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## From the Editor's Desk

### **The Disadvantaged Learner in the Smart Classroom**

All classrooms in all educational institutions all over India have been turned into 'smart', if we go by the statements of state and central educational administrations (in the case of public sector) and as we see in the advertisements and website of private institutions. Even if we blindly believe these statements, the question remains whether teachers have undergone any metamorphosis in their attitude to teaching. Then, what about the learners?

Uniformity or conformity may be all right from the perspective of judiciary or democracy; but not so in the case of teaching-learning. One of the main reasons for the miserable failure of Indian education is the teacher's uniform treatment to all in the class. We conveniently forget that each student sitting in front of us is a distinct and unique human being.

When it comes to the use of ICT in the class, especially on professional courses, the situation becomes worse. Socio-economic factors play a crucial role in learning. Usually, ours is a mixed ability class. Poor, first generation literate students and those from the middle and upper middle class sit together. We can see them sitting in their own groups, rarely mixing among them, unless they are forced. The back benches of the Indian classrooms have always been reserved for the disadvantaged. At schools, even by chance, if a few students from the socio-economically backward classes occupy the front rows, gradually they are pushed to the last rows by way of punishment or some other reasons.

One group comes to the class with more than optimal exposure to electronic gadgets, and the other with neither exposure nor possession. For the teacher, who is forced to 'cover the portion' at the earliest, the answers in the lecture class,

and the performance in the lab or workshop sessions by the best few are more than enough to 'jump' to the next topic and class test. Those who are waiting for the basics are side-lined. Back at school, especially in government schools, with one or two computers, a class of 60 or 80 'finish' their computer studies. Naturally, there the preference was to the best performers. The least performers showed 'withdrawal symptoms' and they somehow managed those practical sessions by 'attending' the classes. Attendance alone fetches a pass mark in many of the lab/practical sessions on most of the professional courses.

However, the economically backward, the socially disadvantaged learner too reaches the tertiary level—selecting either a professional or general programme of three to five years. As stated earlier, one among the prerequisites is the basics of computer literacy. But, unfortunately, he is not adequately good at it; nor does he possess a smart phone—an added disadvantage. When his classmates who come from a fairly good socio-economic-educational background perform fast in the class, lab or workshop, naturally he lags behind. Instructors, these days are not very particular about "knowing the learner before teaching". They either ignore the slow learners or distance them from the mainstream. In either case, the slow learner starts displaying 'withdrawal symptoms' and gets self-alienated.

If we trace the history of this unfortunate learner, who has been maintaining an average level in his studies all these years, was not able to perform better just because of his inaccessibility to the electronic media, and his inability to possess the modern gadgets. The teaching-testing system in India does not provide any special slot for slow learners. *(Continued on page 5)*

## **Integrating Literature and Language (Skills) Teaching**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to help us understand the relationship between literature and language and suggest how literature and language skills teaching can be integrated. First we shall look at the relationship between literature and language, then take a look at the processes that were responsible for creating the gap between literature and language teaching and finally, suggest ways of integrating them.

**Key Words:** Literature, language skills, integration, relationship, materials

### **Introduction**

This is how the relationship between Literature and language is generally viewed:

1. Language is the medium of literature
2. Literature is the manifestation of language
3. Language and literature are complementary to each other
4. Without good language, there can't be good literature
5. Literature is not possible without language.

We observe that there is an intimate relationship between literature and language. Both are complementary and are like song attuned to music. However, when it comes to teaching, both components are not given equal importance by teachers. The literature teachers do not address the language aspects present in the text and tend to do a little to develop language skills in the learners and the language teachers think that literary texts are not necessary. For this reason perhaps, literary texts were kept aside from the language classroom for some time. However, in olden days, Literary classics were prescribed in the language curriculum. However, with the advent of the structural approach, literature was seen as unnecessary and emphasis was given to everyday language. The language of literature was seen as far-fetched and deviated from every day language. Another reason for keeping literature aside from the language classroom is historical. We may discuss here

as to how literature teaching emerged as a separate discipline in India.

### **Historical Overview**

English was introduced in Indian education system by the British as part of the civilizing agenda with the support of some veteran Indian leaders in 1830s. It was Lord Thomas Babilton Macaulay who advocated the introduction of English by emphasizing the superiority of English literature. He stated: "I have conversed both here and at home with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. .... I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". The purpose behind introducing English was to create a class of people who would serve the British administration and transform them culturally. As stated by Macaulay: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." Subsequently, English was introduced in Indian schools and colleges. The first universities were set up in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 (Krishnaswamy). English literature was introduced in Indian universities to teach

the masters to the Indian students. Methods and materials were imported from England. Teachers who taught were either British or were trained in Britain. Students who enrolled in universities were largely from the feudal sections. So it was a homogenous kind of group and teaching them was smooth. Researchers who have analysed the syllabus of that time and have found that it was highly anglicized and exclusively British. It included only the British writers like Bacon, Johnson, Milton and Goldsmith (Mukherjee 318).

After Independence, English literature was seen as alien and against the local literature. Still some students and teachers preferred it. Hence English literature was part of the syllabus of English department. English teachers concentrated on teaching the masters paying little attention to language skills. Its teaching was assigned to the neighbouring department which was called the Linguistics Department. The composition of class changed after Independence. More and more students from rural and underprivileged sections also joined universities. They needed help in language skills to read the masters. However, English department teachers expected their students to enter the department after an adequate proficiency in English so that it would be convenient for them to enjoy the works of the masters (There were, of course, a few exceptions who took care of language development of their students as well). Without finding support they had to depend on guide books and translated texts. After passing out from universities some of them were not proficient in language skills.

Thus, English literature teaching established itself as a separate discipline losing focus on language teaching and acquired an elitist status. The gap between them widened slowly as English departments became narrower in their approach. Finally they became marginalized and at a point of time there were a few takers of English. A mismatch was also observed as students who enrolled in English departments needed help in English language skills. They took admissions in English departments to hone their English language skills whereas they were taught literature and aesthetics.

In the field of ELT as pointed by Professor Tickoo there was a methodological shift. The structural approach put aside literature as it was thought to have farfetched language removed from day to day language. Also with the advent of ESP, literature was seen as unnecessary and tailored made courses to suit different professionals were preferred over of English for General Purposes. Of course, now with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching, Literature has come back to ELT.

### **How to bridge the gap?**

There is a need to integrate literary appreciation and language skills development. Here are a few suggestions to bridge the gap. Good literary works in English should be included in the syllabus. These include, literature from England and America as well as from the commonwealth countries. Literature in translation from Europe should also be included. Widdowson (1983) makes a distinction between study of literature and learning of literature. Literature should not be seen as a text for study but it could be used for a variety of tasks for language enrichment. Emphasis should be on the use of literature meaning employing literature for applied purposes i.e. for skills development. In addition to these, we should also include local materials such as Bhasha literature, oral narratives to make our materials and methods more interesting and inclusive and give our students a sense of ownership. We should have a broader view of literature and include, essays, travel writing, biography, personal narratives, etc. into the purview of literature. Language skills should be given importance. Apart from the syllabus and the materials, there is a need to revamp the methods of teaching too. Teachers should make the class interactive by allowing students to speak and present their views. It is possible to make students interact in lecture method as well. Teacher can pause in between and invite students' response time to time. By this, learners will develop confidence and fluency in speaking. Small scale assignments in writing and speaking should be given throughout the semester. Making students do small scale projects on topics related to literature and asking them to make oral presentations

will enhance their language skills. Students should be allowed to do projects choosing texts from their first language as well. Selected films in English and in MT can also be given for appreciation. Extensive reading could be planned and monitored by the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Though English is needed by learners, that does not mean they need only literature but they would like to learn language skills as well. This can be taught by integrating literature and language teaching. English is no longer the language of the British but it has acquired the global status.

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*(continued from page 2)*

### **From the Editor's Desk**

The post-Covid19 instructional design and pattern are going to make matters worse for the disadvantaged learners. Though online tutoring has been there in the agenda of many professional and general colleges, not many have been effectively making use of this mode. However, in the post-Covid19 situation, almost all post-matric educational programmes are going to be shifted to online mode. Reasons may vary—but one main reason could be economy. Online tutoring needs less number of teachers; as a result many private institutions are likely to cut short their workforce. We have the examples of banking and telecommunication systems before us, which reduced manpower considerably when computerization progressed.

But, at the moment I am not worried about the loss of job for my younger colleagues. As usual, my concern is about the disadvantaged

We have also internalized it. Literature doesn't mean only English literature but literatures in English. It can be literature from the Americas, from Australia, Europe, Africa and Asia. It is possible to teach literature and language skills if the teacher plans the syllabus making it inclusive, implement it paying attention to both literary appreciation and language skills and carry out the evaluation maintaining a balance. It is generally thought that students who study literature will be good in language skills as well, but if teachers' efforts are also combined it will help more number of students.

learners—disadvantaged, just because they were born poor. Any implementation of technology must be slow-paced—in the first phase, both manual and technological modes should go hand in hand, parallel. Slowly and gradually, manual scaffolding can be withdrawn in small degrees. Even then, those learners who need personal, face to face interaction and tutoring must be provided as long as they wish.

One lesson we must learn from the mortal Covid 19 is that science or technology functions effectively only when human beings care one another. Those rich nations, where there were no humanitarian concerns, though technologically highly advanced, failed miserably and they miserably surrendered to Death.

P. Bhaskaran Nair  
(Editor)

## **The Low Reading Proficiency of EFL Tertiary Level Students: A Study in the Omani Context**

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### **Introduction**

Among the four language skills, reading is considered to be the mother of all the skills. Alderson (2000) opines that in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), reading is the most important skill for an English Language Learner (ELL). As English opens the window to the world, reading opens the window to the vast storehouse of knowledge in the field of education, scientific research, technology and all other fields of knowledge. The students who learn English in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts need to depend mostly on reading to acquire both the fundamental and the advanced second language (L2) skills. Reading competence enables the reader to undergo the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text and this skill contributes towards the enhancement of other language skills (Zhao, 2009). The ESL and EFL students are generally more exposed to reading than to the other language skills – listening, speaking and writing. It is commonly found that the ESL / EFL students who are weak in reading face stumbling blocks in their endeavor to acquire other language skills too.

The Sultanate of Oman is a country in the gulf region where English is taught and learned in an EFL context. The government of the country pays great attention to impart English education to school and tertiary level students. This was obviously seen when Basic Education system was introduced in 1998 wherein English was introduced right from class 1 instead of class-4 as in the old General Education system. As per the new school education system, students get education in English language for 12 years. In most of the schools in Oman, English lessons are taught six times in a week for approximately for 40 minutes each. In spite of all these innovations and efforts to improve the standard of English among school students, their competency in English remains inadequate

and most of the students are forced to complete one more year of intensive English language training called General Foundation Programme before they can join the undergraduate programs of their universities / colleges. Also, even after the focused training in English for a year, the students are still found to be weak in the language skills, especially in the reading skill. Al Issa (2011) confirms this and opines that the majority of higher education students need extra tuition in English and they find it very difficult to secure a job. It has been observed that all the high profile private companies in Oman generally prefer the candidates with adequate skill in English as well as in their specialized subjects to be absorbed into their workforce. Low proficiency level in English is one of the major reasons why many university graduates fail to secure their dream jobs. According to the Test Taker Performance statistics of IELTS candidates in Oman (2018), the mean band score in reading is just 4.93 whereas the mean band scores of all other skills are 5 or above; the Overall Band Score (OBS) is 5.22. Oman's strong oral tradition can be one of the reasons for the students' lack of interest in reading. Arabic speaking nations have an unusually strong tradition of oral language. As Al- Mahrooqi (2016) puts it, Oman has been characterized as largely lacking a reading culture both in Arabic and English. Al Noursi (2014) further states "In the Arab world, education systems have failed to create a reading generation or a sufficiency of good writers, both of which are primary conditions for creating an encouraging reading environment" (p 246). Good reading is a pre-requisite for developing good writing skills. O' Sullivan (2004) also expresses a similar view on the negative attitude of the UAE college students towards reading and opines that UAE students have limited strategy and poor performance in reading. Rajab and Al Sadi (2015) conducted a similar study on the reading habits of Saudi University students

and have found that the Saudi students do not exhibit adequate interest in reading, especially in English. Shannon (2003) also shared the same view when he noted that reading culture and reading habits are rather missing in many Arab societies in which "oral tradition is treasured and prized". So, it can be seen that Arab EFL students in general do not value the importance of reading to enhance their language skills.

This paper aims to investigate the reasons behind the poor reading skill of Omani students at the tertiary level. The paper is based on a study conducted at a tertiary level institution in Oman among 121 undergraduate students and 6 ELT practitioners.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the reading preferences and reading habits of the EFL students at the tertiary level;
2. investigate the reasons behind the low motivation of the students in reading;
3. find out the causes for the low achievements of the students in the reading assessments;
4. evaluate the students' and teachers' perceptions on the measures to be undertaken to motivate the students to read effectively and extensively.

### **Participants**

One hundred and twenty-one undergraduates (Female 102, Male 19) from a tertiary level institution in Oman, 6 university lecturers and 1 ELT supervisor are the participants in the study. A questionnaire of mixed type questions, semi structured focus group and individual interviews have been employed to collect the data for this study. Observation also has been used as one of the techniques to triangulate the findings. No personal information of the participants was collected to encourage them to respond to the survey questions as truly as possible.

The following hypotheses were formulated to conduct the study:

- H1 Tertiary level students in Oman do not read enough in L1 and L2 and this factor affects their proficiency in the reading skill negatively;
- H2 Students are aware of their shortcomings in reading and want to improve their reading skills;
- H3 Students are very active on social media and their interest in them can be effectively channelized to enhance their interest in reading

in English.

### **Literature Review**

Language is called a skill subject because learning as well as using a language requires the fourfold interdependent skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To speak is to listen and to write is to read. Amongst the four language skills, reading can be defined as an act of receiving meaning from the written words. Reading is not a natural process because the habits necessary for efficient reading are not innate but acquired during the beginning period of reading instruction. As technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace and as English is the most commonly used language on the Internet for disseminating the information on new thoughts and findings, developing a good reading skill in English is very crucial for any learner. As Grabe & Stoller (2011) state, it is essential to possess adequate reading skills for academic success and success in a career. As we see in the present scenario, educated citizens need much stronger literary abilities both in reading and in writing in the complex societal settings. Most children acquire requisite basic literacy skills relatively easily, but the difficulties appear in advanced reading both in L1 as well as in L2. Hannell (2008) states that about 15 percent of early learners undergo different forms of reading difficulties that can be occasionally very serious in nature. The early identification will help in assisting a student to overcome these serious problems and achieve his / her full potential for linguistic and academic development.

There are some fundamental differences between ESL and EFL classrooms. In an ESL context, students get exposed to language even outside the learning environment and this directly and indirectly better facilitates language learning. In an EFL context, students get very limited exposure to English outside the learning environment and thus language learning is mostly confined to the exposure and practice only in the classrooms during the English lessons. So reading is to be mainly depended upon for facilitating the learning of other language skills. Some researchers like claim that the differences between acquiring a language in a foreign language context and in a second language context are so vast and often

overlooked.

Though the reading skill is of paramount importance, numerous researches on the reading habits of the secondary as well as the tertiary level students have revealed that students are not motivated enough to read extensively and thus they fail to acquire the right attitude towards reading. The reading problems that students confront are not limited to EFL or ESL students; but even the students who are native speakers of English face serious problems in developing the proper reading skills right from their elementary classes (Guthrie, 2006).

The native speakers of English already possess approximately 5000-7000 words when they commence reading in English. Also, they possess adequate knowledge of the fundamental structures of sentences (Grabe&Stoller, 2011). On the other hand, the early L2 learners of English who learn English is used as a foreign language, as in Oman, have inadequate lexical and grammatical knowledge when they start to read English. This poses a great challenge for the students as well as for the educators. EFL and ESL secondary and undergraduate students often need to read and comprehend a huge number of academic texts in English but many of the students are underprepared for the demand that the reading bestows on them (Dreyer and Nel(2003).Grabe&Stoller (2011) opine that the learners with acceptable level of competency in vocabulary and the skills in decoding also face glitches in the process of comprehending a task which is due to inadequate knowledge in the strategy.

Automaticity of the word recognition is considered as an important prerequisite for enabling the learner for achieving higher level of processing of meaning at various levels- words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and the whole text (Macaro&Erler, 2008, p. 92). Schemata also play a momentous role in facilitating the understanding of the reading text. Reading involves both bottom-up and top-down strategies as well as the interactive approach. The bottom up strategy involves decoding the text word by word. For top down, strategies like inferencing and predicting are made good use of during the process of reading. Using this strategy, the

reader processes the text in their mind with the help of reader's own schemata that is usually transferred from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2). Interactive approach is an amalgamation of both the above approaches; which stresses what is in the text and what a reader brings to it. While reading both in L1 and L2, a reader employs any of or all of these strategies. competent readers always interact with the texts by asking questions, agreeing or disagreeing with the arguments developed in the text and link their other reading experience too with what they read.

There are two categories of reasons for developing reading difficulties. The former one is the influences from outside. This includes faulty teaching methods, inadequately trained teachers, lack of adequate time devoted for teaching and practicing reading, socio-economic status of the learners. The second factors that influence the reading are intrinsic such as the learner's cognitive abilities, phonological awareness, the level of motivation of the learner and the attitude and the learner's response to failure. Placing heavy demands on the learners also affect his reading capacity adversely. This is true if the learners are struggling to develop their literary skills in their mother tongue too. According to Westwood (2008) about 15 percent of the learners face difficulties in comprehension when they read expository texts. He further emphasizes the importance role that the environment plays in developing the attitudes of the learners towards reading. In the present scenario, reading is not only done just from print but on screen / online too. Reading is an art of transferring the facts, ideas, information and feelings from the heart of the author to the reader. Good readers make use of various cognitive skills to comprehend a text that help him to achieve greater results in reading.

The efficient reading has two steps: recognition of printed / written symbols and comprehension of printed matter. The ultimate objective of all reading is the comprehension of meaning of the text. The students who are taught other subjects in their vernacular medium of instruction have little exposure to English



other than during the very limited hours that they have in the classroom. Moreover, during these hours, reading skill is not developed well enough as the focus is often shifted to other language skills, especially on writing skill or teaching grammar. Comparatively, the students who study in English medium schools are exposed to English right from their elementary level which leads to attain better language competency in English. In Omani educational setting, where English is taught in an EFL context, the students lag behind in reading skill than in other language skills (IELTS, 2018).

### **Findings of the study**

The findings in this study throw light on some interesting aspects of the EFL students' reading preferences and habits. To the survey question on the frequency of reading other than the course books, an alarming 52 per cent of the students responded that they never read anything other than the course book and the messages on the social media. During the focus group interview, 78 per cent of them responded that they do not have the habit of reading even the newspaper either in their mother tongue or in English. Many students even do not know the names of the English newspapers or magazines that are in circulation in Oman or in the gulf region. Only 8 per cent of the participants responded that they read from magazines and books regularly, though only for a very short time.

On the question to find out the reading preference of the tertiary level students, 89 per cent of the respondents opined that their preferred language for reading is Arabic. This shows that English is not as popular among the tertiary students as expected even though the medium of instruction at the tertiary level is English. The percentage of the students who prefer the online reading and reading the hard copies of the books and magazines are found to be almost equal, 49% and 51% respectively. It is interesting to note that even though the students have better access to the online reading materials, it has not positively influenced the reading preference of the students.

A question was asked in the survey to gauge the self-evaluation of the students as a reader in English. Surprisingly 61 per cent of the

students assessed themselves as average readers but only 2 per cent of the students evaluate themselves as good or excellent readers. One very encouraging response from the students was that 98% of the students are aware of the importance of developing the reading skill in English and during the focus group interview they stated that there are many factors that impede them from developing adequate reading skills in English. The causes that are instrumental in hampering the reading skills will be discussed later in this paper.

It was observed that even if almost all the tertiary level institutions in Oman have good library facilities, most of the students have not developed good library habits. It has been found from the data that a whopping 38 per cent of the participants in this study had never been to the library for the purpose of any serious reading. Moreover, 27 per cent of the students responded that they visit the library very rarely; during the interview many of the students admitted that they visit the library building and read certain parts from some books purely based on the recommendation and compulsion of their teachers.

The respondents have cited many reasons for their poor reading skill in English. One of the major problems cited was the unfamiliar vocabulary that they come across in any reading text. This stands as a stumbling block, affects their comprehension and discourages them reading further because they fail to connect and comprehend different parts of the text. As Fecteau (1999) mentioned, unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure hamper students' understanding and they tend to misinterpret or focus on less important part of the reading text. Cobb (2007) also reports that word knowledge is the most important ingredient for succeeding both in L1 and L2. It was seen that poor comprehension poses as a serious problem as a participant opened up saying "I do not understand what I read; so I stop reading after sometime because I feel it is useless to continue reading if I do not understand what I read". Some participants opined that they did not get good reading practices right from their school days and it is affecting their reading

skill even after they reaching the tertiary level. To some participants “not getting good books to read” and “not getting interesting topics” are the problems that discourage them from reading English books other than their course books. A participant finds no purpose in reading as she says “I do not read because..... why should I read?”. Some students complained that they do not get proper guidance or directions on how to choose good books and what are the appropriate books and magazines to read; so they feel like groping in the darkness without proper direction.

The teachers who were interviewed opined that lack of interest and motivation in reading in English are the prime reason for having the poor reading skills among the students. Guthrie et al. (2004) claim that the effectiveness of reading instruction depends on linguistic competency as well as on the intrinsic motivation of the learners. Wurr (2003) establishes that motivation and engagement decide how well a learner acquires the language skills. Most of the teachers were of the opinion that the reading habit of the most of the tertiary level students is limited to only ‘pragmatic use’ as to get good marks in the assessments. The wash back effect of the tests is seen as a prime reason for the students not focusing on the real purpose for reading. Students do not look at reading practice in the classes as an exercise to improve their skill in reading but only as a mundane effort to prepare for the reading examination and score good grades. Some students even translate the whole text into Arabic by using some translation apps and focus on understanding only the sense of the text. In such a scenario, the very purpose of reading in a second language is lost and the students do not develop the much needed L2 language skills. They fail to realize that they need to develop good reading skills at school and college / university level to be lifelong learners. Also, it was observed that some English teachers at the school level do not go beyond the instructions given in the Teacher’s Book and limit themselves without exploring the possibilities of going beyond the virtual boundaries to sow the seeds of interest in the students’ mind.

More than 92 per cent of the students who participated in this study answered that they generally use social media for more than 2 hours daily, reading the messages from friends and family and watching videos etc... In the past, when a teacher enters a class it was a usual sight to see students talking to each other and sharing news about things that are happening around them. However, in the present changed scenario, most of the students are found to be glued to their smart phones and reading / watching something from social media. The new generation’s interest in the smart phones and social media has a huge educational potential if it can be channelized and utilized wisely by the educators. Rafiq et al. (2019) in their research on the effects of social media on the reading habits of the students have found that the use of usual media has a very positive impact on enhancing the reading skills of the students. Difficulties with the spellings and sound system of English words also are found to be really challenging for the students whose mother tongue is phonetic. Phonic incompetency poses as a serious challenge for many students. In their vernacular language they read what they write and mostly the letter combinations have similar pronunciation wherever they are used in different words. The students’ L-1 practice and knowledge find it slightly difficult to accept the language where a combination of a couple of letters has different pronunciation depending on the context and the words in which they are used. It is also generally found that loud reading is not given adequate importance even at the primary level in Oman. Reading aloud helps the learners learn to improve their information processing skills, pronunciation, vocabulary and comprehension.

The participant teachers also are of the view that cultural, social and family backgrounds also do not encourage the reading habit in English. As a result of a valued oral tradition, there is a lack of reading culture in the Arab society (Shannon, 2003). In the families, the siblings do not see elder siblings reading regularly and they fail to understand the value of reading skill in general and reading skill in English in particular. Parents also do not usually play

an encouraging role in developing the good reading skills of their children at home. The parents are generally happy if their children can manage a pass grade in the examinations. Most of the parents of the present tertiary level students do not have tertiary level educational qualification and in many Omani families this is the first generation of the students who are getting college education.

The teachers who participated in this study also confirm students' opinion that lack of adequate number of interesting reading materials is a major reason that leads to low motivation of the students in reading. The students' exposure to English in general outside the classroom is very limited and students get the practice on the language skills only during the limited time in the classroom. At the school level, the students seldom use English even during English lessons and most of the conversations among the students during the class time happens in Arabic. Even at university or colleges, the situation is not very different. Among all the language skills students seem to like speaking the most but the students are very rarely found to be engaged in conversation in English with their peers outside the classroom; thus they are losing a great to change to improve their English language skills.

Nonexistence of public libraries in the towns and villages are cited as another important reason for not getting the opportunities for developing the reading skill among the students. Once out of the campus, the students mostly have access to only their course books as hard copies. They do not get encouraged to read in a particular place with a particular ambience as it happens in a public library. It can be observed that in all the developed countries, the public libraries play a major role in developing the reading habits of the young and old generation alike.

### **Discussion.**

It is encouraging to find that students are aware of the importance of reading in acquiring the English language skills as 98 per cent of the students acknowledge that it is very important to develop good reading skill both in L1 and L2. This self-realization goes a long way in enhancing the motivation of the students in

reading. From the response of the students it was clear that they are not guided properly or provided with interesting books to sustain their interest in reading. Conducting regular reading competitions in English based on the interesting reading assignments will instill interest and competitive spirit in the minds of the students. Also, it has been found that students use social media for a very long time daily and if their interest in the social media is systematically channelized to achieve educational goals, that will have a positive result on the reading skill of the students. The use of social media to facilitate the education will indirectly motivate the tech savvy students and encourage reading outside the framework of rigid classroom settings. This is an area that has a huge educational potential but is largely underexploited in the present English language teaching setting. From the unanimous opinion of the teachers and the students it is obvious that if the reading lessons are made more interesting and if the correct reading strategies are taught efficiently, the students' interest in the reading can be sustained and it will lead to improving the reading competency of the tertiary level students.

Treating reading in English just as a component of the assessment also is one of the main reasons why students do not develop the reading skill in a meaningful way. The purpose of reading is found to be confined to just understand a reading passage and find the answer from them. There must be a major focus shift in this area. Sometimes faulty assessments and inflated marks in the assessments also give a false impression to the students that their reading skill is adequate. For example, the assessment questions below fail to test the reading comprehension of the students.

Example of a question from an elementary class assessment: Comprehension text: ..... Ali and his parents live in Sohar. Q. Ali's parents live in \_\_\_\_\_.

Example of a question from an assessment in a literature course: The text: ..... The alliteration in this poem makes it mellifluous. Q. What makes the poem mellifluous?

In the above examples there is absolutely no

comprehension involved; rather any student who can identify these words in the reading passage can answer the questions correctly. Without even knowing what is 'alliteration' or what the word 'mellifluous' means, the students will be able to answer the given question correctly. Such faulty assessments that give a false impression to the students about their competency in reading skill should be avoided at all levels.

Newspapers and magazines have a vital role to play in enhancing the reading skill of the students. According to Cheyney (1982) newspaper is the textbook on reading that provides up-to-date information on local, provincial, national and world affairs. Reading the newspaper regularly helps the students to build vocabulary skills and background knowledge that strengthens reading skills and increases the enjoyment of reading (Strommen and Mates, 2004). Vocabulary repertoire gets built up during a learner's life time indirectly through the constant exposure to the language rather than through direct teaching. Good readers are generally found to be good spellers; spellings are not to be taught but to be caught. The habit of reading newspaper is an activity that has been thoroughly neglected in Oman. During the focus group interview, students have responded that reading newspapers regularly either in L1 or in English has never been a part of their daily life. As the newspapers always carry news on current developments all over the world, it can surely be used as an educational tool to sustain the interest of the students. Some regular competitions based on the current affairs and world events will encourage the students to regularly read the newspapers and periodicals that will have a cumulative positive result on the reading practice and the reading skill of the students. Newspapers and magazines must be made easily available for the students and once the students take interest in reading them regularly, the habit will stay with them throughout their life. The more one reads, the better competency he or she acquires in the reading skill in English.

To improve the language skills of the students in English, it is inevitable that students must

be exposed to the language other than the very limited time that they get in the language classes to practice the language. One of the important facilitators that is missing in Omani society is the existence of public libraries in the towns and villages. This is an area that requires adequate attention of the authorities. In any society, the existence of the public libraries always positively contribute to the literary and the reading skills of the masses. These libraries usually turn out to be meeting places for the youths in the community and involve them in many literary competitions including debates, symposium, versification etc. All these activities lead to the improvement of the reading skills both in the mother tongue and in English.

English course materials must be realistic and appropriate to the students' level to induce interest in the students for reading extensively. Extensive reading also must be made a part of the curriculum. Keeping in view the low level of language skill of the students, the present contact hours in English is not adequate and the hours must be increased at least by a quarter. Al Mahrooqi (2012) also finds that the number of English classes and the length of the English are not sufficient to impart adequate language skills in the students and suggests to offer science subjects in English so that the students will be exposed to English for more number of hours. If the Ministry of Education in Oman can start a few English medium classes along with the classes in Arabic medium in the same school, the students who are more interested in English will get an opportunity to join and be better equipped in English.

### **Conclusion**

The findings agree with the hypothesis that tertiary level students in Oman do not read enough books in L1 and L2. However, students are aware of the utmost importance of improving the reading skill as can be seen from the very high percentage of positive response on the question in the survey. The findings also emphasize that most of the tertiary level students spend good amount of time on social media. Students' intrinsic interest in the social media and the Internet can be positively channelized to enhance the language skills. A new reading culture is to be developed

inside and outside the classrooms so that extensive reading becomes a part of the student life. As the students generally complain about the lack of adequate vocabulary as a stumbling block, focus must be given on developing good foundation in acquiring adequate vocabulary in English. Library hours must be integrated into the curriculum and it must be made an essential part of curriculum. Also, extreme care must be

employed while selecting the course books for the foundation program. Culturally appropriate and interesting course books must be selected so that students find a reason for sustained reading. Introducing different completions in English such as test on general knowledge and current affairs, conducting debates and book review etc. will also encourage the EFL students to read more in English.

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## **Impulsiveness and Craftsmanship: A Luscious Recipe by Kamala Das and Wole Soyinka**

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### **Abstract**

India and Nigeria have witnessed the most tumultuous situations both in their local and national cultures due to imperialism and colonialism. During the remarkable periods of colonization and attainment of freedom there occurred a wide range of cultural, racial and political interactions between ruling and the ruled sections of the society. In turn, those cultural interfaces and influences led writers register their distinct experiences on the canvas of both regional and world literature. Kamala Das (India) and Wole Soyinka (Nigeria) have explored English poetry to display their personal and social contexts diversely. These contemporary writers have created an authentic and artistic document by exploring various dimensions of language in terms of spontaneity and craftsmanship. While Kamala Das is more autobiographical and engages spontaneity of regular speech in an unconcealed way, Wole Soyinka employs refined and well-knit form of expression to load multiple meanings. Thus, this paper is an attempt to draw excerpts from their illustrious poetry to display the process of spontaneity and craftsmanship in terms of language use. It also discusses the way these poets have explored distinct form, tone, narrative and descriptive techniques to articulate intense emotions and thoughts of true human concerns.

India and Nigeria have witnessed the most tumultuous situations both in their local and national cultures of due to imperialism and colonialism. Colonial period brought a direct irresistible encounter between the native and foreign cultures. The traces of influence prevailed even in post-colonial context. During the remarkable periods of colonization and attainment of freedom, there occurred a wide range of cultural, racial and political interactions among ruling and the ruled sections of the society. As a result, the society had been a boiling cauldron all along. In turn, it led the writers bring their distinct experiences on to the canvas of their national literature. Kamala Das (1934 - 2009) and Wole Soyinka (1934 - ) stand among the highly sensible and reactive poets representing their experiences during historical transitions in the body of their national culture. Their poetic language exhibit both spontaneity and craftsmanship in reflecting the present and transforming the same into history. Most of their poems are authentic record of powerful responses to the changing and unchanging human situations. There is a wide range of differences in the way these two writers have employed the language. As a result the poetry of these contemporary writers seems to be an artistic document exploring various possibilities of language use. Poems of Kamala Das threw

open the windows of personal chamber of the royal community to the outer world through spontaneous unconcealed expressions, whereas Wole Soyinka exhibits amazing craftsmanship in taking across the ideas of cultural concerns. This paper explores the unique approaches of dressing thoughts followed by illustrious Kamala Das and Wole Soyinka in their poems. While talking about Kamala Das in his introduction to her selected poems K. Satchidanandan (1996) has rightly observed, "*The openness, the confessional character and the complete identification of the personal and poetic selves characteristic of Kamala's poetry have to be viewed in reference to the social context. She reveals rather than conceals, explains rather than suggests.*"<sup>1</sup> She seems to have emptied the load of emotions and sufferings through her poetry. Thus, in all its dimensions poetry of Kamala Das seems to be in line with what Aristotle has said; '*literature is to achieve catharsis*'. She had been excitingly spontaneous in responding to every woman and human situation she came across which makes K Satchidanandan further say, "*She is many: her language speaks with a hundred tongues.*"<sup>2</sup> Kamala Das outlines her pain and her identity in a plain but more telling way in the poem 'The Cat in the Gutter'. Throughout the poem Kamala Das maintains natural tone and the thoughts

appear in an undressed form. The images she uses are very spontaneous and successfully arrest the attention by its directness.

*... I was just a high bred kitten  
Rolling for fun in the gutter.*

**(Das: Cat in the Gutter, p.103)**

Kamala Das masterfully exploits her day to day language in her compositions. There is no hide and seek business in her poems. But the use of language to document her purely personal experiences is new in both cultural and literary context of India. Changing at ease from first person description to conversation form and swiftly returning to first person expression again is amazingly managed by Kamala Das. For instance, this may be noticed in following lines from the poem 'Substitute'.

*... I was thinking, lying beside him  
That I loved, and was much loved.  
It is a physical thing, he said suddenly,  
End it, I cried, end it, and let us be free.  
This freedom was our last strange toy. . .*

**(Das: Substitute, p.53)**

She was thoroughly lost in an exciting path of love beyond the framework of marriage. Although it had been common in case of men in royal families, the moves of Kamala Das came as an unbearable shock. But home is home. It has the enchanting power and it is true even in case of Kamala Das. She could not escape from the beckon of home and at the same time she registers the grave fact stunningly in the very next line.

*... home is what we return to battered by work  
illness or love.*

*home is where the dream awaits us  
and the knife sharpened for the kill. . . .*

**(Das: The Word is Sin, p. 106)**

While Kamala Das engages her language to portray her personal experiences, Wole Soyinka displays his committed social and national concerns. As a citizen of tumultuous Nigeria Soyinka has encountered every miserable side of colonial and post colonial absurdities under the rule of both foreign powers and native power-mongers. He witnessed both warm and cold sides of relationships in terms of politics and social life. He voices it out in the poem 'When Seasons Change'.

*... The blows of battle and the scars, old fences*

*And the guarded opening of a gate  
Old welcomes, the heat of comradeship  
And cold betrayal, old sacrifices . . .*

**(Soyinka: When Seasons Change, p.113)**

Soyinka appears to work on the choice and order of words to load the meaning into the well-knit frame of poem. Whereas compositions of Kamala Das brought fresh ways into the body of Indian English literature by their briskness of swift reactions. She has successfully articulated what had never been outlined in the context of Indian tradition. Even then she feels that most of those acute pains can never be articulated and the languages seem to be inefficient or inadequate in outpouring the pangs of life. In the poem 'Death is So Mediocre' Kamala Das admits the same in following words.

*... when asked  
To speak I find my poor mouth turn into an  
Open cavern, ransacked bare, by burglars  
Of thoughts and suddenly wealth and lust seem like  
Languages once learnt but now forgotten. . . .*

**(Das: Death Is So Mediocre, p.52)**

Many poems of Kamala Das display the anguish of woman bound by the conventional Indian values. She not only questioned the bias and prejudice in the set of rules inflicted upon women but also took the deviated path of tit for tat and that almost brought the bonds of marriage to crash. As a result life becomes a bundle of dissatisfaction. Realization of this is also seen in Kamala Das in the poem 'Substitute'.

*... Life is quiet simple now –  
Love, blackmail and sorrow. . . .*

**(Das: Substitute, p.53)**

Soyinka had to undergo grave situations for being rational and opposing the corrupt ways of both British and the native rulers. He had to endure solitary confinement for about two years. He had been fighting all along and gaol had never been a deserving place for him in any way. The suffering of native people brought sorrow to the poet and the days in gaol had been time of reflection for him. No doubt he finds walls of the prison less torture-some but they kill the human interest of life. The lines below seem to be spontaneous in documenting the heavy heart of Soyinka.

*... They feed no fires, prompt no pains  
Wake no memories: walls*

*Are the tomb of longing . . .*

**(Soyinka: II Wall of Mists, p.135)**

Kamala Das also responded to wretched situations of human life but still most of the critics have wrongly assessed her poetry as just loud cries of a frustrated woman but the serious readers of her poetry can never ignore her sensitivity towards social and political happenings. The following lines from her poem 'Smoke in Colombo' speaks about her social sensibility which should never be ignored in the show of sensuous side of her poetry.

*. . .there was no space*

*Between us and their guns, but we were*

*Too fatigued to feel fear, or resist*

*The abrupt moves*

*Of an imbecilic will.*

**(Das: Smoke in Colombo, p.58)**

Kamala Das had been straight forward and barely plain in her poetry and almost every poem may be stated as an example for the same. Life itself is a struggle and everyone longs for fearless moments of life. It is possible only when the love remains as a binding thread of relationship. In 'The End of Spring' Kamala Das questions the necessity of love in the presence of fear. The way she questions and the choice of words certainly speak of her true love.

*. . .What is the use*

*Of love, all this love, if all it gives is*

*Fear; you the fear of storms asleep in you,*

*And me the fear of hurting you?*

**(Das: The End of Spring, p.100)**

Voice is more personal in the above lines. Conversely Soyinka shows mature way of Nigerian life in some of his poems. They indicate that one needs to find solutions to one's own problems rather than waiting for someone and ensuring that one's effort not creating the bigger problem. The poem 'The Beginning' beautifully exhibits the rational and responsible way of Soyinka's thought.

*. . .The farmer hired a hunter; filled him with wine*

*And thrust a firebrand in his hand*

*We do not burn the woods to trap*

*A squirrel; we do not ask the mountain's*

*Aid, to crack a walnut.*

**(Soyinka: The Beginning, p.77)**

Soyinka reveals and develops the idea bit by bit and Kamala Das directly displays the thought

in its instant original flavour like in case of the poem 'My Sons'.

*. . .My sons are old enough to take*

*Their own women, old enough to forget*

*The lullabies I sang and the prayers*

*Recited near their beds when they were ill. . . .*

**(Das: My Sons, p.47)**

The lines display incurable pain of motherhood in traditional Indian context. But it shouldn't mean that Kamala Das never works on the form of the poem. She has composed many poems like 'The Millionaires at Marine Drive' by planning the expression of thought in the well-knit form providing swift turn to the flow of thought.

*. . .I yellowed, sickened like the leaves on trees,*

*Gained a freedom I never once had asked for. . . .*

**(Das: The Millionaires at Marine Drive, p.68)**

Wole Soyinka explores descriptive mode more whereas Kamala Das seems to be harvesting narrative strategy. But both of them have exploited the advantages of conversational forms like monologue, dialogue, etc. in their poems. In the poem 'A Requiem for My Father' she narrates the lack of care and ill treatment given to her in the early childhood of Kamala Das although she was born in an educated and economically sound family.

*. . .From childhood to middle years I have had  
a raw deal,*

*Illness, and loneliness, loves that faded like mist,*

*And the elders' irrational hate. . . .*

**(Das: A Requiem For My Father, p.115)**

At times Wole Soyinka goes suggestive in the way he uses the language. While responding to the established colonial tradition which never ensured justice to common folk he advocates the bold path of seizing justice. Realizing that gentle plead would not yield results, he urged common people to demand for the justice.

*. . . Since justice is but One, it must*

*Be seized not piecemeal but entire, or not at all,*

*And pleas for the moment's justice shall not be. . . .*

**(Soyinka: My Tongue Does Not Marry Slogans, p.245)**

Inhibition-free way of Kamala Das remains shocking even today both in Indian and world literary situations. Breaking the hidden restrictions of keeping secrets of the family for the sake of so called 'pride and prestige', Kamala Das discloses it to her readers in the poem 'The Last



Act'. Rather than conveying the following stanza displays the scene of confession.

... *He clung*

*To her, he buried his arrogant face*

*Between her breasts, but a little later, sobbing*

*Like a hurt child, he said, I am old.*

*I am finished, I cannot even make love...*

**(Das: The Last Act, p.85)**

Philosophy of Marxism seems to be naturally lingering all around the body of Wole Soyinka's poetry. His intense longing 'for increasing the social awareness' and his revelation of the fact certainly differs from that of Kamala Das which may be noted in the following lines.

... *We sought to speak*

*Each to each in accents of trust*

*Dispersing ancient mists in clean breezes*

*To clear the path of lowland barriers*

*Forge new realities, free our earth*

*Of distorting shadows cast by old*

*And modern necromancers.*

**(Soyinka: Conversation at Night with a Cockroach, p.104)**

Like Kamala Das, Wole Soyinka also explores language in dialogue form for bringing greater effect in transporting ideas. It may be noticed in the poem 'Your Logic Frightens me, Mandela'.

... *Your patience grows inhuman, Mandela.*

*Do you grow food? Do you make friends*

*Of mice and lizards? Measure the growth of grass*

*For time's unhurried pace? ...*

**(Soyinka: Your Logic Frightens Me, Mandela, p.197)**

Using the form of first person description is more frequent, whereas Soyinka does the same in narrative form. Although he too builds the poem on his personal experience, it is placed on the canvas of social context.

... *I find no poetry in slaughter fields,*

*No lyric grace; redemptive passion, no.*

*Only that which came and went, as others –*

*The blaze of empires, salvation's ashes,*

*The crunch of cinders in time's cul-de-sac. ...*

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3. Achebe, Chinua (1996), *The Black Writer's Burden*, Presence Africane, English Edition, xxxi 59, p.135.

**(Soyinka: My Tongue Does Not Marry Slogans, p.242)**

Losing is an indispensable aspect of life irrespective of race, region and gender. Sense of loss finds place in most of the poems of these luminary writers. Kamala Das says,

... *It is hard to believe*

*That I only lost, Lost all, lost even*

*What I never had. ...*

**(Das: Substitute, p.53)**

Both men and women are plundered of their happiness and peace. Helpless individuals beg the destiny for mercy. In the poem 'A Souvenir of Bone' Kamala Das pleads the destiny to be kind enough to at least leave true human thirsts un-looted.

... *Rob me, destiny, if you must,*

*Rob me of my sustenance, but do not, I beg*

*Of you, do not take away my thirst...*

**(Das: A Souvenir Of Bone, p.79)**

As opined by Chinua Achebe (1996), "In giving expression to the plight of their people, writers have shown how strongly traumatic experiences can possess their sensibility and direct their language."3 Evidently, in the poems of Kamala Das a reader may notice less deliberate efforts of re-framing or refinement whereas in Wole Soyinka we may notice intentional effort of polishing language. Thus it leads us to draw a verifiable conclusion that in case of Kamala Das conveying of thought takes the driver's seat whereas to Wole Soyinka dressing of thought in refined fabric of language seems to be more significant. What is to be said flows spontaneously in the poems of Kamala Das. On contrast how it has to be conveyed comes more masterfully in the compositions of Wole Soyinka. Kamala Das weaves her poems like a spider and Wole Soyinka like mature weaver! But surprisingly both the poets arrest the attention and evoke sheer joy of reading poetry in their readers by tactfully mixing both spontaneity and craftsmanship in elegant proportions.

# **The Future of Indian English (Inglishes): The Impact and the Challenges of English Language Teaching in Digital India**

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## **Abstract**

Today the position and future of English in India can be analysed in three dimensional ways: English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). David Graddol in *The Future of English?* forecasts the popularity of English language in the 21st Century, as a Global or International language. But the position of English in India can be understood based on the historical perspectives of status of English in India through the ages from British Colonialism to the present Digital India. In a 'World of Englishes' today, we can see Non Native varieties of English in India known as Indian Englishes or Inglishes. Educationists must find a policy for promoting regional languages as well as Inglishes in India, by following traditional Three Language Formula. As we are in the threshold of Digital India, making English more Digital and follow a National Policy (NEP) and National Curriculum for English is a great challenge. An appropriate method of ICT4LT and ORELТ is needed, to set the future of English in India and teachers must switch away from Traditional methods to ICT Enabled/ Communicative/ Blended methods/ approaches for making Digital English/ India.

**Keywords:** DER: Digital Education Revolution; EFL: English as a Foreign Language; ELT: English Language Teaching; ESL: English as a Second Language; ESP: English for Specific Purposes; ICT: Information and Communication Technology; ICT4LT: Information Communication Technology for Language Teaching; NEP-2019: National Educational Policy of 2019, ORELТ: Open Resources for English Language Teaching; RP: Received Pronunciation; TELL: Technology Enhanced Language Learning.

## **Introduction:**

David Crystal in his Essay *The Future of English in English Today* said: '... the reality that English is now spoken by more people (as a first, second, or foreign language) than any other language and is recognized by more countries as a desirable lingua franca than any other language (59). Today there are over 350 modern languages listed in the etymology files of the Oxford English Dictionary. It is a fact that new regional second language standards are emerging in such areas as West Africa and the subcontinent of India.... (17). Further Crystal says: The challenges of today's English teachers are that they need to prepare their students for a world of staggering linguistic diversity. ... And above all, teachers need to develop a truly flexible attitude towards principles of usage. The absolutist concept of 'proper English' or 'correct English', which is so widespread, needs to be replaced by relativistic models and there is a reverential attitude towards British

English in general, and RP in particular, this attitude is rapidly being replaced by a dynamic pragmatism (17-18).

According to Crystal (1999), the biggest challenge facing British ELT in the millennium is how to come to terms with the new global situation, 'In my view, the chief task facing ELT is how to devise pedagogical policies and practices in which the need to maintain an international standard of intelligibility...' (20).

## **2. Future of World 'Englishes' and the 'Language Shift'**

David Graddol in *Future of English?* analyses that there are three kinds of English speakers in the world; those who speak it as a first language; those for whom it is a second or additional language and those who learn it as a foreign language. Crystal (1997) calculates that world-wide there are a little over 377 million speakers of English as a first language. Areas in which English is used extensively as a second language usually develop a distinct variety of

English which reflects other languages used alongside English. The parts of the world where 'New Englishes' have emerged are the former colonial territories in South Asia, South-east Asia, Africa and the Caribbean etc. Graddol (1998) gives a prediction that, 'Those who speak English will outnumber first-language speakers, and increasingly, will decide

the global future of the language' (10). Kachru's (1992) three circles will overlap and the 'centre of gravity' will shift towards L2 speakers. The Figure given below provides an alternative way of visualizing these three communities such as 'first language speakers' (L1), 'second language speakers' (L2) and 'speakers of English as a Foreign Language' (EFL).

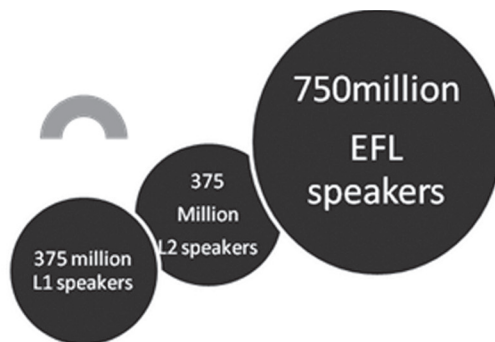


Fig.1. Alternative way of visualizing language communities (source: Graddol, The Future of English? 10)

In many parts of the world there are ongoing shifts in the status of English. These are largely undocumented and unquantified, but will represent a significant factor in the global future of the language. In those countries, the use of English for intranational communication is greatly increasing (such as in professional discourse or higher education). These countries can be regarded as in the process of shifting towards L2 status. In existing L2 areas, a slight increase in the proportion of the population speaking English (for example, in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and the Philippines), would significantly increase the global total of second language speakers.

### 3. Future of Indian English ( Englishes) and its Categorization

Pramod K. Mishra in his book *English Language, Postcolonial Subjectivity, and Globalization in India* says about the position of English in India:

What is more important is to study the effects of English on the production of postcolonial subjectivity, on the one and prosperity of the regional languages and their users. ... English can become a complementary force for their enrichment and turn into a supportive tool and agent for India's transformation (383-384).

Macaulay's notorious words on Introduction

of English Education in India are, "to create a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (430) and these words reflect colonial impact of English in India. At the same time, the status of English has been commonly described in a three-way categorization (i.e. English as a Native Language, English as a Second Language, and English as a Foreign Language) as follows.

#### 3.1 Non-native Varieties of English

A standard non-native variety of English, spoken by educated Indian bilinguals, gradually developed in India. The variety is now intelligible both to other non-native English speakers in India and to native speakers of English. The standardization by no means rules out sub-varieties of English spoken across the vast land; there are varieties of the language that is in some way tilted with existing local languages in a given geographical region such as Hinglish, Monglish, Tamilish, Benglish etc. However, what is known as a standard version of Indian English is a variety of English accepted and intelligible by both native and non-native English speakers.

#### 3.2 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL)

Omidvas and Ravindranath have pointed out in their article, *Position of English in India: Three Way Categorization*:

The position of Indian English in the three-way categorization could also be studied with reference to the mainstream perceptions of the notions of a second language and a foreign language presented by some linguistics, the second language is known as a language taught to immigrants to a country where it is the first language of its natives. In other words L2 learners acquire the language to meet their communicative needs in interaction with L2 native speakers; English as a Second Language Learning (ESL) is known as learning a language where it is in use. India is a flagrant example in which English plays multiple roles for the speakers of that country and the overall proficiency and familiarity of the people is far more than those in countries where English is a Foreign Language by no doubt (e.g., Iran, China, etc.) (*Language in India* 5).

#### **4. Three Language Formula (TFL)**

In India we adopted "three language formula" policy in which the instruction of English has not been limited to being as just a subject; it rather plays the great role medium of instruction in many schools. As such, Hindi and English, the official and associate official languages, must be studied as two of the three languages.

##### **4.1 Ongoing Three-Language Formula (TLF)**

Today there are discussions in many parts of our country to renew present Three Language Formula practicing in our country. As per the three language policy, the First language is mother tongue or the regional language, Second language is modern Indian language or English (in Hindi-speaking areas) or Hindi or English (in Non-Hindi speaking areas) and Third language is (not studied as the second language) the Modern Indian language or English (in Hindi-speaking areas) or Hindi or English (in Non-Hindi speaking areas).

##### **4.2. Need of Revisiting Present TFL**

The recommended changes can be that First language is Mother tongue itself, Second language is English and the Third language is Indian language of the learner's choice (listed in the list of official regional scheduled

languages and Indian Constitution). Some other recommendations are that Schools should be granted autonomy to choose the first (mother tongue) and the third (other Indian) languages, as per language preferences of the students enrolled in the school. Thus educationists can work towards a sustainable pedagogic language policy. A revised TLF will ensure that minority languages are protected from extinction. Thus should form sustainable linguistic models for 21st century pedagogy and it may be reflected in new National Education Policy (NEP-2019).

#### **5. Traditional ELT Methods in India**

English has turned into a universal language today and as Prof. Jacob Tharu says, "English is no longer some remote but a powerful mystery, lying hidden in the world of textbooks and examination." According to Mansoor Ali, English Language teachers adopted and followed some or all of the different methodologies to teach the English language in India such as:

##### **5.1 Grammar Translation Method**

In Grammar translation method, teacher explains every word to students in the native language to make him understand and learn English. By this method English language class seemed to be L1 class rather than L2 class. This method is still in use in many rural schools in India.

##### **5.2 Bilingual Method**

Most of the teachers in our country follow the bilingual method to teach the students, where the teacher first of all explains the entire English sentence in L1 and then asks the students to perform activities in English. If a student is in the process of composing his or her English sentences, abundant help through the use of mother tongue sentences is provided by the teacher. This method is not suitable to develop fluency and naturalness in language expression.

##### **5.3 Direct Method**

Teachers used to follow the direct method to teach Indian students mostly in private schools. These teachers will stick to the practice of using only English, without depending on L1. Teacher is not supposed or authorized to use any single word from L1. This forced seclusion made students with no past history of learning or using English face great difficulty in this method.

#### **6 The Role of Communicative Methods of ELT**

According to Behera (2013), today English enjoys the status of a big business in the wake of globalization. Further he says, 'the traditional ELT methods like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method and Situational Language Teaching are in no way beneficial to the students in the changed scenario where the majority of students are desperate to learn English only to be communicatively competent' (IJSELL 1).

### 6.1 CLT: A Paradigm Shift in ELT in India

Dell Hymes (1985) emphasized that the study of language involves knowing not only the language structure but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any situation. He thus developed the concept of communicative competence. Communicative competence was given more prominence in CLT methods. According to Behera (2013) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in India in the 1980s as the traditional approaches were failing to fulfill the current demands of English language learners, with the difference that the Indian context was not ready for CLT (IJSELL 2). Again Behera says, though CLT faces a lot of impediments in its successful implementation in India, it still holds the road to success (IJSELL 4).

### 6.2 The Role of TELL in ELT

Technology has played a major role in creating a resource-rich environment by giving a wide range of exposure to English. Becoming web-savvy has emerged as the need of the day and this is more possible through English. All these contextual changes in the Indian scenario have affected English language teaching in India positively showing some hopeful signs of modifications aided by modernization as pointed out by Behera (2013) are:

- (i) introduction of CLT curriculum by Central Board of School Education in all its affiliated schools,
- (ii) introduction of 'English for Specific Purposes' (ESP) in some Indian schools,
- (iii) infusion of technology with the teaching of English in the form of Language Labs,
- (iv) availability of the native English Language to the Indian people with the widespread availability of cable television and satellite television in India,

- (v) Realization of English as the most preferred language of the global information highway by the new generation with the rise of computer expertise and internet (IJSELL 1).

### 7. The Digital Education Revolution (DER) in India

In the 21st century, the definition of literacy has expanded to refer to a flexible, sustainable command of a set of capabilities in the use and production of traditional texts and new communications technologies, using spoken language, print and multimedia. The aim of the Digital Education Revolution (DER) is to contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Indian schools that will prepare students for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world.

#### 7.1 The Role of English for Digital Revolution in India

While it has been clear from the outset that technology alone is not going to affect a revolution, the vision of what the Digital Revolution might provide is one with much promise for English, and English teaching. Digital English, or English for the Digital Age, entails going further, to make digital texts and literacies themselves part of the curriculum under study, as well as (one of) the means by which it is made.

#### 7.2 Challenges and Opportunities of Digital English

Catherine Beaves (2016) in her article English in the Digital Age: Making English Digital points out three challenges in thinking about English and the Digital in Australia can be applied to Indian conditions too. The first concerns issues of access and equity, the second what kinds of activities and thinking are enabled and brought into being by teachers working with both fixed and ubiquitous technologies, and third, what Digital English might actually be, the place of both print and digital, how English is imagined, - what might and might not be attended to, and in what ways. We should argue for a curriculum that ensured students were both active and critical users of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)... Technology alone cannot bridge the digital divide, and what teacher's do - the tasks they set, the expectations they have,

curriculum they enact matter(7).

## 8. Conclusion

The most students could manage a basic level of computer tasks, many fewer could, or were, using ICT to support learning at a higher level. An awareness of the digital, globalised world in which students live, and the pervasiveness of digital and screen-based forms of literacy, needs to inform conceptions of English for present and future times. To move further in the development of Digital English we need as suggested by Beaves (2016):

- (i) to involve ways of building on existing practice and understandings about working with multimodal texts,
- (ii) to go further in finding ways to incorporate interactive web-based sites and texts,
- (iii) to foster the active production of students' own texts in digital form as part of the curriculum,
- (iv) crucially needed is more information and guidance about ways to fully utilize Web 2 forms,
- (v) the development of multimodal tools of analysis and assessment that include, and
- (vi) go beyond the visual to acknowledge and properly evaluate multimodal texts and literacies alongside more familiar print-based forms (10).

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As far as our country concerned, first up of all we need a policy, to be actively incorporated into whatever assessment regimes accompany guidelines regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and policy in Indian scenario. There should be a special policy regarding Information Communication Technology in Language Teaching (ICTLT) and also Open Online Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) in our country.

Finally to quote Bill Green (2004), "The National Curriculum is strongly affirmative of print literacies, and the hopes held for it suggests a move towards a settled view of English. Yet, as Green observes, 'English is inescapably plural, and so are we'" (292). It may not be a "revolution," but there are sufficient teachers must be interested to build a digital English to do so. Digital English, English in the Digital Age, needs to move into the future in ways that bring the best of the past into the present, that draw on core principles and values that have shaped the subject historically, but that are also expansive and responsive to change (Beaves 13). There should be a clear cut policy in NEP-2019 for making Digital English and we need a National Policy for Teaching of English in Digital India.

## **A Language of Opportunities for Learners, A Tool for Empowerment for Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

The principle of imitation-based learning shall open the door for underprivileged students to learn English as a second language in a natural learning environment. To accomplish this, an English Language Teaching (ELT) model has been developed. Preparing teachers as the role model where learning would be facilitated in the most natural and conducive environment without any pressure is an important aspect of the ELT model. Various teaching-learning methodologies such as collaborative learning, peer learning, mixed group learning etc. were used to create a platform for the students where Imitation and collaboration would become the basis of learning. Through this method, within the limited resources, students will have the easiest and comprehensive path of learning English as a second language.

**Key Words:** English language teaching, Government system of education, Learner centric education, Empowerment.

### **Introduction**

India is the second most populated country in the world after China and around 70% of Indian population resides in rural areas [1]. More than 50% of rural Indian population is dependent on Government System of Education (GSE) [2]. Hence, GSE is not only responsible for providing quality education, but also an education that is compliant with the need of current job market. Being a multi-linguistic country, English is one of the common languages that Indians use to communicate with fellow Indians living in different parts of the country. Moreover, in the 21st century, for non-English natives, knowing English as a second language is one of the important language skills needed to excel in career and access the opportunities at a global level. This adds to the list of challenges of the GSE.

Uttar Pradesh, an Indian State, with highest population density (828 people per km<sup>2</sup>), contributes the maximum population of about 200 million to the nation [3]. Being a native Hindi speaking region, this state has an impressive GSE action research and English learning success stories to share, which can help other Government or non-profit based education systems with limited resources. In India, realizing the need of time, even illiterate,

poor, and monetary challenged parents want their children to go to an English Medium School. Therefore, in 2018, Government of Uttar Pradesh introduced English medium schools to cater the need-based education. To accomplish this in the minimum available resources, the Government of Uttar Pradesh came up with an innovative policy of transforming the conventional Hindi language-based learning schools into English medium schools. As a pilot project, in Gautam Buddha Nagar, around 100 teachers were invited to become part of this transformation initiative. However, only 24 applications were received. This intrigued the officials who later discovered that the poor response was not the knowledge of the English language but the fear to use and teach it in a classroom setting.

English Language Teaching (ELT) model: Given the currently serving government teachers, who come from Hindi medium background, have always approached English as a subject and not a language, the challenge was to transform this available manpower into a powerful resource. From a learner-centric education perspective, establishing an English Learning club for Teachers (ELT) at block level was found to be the best solution. The first batch of ELT, with 50 teachers at one of the blocks

of GautamBuddh Nagar district, was started in Apr 2018. The vision behind this club was to empower and encourage teachers with English as a language and using this club as a tool to

create a conducive environment where English would not come as a pressure for teachers and students.

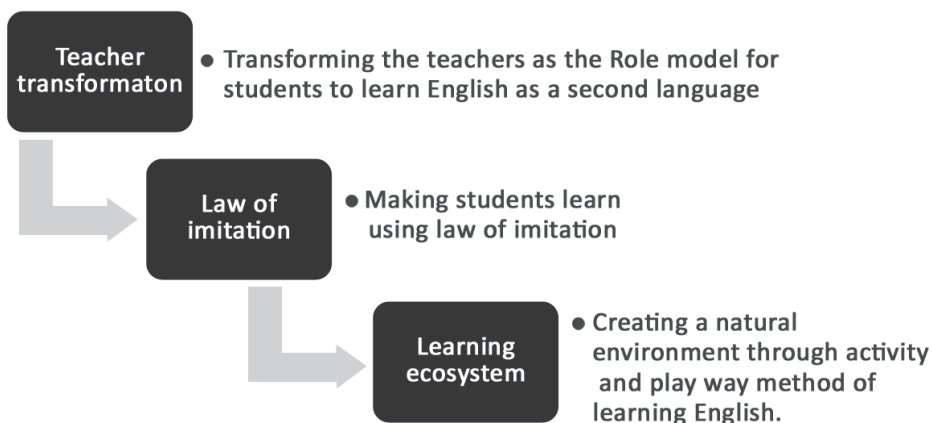


Figure 1: ELT model of learning

As shown in Figure 1, The ELT model was developed based on three basic tenets:

1. Transforming the teachers as the role model for students to learn English as a second language.
2. English classroom learning based on law of imitation
3. Creating a natural environment through activity and play way method of learning English.

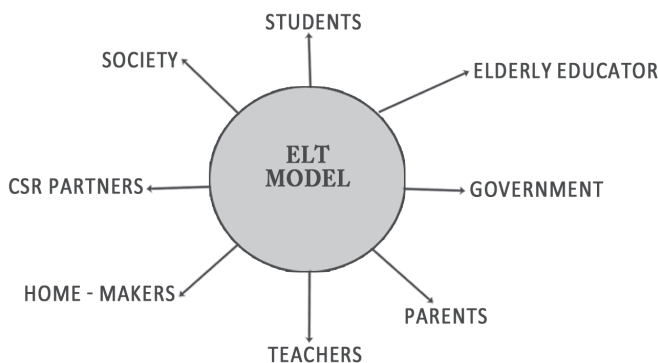


Figure 2: ELT model impact

**Plan of action under ELT model:students**

Based on the ELT model, a five-hour long English learning class was started on weekly basis with structured strategy (Figure 3) as follows:

1. The first two hours, I used to do knowledge transfer about the communication approach, grammatical concepts, and spoken English.
2. Second two hours, teachers used to present some content of their choice in English. This was to enhance their confidence with the language and to remove the hesitation to use the language in the group.
3. The last two hours, we used to create and share the activity/play based methods of teaching



- English in classroom. This helps in creating a natural environment for the underprivileged students will feel secure to learn English as a second language without any fear and pressure.
- Use of technology as a tool to connect, learn, and monitor. To do so, a WhatsApp group was created with these 50 members and the higher officials. The aim was to stay connected, to share their ELT classroom activity-based teaching and learning, indirect monitoring by the higher officials and peer learning, and getting direct recognition for their efforts



Figure 3: ELT model plan of action

**Outcome of ELT model:**

- With learner centric approach, a perfect cascading took place from the teachers to the students of government schools (Figure 4).
- Teacher gradually gained confidence and were highly motivated to use the language.
- With the creation of a conducive language learning environment, teachers became a role model for the students by using English as a language of primary communicate at their schools.
- A variety of activities were created and used in the ELT classroom that created a natural environment to learn.

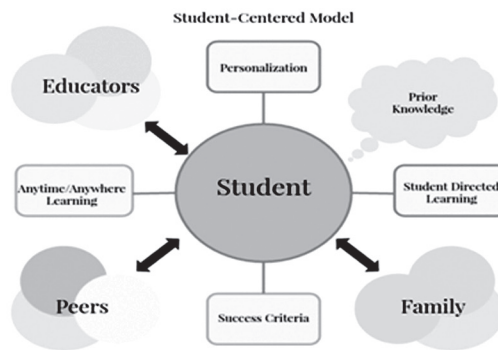


Figure 4: Creating a child centric environment for English learning [4]

- The impact was so visible that number of people did approach to join the club.
- The higher officials were satisfied and extended their scope and establish this club at each block.
- Presently English club has more than 500 teachers who joined it on their own interest and a long queue of teachers waiting for their turn to join it.
- Government has another phase of conversion and this time teachers have no fear for English Medium Schools.

10. The influence was so deep that our CSR Partners like NTPC Dadri, IGLC and saksherhum collaborated and extended their support to create additional and supplementary ELT resources to our schools. The Ex-professional home makers and Retired People were trained to become potential ELT resources as well (Figure 5).
11. In August 2019, for the first time, an ELT conference was organized at Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. In this conference, around 650 teachers participated, of which, 78 teachers presented their papers on the theme, "English Language Teaching as a Challenge or an Opportunity". Additionally, around 100 students have demonstrated the English language skills acquired through the ELT model initiative (Figure 5).

### Conclusions:

In span of one year, the scenario has completely changed. A community of more than 650 English teachers has been built who are not only highly motivated for their own professional development, but also for helping thousands of underprivileged students to acquire language competency. As a result of ELT model implementation, in contrast to 24 applications during the pilot phase of transforming Hindi teachers to English medium, 300 applications were received in the third phase of implementation. The vision is to create a community of English language Teachers of Uttar Pradesh who would bring remarkable changes to the ongoing system of education. This would help millions of underprivileged students to grow, learn, and access the global platform of opportunities through English language.

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### Signposts for Researchers 1

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295687655\\_Implications\\_of\\_Hegel's\\_theories\\_of\\_language\\_onsecond\\_language\\_teaching](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295687655_Implications_of_Hegel's_theories_of_language_onsecond_language_teaching)

**Alan Waters: Trends and issues in ELT methods and methodology Article** in *ELT Journal* 66(4):440-449 • September 2012 with 806 Reads DOI: [10.1093/elt/ccc038](https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccc038)

#### Abstract

Trends and issues in ELT methods and methodology can be identified at two main levels. One is in terms of the theoretical pronouncements of the 'professional discourse', as manifested by major publications, conference presentations, and so on. This article therefore begins by briefly summarizing some of the main developments of this kind from 1995 onwards. In this respect, the period as a whole is seen to be characterized primarily by increased advocacy of a 'communicating to learn' approach. However, methods and methodology also manifest themselves, of course, in the form of classroom practice. The attempt is therefore made to characterize developments since 1995 at this level as well, by comparing earlier and more recent editions of a unit from a widely-used international ELT coursebook. Their methodology is seen to have remained relatively similar, and, in contrast to the theoretical level, to have taken a mainly 'learning to communicate' orientation. The article concludes by also considering what form future developments in the area might take.

# Triggering Comprehensible Input through Multimedia: A Support to Enhance Learning Experience in the ESL Classroom

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## Abstract

The demand for English language boomed with the growing economy, moreover English had the status of power and hegemony in post colonial societies. Technological edge and proximity to modern academic circles gave a new dimension to the sway of the second language in the modern times. English language plays a key role in the life of civilian in preparing him to meet the challenges of nation and community in which he lives. To accomplish this, language classroom will be the absolute place to start with. The language which is used by the teacher in the classroom affects the language produced by the learners. Hence, the comprehensible input plays a vital role in language learning. It is evident that no learning takes place without this input. 'How much of the input is appropriate and useful' should be addressed and fixed by the teachers who handle the language classes. These are determined by analyzing the capabilities and performance of the learners in the classroom interactions. Multimedia instructional messages intended to enrich the teaching learning context which promotes effective language learning. The efficacy is accomplished mainly through incorporating words and pictures. Multimedia can be effectively used as a comprehensible input in the classroom by providing visual perception to the learner. When the visual perception takes place, learning multiplies. It not only helps the learners to process information, but also motivates them to be active in the learning process. This paper explores that, a better understanding of the English language enhances higher order cognitive functioning which in turn, assists in better linguistic output.

**Keywords:** comprehensible input, multimedia, cognitive function, linguistic output

## Introduction

Global opportunities which have been extended through English language learning lead the language teacher to the forefront in developing strategies and techniques to make effective and efficient connections in the language learning classroom. These connections enrich learning experiences and make them more comprehensible. These connections, when the teacher relates it in a simple and meaningful way, the teaching learning will become interesting and innovative.

## Comprehensible Input

The concept of comprehensible input was proposed by Stephen Krashen. He uses this concept to explain how the learners acquire a second language. According to him, children acquire a new language when they receive comprehensible input. He holds the view that the only way for acquiring a language is by receiving comprehensible input in that language. By comprehensible input, Krashen means the language chunk exposed to the learner that s/he tries to understand and comprehend. If sound/ form/ word order/ meaning and appropriateness of usages of words

are incomprehensible to learners, the language will not become comprehensible to listeners. When the input is comprehensible, the learners understand all the key aspects of language and thus receive appropriate learning experience. This will help them to understand the concept in a better way. This does not compel the teacher to use the choice of words that the learner demands. In other words, teachers should be very careful while selecting vocabulary, and must use graphic organizers, concrete objects, and minimum gestures wherever possible to make the comprehension easier. He opines that giving learners this kind of input helps them in the natural acquisition of language.

Krashen defines comprehensible input as the "language input that can be understood by the listeners despite their not understanding all the words and structures in it" (146). When learners receive input in new language that is a bit higher than their level, they try to learn it. In other words, it is not necessary that all words that the teachers utter must be understood by learners. But when the input is comprehensible, learner understands the key terminologies which are directly related to the

learning topic. When learners understand the language that is necessary to comprehend the concept, they can create appropriate mental images for effective conceptual formulation. When learners can create effective formulation, the concept becomes clear. When the concept is clear to them, they do not repeat what they have learnt; instead, it enables them for active response. If the teacher can provide quality comprehensible input and clarity of thought, it increases the learner's confidence in the target language. In Krashen's point of view, the acquisition of language naturally takes place in a classroom where learners abundantly receive comprehensible input. In other words, when learners access comprehensible input, acquisition takes place. In this context, multimedia can be used as a cognitive aid in the language classroom to facilitate comprehensible input.

### **Defining Multimedia in General**

Technological explosion and academic experiments have opened up new avenues in English language learning and teaching. Constant changes, incorporation of new methodologies and innovative techniques have left their imprint in the realm of ELT. For centuries, verbal modes of presentation have dominated the second language learning and teaching context. Once, it was an effective medium through which language lessons were planned, executed, and disseminated properly. Nevertheless, technological progression into personal circles of human life through the form of appliances and gadgets created a learner whose language requirements are not fulfilled through the verbal mode of the previous era. The advent of computer technology announced a paradigm shift in English language teaching, and practitioners of ELT began to disseminate language lessons not only through the verbal mode, but also through visual, static and dynamic images in the form of animation, video, etc. The concomitance of verbal and visual or static and dynamic modes of presentation revolutionized the classroom that enabled the practitioners of ELT to surpass the limitations that they had experienced previously.

A blend of verbal and visual representations in classroom setting achieves the objectives of

learning better as the learners are enabled to benefit from the connections between these two modes. Contrary to the old classroom situation where the lecture method had been predominant mode of knowledge transaction, the inclusion of a variety of multimedia resources catches the attention of contemporary second language learners and enables effective language learning. Christine Hughes opines "multimedia is the combination of time-based media like voice, animation and video, along-with space-based media such as text, graphics and images" (Chopra 535). Multimedia, in general, is defined "as the information presentation modes, which use the computer resources in integrated form of text, image, graphics, animation, sound and video into single synchronized presentation" (535). The combination of several media provides cognitive assistance to the learners which, in turn, help them to immerse in the learning process.

Roy D. Pea posits that multimedia methodologies help students for several reasons, among them are:

First, it's much better than the written text so that the student can understand the material well. Second, it provides the context for the abstract word or explanation such as different emotions on the human face. Third, it may overcome the individual needs and preferences so that students can learn the material accordingly. (2-3)

These technologies make learning easy and address the needs and requirements of all learners in the ESL classroom.

### **Cognitive Multimedia Language Learning: Theoretical Validations**

In the theoretical explanation of multimedia learning, Richard E Mayer expresses his view that human beings learn through their senses. Among the five senses, the visual and auditory senses take a dominant position in the majority. This dual channel processing of information helps learners to improve understanding and enhances the power to retain the received information. This dual code processing enables learners to process pictures and sounds in multimedia through visual and auditory channels. It is said that "the persistence of visual impressions makes them

briefly available for processing even after the stimulus has terminated” (Neisser 12). The instructional lessons through animation, video, audio and PowerPoint presentation assist the learners in comprehending the content in a better way. When information is presented through the multimedia framework, the dual channel processing helps brain to process the information through visual and auditory channels and facilitates it to work effectively and enhances successful processing.

Multimedia instructional materials are designed in accordance with stimulating the existing schemas to integrate new information. Though multimedia acknowledge the limited capacity of working memory, the rate of meaningful and effective processing is ensured by accessing visual and auditory channels to process these presented information. This framework largely depends on the mindset of the language learners, when the new information is presented in a language classroom. Here, multimedia takes the role of a catalyst, a tool that increases the rate of language learning or speeds up the same.

When we use multimedia for providing comprehensible input, the learners establish a mental connection with the material and what they are going to learn. But it is the teacher’s responsibility to provide appropriate input. The input will become comprehensible when,

- a) the teacher provides cognitive support to comprehend the topic in the beginning.
- b) the input is simple and understandable
- c) the teacher uses proper body language and voice modulation
- d) the teacher tries to explain vague concepts by using tonal variations and different terminologies and with suitable examples, and
- e) the teacher provides meaningful, interesting and cognitively challenging tasks to learners.

Strategies to make the language comprehensible:

- Break lengthy expressions into meaningful chunks
- Incorporate images, moving pictures or visual support within language classroom
- Add appropriate supra segmental features in the teacher talk
- Use optimum gestures
- Provide encouragement to learners.

In fact, the language which is used by the teacher affects the language produced by learners. So, the input plays a vital role in language learning. It is evident that no learning takes place without input. The answers to the questions such as ‘how much inputs are appropriate and useful?’ should be addressed and fixed by teachers who handle the classes. These are determined by analyzing the capabilities and performance of the learners during classroom interactive sessions. It can be formulated as  $i+1$ .  $i$  denotes learner’s actual knowledge regarding language, whereas  $1$  shows the knowledge of language which is a bit higher than the learner’s actual level.

### **Features of the Multimedia Enhanced Language Classroom**

Learners form the centre of complete learning. To give them due importance is important in the teaching learning process. In a multimedia classroom environment, prominence should be given to them. Hence, it should be,

- (a) Learner inviting: All multimedia materials should be in tune with the emotional level of the learner. The more the emotive content, the more involvement of the learners in the learning will be.
- (b) Learner challenging: It must not only be cognitively challenging for the learners, but also be appealing to all senses.
- (c) Learner determined: The mutual relationship between learner autonomy and the scaffolding provided by the teacher makes second language classroom learner determined.
- (d) Learner directed: The learner gets enough and more space in classroom and is capable enough to direct the learning experience according to taste and attitude of the learner.

The learner centred approach in multimedia learning proves to be very useful in research. As Norman pointed out, technology helps us to enlarge the cognitive abilities and it also helps us to be smart. When the teacher makes use of technology in the classroom, it complements the learner’s abilities and activities in the learning process. It can be used as a cognitive aid for knowledge construction. Learners construct their own knowledge by refreshing their existing schemas and providing new schemas through multimedia. The comprehensible input through

multimedia holds the view that learning is an active process where the learner filters, selects, organizes and integrates new information along with his prior knowledge. Multimedia facilitates them to make this process easy and effective.

### **Comprehensible input through Multimedia**

Researchers opine that Internet is a platform that can provide authentic and recent materials pertaining to the target language being studied (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). The Internet usually makes available the authentic materials which are more reliable and motivating for the learner. This could include webcasts, newsroom video claims, videos from YouTube and other providers, digital stories, online newspapers, and others (Kumar & Tammelin, 2008). Multimedia applications for L2 learning provide a more realistic picture of the new language and culture in the classroom. Ludwig et al. (2004) holds the view that the effective multimedia presentations are those which incorporate different types of media that interrelate with one another (Ludwig et al, 2004). Stockwell remarks that multimedia provides several advantages to the learners, the characteristic features he points are interactivity, accessibility, authenticity, and integration of text, sound, and visuals. Teachers can create apt power point presentation, short videos using various free applications available in android soft ware's, images, audio clips, etc to provide comprehensible input.

### **Conclusion**

Multimedia highlights exciting prospects in

the realm of language learning to meet the requirements of 21st century learners. It is defined "as the delivery of instructional content using multiple modes that include visual and auditory information and the student's use of this information to construct knowledge" (SEG 1). The combination of technological knowledge and knowledge about how our brain processes information opens huge possibilities for improving instruction in the classroom. It is a proven fact that our brain processes and accommodates more information effectively using visual and auditory channels. Thus, a cognitive guide effectively implements cognitive multimedia language learning for SLA. Multimodal processing ability of brain and technology based tools can be effectively used to improve learning through multimedia instruction in the language classroom. Cognitive theory of multimedia learning consists of dual channel processing systems for human information processing that includes a visual/pictorial and auditory/verbal processing with certain limitations while processing information on each channel. Pictures are probably the original mode of knowledge representation in humans. By using pictures, we can depict material in a form that is more intuitive and closer to our visual sensory experience. Using all these aids, we can provide appropriate comprehensible inputs suited for ESL learners to ensure maximum and meaning learning in the language classroom.

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## **Revamping Dictation: New Possibilities in the ESL Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

Dictation is considered to be one of the oldest language teaching activities and has been ignored by teachers in the modern classrooms. The so-called allegations against this effective tool of language learning are: (i) it is teacher- centred (ii) it is non-communicative (iii) it is a boring and old fashioned tool. But an innovative teacher can use dictation in his/her class effectively to improve the accuracy and fluency of language skills of the learners. This paper investigates the significance of dictation as a language learning device and proposes some variations to sharpen its pedagogic potentials in the ESL classrooms.

**Keywords:** Dictation, interaction, ESLclassroom, learner centeredness, teacher centeredness

### **Introduction**

Dictation has a proud legacy of hundreds of years in the field of English language teaching and learning. Until the end of the Middle ages, dictation was used to transmit the course content from master to pupil in the first language classrooms. Later, when it was introduced in foreign language classrooms, its function was to help the students to develop their skills in listening, comprehending and writing. In the nineteenth century, it was used extensively in foreign language teaching. The grammar translation method and traditional direct method of language teaching used dictation as a tool for teaching structures, sounds and spellings respectively. Later, in the 1960s, when the Audio-lingual method became more popular in language teaching, dictation fell into disfavour. As audio lingual method stressed on oral repetition, dictation was considered as a non-communicative tool. Even though it had lost its importance somewhere in the past, a good number of teachers these days began to recapture and use this tool with appropriate variations. Thus dictation is regaining its former popularity.

### **What is Dictation?**

Dictation is a decoding- recoding activity. The Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary defines dictation as a test in which students write down what is being read to them, especially in language

lessons. Dictation is used as a technique where the learners receive some spoken input, hold this in their memory for a short time, and then write what they heard. This writing is affected by their skill at listening, their command of the language, and their ability to hold what they have heard in their memory. Dictation has been thoroughly examined as a language proficiency test (Oller and Streiff, 1975). As a teaching technique, it helps language learning by making learners focus on phrase- and clause- level constructions.

In a traditional classroom, the dictation aims at making the students write down what is said by the teacher, word for word and later checking their text against the original and correct the errors either by the teacher or the students themselves. The main objective of dictation is to help the learners develop their skills in listening and comprehending. The development of writing ability too was aimed at, though at a lower degree. But, in effect, the entire task was evaluated in terms of spelling (in)accuracy! (P. Bhaskaran Nair, 2011: 30). There are scopes for many innovative variations in dictation to keep its actual objectives and thus to make it more meaningful, interesting, interactive and learner-centred.

### **Why Dictation?**

Usually dictation activities work well in the classrooms. For the teachers, dictation:

- can give instant feedback to the learners
- can give individual attention to the students
- can be used in multi-level classrooms

For learners, dictation is

- an integrated activity involving the language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Listening - when a passage is dictated for students

Speaking – When the learners do the dictating/ when the passage is used for a discussion or a follow up speaking activity

Reading – when the learners practice pronunciation and read the passages

Writing – when the students copy down the passage

Besides, four language skills dictation enhances a wide range of sub-skills such as letter formation, spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, and vocabulary and grammar practice.

- useful for learning grammar as the learners comprehend the meaning and relationship among the segments of language.
- develops short term memory. Learners retain the semantic groups and sentences in their memory before pen them down
- giving opportunity to the learners to notice features of pronunciation such as weak forms, linking and elision.

**How?**

**From teacher centred to Learner centred practice**

An innovative teacher can make dictation more challenging, interactive and learner centred. Instead of 'dictating' the words in isolation, the teacher can make the task a discourse oriented, context based activity. Here are some samples of dictations which were already tried in the classrooms and found very effective for achieving its aim.

**Word Race**

An effective variety of dictation, suited for even large multilevel classes aiming at enhancing listening and spelling.

*Preparation:*

After narrating a story, the teacher can use this activity for revising the vocabulary items.

1. Prepare a list of review vocabulary words.
2. Write each word on two small pieces of paper. That means writing the word twice, once on each paper.
3. Organize the pieces like bundles, 2 bundles, 2 sets of identical words.
4. Divide the class into two teams. Ask them to make creative team names.
5. Distribute each list of words to both teams. Every student on each team should have a paper. Both teams have the same words.

*Procedure:*

The teacher narrates the story once again and the words which are included in the list will be repeated two-three times. This will help the students to understand the words and its pronunciation. After the narration, the teacher calls out word from the list, two students, who got that respective word should stand up, one from each team. The students (from both teams) must then run to the blackboard and to write the particular word on the blackboard. The student who writes the word first with correct spelling will get the point and the team which scores maximum points will be the winners.

In advanced level, the teacher can ask the students to write a sentence using the words.

**Running Dictation**

*Aim:* teaching spelling, pronunciation, word order and narrating the events in the proper sequence

*Preparation:*

1. Select a small story/ interesting passage
2. Write each sentences/ clauses of the passage in separate pieces of paper
3. Hide all sentences in different spots in the classroom
4. Divide the class into groups of 5/6 students.
5. Ask the leaders of the groups to search for the sentences and dictate the sentences to the group members.
6. Ask the groups to read out the collected



sentences in group wise. The feedback may be given by the other groups.

7. The group which complete the dictation first with maximum sentences, will be the winners.

*Follow up Activity:*

Ask the students to narrate the passage in the correct order.

## **Conclusion**

This paper examined the new possibilities and significance of dictations in an interactive and learner centred classroom. The teachers need to understand and practice the perpetual advantages of this device. The consistent and innovative application of dictation can contribute much more to enhance the language proficiency of the learners as well.

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## **Signposts for Researchers 2**

### ***Manfred Man-fat Wu: Implications of Hegel's theories of language on second language teaching***

Article in *Curriculum Studies* • February 2016

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#### **Abstract**

This article explores the implications of Hegel's theories of language on second language (L2) teaching. Three among the various concepts in Hegel's theories of language are selected. They are the crucial role of intersubjectivity; the primacy of the spoken over the written form; and the importance of the training of form or grammar. Applying these three concepts to L2 teaching results in several recommendations. Firstly, there should be more emphases of the goal of L2 learning as achieving intersubjectivity. Secondly, the teaching of spoken language should precede the written form. Thirdly, in L2 instruction, the teaching of forms, or rules of grammar or mechanical practices, should be treated as another major goal. The final recommendation is that culture learning is essential.

## **Developing Listening and Speaking Skills Using Information and Communication Technology Tools**

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### **Abstract**

ICT as a common tool has been used for all the aspect of life and its impact as an instructional tool in developing listening and speaking skills. The present study aims to explore the influence of ICT on improving learners' listening and speaking skills. It is focused on integrating different types of these tools to enhance speaking as well as listening skill. It is also concerned with the importance of technological materials to create an enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere as an attempt to make students use the target language effectively. The main hypothesis is that ICT functions as a great motivator, and these gadgets help student speak fluently and accurately as well as listen well. It creates a comfortable environment that provides learners with extensive language use and oral performance. The researcher tries to use ICT tools to develop engineering students' listening and speaking skills to enhance their competence.

**Keywords:** Listening, skill, aural, speaking, oral, , ICT, language, lab.

### **Introduction**

The researcher investigated the application of ICT tools for developing listening and speaking skills and an analytical study of performance diversities among the higher secondary school and tertiary level students, in Salem district. Ejigu, B. (2015) suggests that "ICT increases the flexibility of delivery of education so that learners can access knowledge anytime and from anywhere. It can influence the way students are taught and how they learn as now the processes are learner driven and not by teachers". The research data were collected through questionnaire from the students of tertiary level studying in computer science engineering department in two Engineering colleges located in Salem district. The students had enrolled English for specific purposes (ESP) as it is compulsory subject for tertiary level. The researcher using five point likert scale adapted questionnaire which was completed by 240 higher secondary school students. The other experimental question also adapted with the need of experimental study to analyze the student's listening and speaking skills performance for rural tertiary level students from two different

colleges in Salem district. The main aim of this research is to investigate the technological tool and how it exercises influence in developing listening skill for tertiary level rural engineering colleges in Salem district. The secondary aim of this research is to find out and analyze which skill is neglected, among the LSRW skills. The research data was analyzed based on the interpretations of frequencies, and percentages through using of (SPSS) statistical software version 23. The main result of this research revealed that rural engineering students need to develop their listening skills in order to use ICT gadgets.

### **Review of literature**

Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "communication is a process whereby information is encoded, channeled, and sent by a sender to a receiver via a medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback". The communication is effective process of the sender (speak) and receiver (listen) to the language is called as communality. Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "poor listening results in incomplete, incorrect, and

inconsistent responses. Sometimes people do not listen to others properly and patiently because rather than listening to others' views, they may just be waiting anxiously for the speaker to keep quiet so that they may articulate their own views".

Speaking skill is very important skill for a person's professional survival and growth. One needs them to be successful in one's academic and professional pursuits. In fact, every academic, professional, or business works executive speaking skills. Whether you are a scientist engaged in technical research, a business executive involved in business activities or a student working for a professional degree, you need effective speaking skills in order to take an active part in oral communicative process. Rizvi, M. A. (2005)

Pannu, P., & Tomar, Y. A. (2010) state "Knowledge is one of the primary resources for improving the lives of people and the key for rapid development lies in building knowledge". In new emerging world of technology, the learners become tech savvy. So, the researcher felt it would be new idea to make the engineering students to develop their listening skills in an easy and interesting way by using ICT tools. Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "oral communication is a face to face interaction between the sender and the receiver is called oral communication". When the learners are asked to listen English language they may not show interest to listen, but they are attracted towards ICT tool, sounds of audio/video because of the real language learner speaking with visual effects. Rizvi, M. A. (2005) states that a person requires effective oral communication skills in several formal communicative situations, that is meetings, conferences, group discussions, panel discussions, interviews, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, seminars, workshops, and symposiums". The ICT tools generate new ideas to listen to the language of native speakers. Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "Experience suggests that those who listen to others with dwindling attention fail to speak properly. It is so because listening is the mother of all speaking". Pannu, P., & Tomar, Y. A. (2010) state "The world entered the 20th century

without planes, radio or television. It entered the 21st century with nuclear power, space travel, computers, cell phones and wireless internet. Within the span of hundred years, entirely new fields of science and technology came". The twenty first century is evident period for digital revaluation in various fields of development. In the global world social, economical, political, and also trade and commerce have become new change in way of using ICT technology. In the recent era without using ICT technology in these fields will be excluded. The new sophisticated social, economical and political life will be developed through role of ICT at the global level. Ejigu, B. (2015) suggested that "ICT helps in improving the quality of education. It is stating that information and communication technology is an important instrument that can transfer the present isolated, teacher-centered and book-centered learning environment into a student-centered environment". Pannu, P., & Tomar, Y. A. (2010) state "it is the technology that has propelled the unprecedented levels of prosperity enjoyed by developed countries". In the new ever changing world technology is the most powerful tool for social change and development. In the 21st century various developments are happened through the ICT. Of these, the internet has become a major means for all sorts of official or personal communication" Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "there are people who do not listen to others at meetings; quite a few of them write incomprehensible memos; some do not value other's opinions; some others are unable to seek cooperation from their colleagues and subordinates". Kumar, S., & Lata, P. (2011) states that "Listening requires concentration, patience, and focus; the turbulence characterizing a quintessential twenty first century mind, however, renders the whole task extremely challenging". Listening is important skill of communication which helps to sensing, recognizing, interpreting, evaluating, responding and also remembering or memorizing the spoken language. Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.) (2002) states that "A large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. The ability to speak a

second language or foreign language well is a complex task if we try to understand the nature of what appears to be involved". Shumin, K. (2002) states that " In conclusion , speaking is one of the central elements of communication. In EFL teaching, it is an aspect that needs special attention and instruction. In order to provide effective instruction, it is necessary for teachers of EFL to carefully examine the factors, conditions, and components that underlie speaking effectiveness".

### **Background of the study**

The heterogeneous learners who come from the rural background have less exposure in English language learning as well as teaching. They are expected to speak, read, write and listen to second language without proper training. At the school level the teacher concentrates and gives practice more on reading and writing and less practice is given in speaking skill they totally neglected the listening skill. Due to the lack of practice and negligence of listening skill the students face problem in speaking. The second language learners hesitate to do due to the fear and lack of practice. This is main reason hence the second language learners fail to reach the target language. So the researcher felt the new way to motivate the higher secondary students to listen as well speak in the target language, to generate ideas and persuade them through using of ICT tools. This will really change the students' learning view to listen to the second language directly with any error with the visual effects. The improvement of education sector is very necessary areas both qualitatively and quantitatively, was recognized by the Ministry of education, Government of India way back in 1974 and it was included in 5th five year plan. The project had the following sub-scheme:

According to Kumara, sarita.2004, setting up an education technology unit in the ministry of education & social welfare and establishing a centre for educational technology by the NCERT. Assisting states in setting up educational technology cells and their programmes on

100% basis is planned. Strengthening a few educational institutions for undertaking educational technology programme (as cited in Dinesh, P., Karthikeyan, J. 2019).

### **Role of researcher:**

The researcher should monitor the language lab with the audio/video having assigned the students to listen audios/videos and also for speaking and recording the text from the distributed handouts by each member.

The researcher should give instructions and facilitate the learners at various situations and monitor them, enable to comprehend the audio/video at the time of experiment.

The researcher should motivate the students by giving time limit to complete their task on time.

### **Methodology**

The researcher used quasi experimental research design to analyze the higher secondary students' listening and speaking skill of rural and urban students through information and communication technology (ICT) tools.

### **Participants of this research**

The students of 9th standard at three different streams such as government, government aided and private schools in Salem district. These schools are selected for the experimental study because of the feasibility and time factor of the study. Total population of this research is 240 higher secondary school students from both urban and rural areas and by selecting 80 from each school by the researcher.

### **Ancova (analysis of co-variance)**

Analysis of co- variance is a statistical test used by the researcher to analyse the co- variance among the educationally backward higher secondary school students' listening and speaking skills by using ICT tools. The researcher conducts paired sample test to analyse the variance between the groups. Listening skill is mainly focused (Comprehensive and discriminative listening)

Comprehensive & discriminative	Sum of the squares	Difference	Mean scores	F	sig
Between the groups	26.219	2	7.266	9.386	0.00
Within the groups	220.15	238	.958	3.849	
total	246.369	240	15.49		

There is statistically significant difference between the groups with the intervention of the use of ICT tools among the higher secondary students' listening skill with a focus on comprehensive and discriminative listening. The F value 9.386 is significant at the level of .001. The researcher has conducted ANCOVA post hoc test to know the co variance between the groups. As per the ANCOVA post hoc test there is the significant difference among the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students' listening and speaking skills.

Speaking skills is mainly focused (Pronunciation and Vocabulary)

Pronunciation & vocabulary	Sum of the squares	Difference	Mean scores	F	sig
Between the groups	28.012	2	8.541	7.101	0.00
Within the groups	235	235	3.849	2.359	0.00
total	263.012	237	12.39		

The above table shows the ANCOVA results of higher secondary students' speaking skill mainly focused on pronunciation and vocabulary. The statistical difference between the groups says the use of ICT tools form the basis of higher secondary students' listening skill which mainly focused on Comprehensive and discriminative listening. The F value 7.101 is significant at the level of .001. The researcher has conducted ANCOVA post hoc test to know the co variance between the groups. As per the ANCOVA post hoc test there is the significant difference in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students' listening skill.

**Evaluation:**

The students are evaluated by the listening and speaking skills through their understanding of second language and also their handout interpretations from the critical analysis of audio/video recorded from their listening and speaking. Even their body language was analyzed after the listening and speaking activity.

**Results:**

Each learner has listened and speaks in a different way from his/her own understanding. The intervention of ICT with the students

has helped them to analyze and understand the audio/video from different perspectives. The audio/videos have generated new ideas even the rural background students have overcome the language difficulties and listened and spoke clearly. This study helps to motivate the educationally backward rural students to develop logical thinking and give a confidence to develop their analytical skill. The outcome of this research reveals rural educationally backward block higher secondary students' listening and speaking skill can be developed. The main purpose of this research was to explore the effectiveness of ICT tools on the second language learners listening and speaking skill at higher secondary level. The specific components are comprehensive listening, discriminative listening as well as pronunciation and vocabulary. In addition, the researcher investigated the effectiveness of second language learner using ICT tools for developing their motivation. The research design of this study was quasi experimental study, including pre-test, post-test, to the control and experimental group. Three hundred and fifty higher secondary educationally

backward school students are participated in this research. The experimental group students received language learning and teaching of listening and speaking skills through using ICT tools, the control group students received usual traditional teaching method. Both the control and experimental groups took listening and speaking pre-test. After the 15 hours of intervention both the groups took a post-test. In addition the researcher gave a questionnaire to experimental group to evaluate their motivation of using ICT tools. The researcher reached the following results after the data analysis using (ANCOVA) analysis of co-variance between the groups. There is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-tests mean scores of the control and experimental groups.

This research reached the following conclusions after analyzing the results of the data through ANCOVA.

1. There is statistically significant difference between the general listening and speaking skills post-test mean scores of control and experimental groups in favor of the experimental group alone,  $F(2,120) = 9.386, P < 0.09$ .
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the comprehensive listening post-test mean scores of control and experimental groups.  $F(2,120) = 3.849, p > 0.05$ , There are statically significant differences between the post-test marks and mean scores of control and experimental groups in the terms of discriminative listening skill,  $F(2,120) = 16.896, P < 0.05$ ,
3. There are statistically difference between the post-test marks mean score of pronunciation and vocabulary  $F(2,120) = 8.297, p < 0.05$ ,  $F(2,120) = 9.201, p < 0.05$ , in favor of the experimental group scores too.

### **Findings and conclusion**

The main focus of this research has been on the application of ICT tools for developing listening and speaking skill and made an analytical study of performance diversities among the higher secondary backward students in Salem district. The students from rural educationally backward block have less exposure in language learning

and also developing their communication skill. This is main goal of this research to change their learning environment using technology and making their steps easier and faster to develop the communication skills. The use of ICT tools for developing listening and speaking skills is new way of revolution to change earlier teaching method into digital way. The students in the new digital environments make their communication process and real life interaction through various ICT gadgets. In earlier days using technology was in the initial stage in language learning and teaching in particular. But the recent changes in technological development have produced massive revolution in the field of education, health, economic, trade and commerce. The communication interaction between the students and teachers' conversation become easy, fast and face to face even outside the classroom. ICT tools are key factor for developing communication through various resources like computer, internet, mobile phone, email, and other resources. ICT tools really help the students to exchange information through technology and make things possible. The teachers' sharing their notes and their materials become easy by posting and students can access the information, clarify their doubts faster from anywhere and any place through digital resources. Web 2 technologies is most frequent ICT resource for the students and teachers to find and share their learning and teaching materials, articles, important news, suggestions and their comments at the real time situation. Teacher encourages the students to contribute digital resources that they find from ICT tools are appropriate for enhancing language learning and developing their communication skills faster.

Furthermore, as the school level students may have less technological exposure and this could be the reason for the problems faced by the higher education level in using ICT resources in the language learning classroom. In the ever changing world education is not exemption to using various developing resource. So the teacher can change their approach of teaching from teacher - centered to student centered with the use of ICTs technology resources in

language teaching. The continuous classroom practice in using of ICT digital resources help the students to enhance their mind and also their learning environment by making adigital revolution.

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## Signposts for Researchers 3

### Key Concepts in ELT

[https://academic.oup.com/eltj/pages/key\\_concepts](https://academic.oup.com/eltj/pages/key_concepts)

#### 1. Criticality

The word ‘critical’ can be used in different ways, qualifying different phenomena. Thus, the development of ‘critical thinking’ is a goal in some ELT classrooms or teacher education programmes; there is also ‘critical pedagogy’, which seeks empowerment and social transformation; and ‘critical perspectives’ can be taken towards the enterprise of ELT itself.

#### 2. Creativity

Creativity is attracting increasing attention in the field of ELT. From a practical point of view, teachers have a growing number of resources to tap into if they wish to add a more creative dimension to their classes and away from purely practical issues, there is also a need to understand certain underlying processes and principles relating to creativity

#### 3. Collaboration

Within the field of education, collaboration comes in many guises: teacher collaboration in the classroom (peer teaching/team teaching), collaborative learning among learners themselves, collaborative research, and collaborative curriculum development, to name some of the most common.

## The Angry Panther: An Analysis of Namdeo Dhasal's Mumbai, My Beloved Whore

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*Bombay, Bombay  
O my dear slut  
I may say a good-bye  
But not before  
I take you  
in multiple ways  
Not before  
I will pin you down  
here and how  
thus and thus.*

(An Excerpt From *Mumbai, Mazha Priya Rande*)

And thus begins the poem at hand, Namdeo Dhasal's, *Mumbai, Mumbai, My Dear Slut*, which has also been translated into English as *Mumbai, My Beloved Whore*. First appearing in his collection of poems called *Khel*, which was published in 1983, it runs eleven stanzas and is one of the most famous writings from the Dalit Panther Movement about Mumbai, or as it was known in those days, Bombay.

It can very easily be hypothesised that a poem cannot be removed from its social, political and economic context, and be evaluated on its merit. Especially when it comes to Dalit Literature, the surrounding context takes as much importance as the poem, and its language itself, for the writing, then becomes a vehicle for a community that has been marginalised for the last 5000 years to assert their own identities. Dilip Chitre defines Dalit Literature as such: Anything published by a Dalit writer is considered Dalit Literature. Anything that reveals the life of the Dalit or any aspect of it is regarded as Dalit Literature.<sup>2</sup> He further asserts that Dalit Literature is not a single literary movement with its individual, cohesive ideology, but is just something that has been created by an eclectic combination of social sciences upon

literary criticism, where the terminology of the former comes to dominate the terminology of the latter.<sup>3</sup> In 1972, Dhasal, along with other writers, the most popular of them being Raja Dhale, Ashok Ingle, and J.V. Pawar, started the Dalit Panther Movement, inspired by the Black Panthers movement in the United States, but in general seemed to be a part of the 'global mosaic of anger, protest, demonstrations, violence and youthful revolutionary upsurge'<sup>4</sup> that was going throughout the world then. The Dalit Panthers was initially envisioned as a militant organisation which would combat atrocities against the Dalits<sup>5</sup>, but the militant nature of the organisation soon changed into a political and literary one.

The need for the organisation in the first place was due to two major reasons: First, the report of the Elayaperumal Committee, which was formed in 1965 to investigate cases of atrocities against the Dalits and suggest measures to curb these incidents and published its findings in January 1970. It studied 11,000 cases of atrocities, including 1,177 cases of murders in a single year. Most of the perpetrators were Congressmen and the Brahmans, including some Non-Brahmans. This changed the whole situation on the ground and spurred a few Dalit writers and activists into action, which included a group that was to become the Dalit Panthers. The second primary reason was the occurrence of violence in two villages in Maharashtra, one in the Pune District, and the other in the Parbhani District, the former being perpetrated by the brother of the local Congress leader, who was a minister of state in the Maharashtra cabinet<sup>6</sup>. As a reaction to the latter, this group of leaders met and formed a Yuvak Aghadi, which later turned out into the Dalit Panthers. However, the only popular Dalit writer at that



time, the great fiction writer Baburao Bagul<sup>7</sup>, abstained from any direct involvement in their activities, only supporting them covertly.

Dhasal himself was born into a *Mahar* family, which is one of the untouchable castes in Maharashtra, in a small hamlet called Pur-Kanesar in Pune district in 1949. He migrated to Mumbai at a very young age, working as a butcher's assistant in an area called Golpitha, which is near Kamatipura, which is one of the most significant red-light areas in India. The area he lived in came to be the title of his first work, which was published in his mid-twenties. The work was colossally disruptive, for it had no literary foregrounding: it was coming from an unprecedented 'untouchable' source, and in Chitre's opinion, all the qualities that made his poetry Nobel-worthy.<sup>8</sup>

Dhasal lived around the lumenproletariat all his life — the scum of the earth, the most marginalised communities in the city, and this also influenced his poetry and the meaning of the word Dalit which for him wasn't limited to the Scheduled Castes: it was everyone who had been socioeconomically ostracised by the society at large. He wrote about the pimps, the prostitutes, the street urchins, the gangsters, the *mujra* dancers, the criminals, the tamasha artists, labourers, vendors, and so on, all of them being Dalit for him<sup>9</sup>.

Coming to the contents of the poem itself, in the second line, he calls Mumbai 'his dear slut', which, when taken into the context of Dhasal's poetry at large, incorporates the city into his canon. On the very outset, the understanding has established the city as a woman, which makes it the ultimate symbol for human degradation, for, in Dhasal's canon, a woman is a borderline non-person, an object of sexual exploitation and someone left to decay after use.<sup>10</sup> However, Dhasal is vehement in his belief that decay exists as an extant form of life, and through his writing, tries to humanise the ostracised and by doing them, empower them against the system that brutally oppresses them. He does this by calling the city 'a whore with a heart of Gold', which to him makes the city his

beloved, for to him, love is just a relationship between a sanctified whore, the beloved and whore and a glorified pimp<sup>11</sup>, the lover. To him, the city is the most sanctified whore, the purest of them all, and he is her pimp.

However, one cannot ignore the language that he uses here: he calls the city a slut, which, by any means, is a profane word, and not acceptable in any way. However, one must take into consideration the socio-economic context that the poet is coming from and what he intended to do with the use of this word. The use of the word slut here should be considered invitational here. By using a word as harsh as that, he lures the reader into his world, a world where a profane word is not considered disruptive in any shape or form, where words like these are a part of everyday language. By the use of such language, he wants the reader to understand that the words that would be considered profane and offensive in more comfortable worlds are a reality in his world. This also evident by the use of other profane words or phrases, like the title of his poem *Gandu Bachicha*, which can be translated into English as Arsefuckers Park, or in this very poem, when he tells the city 'I'll strike you dumb/and go'. Such profanity can also be considered an expression of anger, which has consumed him so much that he ends up venting his frustrations to the reader in this language. One can see in Dhasal a wave of anger that has seeped deep into his psyche to the point where it has become his first emotion, and a sort of *Modus Operandi*, to shield himself against the exploitation that he has seen since birth and the inherent fear of domination that is encoded into his genes and the millions upon millions who belong to his social strata and even those who followed on their leader's footsteps and converted to Buddhism in 1956.

The usage of the word slut also portrays the city in a way: it portrays it as a source of infinite pleasures, erotic, yet faithless, and intoxicating, for she could provide sensory pleasures beyond one's imagination, but one could not expect her to care for them beyond the essential monetary exchange that goes behind prostitution. Moreover, in a very perverted

way, she represents the recklessness and the various excesses of the urban lifestyle, and how one could seize the opportunities in the urban setting. Through this, one can also interpret that Dhasal is trying to communicate to the Dalit Youth, and tell them they should seize all the opportunities that the city presented to them.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, attention must be drawn to a layer of exclusion in this sentiment, for it also draws a contrast between the life that the city presents to the Dalit Youth and the way they are treated in the Marathi countryside. On that account, we can consult an incident that has been alluded to before, the one in the Parbhani District, where two women were paraded around naked and hit with thorny branches, just because they were trying to quench their thirsts from a well that was supposed to be upper caste. There has been a historical trend of Dalit Youths migrating into the city, mostly due to deprivation in the countryside and the relative absence of caste distinctions in the city. Therefore, one can also consider *Mumbai, Mazha Priya Rande* as a manual for the Dalit communities that resided in the countryside in Maharashtra about what Mumbai should mean to them and asking them to seize the reckless living that the city provides them. For his commitment to Marxism, Dhasal here exhibits a preference for the urban setting rather than the countryside.

The disruptive nature of the language echoes

the imminent need for destruction of the existing structures of the society, for that was the only way that the marginalised could come to a regular fitting with the people who have dominated them since millennia. This also shows us the poet's affinity towards Marxism and the need for a revolution, even though he does not talk about the creation of a new society, but it is only in the process of destruction that he seeks creation. The world that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned, a truly secular and equal state, to the Dalits and many other marginalised communities, was a radical idea, despite Ambedkar's own belief and the constitution he made that made provisions for the inclusion of his vision. One can only imagine that Dhasal's world, like many Panthers' vision, was indeed the world that was imagined by Babasaheb.

Therefore, one can easily conclude that Namdeo Dhasal's *Mumbai, Mazha Priya Rande*, is an expression equally of Dhasal's politics and the political programme of the Dalit Panther movement, and an ode to the city he owed his life to, and lived and died in. As one obituary of his tells us, Dhasal knew Mumbai like no other, and nobody knew its secrets more. At its core, the poem is also a love letter to the city like none other, and a commitment to not leave the city like a ragged beggar, as he promises her in the poem.

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## **Experiencing the Moisture and Heat of Tears through the Eyes of Vaidehi**

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### **Abstract**

The declaration of human rights has been a boon to oppressed individuals. It brought an awareness of human sufferings and gave way to new socio-political thinking. In the context of India, a democratic political system has been trying to rationalize human behaviour to ensure equality of all and nullify sufferings. However, as diversity is Indian identity, there remain a few delicate aspects of exploitation unchanged. The most prominent ones are gender and caste-based discrimination and exploitation. Lower castes are still the victims of social injustice, and the womenfolk continue to be among the much-victimised section of our society. The postmodern era gave a voice to such unheard agonies, silent sufferings, sighs of women through the different genre of literature.

The short story has been explored widely to document and represent both human and women sufferings. Vaidehi is one such prominent Kannada voice in the context of Indian writing. She represents rare sides of sufferings of women in the regional and local contexts with greater sensibility and authenticity. She is unique in exploring both feminine emotions and local language in her writing. This paper makes a humble attempt to analyze distinct female characters of Vaidehi from the collection of short stories titled '*AmmachiEmbaNenapu*'. Further, the paper tries to unfold the way Vaidehi has responded to social experiences along the decades of time and space. The paper focuses on various sides of oppression and sufferings represented by Vaidehi through her female characters.

### **Introduction**

Vaidehi (JanakiShrinivasamurthy) is a well-known Kannada novelist, poet, playwright and a distinct short story writer. She was born in 1945 in Kundapura, Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka. She heralded a new era in the feminist literature of the 1970s. Her writings are described as a postmodernist, which depicts the plight of women, replete with a cry for identity, pleasures, insecurities, sighs and their silent sufferings.

Vaidehi has received many prestigious awards for her literary contribution, such as SahityaAkademy Award for '*KrounchaPakshigalu*' (2009), M. K. Indira Award, and Katha Award for '*GidadaNenapu and AmmachhiEmbaNenapu*' (1992, 1997), Satyakama Award for '*AmmachiEmbaNenapu*'. Recently she was given the Yuvakalavahini-Gopichand National Literary Award given to the story writer reflecting societal progress. Her popular story

Akku is adapted for a television serial, while the film-maker GirishKasaravalli made a movie on her '*GulabiTakeesu*' and depicted her characters with greater details.

Vaidehi began to write in the mid of 1970s. It was the period in which many significant writers portrayed society more authentically in their works, especially the society they lived in. It was the time when revolutionary and Dalit movements were gaining greater momentum. Another important feature of this period is that a large number of women writers came with a stunningly fresh voice. It added a strong feminine consciousness to Kannada literature. PratibhaNandakumar, Nemichandra, Vaidehi, etc., are some of the prominent voices of this period.

Vaidehi's writing is distinct in many ways. More importantly, a woman is the centre of most of Vaidehi's writings. The female characters of Vaidehi belong to different background having different sensibilities. The literary world of

Vaidehi represents women from the most conservative families to the modern one, including illiterates, educated, thieves, and also women who exploit and are exploited. Women appear in different forms and shapes in the stories of Vaidehi. She deals with the problem of gender equality with a unique kind of maturity and mastery.

'*AmmachiEmbaNenapu*' is one of the celebrated short story collections of Vaidehi published in the year 2000. It unfolds the less seen and unshown world of women of author's locality. The anthology consists of twenty-one short stories starting from '*AntaraladaBaduku*' to '*AmmachiEmbaNenapu*' including some of the most popular stories like '*Vanimayi*', '*OnduBagilaSaddu*', '*PuttammattuMattuMommagalu*', etc., Every story looks like a slice of life, as the characters are picked from real contexts and naturally weaved using individual and social experiences. Talking about the origin of her stories, Vaidehi says, "We belonged to typical south Indian joint family. It was prevalent to see many people coming home, chat leisurely and narrate their personal experiences. Those experiences sunk into the subconscious mind and got transformed into a literary form." Vaidehi's stories look like different flowers in a neatly finished garland. The stories make readers experience the plight and listen to the inner voices of characters. Vaidehi encompasses serious social issues in a more personalized tone. Most of the stories focus on feminine, domestic, individual aspirations and experiences. Craving for identity, ill-fated marriage, violence on women, the burden of being women in the male-dominated society etc. are some of the shades Vaidehi has portrayed in the frame of her colourful writing. Her stories represent a group of women with great potentiality and possibilities, but silenced and bound by the delicate threads of tradition and culture.

'*PuttammattuMattuMommagalu*' is an interesting story of a Brahmin widow and her granddaughter. Puttammattu lost her husband and daughter, suffered so much in her life, and spent her life in bringing up her granddaughter Kamalavathi. Her life

revolves only around the granddaughter. Instead of lamenting on losing her husband at an early age, Puttammattu strives to lead a humble and respectful life. People ill-treat her, but she ignores it without any protest. Her granddaughter Kamalavathi aspires to get a job and want to become independent. Silent growth of characters is shown in its true sense by Vaidehi.

'*OnduBagilaSaddu*' is the story of a curious girl who wants to see how the Saligrama is. It is because the girls are not allowed to touch, worship particular idols in the Brahmin community, and Saligrama is one among those forbidden things. It is a common belief that there will be grave consequences if a woman touches Saligrama Shilas, due to their physical impurities. Saligrama is an iconic symbol and representation of Lord Vishnu. Saligramas are usually collected from the bank of river Gandaki from Nepal. It is a kind of 'untouchability' within the community. Women are deprived of a few practices within the family. The plot of the story is based on this invisible injustice. Curious woman, the narrator of the story silently wants to see Saligrama, which is in the pooja room of the house, but fear and guilt haunt her and Vaidehi have captured these emotions very successfully. The story depicts the status of women within the delicate cages of community.

'*Vanimayi*' is one of the most touching stories of a girl aspiring for a pair of slippers and facing the absurdities in the way of fulfilling her desire. In the story, the narrator says '...her desires are very ordinary. The greatest among them is to buy a pair of slippers. Everyone commented on her desire. Didn't we live without slippers all these years?' Her simple desire and attempts face severe objections of the family. Nevertheless, she fails to curb her desire, and at last, she succeeds in getting a pair of slippers. Unfortunately, the new pair of slippers wound the feet. She is charged for violating the words of elders, and the cruelty of the environment reaches its climax when Narasimha, a sadist in the family destroys her slippers. Vanimayi is deeply hurt. She undergoes both physical and mental suffering. The continued distress

drives her to unconsciousness, and she appears to be on her deathbed. These delicate invisible suppression and sufferings seem to be outlined with the utmost honesty and neutrality. The writer has admitted on many occasions that her stories are the outcome of her ever-haunting childhood memories.

'Akku' is among the most popular stories of Vaidehi. In this story, Akku is not well. The story seems to suggest the reasons for her poor health and sufferings. Akku's cruelty is equally responsible for her sufferings besides the tragic turns of life. Due to ill-health, she becomes an 'unwanted' for her husband as he has an illegal relationship. Unable to cope with the situation, Akku comes back to her parents' house. But it only intensifies her suffering as she has to face the indifference and negligence from her brothers. She has to guard herself against the grazing eyes and attempts of 'so-called' gentlemen in the village. Akku experiences various shades of human nature and the mysteries of relationships. All these miserable inexpressible pains drive her to lose her mental health. Vaidehi does not stand for or against any character, but she shows them in their real colours. Careful observation of Vaidehi's portrayal of characters, especially the unusual ones, exposes the readers to 'unrecognized and incurable' sickness of the society. By bringing the contrast of health and sickness, Vaidehi raises questions on the complexity of human relations and values. When the reader sees through the eyes of Akku, he or she can understand the inhumanity and barbarism of healthy, normal society. In this perspective, Akku could be considered as a representative of women's pain, suffering, humiliation and exploitation. Vaidehi employs her creative potential to capture and evoke some of the rare emotions and dimensions of human life.

The world of Vaidehi stories is very fertile yielding distinct experiences. She has touched highly delicate social and family issues, beliefs that have been affecting the lives of women over centuries. As a sensible writer, Vaidehi's concern is not to tell a set of engaging stories but uncover the nature and complexities of human beings. Characters of Vaidehi are real and behave true

to their surroundings. In turn, the characters provide a distinct angle of exploration and expression to the writer. Vaidehi shows the 'seen' and experienced absurdities of life. That is why the suffering and pain of characters in her stories become more important and touch the readers acutely.

'*Ammachchi Emba Nenapu*' is the story of a girl. More importantly, it is a story of a strong individual. Ammachchi is one of the most vibrant characters created by Vaidehi. Ammachchi's close friend narrates the story. Ammachchi is active, lively and enthusiastic. But no one recognized or respected the energy and talent of Ammachchi. She is poor, has no father. As there is no support from any side Ammachchi's mother often takes the help of Venkappa. This casual relationship turns to greater complexities as Venkappa establishes himself as the owner of the family. He says, "Who will come to marry your daughter? Don't worry, I will marry her." This comes as a shock to Ammachchi. Every attempt at Venkappa shows his interest in exploiting the helpless condition of Ammachchi and her mother. He goes on, falling in the eyes of Ammachchi.

Venkappa is twelve years older than Ammachchi. He tries to take advantage of the situation and succeeds in exploiting Ammachchi. He ruins her life, and Ammachchi is both angry and frustrated. Although she can understand the helplessness of her mother, she is angry on her mother for allowing Venkappa to exploit her. The main part of the plot is the conflict between Ammachchi and Venkappa. Venkappa tramples on the little desires of Ammachchi, and she protests in many ways. This is the most effective part of the story constructed in the regional dialect; Kunadapura Kannada. Ammachchi's marriage is fixed with Venkappa forcibly without her consent. Her mother remains helpless and indecisive in guarding the future of her daughter.

Having a little girl as the first person narrator of the story, the writer is able to provide many dimensions to the story rather than making it mere biographical. The narrator, being a young friend of Ammachchi, cannot understand many things but feels that there is something wrong in the situations. She could sense the changing

moods of happiness, sadness and anger of Ammachchi. However, she is not mature enough to comment on the happenings or judge what is right or wrong. As the story is in the first person, the narrator's natural innocence and the spontaneous desire to respond are retained in their realistic form. The writer has documented the events without any attempt of commenting and interpreting.

### **Conclusion**

Vaidehi depicts a highly sensible and responsible self-restraint in her stories. She explores the point of narration artfully, drawing the most suitable point of narration to unveil absurdities of life in their true shade. Most of Vaidehi's narrators are women; women of different age, who are either participants or witnesses. These narrators have concern for the sufferings of the characters. Sometimes they question the

happenings and attempt to understand the truth. Vaidehi, through her 'simply realistic' characters, evokes a sense of wonder towards human nature, behaviour and the complexities of relationships. She provides an authentic experience to understand the delicate threads of sufferings, exploitation and aspirations explorations of women.

Vaidehi's art of characterization is stunningly unique; especially women protagonists of her stories are portrayed with greater depth and sensibility. Employing the regional dialect to portray the characters has added a distinct flavour to her writing. In a way, Vaidehi's stories represent the essence of Tulu Nadu life and culture. A close reading of her creative explorations reveals the success of Vaidehi in documenting unheard sighs and unseen tears of women through her well-crafted characters.

## **Signposts for Researchers 4**

### **Metalinguistic aspects of bilingual processing**

Ellen Bialystok <sup>(a1)</sup> **Annual Review of Applied linguistics** Volume 21

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This chapter examines differences in metalinguistic development between monolingual and bilingual children in terms of three subcategories: word awareness, syntactic awareness, and phonological awareness. In each case, some studies have reported advantages for bilingual children, but equally, other studies have found either no difference between the groups, or, in some cases, monolingual advantages. In the discussion of each of these areas, the kinds of tasks for which bilingual and monolingual children perform differently are identified. In none of these three subcategories of metalinguistic awareness do bilingual children exhibit a uniform and consistent advantage over monolinguals. An alternate conception of metalinguistic ability is proposed in which two cognitive processes, analysis and control, are directly responsible for task performance. These processes are involved in all metalinguistic tasks but to different degrees. Re-examining the results in this way reveals that bilingual advantages occur reliably on tasks that make high demands on control but are not evident in tasks that make high demands on analysis. The implications of this pattern for metalinguistic ability are considered.

## Parenting

### **Let Children Decide Themselves.**

**Dhanya Bhaskaran**

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This is the right time to let children free—of course, not physically (the Monster Corona is out there!); but spiritually, mentally. It is during the time of crises, human intelligence is at its best; critical thinking is at work; cross checking takes place; we observe our surroundings carefully; we rediscover our resources; we reflect on our past for shaping our future, and we critically assess our limitations and shortcomings.

No doubt; this Covid season could be the most dreadful period in most of our lives; and in all of our children's lives, too. We all have passed through the fear and anguish in varying degrees; and our children too have undergone experiences which hitherto they have never thought of. Therefore, let our children shape their future now—whatever their age may be. Let's ask them what they want to do in future—not what career or occupation they want to choose.

During the last one or two months, while being 'shut down' at home, children have learnt a lot without teaching—by watching TV, reading newspapers, listening to elders, interacting among themselves, using smart phones, and being on social media. They were not learning lessons from textbooks, but from life. In fact they were studying life—through observing and experiencing. Real learning, we can call it. As parents, this is the right time for us to observe how children study life. Which aspects of life they value while observing life on TV, in newspapers, during parental conversations etc.? Do they value money, power, position, luxury, educational qualifications, big palatial houses, merry making, holidaying, jolly tours, stay in resorts, costly dress and cosmetics, five star restaurant and dinners? Or, do they appreciate the services offered by ordinary people like nurses, doctors, lab technicians, ambulance drivers, policemen, postmen, home delivery volunteers, electricity and water supply

workers—who all work day and night, rain or shine? When newsstories of humble folk doing 'small' but big acts of charity do your children read those stories in newspapers?

A poor old woman, who runs a small teashop, sold her only goat and donated that amount to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund (CMDRF) to provide food and shelter for people including thousands of migrant workers. A UKG kid stopped a police van patrolling in front of his house, and handed over his piggy bank, and requested them to buy food for those who live in streets. A couple—both retired teachers—donated their one month's pension to CMDRF. Another child donated whatever he had saved so far for buying a bookshelf. Another child, not rich, expressed her desire to donate her savings to the relief fund, and when the police officers reached her home to collect the donation, they came to know that the TV at home was not working. The police officers received her humble donation and in the evening they came back with a new TV for her—spending from their own pocket! A university professor, who recently retired from service, donated his two months' pension to the relief fund. Local people in a village collected Rs.15000 and bought groceries and vegetables and gave them to the community kitchen which had been feeding hundreds of poor and migrant jobless workers for about a month. A district library council donated Rs. 37 lakh, which was collected from local libraries. A farmer gave away six cents of land (which may cost about Rs.50 lakh) to the government. An old man, who has been keeping the coins handed to him by his mother before her death, as a precious relic, handed them over to the relief fund. The District Motor Vehicle Department gave 500 PPE kits which may cost lakhs to the Health Department.

These are just some of the news reports of

a single day from just one district, which appeared in one newspaper (*The Mathrubhoomi Daily* (Malayalam), Kannur Edition, 30 April 2020). "Heard melodies are sweet; but those unheard are sweeter." Imagine the bulk of help in the form of money, food, medicine, health equipment, land, labour, shelter etc. flowing from the whole state into the relief funds of a government!

On the same day, the state government announced that the state was ready to welcome back lakhs of its people who had migrated to foreign countries, as well as to other parts of India. Flights and ships, quarantine shelters,

medical and transport facilities, food, nursing assistance—all have been kept ready for them—just waiting for the central government nod.

Do your children respond to these big and small—No, nothing is small among them; all are big—acts of love and sympathy? Observe how your children behave. Depending on their responses and reactions, you can judge how humane they will grow into future. Depending on how humane and compassionate they are during another disaster like the earlier Plague or the present Covid, after a few decades, you will be known as their parents—alive or not.

#### Report from the field 1

### **EELTIF for a Social Cause**

**Vijayan Karayi**

Treasurer & Resource Person ELTIF, Eruvatty, Thalassery

Being an active member of ELTIF, I have always sought to make English the language of the layman who has been denied of the urban facilities that foster better learning environments and hence being deprived of the privileges for getting good English education. Boosted by the principles of ELTIF, I started an English Enrichment class for the students in our locality. The Panunda Social Education Library took great initiative and accorded tremendous support when the idea of starting such a venture was discussed with them. They arranged a classroom and co-ordinated the programme. Initially the number of students was very less, but in course of time more students joined the class and the strength grew incessantly. The way I handled classes was remarkably different from the traditional classroom processes. Here, I got a chance to know each learner individually, and could tap their creativity, curiosity and interest by helping them collaboratively engage in various activities including theatrical performance, which could give even the lowest performer an opportunity to involve in the teaching-learning process. I took special care to help the learners use their emotive, affective and cognitive strengths to individually and socially appropriate situations to make learning effective.

This is the fourth year I am continuing with my classes at Ponniam South LP School where every year there is an increase in the number of students coming forward willingly to join the class. This year the class began with a formal inaugural function in which Mrs. Padmavathi, HM, Ponniam SLPS, delivered a welcome speech illustrated the various instances of how the school was benefitted by such a programme. Mr. Manoj, PTA President, presided over the function and Ms. Lahija V.K., Ward member, formally inaugurated the function. There were many parents present and the feedback I could collect from them regarding the classes conducted in the previous years were really encouraging. It all reminds me of the role of ELTIF in inspiring teachers to take up such challenges anywhere and everywhere possible.



## It works in my classroom

# Fusion of Multiple Intelligences in the English Class

P.Bhaskaran Nair

The theory of multiple intelligences has gained much popularity in the academic field. Instead of the traditionally established notion of intelligence as a single entity, Howard Gardner's theory offers a cluster of intelligences operating in correlation. A set of seven (later two more added) intelligences has been proposed, replacing the single intelligence. They are: Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Musical, Bodily-kinaesthetic, Spatial, Interpersonal, Intra-personal, Naturalistic and Existential intelligences.

In spite of its popularity among educators and teachers, the empirical validity of the theory has been challenged by theoreticians. At the same time, many great educational psychologists like Jerome K. Bruner have endorsed its pedagogic potentials, as well.

Diversity seems to be the essence of beauty. Diverse artistic talents, while fused together, are likely to give birth to new beauties. At least, says so the result of a classroom experiment. One may ask, "What is the relevance of diverse artistic talents in an English class? You teach grammar and vocabulary, take care of reading comprehension, give some writing assignments, and if you are very particular, do some role-play activities so that spoken English too is 'well taken care of.'"

Well, I'm not asking anybody to give up grammar, reading or writing—all of them must stay. But, to have a little noise in an English class (where only the teacher's voice is heard), a new activity has been suggested. You just take it as fun.

Let's begin with a film song—yes, in the mother tongue. A very popular one with excellent lyrical beauty, wonderfully composed, tuned and sung. "Who is going to sing this song?" Many raise their hands.

Before they sing the song, tell the class that they

should note down two or three phrases of their choice while listening. After the song, each should select one phrase/word and first translate it into English, and then perform an action related to that word/phrase. The 'action' can be a real action (dancing, whistling, humming...), miming (gardening, watering, cooking...), illustrating verbally ("Last night I had a *dream*. I saw an elephant in my *dream*"—based on the word *dream* in the film song), drawing (a tree), origami (a paper plane—since the word chosen from the song is *aeroplane*), telling a very brief story (based on a phrase in the song), doing a mono-act (based on an emotion depicted in the song), narrating an event — imaginary or real, writing a dialogue between the characters mentioned in the song—two lovers, acting along with a short dialogue, composing two or three lines of a poem. Working in pairs or small groups, a few of them can translate the poem in meaningful units—couplets, stanzas, refrain etc.

Once they listened to the song, selected a few words or phrases, and finally picked one from the list, what each has to do is as follows:

Tell the class what the word/phrase selected from the song is: "I have selected the word '.....' (the original). In English, it means *flutist*. I am going to act like that *flutist* of the song". Now, the student performs /mimes for one or two minutes.

Another student: "I have selected the phrase, '.....', which means 'thick forest'. Now, look at my drawing. How is my forest?" (Shows her drawing to the class.)

Yet another student: "I have also taken the same phrase, 'thick forest'. Now, let me walk lonely along the thick forest" (Mimes: Expression of fear and caution on the face, cautious movements in body language).

Another student: "The phrase I have chosen is '....'. It means *very sad and lonely*. I have written two lines of a poem, of course, in our mother tongue/English. Let me read it out for you." (Reads.)

The students may not be able follow the instructions clearly in the beginning. What the teacher has to do is to choose two or three words/phrases from the song, on behalf of each student. Then, depending on their talents ask them to pick one. Then, provide models for each as shown above. For acting, miming, dancing, drawing etc. they don't need models. They may do on their own, once they understood the instructions. For writing a dialogue, composing two lines of a poem, telling a story, narrating an event etc. they might need models to begin with. The teacher is expected to provide models.

The following is a translation of a song from *Thulabharam*, a popular Malayalam film of 1968.

*The wind blew, the hurricane blew,  
The lamp posts on the shore of the backwater  
closed their eyes;*

*Are the heaven and hell on this side, or on the  
far side*

*Of the sea called Time?*

*If it was God who created Man,  
A question to the God:*

*Why did you give us this clay island in the Sea  
of Tears?*

*Long ago-- why did you give us?*

*If it was the Devil who shaped Man, a question  
to the Devil:*

*Why did you come to Heaven,  
And offering a fruit, throw us into the Sea of  
Sorrows?*

*Why did you throw us?*

Student 1: "My word is ... which means *island*. Look I am going to make an island. Look, this is an island. On all sides you see water." (Modelling)

2. "I have taken the word .... Its meaning is *hurricane*. Look, I am going to act like a tall tree --Yes, a coconut tree--caught in

a hurricane'. (Swings violently, making a loud hissing noise of the wind.)(Acting: Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence)

3. "My choice is a phrase from the song, ..., which means *heaven and hell*. I have made a few more similar phrases which go together. Please listen: Day and night, light and dark, head and foot, right and left, right and wrong, up and down, true and false."(Language—vocabulary)
4. "My word is .... In English it means *create*. I have made a few phrases using words similar in meaning to *create*. Please listen. Create a model, build a house, make a toy, produce food grains, and manufacture notebooks." (Language—collocation)
5. " Let me take the first word in the poem,... which means *wind*. All of you know that I do some mimicry. Now, let me imitate the sound of the wind." (Mimicry)
6. "I too would like to begin with the first word, *wind*. We know that wind is the movement of air. Depending on the speed and shape of the movement, we have many 'air-words'. Let me list a few: Air, breeze, wind, tempest, hurricane, gale, cyclone, typhoon, whirlwind..." (Vocabulary: Linguistic intelligence)
7. "The word I have chosen is ..., which means *backwater*. As you know, it is a water source. What are the other sources of water: Let's begin with the largest: Ocean, sea, river, lake, pond, stream, fountain, well, canal..." (Logical intelligence)
8. "I too have selected the same word, *backwater*. Do you know the difference between backwater and other sources of water, as my friend has listed? Backwater is, in fact, part of the sea. When the water level rises in the sea, water enters the large pond-like water bed on the sea shore through small river-like passage. A backwater looks like a lake. But there is no flow in or out. Back water is connected to the sea; lake is not." (Logical intelligence)
9. "Look, I have drawn the picture of an island

caught in a *hurricane*. The trees are swinging violently; the sky is cloudy; the waves in the sea rise like mountains.” (Drawing: Visual-Spatial intelligence)

10. “Let me conduct a very brief quiz programme with only three questions. You may answer the questions. (i) Which holy book is indirectly referred to in this song? (ii) Who are the characters referred to? (iii) What was the fruit offered?”(Existential intelligence)

After one or two in-class work, the task can be assigned partly as homework and partly as class assignment so that (i) students can come prepared and (ii) class time can be saved. That means preparation at home with adult support, and interaction in the class.

The main objective remains the same: enhancing communication skills. The resources being

made use of are one’s own natural potentials—drawing, painting, dancing, poetic skills and so on. A higher level objective, beyond the already stated one (i.e., communication skills) also is attained: self -actualization (Ref: Abraham Maslow’s analysis of human needs). Each student gets opportunities to showcase their talents.

The argument here can be summed up as follows: Students (of any age) come to the class with great potentials of varying kinds. Some of them display their skills and abilities; some don’t. Some get opportunities; some grab them. A few always go back with their latent talents always remaining hidden or dormant. When a teacher offers opportunities to all in the class, or when she caringly forces those who are introverts, they too get the satisfaction of self-actualization

#### **Signposts for Researchers 4**

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of research in the social sciences is to generate data that contribute to our understanding of social phenomena. In education, research provides information on multiple phenomena such as the efficacy of various instructional approaches, achievement differences between social groups and across countries, and the many factors that contribute to school improvement generally. It is common to assume that there is a direct relationship between research and both policy and practice. Policymakers and practitioners are usually seen as consumers of research insofar as they apply research findings to the generation of policy and the implementation of more effective practice. Clearly political considerations enter into all stages of this process—in decisions about what research gets funded, what research methodologies are considered “scientific” or relevant to policy, in the conclusions drawn from the research, and the policies and practices that are ultimately promoted. Analysis of the relationship between research and policy/practice in virtually any context will reveal the complex intersections between empirical data and ideology.

#### **Keywords**

Teacher Education Student Teacher Language Teaching English Language Learning Conversation Analysis

Reports from the field

## **ELTIF- Giving a Leg-up for the Less Privileged**

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English is not merely a means of communication, but also a tool for empowerment, strengthening the morale of the marginalised and encouraging them to join the mainstream. Learning English helps the underprivileged raise their social status and improve self-esteem.

ELTIF has always taken up the pioneering spirits in making wholehearted endeavours to uplift the needy and the underprivileged. The very motto of ELTIF is to go to the villages and the slums, find out the most needy and the least privileged, and bring them up to the higher strata of the society as an attempt for effectuating status equalisation. Such an initiative was taken at Kannavam, a remote place in Kannur district, when ELTIF joined hands with the BRC, Kutuparamba in a genuine effort to constructively elevate the self-confidence of the students that might inspire them to perform better both in their academic domains and in their life situations.

Kannaavam is a place of historical importance as it is reputed for the guerilla warfare against the British. Here the Kurichiyar and the Kurumbar tribes supported Pazhassi Raja and fought the colonialists. The BRC of Kuthuparamba decided to choose this area to conduct a three-day camp for students due to the fact that, in general, the academic performance of the children of Kannavam still remain deplorably poor.

The Three-day Camp, 'Disha 2019' started on 27<sup>th</sup> of December with a vision to create a positive attitude among the children of Kannavam ranging from age 6-16. The camp was formally inaugurated by Dr. Bhaskaran Nair, President, ELTIF, who intoned the significance of such camps where each and

every participant will learn something new for their life. The Co-ordinator, Mr. Hareendran.A., in his briefing, invited the attention of the government agencies to the dire need of conducting various programmes for the less privileged children. Mr. Mohanan, the Course Coordinator, emphasised the importance of such orientation camps which can show how the concerted efforts of the authorities and the social volunteers can bring out miraculous improvements in the life of the marginalised. There were motivation classes, craft making, yoga, and many interesting activities included in the module.

The ELTIF members were very active throughout and one whole day was dedicated exclusively for the learning of English in simple, enjoyable, interactive and interesting ways. The members of ELTIF and the ASAP students of Kutuparamba Higher Secondary School, Thockilangadi, took it up as a challenge and engaged the students in various activities that made them non-consciously learn English and get rid of their apprehension towards English. Mr. Vijayan Karayi (Treasurer, ELTIF), Mr. Pavithran, Mr. Hareendran and Mr. Mohanan led the team and could create enthusiasm among the students.

The camp ended on 29<sup>th</sup> December with a formal function attended by the villagers and the Panchayath representatives, who all expressed their great joy in the success of the camp which could boost the interest of the children in learning and also encourage them to acquire certain life skills that might motivate them throughout their lives. ELTIF promised that there would be regular camps for such children all over Kerala, and if possible, in other remote villages all over India.