known for his realist novels that make a connection with today's generation. He is known for the creation of powerful heroines who do not wait for a Knight in shining armour to rescue them; rather they make the rescuing here. His latest novel *One Indian Girl* is a reflection of his ideas on feminism. Radhika, the mouthpiece of Bhagat faces all the problems of "new woman" – one who is unable to find stability in personal life despite being professionally successful, but comes out with flying colours in the end. This paper traces *One Indian Girl* as a critique of feminism.

Chetan Bhagat is the voice of the current generation. He is an acclaimed novelist, columnist, screenwriter, and television personality. He is also known for his motivational speeches. The author of the best-selling novels *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *One Indian Girl* (2016) and non-fiction works such as *What Young India Wants* (2012) and *Making India Awesome* (2015). A Delhiite educated in the reputed IIT – Delhi and in IIM-A, went to work for Goldman Sachs, an investment banking company. He wrote his first novel while working in Hong Kong. Then he quit his job and shifted to Mumbai to become a full-time writer. He married his IIM-A classmate Anusha who is from Tamilnadu. He has been rated as the "best-selling novelist of India".

All his works are about Indian youth who are bogged by many problems such as educational system, religious politics, personal ambition, greed, identity and especially love. Bhagat is known for creating powerful heroines in his novels. Be it

Ananya (*2 States*) or Radhika (*One Indian Girl*), they are the symbol of the modern Indian woman. Even his other heroines such as Neha (*Five Point Someone*), Priyanka (*One Night @ the Call Center*), Vidya (*The 3 Mistakes of My Life*), Aarti (*Revolution 2020*) and Riya (*Half Girlfriend*), they advocate the equality of women in one point or the other. In short, Bhagat is an advocate of Feminism. As he himself defines in his novel *One Indian Girl*, "Feminism is a movement that seeks to define, establish and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal and social rights for women. A feminist is someone who believes in this movement" (Bhagat 135). And yes, Bhagat is a feminist in true sense.

This paper portrays Bhagat as a feminist who gives out his strong message of feminism through his novel *One Indian Girl*. The novel when released was received with mixed reviews but however many young Indian girls were able to identify with the protagonist – Radhika, the modern girl who is unconventional, has opinion on each and everything and the most important

thing – she makes more money for her age. This paper deals *One Indian Girl* as a feminist critique.

The story of Radhika Mehta, the bride who is getting ready for her destination wedding in Goa with Brijesh Gulati suddenly finds herself in the situation of making a choice between her two ex-boyfriends and her fiancé. The novel is narrated by Radhika and is full of feminists' twists and ends in a fashion that is characteristic of today's "new woman". Radhika, a Punjabi is the second daughter of Sudharshan Mehta, who is a Bank Manager and Aparna Mehta, the homemaker. She has an elder sister Aditi who is married to Anil a well-settled guy.

From the first few pages, we get to know the feminism undertones in the novel through the characters' discussion. There is a confusion regarding the allotment of rooms in the Goa Marriott Hotel for the relatives of the bridegroom. As is the Indian norm, the boys' side are not expected to adjust this simple matter but it falls to the sole responsibility of the girls' side to adjust without any complaint. This is evident when Radhika's father says, "Beta, these are norms. You don't understand. We have to keep them comfortable. Girl's side is expected to adjust" (Bhagat 4). Radhika an advocate of feminism starts to protest when her father asks her to adjust. At that time her mother silences her. "Can you stop waving your feminism flag for a week? This is a wedding, not an NGO activist venue," (Bhagat 5). This is a typical Indian novel where parents are always trying to control their daughters. Though it is for their own good, sometimes it gets past beyond the limit of understanding and compliance.

As soon as the novel opens, we come to know that Radhika's parents were expecting a son the second time. But they got her. They tried for the next two times too but they were in no luck. "Sadly for them, the second was also a girl, which was me. It is rumoured that they tried again twice; both times my mother had an abortion because it was a girl. I confronted her on this topic years ago, but she brushed it off" (Bhagat 7). This again reminds one of the prejudices we Indians hold against girl children.

The issue of beauty and appearance is brought out through the characterisation of Radhika. She is not fair as Punjabis used to be. Rather she is of a wheatish complexion. Her sister often refers to her complexion and asks her to get married soon. "The younger the better. Especially for someone like you... I guess she meant for someone as nerdy as me or as wheatish as me or someone whose breasts weren't the size of footballs, as Punjabi men prefer" (Bhagat 8). Her sister Aditi gets married as soon as she completed her college and gets "settled" according to the wishes of her family. All the people around her concentrate on the only topic when she completes her studies – marriage. But Radhika is far from the very idea. During her schooling itself Radhika realises that she is not going to get married soon because of her "color" and so she decides to spend her life in a more productive way. As is the case with all the girls who are not so beautiful she turns out to be a nerd. "That day I realized I had only one thing going for me – academics" (Bhagat 8). She studies hard right from her schooling and in her college too. And as the result of her hard work, she gets appointed in a global investment bank - (Goldman Sachs). But these are not at all important to her mother. According to her mother, she is just adamant and wants her to get married soon. "That was her prime concern. Her twenty-three-year-old daughter, who grew up in middle-class West Delhi, had cracked a job at one of the biggest investment banks in the world and all she cared about was its impact on her groom-hunt" (Bhagat 9).

She completes her training and soon she if off to New York to start her work. There she befriends Debashish Sen (Debu) who is working in an advertising agency. Debu is so much progressive in thoughts (or appears to be so) and this attracts Radhika the most. When she explains about the difficulties she faces in her job especially being a woman who has to persuade the companies to invest in a project, Debu patiently hears her out and offers his opinions. To her surprise, Debu does not feel women as inferior to men, instead he says, "What nonsense...Why can't a woman do it? They are better negotiators" (Bhagat 49). In the beginning of his character's introduction, Debu comes across as an advocate of Feminism.

He shares much of his opinions regarding the matter with Radhika. When Radhika says that her sister is much better looking than her, Debu offers to see her sister's photo and after seeing it discredits her statement. It is also evident that he does not believe in the conventional ideas of beauty.

When Radhika sends money to her parents, they feel very bad about her working hard and sending money to them since they believe that it is only a duty of a son to take care of their parents. Even Debu so much for his feminist rantings in the beginning, turns out to be another conventional character. He often appreciates Radhika for her exceptional choice of places to dine and to hang out. He admires her taste. "Mr Debashish Sen, I do other things besides pick restaurants. Like make a ton of money for a girl my age. Heck, I make a lot of money for anyone any age. I also got a top rating in my reviews. Can you at least praise me a little for it?" (Bhagat 79).

The basic reason for his character change is that Debu becomes uncomfortable about the fact that Radhika makes more money than him. Almost in all of their outings, he brings up the subject of money with her. Though Radhika does not give any importance to money, she cannot help notice about this particular attitude of Debu and this makes her uncomfortable too. Despite this, Debu moves in with her. They form a routine for themselves except the topic of marriage. Radhika's mother feels that her daughter is overtly independent and now that she is far away without anyone to look after her, she wants her to get married soon. All her phone calls end with the plea of asking her daughter to start seeing boys. When Radhika tells Debu about this, he is always evasive. When she cannot take no more, Radhika bursts out. Debu at last reveals his decision. "I am being calm, okay? But I have an image of the wife I want. The mother of the kids I want. I am not judging you, but I think I want a housewife" (Bhagat 99). This is the same Debu who encouraged Radhika in the beginning of her career. Now after she has become an important asset in her New York office, Debu feels that she cannot be a good wife to him since she is always working and cares so much about her work.

Radhika is shocked to hear such comments from Debu and she is shattered. She tries to work out things between them but of no avail since Debu has already decided to split away from her. He leaves Radhika soon after announcing his decision. She tries to contact him a lot of times but receives no reply from him. Radhika is not able to bear the separation and after a few weeks of deliberate contemplation, she even decides to resign her job and marry Debu. She goes to his home with a ring in her hand but there she stumbles upon Debu with another woman and that too within a few weeks of their break up. She realises that she has become too emotionally dependent on Debu. Finally she decides to leave New York and her company sends her to Hong Kong.

But after all these dramas, Debu comes to her on the day of her wedding. He asks her to elope with her. To this, Radhika replies with their past disagreements and fights. During their relationship, when Debu gets a promotion Radhika arranges a surprise party for him. But when she breaks the news of her bonus to him, Debu is non-reactive and acts like a dork. Now when Radhika questions him about his sudden desire to have her back in his life, he replies, "My feminism didn't go anywhere. My masculinity did. I told you, I felt insecure. How can my girl make three times as much as I do?" (Bhagat 119). Radhika is furious after hearing this. She does not offer him any reply or explanation.

As this is not enough, her second ex-boyfriend Neel Gupta enters the scene again and he too asks her to come with him. The Hong Kong episode is narrated by Radhika now. Neel Gupta, one of the senior partners of the company is happily married to his wife Kusum (or appears to be so) with their two kids. But he gets distracted with Radhika since she makes him yearn for his youth. He comes to know of the professional capability of Radhika and seems impressed with her work and he likes her already. Radhika accompanies him to various meetings with the partners and their clients. One such trip brings them closer together. When the head of the Tokyo Team insults Radhika by saying that he could not believe how a lady could be in

Distressed Debt group, Neel becomes furious and terminates the meeting. When Radhika confronts Neel about this, he is off-guard and drops hints to his feelings. Radhika too gets attracted to him despite knowing his marital status. They both get involved but Radhika keeps her herself away from the emotional attachment with Neel.

Neel's wife Kusum is warm towards Radhika and when she meets Kusum she is torn by her guilt. But she cannot help how beautiful Kusum is and she constantly compares herself with Kusum. "Okay, why on earth am I comparing my body to hers? Is that all we women are? I am a vice president in Goldman Sachs. Why doesn't that make me feel as smug as knowing I have bigger boobs than Neel's wife? And why am I comparing myself to her at all?" (Bhagat 189).

But despite their age difference, their relationship continues. And whenever Neel is upset or feels down he seeks the company of Radhika. But at one point, Radhika decides to put an end to her. When she brings about the idea of marriage, Neel simply replies that, "It's just I never thought of you as the maternal type. I don't know if you were even meant to be a mother" (Bhagat 209). She slaps him and Neel leaves. Radhika now decides to leave Hong Kong and she gets transfer to London with a promotion. She is now the Vice President of the Distressed Debt Group of her company. But even after moving to London, she tries to call Neel. This simply reveals that Radhika is just another girl who deserves to be cared and loved. But her choices of the guys are so far wrong entirely.

At last, due to the constant nagging of her mother, she relents to get married. "You will never be fully ready. It is already hard to get a boy for you. You are too successful, beta" (Bhagat 202). Radhika could not understand the term "too successful" but she lets the matter be. But she is horrified by the description of her which is given by her mother in the matrimonial website. It goes as this:

"Hi, I am a young, slim, quite fair, Punjabi Khatri girl aged 26, 5'4" tall. I am currently working in London, but flexible to move anywhere with my husband. I am family-minded and don't mind

staying in a joint family...I can cook North Indian cuisine quite well. I have one elder sister who is already married and well-settled in Delhi. My parents have no other liabilities. My father retired from a respected position in State Bank of India and my mother is a housewife. We are well off and can do a high-status wedding... I am looking for a well-qualified, well-settled suitable match from a good Punjabi family. Someone who will look after my family and me and respect elders. If interested please respond with details about you, including horoscope or date and time of birth. Regards, Radhika Mehta. (Bhagat 216)

Radhika confronts her mother regarding this, particularly the details about her complexion, the horoscope business, joint family and finally about the detail of her job. She is also offended by the expression "look after my family and me" as if she is not already doing that and needs a stranger to do that. To which her mother replies, "If they see a girl who is too independent-minded, too qualified, doing too well, they get scared...It's a fact. I didn't make the rules, beta" (Bhagat 219).

Finally she gets engaged to Brijesh Gulati who is a software professional. Everything goes well until her two exes turn up. On the early morning of her wedding, she calls them both and introduces them to each other. There she tells them her decision – she is not going to go with either of them. Debu left her because of his insecurity, that she makes more money than him. Neel left her because he thought she would not be suitable for making a home. Radhika does not need them both. She is not even ready to consider them both as her choices. "Choice. The benchmark word of feminism, right? I become a great feminist if I give women the choice of home or career....You know what women really want? We don't want to choose. We want to fly and we also want a beautiful nest. We want both. Do male birds tell female birds to choose?" (Bhagat 258-59). She rejects them both and not only them but also Brijesh. She tells Brijesh everything that has happened in her life so far and she asks him to stop the wedding. Brijesh has no problem with her past. But Radhika persists. The wedding is cancelled. Chetan Bhagat voices his views on

feminism in the conversation between Radhika and Brijesh.

'I think all human beings should have equal rights. It's not men versus women, it's human versus human. Feminist is a wrong term. It should be humanist. The right question is "Are you a humanist?" Well, everyone should be,' he said. 'True,' I said. 'Are you a feminist, Radhika?' 'What do you mean? I am a woman.' 'Not all women are feminists.' 'Really?' 'Mothers who treat sons better than daughters. Are they feminists?' 'No,' I said. 'Women who judge other working women as not being good enough mothers. Are they feminists?' 'No. I see your point. Yes, I consider myself a feminist,' I said. 'Can I say something?' 'Sure.' 'I don't think anyone has to specifically call himself or herself a feminist. If you are a fair person and want equal opportunities for all, that's a start.' (Bhagat 135-36)

Three months after the cancellation of the wedding, again Radhika contacts Brijesh. When Radhika questions him about her decision, Brijesh replies, "That frankly you, or for that matter, any girl, doesn't need a man to define her. You need a man to support, inspire...understand you. Help you be the best person you can be, banker, mother, both, whatever. And until you find a man you trust enough to do that, why settle?" (Bhagat 270). This impresses her even more and the novel ends with an optimistic note with both of them beginning their friendship.

Chetan Bhagat questions many of the conventional ideas through Radhika in this novel. The very first thing he questions is the concept of beauty. Just because Radhika is not fair, all around her even her mother believes that she would not be getting a nice guy. During the process of match making, when Radhika rejects a guy saying that he is ugly, her mother immediately retorts, "There is no such thing as an ugly man" (Bhagat 221).

The next thing is the ultimate destination (or believed so) - the marriage of a woman. This becomes the concern for every Indian mother who has a daughter. Radhika's mother is also the same. Even though her daughter is successful,

and she is independent, her mother wants her to behave like a normal girl – that is one who gets married to a nice guy (in this case good means one who might be good looking or rich), become a proper wife and a responsible mother to her kids. Radhika herself is not against the idea of marriage but she is confused about her choices or to be more correct – she chooses the wrong person(s). Finally Bhagat emphasises about the desire of women. It is obvious in the following statement, "'Women want everything. To have a lovely home and be a great mother. To also have a chance to shine in their careers,'" (Bhagat 259).

The subordination of women is a universal phenomenon. Even in this era of Post Feminism subordination of women remains the central topic of both the armchair academicians and the activists. Women now are not oppressed based on sex and gender. They are oppressed if they are poor, uneducated or undereducated, colored, or not well-informed.

Indian culture is known for its dedication of the reverential place for women. In Hindu religion, we can find many number of women deities dominating the spiritual scene. At the same time, we see many atrocities happening to women in our country. Right from Sati, this struggle continues. Indian feminism was started by men first and later women joined in to advocate their rights. It was started by the social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar.

We can mainly divide the history of Indian feminism into three parts: 1. Beginning in the mid 19th century when Europeans came out openly against the social evil of sati. 2. From 1915 onwards up to 1947 when Mahatma Gandhi associated feminist movement with Quit India Movement. 3. Post independence up to now. It has focused fairly for equality and giving rights for politics too. (Siddiqui 266)

During the initial stages of Indian Feminism women fought to abolish the custom of sati, widow disfigurement, upper caste marriage, child marriage. Even now problems such as female foeticide, right to the parental properties, etc. are being fought by women.

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Book Review

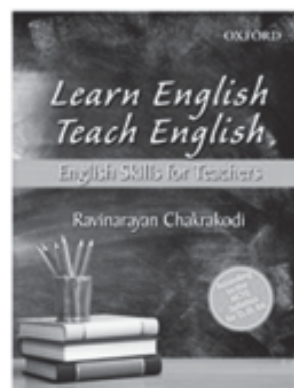
Learn English Teach English: English Skills for Teachers

Chakrakodi, Ravinarayan. (2016). *Learn English Teach English: English Skills for Teachers*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
(144 + viii pages) ISBN 019946636-X ₹ 240/-

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Learn English Teach English is a practical guide for teachers who want to enhance their proficiency in language as well as language teaching. It would also be an excellent guide to anyone entering his/her teacher training course and could easily be used as a textbook for such a course. It provides many ideas and strategies to teacher educators to train their students for acquiring the pedagogical and theoretical awareness about English language teaching. It offers plenty of exercises, sample activities, latest methodologies and theories of language teaching. *Learn English Teach English* can be used as a self-learning material by teachers to improve their professional competence. I, as a teacher educator, found it very effective for bridging the gap between theory and practice.



Structure

The book is divided into six chapters. These chapters cover all the four language skills as well as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Each chapter has two parts. The first part deals with strategies and techniques to improve English language skills and the second part provides the theoretical knowledge necessary to teach the same skills in the classroom.

Chapters at a glance...

The first chapter 'Becoming an efficient reader' introduces varieties of reading strategies and techniques. The reading passages given in the first part of the book provide practical exposure to the teacher trainees to develop their reading skills. In the second part, i. e, 'teaching reading',

the theoretical aspects of teaching reading are discussed. There are a number of practical tips throughout the chapter and some tasks like 'test your reading level' are highly interesting and challenging as well.

The fascinating feature of Chapter 2 'Listening skill' is the variety of listening materials and tasks provided there for improving the listening skill. As a teacher educator, I found the practical tips for teaching listening very useful. For example, in one of the training programmes I adopted 'dicto-gloss' from this chapter to train a group of primary school teachers. The impact was incredible as it provided a new experience to the teachers. They were not familiar with such types of tasks that help in developing one's listening comprehension as well as in language

acquisition. Such activities made my training sessions more interesting than ever before.

Chapter 3 'Speaking' follows the same structure as the previous chapters. I consider the contents in this chapter as the most essential for a language teacher, especially at the primary level. One of the challenges that most of the primary level teachers face in the area of English language teaching is the lack of proficiency in using the target language. The author has taken great care to include all the necessary features and aspects of speaking skill. The introduction of language functions and useful expressions, dialogue practice, classroom English and other speaking activities contribute much to meet the needs of a teacher in acquiring mastery over speaking. Ways of introducing speaking skill in the classroom and designing activities to enhance students' speaking are the focus of the second part of this chapter.

In conjunction with the discussion on the four language skills, the book has done a real good job in producing simple explanation and practice for all the essential English grammar, which is undoubtedly a hard nut to crack for many English language teachers. The activities given in this unit for developing vocabulary are highly practical and easy to conduct.

The fifth chapter on teaching writing skill begins with Ernest Hemingway's words: 'We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master'. This chapter not only develops an understanding of the skill of writing but also helps in developing the writing proficiency of teachers. The activities mentioned in the unit like running dictation, words-dictation- story, etc have already become oft-employed techniques in my ESL classroom.

One may think if teaching pronunciation is necessary in teaching English. Having a commendable word power is meaningless if you cannot pronounce those words with accuracy and no one can easily understand your utterances if you have a strong accent. Keeping these points

in mind, this book has to its credit the essential features of English phonetics. Part 1 deals with the segmental features like vowels, consonants and diphthongs whereas the second part deals with the supra-segmental features such as syllables, stress, intonation, rhythm etc.

The author, Ravinarayan Chakrakodi, also provides a slot for introducing essential ICT skills for ELT. This will help teachers adopt various ICT tools and resources in their classrooms.

Ready beckoner

Learn English Teach English is an excellent book to any learners who are/ will become teachers of English. As the title suggests, this book is designed as a reference for learning and teaching English language skills. Each chapter is well formatted and easy to read and not overrun with unnecessary details. The brevity of each chapter facilitates the book's readability and the author has done a great job by introducing complex topics like phonetic features within such a word count. The chapters are well balanced and give very sensible advice and support to student-teachers as well as novice teachers. It is also useful for experienced teachers whenever they are looking for new ideas and strategies for better teaching and classroom experiences. As I read the book from the perspective of a teacher trainer, I thought how helpful it would have been during my student teaching period and it is indeed a good tool to reflect on my current teaching practice. I love the practical tips sprinkled liberally throughout the chapters and I have adopted many of them in my own classroom. Being comprehensive and need-based, *Learn English Teach English* becomes the most wanted reference material to many teachers and thereby contributes much to their professional development. Overall, the author has succeeded in drawing together the practical and theoretical aspects of teaching English language skills. This would, undoubtedly, be a good book for anyone interested in language learning and teaching to have on their bookshelves.

Trainer's Corner

A Word with Teacher Trainers

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Human development is an evolutionary process. Each individual needs to evolve to enrich himself which may require coming out of one's comfort zones. Many a times this process may involve paradigm shifts to come out of one's comfort zones and to be ready to embrace positive changes. Man tends to develop certain beliefs and values in which he finds his identity and his behaviours are enrooted in these value systems within him. Thus a change in behaviour may demand a change in the value system of the person. Hence, a behavioural training programme which is designed to modify or develop certain behaviours in the participants will be effective if it can enter into the value reservoir of the person.

A behavioural training program must give the participants opportunities for looking into and for confronting themselves. This is possible if the group dynamics in the training group facilitates open transactions and genuine feedback. Here comes the most important role of the trainer/facilitator. Strong commitment from the trainer is needed to encourage openness and trust in the training group. The trainer must avoid his prejudices playing active role in the program and encourage others also to do the same. Many a time emotional presence of the participants will also play an important role to develop an atmosphere of empathy which in turn will raise the trust levels of the participants. Practicing "Now Here" during the training sessions will help to avoid judgements and prescriptive roles being taken by the participants and will encourage them to be more descriptive. In a prescriptive role, a person applies his own philosophies, where as in a descriptive role he/she tries to interpret things in the way he/she understood.

Trainer's role is that of guiding the program on its course without it being deviating much from the objectives. He shall be able to stimulate thinking and encourage constructive participation of the group members. The trainer shall attend to the view points and suggestions being given by the participants and shall ensure respect and equal opportunity to all the participants. A trainer shall be good at capturing the underlying messages, should be able to relate different ideas being floated during the program and should be able to assimilate for forming concrete ideas.

When these fundamental principles are put to practice in the in-service teacher training programme, the trainer has to be consciously aware of one unique and distinct property of teacher training. While all other training programmes address the end products, namely the person or animal (we train animals too, to achieve the desired behaviours), we can perceive the desired effect or change in them, sooner or later. For example a few NCC cadets are given rigorous training in shooting for a fixed time; and in the end, their accuracy in the skill can be measured in tangible terms 'here and now'. The same is the case with an agricultural training-cum-demonstration programme for farmers on organic farming. But, when it comes to a teacher training programme, the trainee stands somewhere in the middle point between the trainer and the children. As a result, the trainer is not in a position to assess whether the training offered has attained the aimed-at objective, because the trainer has to wait still to observe how the children function in the classroom or in the interim tests and final examination. That means here, the trainer has to follow the trainee

farther than the farm (as in the case of the farmer) or a shooting ground (as in the case of the cadet). This 'double distance' both in space and time, which is inherent in teacher training programmes makes it more complex and time-consuming. As a result, even a one-day teacher training programme must be carefully planned and executed. A casual approach, as if it is a matter

of routine career, can only bring in negative results. One reason why teachers, in general are reluctant to attend in-service training programmes is this casual approach of the trainers and organizations which does not promise them any serious behavioural change.

(Continued from page:46)

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Parenting

What Can I Talk to My Son?

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“My son always wants me to talk to him ... but what should I talk?”

Vimal, my neighbor was worried. His son, 7 year old Manav loves to talk to his dad and listen to him too. Every evening he troubles his dad with en number of requests to tell everything that happened during the day. Manav is a very eloquent child and just loves to talk and make others talk to him.

Vimal, on the other hand is a man of few words. He is quiet, introspective and observant. He doesn't want to disappoint his son, but doesn't know how to increase his talk time to his child.

Many parents find it a bit difficult to select suitable constructive conversations with their kids. They either end up in baby talks or in extremely simplified and shallow conversations. We tend to underestimate the capabilities of our children. We hardly share glimpses of our day to day normal life with our kids- rather we take them to a make believe world. We present the natural real world with added hues and mild tones in front of them; else they just read out stories or sing rhymes and lullabies.

It is essential to prepare the child with all necessary inputs regarding normal and natural life outside the four walls of the comfortable home. Life is not always a cake walk. The can of worms also is part of the normal human life. Keeping the child away from all the difficult and grim situations may make him vulnerable, naive

and helpless in tough situations later in his life. At the same time, parents should be extremely careful while talking about the realities around him- it should not create a panic or trauma in the child. It should not affect his innate trust and belief in the humanity and in the world around him.

Talking about how your day was could be a good move towards this acclimatization process. In simple words, if the parent could describe the entire day to the child, he would get an opportunity to experience it in a more natural way. When you share your experiences of your difficult times with the child, you are inviting the child to be part of your life. Such an open approach will reduce the possible 'taken for granted' mental state of the children towards their parents.

During such conversations, the parents could ask how the child feels, or what he would do if he were in your position. Thus, instead of direct value- teaching fables, you can let the child to be part of a problem solving process. Such constructive conversations will help to develop the perception of the child to different environments existing outside the comfy home climate.

Please listen to What Sachin Tendulkar has to tell us about his father.

I think it has a lot to do with interaction. My father never told me what was right or

wrong. *He guided me, but most of the things I learned came from watching him. He never told me that I had to be humble, I just watched him [being humble himself] and I said, "This is how I want to be in life."*

The most important advice he gave me was when he said, "Most things are temporary, your cricket will also be temporary because at some stage you will stop. But something

that stays permanently with you is your nature, the person you are. So try and be a good person. People will appreciate that even after you've stopped playing." So I try and tell my children the same thing. (Excepts from the interview with the Time Magazine)

Try such normal conversations with your child and help him grow with you in real world as a normal kid.

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Literature is treated as a medium where one can voice out the problems and tries to find a way out. Indian literature exactly serves that purpose of the creative genius. It not only presents or reflects the society but also focuses on various problems that are plaguing people today and tries to find a possible solution for that by advocating the readers. Almost all the Indian novelists voice out their concern regarding the equality of women. Feminist perspectives can be found in the works of Indian authors like Kamala Das, Kamala Markandeya, Anita desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Rama Mehta, Bharti Mukherjee, Dina Mehta, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nari, Susha Viswanathan, Nergis Dalal, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Indira Goswami, Malti Chendur, Shoba De, Arundhati Roy, Ruth Jabvala, Geeta Mehta. Not only women writers are vocal for the equality of women, we cannot forget the strong heroines of our very own R.K.Narayan.

The contemporary literary productions reflect the current trends and problems of our society. Bhagat addresses these problems in his writings with a right mixture of story-telling and teaching. He does not offer solutions but rather enables us to see what would happen if we do or do not engage in a particular action. *One Indian Girl* addresses all the problems that are faced by modern women of this era. Women face

problems at home – they are expected to be housewives who would only concentrate on their family and not on themselves – their health, their desires and their interests; they are expected to get married soon and that to a “settled” guy who would provide them for their lives; they are expected to be pretty looking and not ordinary looking as that would impede them in catching a “good guy”; even if she goes to a job, she is expected to earn less than her man so that his ego would not be affected; they are expected to be in lower positions in their place of work; they are always expected to be dependent on a male figure throughout their lives; if she is single guys hit on her and she is expected to maintain her decorum and chasitivity, and and so on and so on. The list only continues. All these issues are being addressed by writers of this era. Chetan Bhagat is one such influential figure who attracts attention through his writings and is known for his advocacy for women empowerment. *One Indian Girl* deals with all these problems and it ends with Radhika pursuing her heart; she does not need a guy to take care of her and she becomes independent in all aspects enjoying her freedom and bearing its responsibility at the same time. We modern women know our responsibilities of the freedom which is given to us and well aware of our limitations too, so please let us fly and find our own ways.

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Reports from the field

Learning to Learn through Learning to Teach: The English Summer Vacation Camp at GVGHSS Chittur, Palakkad

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Teachers in general may agree that when we teach something, we learn it better. Back at school and college we might have scored marks in a particular subject or topic; but things become clearer when we teach it—be it content or language. Students of Class XI virtually shared this 'teacher experience' when they stepped in the shoes of 'tutors' during the past summer vacation.

An English Summer Vacation Camp was conducted in Govt. Victoria Girls Higher Secondary School Chittur, Palakkad from 3rd to 28th April, 2017 as an initiative of a small local teacher organization called KELTA. Academic support was rendered by ELTIF. It was a unique programme and the first of its kind in Kerala, because the tutors were higher secondary students, and learners were a selected group from class V to IX. It was an experiment on how the academic excellence of the senior students can be made use of for the benefit of their juniors.

The cooperation of all the teachers and parents was assured for the success of the programme. Student teachers were given proper guidelines and training based on the module prepared by the English teachers of the school. Experts in the field were invited for training session for the student teachers. Dr. Bhaskaran Nair, ELT trainer and Professor at Chennai Central University was the master trainer. Mr. Biju T and Mr. Midhun from KELTA provided guidelines and support. Sri. R. Rajeevan, the Principal, Smt. Prasanna, the Headmistress, Sri. Sasikumar and Smt. Bindu, the English teachers and the school PTA and many others joined hands together for the success of the programme. I was fortunately instrumental to be the coordinator.

Around 140 students came willing to participate in the camp. They were divided into seven classes. Fifty higher secondary students volunteered to be tutors. A team of five tutors

was in charge of each class. Others helped in administrative work and related activities such as preparing materials—charts, pictures, models etc.. Class timing was 9 to 11a.m. Each day's session was prefixed by morning assembly and suffixed by an evaluation session— briefing , analyzing and evaluating each session.

When they practiced letter writing they decided to send friendly letters to their friends writing in inlands and post cards. All 200 students were taken to the post office to post their letters. The postal department celebrated the occasion by distributing sweets to the students.

The programme gained great popularity. Both print and visual media covered the event with due importance.

At the end of the camp a valedictory function was organized with a view of giving a chance for the students to showcase what they have gained from the camp. They performed skits, speeches, recitation of poems and role plays. A manuscript magazine titled 'Summer Diaries' compiling the creative writings of the students was released during the function. Chittur MLA Sri. K. Krishnankutty, Dr. Bhaskaran Nair, The Chittur Municipal Chairman and other dignitaries felicitated the function.

What was special of the programme was the fear-free atmosphere in which the learners and tutors interacted. Secondly, the materials used for teaching-learning were something new to both— pictures, film songs, film strips, TV programmes, and things which are not usually brought to the class. Thirdly, team teaching was something quite new to both. Finally, a sense of responsibility grew among them through working in collaboration.

Both the tutors and the learners are waiting for the next year's camp. Let this be pioneering venture – with an ideal teaching and learning experience for the students.

It works in my classroom.

Enriching Word Power through Extending Associations

P.Bhaskaran Nair

A new principal from a distant place joined the school, recently. She inquires a student about the travel facilities in the new place.

Teacher: Do you come to school by bus?

Student: Yes. Usually, I come by bus. Sometimes, on my bicycle, too.

Tr: Fine. By which bus? Private or State Transport?

St: Private. This route has more private buses than State Transport buses.

Tr: How far is your house from here?

St: Five kilometers.

Tr: How much is the bus fare?

St: Two rupees.

Tr: Only two rupees? Do students get concession?

St: Yes. One-third.

Tr: Ah, that's why. Otherwise, how much is the usual fare?

St: Six rupees.

Tr: OK. How long does it take to reach here?

St: Only fifteen minutes.

Tr: How many stops are there in between?

St: Usually six; sometimes one or two more.

Tr: Are the buses crowded?

St: Mostly, especially in the morning. On this route, buses are most often crowded.

Tr: Do you get a seat usually?

St: Very rarely. Even if we get, we vacate them when elders board the bus.

Tr: Are the crew friendly with students?

St: 'Crew' means?

Tr: Driver, conductor etc.

St: Oh, yes, of course. There is an agreement between the school and the bus operators. Each bus will take as many students as possible. Students can occupy seats; but should vacate them when elders board the bus. They will keep our bags with them. That is the understanding among the school, bus people and the local public.

Tr: It seems to be a very good system. Are you happy with the bus journey on this route?

St: Quite happy.

Tr: That's good. Thank you.

What is given above is an instance of a discourse genre (type), namely, conversation. A non-technical definition of a discourse may be something like "a chunk of language in use, which serves a communication purpose". For a learner of early years (class 3 or 4), there may be a few unfamiliar words in the discourse. A teacher, who critically analyzes the structure of the discourse can trace a pattern of distribution of those unfamiliar words (and of course, of the familiar words, too). If we draw a small circle with reference to the conversation given above, we can mark 'bus journey' as the central point. All other words are scattered around the central point, but within the circumference of the circle. You may be surprised to see that each word is connected to one or more words, and at the

same time directly connected with the central point (bus journey). For example, *crew* is connected with *passengers*, *bus*, and *friendly* within the circle, and at the same time directly connected with the centre '*bus journey*'. Another word, *fare* connects *the passenger*, *conductor* and *concession* in one direction, and with the centre *bus journey* in another direction. The word *fare* is further extended to two more familiar phrases in the conversation: *six rupees* and *two rupees*. Similarly, look at the mutual relation in each of the following pairs of phrases: *how far – five kilometers*, *how long – fifteen minutes*, *how much – two rupees*. That means, in the conversation, the three phrases *five kilometers*, *fifteen minutes* and *two rupees* exist just because another set of three corresponding phrases pre-existed.

Do this conversation and the illustration that followed together tell us anything about teaching vocabulary? To me, as a teacher, they do: Introduce a new word in association with those words which go with it. As a result, (i) comprehension will be easier, since some clue

pre-exists; (ii) retention in the mind will be stronger since both words are logically connected; (iii) retrieving the right word for a situation will be faster since the mind map has placed both words closer; (iv) wrong collocations will be minimized since right collocations are framed at source itself (*how long* instead of *how much time*); and finally (v) communication becomes faster and more precise.

Therefore, let words go together; not in isolation. The dialogue given in the beginning of this article can be used not only for developing speaking skills, but for enhancing thinking skills, too. Let the dialogue be first presented by the teacher and a student, and then repeated by pairs of students, a few times. While the practice is in progress, let the teacher draw the following diagram on the board and write the words and phrases within the circles, as shown in the diagram. Let the students, by working in pairs, connect them (two or three) by drawing arrows. Children thus, learn to establish association among words based on their meaning.

