

English Language Teacher Education in a Diverse Environment

Edited by Dr Philip Powell-Davies
and Professor Paul Gunashekar

Selected papers from the Third International
Teacher Educators Conference Hyderabad, India

16–18 March 2013

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword Alison Barrett | 7 |
| Introduction Paul Gunashekar | 9 |
| Preface Philip Powell-Davies | 12 |
| OVERVIEW | |
| The teacher, the student, the planner and the policy maker: the importance of context, culture, language(s) and inclusion | 17 |
| Authenticity, Communities and Hidden Potentials Adrian Holliday | 19 |
| Learner Autonomy in Text Choice: Authenticity, Length and Comprehensibility R. Amritavalli | 24 |
| Understanding our ELT Contexts: The Starting Point for Developing Appropriate ELTE Programme Goals, Content and Processes Martin Wedell | 30 |
| THEME ONE | |
| The institutional environment: approaches to English language teaching and English language teacher education | 37 |
| Realisations and Perceptions of Preferred Languages in Indian Classrooms: Teacher Education Implications Geetha Durairajan | 39 |
| Nurturing the Prospective Teachers of English in India: An Assessment Ravindra Tasildar | 45 |
| Research and the Language Teacher Penny Ur | 53 |
| Teaching English Using Multilinguality in the Classroom: The Teacher's Role as a Learner Neha Aggarwal | 58 |
| An Experiment in Multilingual Pedagogy for English Language Teacher Professional Development Nivedita Vijay Bedadur | 64 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Inspiring English Teachers in China and Indonesia: Implications for Indian Teacher Educators? Martin Lamb | 72 |
| Satellite-based Supplementary English Programme for Students in Scheduled Areas of Gujarat Geeta Sharma and Ranganayaki Srinivas | 78 |
| English Language Resources and Teachers' Attitudes in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria Wisdom Inibehe Jude, Alice Effiong Udosen and Charles Okon Effiong | 84 |
| On-line Courses: The Better Platform for Continuous Professional Development in Sharing Ideas and Solving Classroom Issues Hitesh Chandra Bhakat | 93 |
| Developing Coherence in Writing: A Study of Pre-Service German Teachers of English Lina Mukhopadhyay | 99 |
| Transacting in Multi-level Classrooms: Experiences from the Field Kirti Kapur | 110 |
| Assessing Language Teaching Competences – Why and How? Richard Rossner | 115 |
| The Role of Programme Evaluation in Curriculum Development OR 'How Are We Doing?' Richard Kiely | 122 |
| THEME TWO | |
| The socio-economic environment: English for development | 129 |
| Brave New World: English and the Global Indian Priyali Ghosh | 130 |
| English Skills for Employability in the 21st Century Manique Gunesequera | 136 |
| Soft Skills for Success at Work Rama Gautam and Nikhil Bhatt | 142 |
| Crossing Frontiers: English Language and the International Dimension Anjana Tiwari and Raees Unnisa | 150 |
| Cultural Diversity as a Resource for Children's L2 Development Padmini Shankar Kankata | 154 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Enhancing Functional English Skills to Empower Underprivileged Youth Rajashree Pande and Moiz Raja Shaikh | 162 |
| ‘Global Readiness’ of Indian Students with Special Reference to English Language and Communication Skills Jagtar Chowla and Nidhi Nema | 169 |
| The Role of English for the Socio-Economic Development of the Children of the Marginalised Seasonally Migrant Labour Community Rekibuddin Ahmed and Debasish Mohapatra | 180 |
| Learning English for Development and Economy in India: A Socio-Cultural Perspective Uday Kumar Mishra | 186 |
| THEME THREE | |
| The home environment: issues in the home/school language switch | 193 |
| Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education as a Key to Access and Quality Pamela Mackenzie | 194 |
| Using Learners’ Home Language in Teaching English at the Secondary Level in West Odisha Sadananda Meher | 202 |
| Development and Empowerment of Marginalised Communities through English Neeraj Agnihotra and Vinita Chawdhry | 209 |
| Role of L1 (Assamese) in the Acquisition of English as L2: A Case of Secondary School Students of Assam Ataur Rahman | 214 |
| Identifying and Educating Learners with Language Learning Disabilities: Advocating Inclusion through Teacher Education Farida Raj and Santosh Mahapatra | 223 |
| Parent Participation in Language Education Priscilla Yelamanchi | 229 |
| The Right to Education and Overcoming the Language Barrier through Community Outreach: A Case Study (in progress) Grace Jacob | 233 |
| Access and Diversity: Why English Language Teachers Need to Embrace Both Michael Joseph and Esther Ramani | 239 |
| Contributors | 246 |

Foreword

Alison Barrett, Assistant Director, English Partnerships, British Council, India

India's incredible diversity attracted me in my 20s and attracts me still, nearly 20 years later. I can now name my favourite dishes from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and Delhi; can explain different festivals to my children, and not only can I recognise many of India's 22 official languages, but I can also identify Tamil-accented Hindi! The fact that multilingualism is the norm in India is no less amazing to me now than when I first arrived.

Even though the majority of Indians use a number of different languages, English still eludes a large percentage of the population, and in particular the majority of the 288 million children studying English at India's government schools. English in India is increasingly valued as a language that provides access to social mobility and empowerment, economic success and educational opportunity. The need for teachers to be able to teach English effectively within this multilingual context, and for teacher educators to support them in doing this, is a goal set by the National Curriculum Framework and the recent Teacher Education Mission. It is essential that language does not become a barrier to the achievement of learning outcomes. The British Council works in partnership with the public and private sector to provide professional development opportunities, such as the annual Hyderabad Teacher Educators' Conference co-hosted with the English and Foreign Languages University, which contributes to this goal.

Linguistic diversity is not a challenge, but an opportunity. This publication contains a huge range of examples of how this is being successfully harnessed. Priyali Ghosh's paper, *Brave New World: English and the Global Indian*, examines a number of issues around diversity and how Indians relate to language in a globalised scenario. Adrian Holliday's paper, *Authenticity, Communities and Hidden Potentials*, talks about 'linguaculture' – the small connections between language and culture which can be carried from one language to another and which enable students to stamp their identities on English. The opportunities afforded by English are expressed throughout the book: in terms of individual growth and advancement, socio-economic development on a national and international scale, and in the form of enhanced opportunities for marginalised children and communities through accessing education and knowledge in forms that are appropriate to their needs, so that they can fulfil their potential.

Linguistic diversity can also be seen as negative: more trouble, **more** work, more effort, rather than just more. And it is not the only form of diversity that a teacher is faced with every day. Embracing diversity in the class and training room involves understanding the nature of the similarities and differences among individuals. Once the nature of the diversity is understood, strategies can be employed to create learning environments that value the range of differences. Believing in their value and co-ordinating learning activities in such a way that diverse learners can access learning activities best suited to their needs, levels, gender, desires and socio-economic/socio-cultural backgrounds can lead to greater learning and a more understanding society.

Diversity is one of the five core values of the British Council and we are committed to valuing, embracing and harnessing diversity. It informs our internal working practices, and it guides us in our

work with partners, teacher educators, teachers and learners. Last year we published a volume of case studies that highlight how we support English language learners with special needs across our network of 80 teaching centres globally. In India, Rachna Khosla's story about how lost she felt when she found out she had a visually impaired learner in her English classroom won our national What's Your Story? competition. Her winning entry described how she sought guidance and support from a range of places and was able to provide a secure and safe learning environment for her student and help him excel as a result. Her commitment to his learning led her on a path of professional development that was mutually beneficial not only for the student, but for all the other learners in her classroom, the other English teachers in her school, and was professionally rewarding for her too.

As part of a teacher education project in Delhi we were able to partner the Blind School to get our teacher training materials translated into Braille and conduct training for visually impaired teachers with an expert from Mumbai. In all our teacher education programmes we address issues of social inclusion, promoting collaborative and peer learning approaches in our training sessions and challenging teachers' assumptions about their students' potential to understand and grasp English. Illiteracy, or a lack of English, is not an indicator of general competence. A child in a rural school or from a poor family has as much potential as one from an urban or a wealthy one. And all children have the right to access quality English language teaching and learning.

Valuing and embracing diversity will help erode exclusive practices in schools and classrooms. We hope that this selection of papers from the 2013 conference will help to promote discussion around these questions:

- How can English language teacher educators provide relevant and appropriate resources and training for diverse groups of teachers so that they can promote inclusive practices in their classrooms and their schools?
- How can we ensure that teachers have the appropriate skills, knowledge and depth of understanding of inclusive practices to ensure that no child in their own classroom is excluded?
- How can we ensure that English, or any language for that matter, is not a barrier to inclusion? And conversely, how is English a potential tool for social inclusion?

We encourage you to use these papers to enrich your own understanding of what diversity means, to use them as a stimulus when you train other teachers or in discussions with your peers at cluster resource-centre meetings perhaps, or during in-service training sessions. The British Council is proud to contribute to this debate, learn from your experiences and share them more widely with others.

Introduction

English in diversity

Paul Gunashekar, Professor, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

The evidence suggests that English is now the dominant voice in international politics, banking, the press, the news agencies, advertising, broadcasting, the recording industry, motion pictures, travel, science and technology, knowledge management, and communications. No other language has achieved such a widespread profile – or is likely to, in the foreseeable future. (Crystal 1999)

There were two related developments just days before the third Teacher Educators Conference began. On 5 March, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) took three significant decisions:

- one, providing added weight to English in the prestigious Civil Services Examinations starting later this year, that is, marks obtained in English would have a distinct bearing on the merit list
- two, setting down the condition that there should be at least 25 candidates formally declaring their intention to take the examinations in a regional language; and
- three, those candidates who choose to write the examinations in a regional language should have graduated in that language.

On 15 March, when the proposed changes were tabled in Parliament, there was uproar. Cutting across party lines, the members of the Lok Sabha roundly criticised the changes, with the result that the Union government decided to put the proposed measures on hold. It is assumed that UPSC proposed the changes in support of their belief in the now familiar diction *English for Development*. Parliament, however, saw the changes as an elitist conspiracy to disadvantage rural candidates, whose English, members claimed, was not good enough to compete against the privileged English-speaking urban candidates. A member exclaimed: 'Desh phir ghulam na hoga!' (India will not be enslaved again!)

In a BBC-OUP lecture at the English Speaking Union in 1996, Mark Tully said: '... I would suggest that the golden rule is don't oversell English. It is in the interests of English that it reaches an accommodation with those Indians who at present regard it with the deepest suspicion, those who are not members of the elite club.' There is a risk in discussing issues related to English for development vis-à-vis diversity and the implications for the training classroom when English, in some quarters at least, continues to be regarded as an instrument of linguistic imperialism and social intimidation. Experience and propriety therefore suggest that the link between English and development be emphasised in a muted voice: there is clearly a correlation between an acknowledged proficiency in English and socio-economic empowerment.

If English is the acknowledged gateway to modern scientific knowledge, accelerated economic growth and upward social mobility, there is a strong argument in favour of English and English education being the instrument of change and development for children from the marginalised and underprivileged segments of Indian society. It also accounts for the socio-political pressure that has led to English being introduced as a subject of study from the earliest levels in primary school in most Indian states. Critics of this move, however, have been quick to point out that deliberate prominence being accorded to English in school education would only alienate Indian children from their cultural roots and reduce their esteem for their own languages, which in turn would lead to cultural atrophy. This is a throwback to the post-Independence distrust of retaining English in school and college education; the Report of the University Education Commission of India (1948–49) stated: ‘The use of English as such divides the people into two nations, the few who govern and the many who are governed, the one unable to talk the language of the other, and mutually incomprehending. This is a negation of democracy.’ While this debate continues to rage, we need to remind ourselves of a home truth: the instrumental, the regulative, the interpersonal and the imaginative functions that English performs (Kachru 1996) are all located in multiple layers of diversity. To avoid falling into the monolingual trap, the instrumental function (that is, the use of English as a medium of learning at various stages in the educational system) in particular should be seen to be performed in multilingual and multicultural settings. When the settings are acknowledged and accepted, learners, teachers and teacher educators can be persuaded to regard English not merely as a utilitarian acquisition but as a major contributor to personal development and as an invaluable tool for understanding India’s pluralistic society. In a recent lecture, Kumaravadivelu made this interesting comment:

... one’s cultural growth should be rooted in one’s own cultural traditions but must also be enriched by an ability and willingness to learn not only about other cultures but also from other cultures. Learning about other cultures merely leads us to cultural literacy. It is learning from other cultures that will lead us to cultural liberty.

The classroom can then be exploited to promote the concept of language education in diversity. All stakeholders will gradually recognise the significance of using English to develop a mutual respect for diverse religious and value systems, and varied cultural and linguistic traditions. One of the beneficiaries of this recognition will be materials developers. They will be able to emphasise overtly the principle of liberality through texts and tasks that are built on the knowledge and experience that learners bring with them in a multilingual and multicultural context. Consequently, classroom transactions will be used as opportunities for personalisation, which in turn will lead to genuine empowerment.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF 2005) stresses this link between personalisation and empowerment:

- A language course should give prominence to the knowledge that learners bring to the classroom, that is, everyday knowledge, and its relevance to school knowledge that is developed in an educational setting. This means that the teacher educator’s job includes helping the teacher to modify, extend, or elaborate the schemata that learners bring with them.
- Learners should develop a sense of self-worth. They need to experience acceptance, regardless of what language they speak, what religious convictions they have, and which gender, class, caste, or ethnic group they belong to.

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009 (NCFTE 2009), while corroborating the above curricular aims, makes a strong plea for inclusive education so that it leads to equitable and sustainable development:

- Teacher education institutions need to reframe their programmes to include the concerns of children with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.
- Teachers should be equipped in teacher education programmes to help overcome problems of social deprivation and work towards constitutionally mandated goals of equity and social justice.
- Inclusive education implies a philosophical and ideological position as well as appropriate arrangement of institutional facilities and processes. The aim is to create a truly integrated school setting through the development of reflective teachers with positive values as well as effective skills for the craft of teaching.

The third International Teacher Educators Conference that we organised in Hyderabad In March 2013 sought to address a pressing policy issue for the government of India consequent upon the adoption of the Right to Education Act 2009: the need to introduce inclusive classroom practices and the elimination of restrictive and discriminatory classroom practices. As the NCF 2005 says, 'Schools need to be centres that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently abled, children from marginalised sections, and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit from this critical area of education.' (NCF 2005: 85).

Since every classroom is a constituency of diverse individuals, English language teachers and teacher educators need to be empowered to manage diversity and enthused to celebrate diversity.

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Preface

Philip Powell-Davies, Education and Social Development Consultant, and Academic Lead for the TEC 13 Conference

The original idea to bring together ELT professionals to explore the role of teacher educators in the teaching-learning process stems from the shared interests and partnership of the British Council and The English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad. This, in turn, is a recognition of the importance of the teacher educators' role in positively influencing teaching practice in the classroom and helping to improve students' learning.

One of the most pressing policy issues facing governments of many other countries at the present time is classroom exclusion and the introduction of inclusive practices. Every classroom and training room is a collection of diverse individuals and the 2013 International Teacher Educators Conference – 'English Language Teacher Education in a Diverse Environment', held in Hyderabad, was designed to explore this from a variety of perspectives. Teachers and teacher educators need to be aware of how to make effective use of the differences and similarities between students in order to create a flexible enabling environment in the classroom. They also need appropriate training opportunities throughout their careers to develop the skills to make this possible.

The conference provided the opportunity to exchange views and insights, problems and practices, and explore the rich and diverse linguistic tradition of India and other countries, which is all too often ignored in the English classroom. The challenges facing teachers in both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes were also addressed. The conference celebrated the tremendous diversity of approaches to teaching and learning available to educators and teacher educators drawn from experience in Europe, South Asia, Africa, East Asia, the Middle East and North America.

Three principal themes were explored at the conference:

- ***The institutional environment – approaches to English language teaching and English language teacher education***
 - Multilingual approaches for teachers
 - Multigrade classrooms for teachers
 - Multilevel classrooms within the same grade
 - Individuated learning for teachers
 - Special needs language education and teacher education
 - Access to resources in the language classroom
 - Infrastructure as a learning tool.

- ***The socio-economic environment – English for development***

- English and economic development
- English skills for employability
- Skills for the 21st century
- Developing global citizens
- Marginalised communities.

- ***The home environment – issues in the home/school language switch***

- Role of the home language in language education
- Parent participation in language education
- The community as a resource
- Linguistic priorities among minority language groups.

This collection of papers is about many things: it is about the challenges of teaching and learning English in complex environments and attempting to be inclusive and effective; it is about the huge range of opportunities that accrue from the adoption of inclusive practices in terms of social and economic development for nations, institutions and individuals. A common concern of all the contributors is to put the individual at the centre of their arguments and examine the issues from the perspectives of access, quality and capacity, as well as professional development, relevance and impact.

The relationship between the individual and society is also explored throughout the book in relation to plurilingualism (at the level of the individual) and multilingualism (at the societal level). One of the challenges for the reader is to assess whether we are seeing a greater use of diverse languages by people in their education and everyday interactions or are more people using English as a lingua franca?

We can see that there are strong economic arguments for learning English linked to future employment opportunities as the internationalisation of interconnected economies is not a distant possibility but a daily reality. This publication also draws attention to some of the wider issues around educating young people and the value of learning languages to promote intercultural dialogue, social equity and the development of greater tolerance. The benefits of being able to communicate in foreign languages go beyond the development of linguistic competence. Language learning is an essential component in preparing young people for life and in developing responsible and informed citizens, and this is especially true of English at the present time. This has a huge range of implications for young people's opportunities and career choices. One thing that can be guaranteed is that patterns of global competitiveness will develop and shift rapidly, and the acquisition of languages will become an important part of a population's readiness for national, regional and global labour markets. Several contributors highlight the potential for English language teaching to develop intercultural and soft skills in young people. Language learning clearly has the potential to promote attitudes which encourage curiosity about other cultures, alongside other subjects in the curriculum.

The contributors inhabit a spectrum of cultures and represent very different horizons of thought. They occupy a wide range of social positions – academics, teachers, students, managers, trainers, researchers, policy makers. They have been asked to present their views and expand our understanding of a range of areas because of the quality of their experience and the insights they can bring to bear.

The papers presented here have at least three qualities in common. First, the perspectives they explore are in some ways subversive, in the sense that they turn a situation around and look at it from another angle, and assess what effect it has on people. As a result of this, the papers share a second concern with the exploration of how individuals access and use languages, and for what purposes. Several of the contributors consider the negative impact that policy decisions around the teaching and learning of language can have on individuals and communities, particularly in the context of an increasingly globalised world economy. As such, the intention of many of the contributors is not to outline a smooth, faultless landscape of economic progress, participation and development which opens up to us once we are confident users of English, but to examine how individuals can be both positively and negatively affected and how this relates to the fabric of the society in which they live. And in this context, we need to consider the disputed role that a wider understanding and use of English can play in enhancing the competitiveness of individuals and economies; combating or exacerbating social exclusion; opening up cultural and generational gaps in societies; creating jobs; facilitating international connections; and in repositioning (positively and negatively) other minority languages. Finally, the ideas presented here are radical in the sense that the contributors go to the root of the questions they are exploring.

The contributions to this book have been classified into four parts:

The **Overview** presents three papers which address broad issues that cut across all the themes of the conference as a whole, including issues of culture, language, authenticity, student autonomy, and the implications for designing and implementing appropriate English language teacher education programmes. Adrian Holliday explores issues of 'linguaculture' – the connections between language and culture which can be carried from one language to another and which enable students to stamp their identities on English. The interplay of linguistic skills and awareness of cultural competences may well help learners achieve more effective international communication. R. Amritavalli examines issues of student autonomy and what constitutes comprehensibility before picking out the implications for teacher education. Martin Wedell concludes that the main features of ELT contexts must be the starting point for developing teacher education curricula so that they can be seen as relevant by trainee teachers, and positively affect what they do in actual English classrooms

Theme one discusses different aspects of the institutional environment for teacher education. Geetha Durairajan provides a broad survey of perceptions of preferred languages in Indian classrooms and the power play that is often at work under the surface. Several contributors present case studies from specific contexts and exemplify in the process many important issues related to context and appropriacy. Geeta Sharma and Ranganayaki Srinivas outline a programme in scheduled areas of Gujarat; Lina Mukhopadhyay deals with a study of pre-service German teachers of English; Neha Aggarwal reports on a small-scale study which puts the teacher centre-stage as a co-learner through the use of multiple languages in the classroom; Wisdom Jude et al. explore a different perspective, of the interplay of resources and teachers' attitudes in Nigeria. Innovations in multilingual and multilevel classrooms, whether in customisation of materials, tasks and strategies adopted by teachers and teacher educators and how they can foster a positive learning environment, are explored in several papers: Nivedita Bedadur examines the pedagogical implications of multilingualism to develop teacher capacity in English and the challenge that the vast canvas of regional languages and dialectic variations in India poses; Kirti Kapur asserts that importance lies in recognising that a multilevel class is a cultural and linguistic resource that can be used to teach L2 and should be exploited to facilitate participation and encourage language use. Hitesh Chandra Bhakat contends that the efficacy of online courses in enhancing the continuous professional development of teachers requires more attention, based on his own personal learning experience. Ravindra Tasildar pulls our focus back to consider the principles upon which teachers are being trained in one state in India and analyses what teacher preparation courses are actually offering, uncovering several deficiencies in the process but also

making clear recommendations for improvement. What constitutes an inspirational teacher is considered by Martin Lamb using data gathered in Indonesia and China. He uses this to think about the wider implications for other contexts and pulls together many of the issues explored in detail in other papers. Penny Ur takes a different perspective, and discusses how language teachers approach and make use of research to inform their professional practice. She focuses on this from the teacher's perspective and considers what can improve the chances of a teacher making use of research and what can block it. Concluding this section and opening out the discussion to consider issues of assessment of teacher competences and the evaluation of programmes, Richard Rossner and Richard Kiely, respectively, draw our attention to issues of effective practice and the management of change in the education system. In doing so they bring us back to the importance of considering context and practice.

Theme two explores the socio-economic environment and covers a wide range of topics which take us beyond the classroom to consider broader issues. The skills necessary to be competitive in the world of globalised business are an interest of several contributors. Manique Gunsekera highlights the needs of employers and links these to the knowledge and use of language in which young people need to be proficient. Rama Gautam and Nikhil Bhatt open out the discussion beyond language skills to consider other soft skills that can be developed through language. The way in which underprivileged groups are disadvantaged in this sphere is made clear in Rajashree Pande and Moiz Raja Shaikh's paper. However, their case study is positive in its emphasis on the kind of training that can produce good results for students from these groups. Similarly, the needs and opportunities of developing programmes of support for both children and parents of the seasonally migrant labour community are analysed in Rekiuddin Ahmed and Debasish Mohapatra's case study. Interestingly, they also underscore the importance of the home environment in working towards a positive impact and consequently foreshadow some of the debates explored in Theme three. The interlocking concepts of the global citizen and the international dimension are analysed by several writers. Priyali Ghosh in her paper, and Jagtar Chowla and Nidh Nema in their paper, cover similar ground from different perspectives on the global readiness of Indians as seen from the point of view of language skills and the relationship of students to the language. Further insights about cross-cultural communication are made by Raees Unnisa and Anjana Tiwari in the context of online collaboration and 'globalised classrooms'. The cultural dimension remains at the forefront of Padmini Shankar's contribution and reaffirms the contention that culturally familiar content not only offers linguistic and emotional skills gains but also makes L2 learning personally meaningful for children.

It is in **Theme three** that we examine the home environment and the link between home and school. Pamela Mackenzie looks at the issues around multilingualism, social context, mother-tongue usage and educational outcomes by examining cases from Bangladesh and India. She reminds us that we ignore the use of the mother tongue at our peril and that the technical challenges of implementing the mother tongue in the language classroom are less significant than securing the awareness and commitment of planners and policy makers. The importance of L1 in L2 acquisition is picked up by Aatur Rahman in his study of tribal groups, and in Sadananda Meher's paper, which examines bilingualism and multilingualism in West Odisha through a series of experiments on reading comprehension. Grace Jacob also examines this idea but from the perspective of a very personal study of a single child struggling to overcome both the language and social barriers he faces in the school environment; the need for out-of-school interventions to support such children is clearly articulated. The same can be said of Priscilla Yelamanchi's focus on the home environment and the significance of parental participation in language education. She advocates parental involvement at every level of a child's education in order to stay informed of academic progress. A number of core concepts are explored by our remaining contributors, including access and diversity (Esther Ramani and Michael Joseph); inclusiveness, especially for special-needs provision (Santosh Mahapatra and Farida Raj); and the empowerment of marginalised communities through English (Vinita Chawdhry and Neeraj

Agnihotri). These issues are considered from both positive and negative viewpoints, as challenges and opportunities, with consequent problems and solutions. They examine the social and educational consequences of neglecting indigenous languages and restricting access to English-medium education to privileged minorities. The contention that the role of English in the education system must be considered holistically, together with the national language and other indigenous languages, and that access to the foreign language needs to be equitable, is supported through data from case studies presented by these authors. The acquisition of English and other 'prestige' languages is not an issue limited to a few communities, groups, or countries. It affects every aspect of education systems worldwide and directly influences learning outcomes. And the enabling role of mother-tongue education needs to be considered in helping to achieve quality education and opportunities for a better life.

The range of perspectives that these papers encompass underpin the principles of the conference and develop them considerably in a number of directions. The reader is encouraged to consider the arguments made in the book from their own experience and assess the beneficial impacts of learning a global language like English. We hope that readers will find this book provocative, stimulating and a spur to continue the debates raised in the papers contained here. There is a need for more research and discussion to understand the nuances of many of these topics. Language seems to be a missing link in initiatives to improve access and standards of education attainment across the many countries represented in this book. The issue is not one of just providing more 'prestige' language education for the many, but of understanding that language can be both an enabler and a barrier. The papers in this collection develop the two sides of the argument clearly and advocate strategies to deal with both. Further evidence-based discussion will help to clarify issues and may well identify new barriers and enabling factors.

The British Council and the English and Foreign Languages University very much welcome your responses to this publication, which we hope will serve as an appropriate contribution to the on-going debate.

Overview

The teacher, the student, the planner and the policy maker: the importance of context, culture, language(s) and inclusion

Authenticity, Communities and Hidden Potentials

Adrian Holliday, *Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English and Language Studies, Canterbury Christ Church University*

Abstract

This paper explores what teachers need to know if they are fully to appreciate and to encourage the contribution of their students' existing experience in the learning of English. This contribution is based on what students already know about language and culture within their own communities. Focusing on what students bring with them in this way requires a reassessment of the meaning of 'authentic'. Authentic materials have often been defined as comprising un-simplified language from real situations. We need to redefine 'real' and 'authentic' as what is meaningful to the students, their lives and their communities. Teachers may need to leave behind the established notion of one-language-one-culture, and the idea that learning English means learning a new culture and leaving behind one's existing culture. Instead, they need to appreciate the deep connections between existing and new languages and existing and new cultural realities. A core concept is that of 'linguaculture' – small connections between language and culture which can be carried from one language to another and which enable students to stamp their identities on English.

In many ways this paper states the obvious. It describes what we can see around us in the everyday manner in which language is used creatively in a multiplicity of ways and circumstances – by people who are naturally intelligent and accomplished users of language within their own communities. However, we all continuously need to have these truths pointed out to us: they can so easily be missed as we look through the sometimes confining formal structures of our lives and professions.

1. New understandings

The past 15 years have revealed new understandings in ELT. There has been an appreciation of how, in a globalised world, English can no longer be associated simplistically with Anglo-Saxon origins (e.g. Saraceni 2010). A critical cosmopolitan sociology, which looks at how the world fits together rather than how it is divided, has been focusing on cultural realities which have long been unrecognised by a Western establishment (e.g. Delanty 2006). New research, which looks at the deeper meanings of everyday life, has shown us rich and creative modes of student learning which, out of the sight of teachers, have also been unrecognised by established professional practices. Critical applied linguistics has revealed the politics of so-called native-speaker models. New ideas in intercultural communication look differently at the relationship between English and culture (Kumaravadivelu 2007). In India, especially, we can begin to realise the immense potential of multicultural and multilingual possibilities.

This is not new. It has been argued that a cosmopolitan world existed across a broad network of local communities long before European colonialism and nationalism divided the world with modernist boundaries (e.g. Canagarajah 1999a; Rajagopalan 1999a, b). It follows that there have always been resilient local communities from which students can bring rich cultural and linguistic resources to the learning of new languages – and more recently to the learning of English. This contribution has, however, been denied by a native-speakerist hegemony which has insisted that English can only be learnt effectively from so-called native-speaker models through the exclusion of other languages (Phillipson 1992: 185). It has also been denied by an insistence on the necessity of native-speaker learning modes which have been carried through to current methodology since the advent of particular behaviourist régimes in audiolingualism (Holliday 2005: 45ff).

The outcome has been a false view that the only appropriate English content and methodology is that which conforms to a native-speaker model. This view ignores the possibility that English can operate perfectly well in any cultural milieu where it is used (Saraceni 2010). An example of English being associated with other cultural realities is from Nigeria. In a highly praised novel written in English we see the greeting, 'Did you come out well this morning?' (Adichie 2007: 423). It is grammatically correct and has a poetic ring to it. In a recent seminar with teachers in Mexico, I asked them to think of greetings which could be translated from local Mexican Spanish to English, and similar sorts of expression emerged. These would be highly meaningful to their students, and such expressions can often travel further. Students need to know that all languages contain borrowings from elsewhere that have, over the years, caught on and become normal parts of the language. How often do we inhibit our students' enthusiasm for English by denying them the possibility of bringing their own community expressions into English?

2. Students acting creatively by themselves

There is a range of critical ethnographic research which observes a very different world of learning. It reveals what students do with new language out of sight of their teachers. Sri Lankan secondary-school students write their own references to local and Western cultural realities into the margins of their American textbooks, and recast characters in so-called authentic American texts as Tamil film stars (Canagarajah 1999b: 88–90). University students in Kuwait engage in sophisticated play with English among their friends (Kamal 2012). Secondary- and primary-school students across China say they want to communicate with the world about identity (Gong 2010). UK inner-London secondary-school students from a variety of language backgrounds play with each other's languages and expressions (Rampton 2011). Mexican university students talk about how they stamp their identity on English by using it to express post-colonial sentiments (Clemente and Higgins 2008). The teachers of Taiwanese students in British university study-skills classes follow the cultural stereotype and think they lack autonomy. In fact, they bypass their teachers and practise autonomy to get what they need outside the classroom (Holliday 2005: 94, citing Chang). Hong Kong secondary-school students are thought by their teachers to be unable to carry out communicative activities because of their 'Confucian culture'. However, they show extensive evidence of communicative engagement with English when observed from the back of the class, often in resistance to their teachers (Holliday 2005: 97–8, citing Tong).

If these cases are surprising or unexpected it is because they represent an unrecognised autonomy. They are all cases of students doing things by themselves which our less creative professionalism tells us they lack the autonomy to do. Our restricted views are fed by false stereotypes about non-Western students – telling us that they cannot do this or that because of their culture (Kumaravadivelu 2003). If, on the other hand, we recognise their natural autonomy, which they bring from the hurly burly of their daily lives outside the classroom, we can see that they have the potential to make up their own minds about what is meaningful to them, and that they already have considerable communicative skill in

sorting out how to use language in different settings. This then relates to a very old but often forgotten definition of authenticity as what the students themselves find meaningful.

I think it is probably better to consider authenticity not as a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which is bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver. Authenticity in this view is a function of the interaction between the reader/hearer and the text, which incorporates the intentions of the writer/speaker. We do not recognise authenticity as something there waiting to be noticed, we realise it in the act of interpretation (Widdowson 1979: 165). The implication here is that it is not necessarily so-called native-speaker un-simplified texts which are authentic, but texts which are meaningful to the students – authentic to their lives. The question we therefore need to ask is what it is in their lives to which authentic texts need to relate.

3. Complexity of community

To answer this question, it is important to move away from the traditional one-culture-one language model and consider instead a more complex picture of culture. A social-action model of culture shows us a creative dialogue between individuals and the structures of their societies. While different societies and communities do have specific contexts and particular features that make us, our cultural practices and our languages different, they do not necessarily prevent individuals from moving creatively beyond their boundaries. Our daily manipulation of social rules, in our on-going struggle to be ourselves and succeed in our agendas is something we share across nations and communities. There is a broad and significant domain of underlying universal cultural processes which enables all of us to read and engage creatively with culture and language, wherever we find it. This is evidenced by the way in which we can read each other's literatures. One does not have to go to a foreign country or into a foreign language to find unfamiliar behaviour and expression. We find this in the family next door; and young people face it every day as they engage with the diverse worlds of family, school, classrooms, sports groups and so on. We can also make huge sense of other cultural realities if we open our minds to them (Holliday 2013).

There are several important implications here. Underlying universal cultural processes give language learners the potential to apply the experience of how language and culture operate in their own communities to new language. This enables them to stamp their own cultural identity on the language. However, for them to be motivated to do this, the content with which they are presented has to be sufficiently meaningful to resonate with and activate this experience. It is this authentic relationship, between where they come from and new domains, which encourages language learners to be cosmopolitan and to claim the world through new language experience.

It is hard to stop young people from learning creatively. This learning can, however, be inhibited or diverted into less productive areas by powerful and popular ways of thinking about things in everyday life and within the ELT profession. These ways of thinking seduce us with the false, modernist certainty that relationships between language, culture and types of speakers are fixed, neat and measurable. For this reason, teachers everywhere, even in India, are still telling their students that the only correct forms of English are British or American and that to learn them they have somehow to leave behind the cultural realities of their communities. Our major task is to overturn these ways of thinking and move on to a new paradigm (Kumaravadivelu 2012). Because these discourses have pushed the rich contribution of students and their communities to the margins, it is from the margins that we must learn (Stuart Hall 1991).

4. Linguaculture

The discussion so far implies a complex relationship between language and culture. On the one hand, I and others are claiming that English does not have any particular home and that it can attach itself to any set of cultural realities. On the other hand, it would be a mistake that languages do not carry a sense of culture with them. They cannot be empty vessels waiting to be filled. A solution to this problem may well be in Karen Risager's concept of linguaculture, which she explains in the following way:

When I, as a Dane, move around the world, I tend to build on my Danish linguaculture, when I speak English, French or German. I therefore contribute to the flow of Danish linguaculture across languages'. (Risager 2011: 110).

What is significant in this description is that we see something small and personal about the relationship between language and culture. There is a strong sense that, while the lingua- in linguaculture suggests the bond between language and culture, it is individual people who carry culture into language rather than vice versa. This means that language learners can indeed carry their linguacultures from their existing communities and languages into English.

5. What teachers need to do and know

Teachers therefore need to know how to inspire and help their students to research and externalise their existing linguacultural experience so that they can bring it meaningfully to English. They also have to instil in their students the ability to recognise and avoid the restrictive popular ways of thinking about culture, language and learning. Iranian primary-level textbook writers attempt to catch their pupils' imagination in this respect with stories about a turtle that transcends cultural boundaries with her linguaculture:

Turtles are patient and curious, they take their time in water and land, they never worry about where to stay or where to rest because they walk with their homes on their backs! I feel our memories are like their homes on their backs – the memories we carry to wherever we go. The turtle in our stories travels to different places, she talks to different people, she tells us about other people's stories, and she tells her own stories that are usually my/our stories too!' (Ghahremani Ghajar 2009: 1).

It is this possibility that other people's stories can also be ours that is at the core of what makes content authentic. Teachers need to know the value of connecting with their students' stories. They need to know how to appreciate and manage the knowledge and experience which their students bring to the classroom, and how to allow space for authentic learning. They need to help their students bring their stories into English, and to help them connect the stories in their textbooks with their own stories.

Being able to understand the importance of, and to allow space for, the students' stories, and to admit them into English is at the centre of culture-neutral communicative principles (Holliday 2005: 143). We are already familiar with the first principle – to treat language as communication. The second principle is to capitalise upon, to make maximum use of the students' existing communicative competence, which resides in their communities and its languages. The third principle is to communicate with local agencies, with the things that are going on in students' communities and their languages.

Apart from the learning and teaching of language, there also needs to be some background content about the politics of English and wariness of the restrictive ways of thinking about language and culture. Students need to know basic sociolinguistics, not only of English, but also of how language

operates in society generally, so that links between the workings of English and home languages can be understood better.

This approach to English and culture presents unavoidable challenges. There is an opening up of creative possibilities which problematises traditional English teacher knowledge and professionalism and presents a fine balance between regulation and messiness.

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Learner Autonomy in Text Choice: Authenticity, Length and Comprehensibility

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Abstract

Second-language teaching must promote in the learner the complex and unconscious knowledge that allows the automatic use of everyday language, as in L1. Learner autonomy in the choice of texts in the classroom is a feasible and desirable way of providing a guided space for individual learning. It allows for 'authenticity' in learning materials, as against mere 'genuineness' (a distinction made by Widdowson 1979). Learners, especially from disadvantaged groups, are best able to define what is authentic for them. Their choices, which may appear counterintuitive to others, may include poetry, or selections from prescribed texts. The emergent features of particular interest in learner-chosen texts are length and comprehensibility. Learners choose language presented in texts that make sense or have meaning; they may initially use a visual (pictorial) route into the text. They choose 'encompassable' texts, which they can read in their entirety within their span of interest; unlike 'taught' texts that provide work for the class over an extended period. Learners also set their own criteria of adequacy for comprehension. Comprehensibility is not text-inherent, but a relation between learner, text, and a criterion of adequacy (Prabhu 1987).

1. Introduction

I shall discuss some features of the texts chosen by learners from marginalised sections struggling to learn English, and point out how they may be at variance from the teaching texts typically used in our classrooms. An understanding of this gap should reduce the routinised play-acting at learning that substitutes for true learning. First, let me spell out the assumptions that contextualise the discussion:

Successful L2 learning is autonomous language learning

Success in second-language learning appears to correlate with two sets of variables vested in the learner: 'motivation and attitude' and 'unconscious acquisition'. In India, generations of successful learners of English have been remarkable for their autonomy. Earlier generations had habits of reading extensively. Subsequent generations have had access to visual/aural media, and film. A university teacher now in his early 30s recalls he read comic books to compensate for the absence of English in his non-urban school. Many such stories lie beneath the surface of successful English use today.

Systemic erosion of learner autonomy in new learners

Conversely, the stories of failure are many. Disadvantaged learners who need ‘the dominant standard language’ for empowerment may equate learning English with measuring up to the demands of an impersonal system of examination and certification. Overawed and alienated as they are, their lack of learning appears to reflect problems in motivation and attitude. These are factors entirely irrelevant to the acquisition of language in infancy and childhood. If second-language learning is to result in a creative, self-regulating system similar to that attained by child language acquisition, it must engage the same mental mechanisms. Its failure cannot be explained away by invoking factors that do not proceed from first principles of language acquisition in childhood. It follows that if second-language learners are demotivated and alienated, these factors need to be systemically addressed.

Learner autonomy in the choice of classroom texts

Kumaradas (1993) offers an insight into how to re-connect the second language to the learner’s world, drawing on the thinking of Ivan Illich and Paolo Freire. She suggests that learners be allowed to bring to the classroom their own texts for language learning. If this step is taken, learner autonomy becomes a curricular given, not an extra-curricular choice. Authenticity is restored to the system by reconnecting what is read in class to the learner’s own world. The choice of input at level $i+1$ by the learner, who is at level i (Krashen 1985), now follows automatically; with the additional provision of space for useful intervention by the teacher and peers in the process of language growth in the mind: a guided space for individual learning, or a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in the sense of Vygotsky (1978).

2. A project in a non-formal school: teaching and research agendas

The features of learner-chosen texts that I discuss here emerged from a project (Amritavalli 2007) that followed from these ideas, undertaken at a non-formal school for girls who were domestic workers. There were in this situation obvious limitations of the time available for learning (the school functioned for three hours a day), and learner-mobility (‘drop-out’), as learners’ families were often part of an itinerant workforce. It was imperative that these learners ‘learned to learn’, rather than learning specific bits of knowledge. Therefore, the somewhat unfashionable goal of promoting reading ability appeared to be the most appropriate. The project was cast in the mould of action-research. The expectations for research were that learner autonomy would be reflected in the learner’s recognition of her own ZPD or $i+1$ level, i.e. in the choice of the texts she read. Studying the paths taken by individual learners in text choice could help us better understand these notions.

3. Syllabus expectations and learner abilities

I describe here my work with a subgroup of three learners, who the school management had identified as ready to take the class VII examination, then a public examination. The teaching time I had with them was once a week, for an hour. I divided my time in class equally between the prescribed textbook on the one hand, and teacher-chosen materials on the other: newspapers, stories, reading cards from science projects, or packaging material (for toothpaste, soap, etc.) that I took to class.

After a few weeks of this interaction before and after the summer holidays, the school conducted an internal sessional examination. The errors in the written answers were a disappointment to the management. To me it had become obvious that the students’ reading ability was not up to the expectations of the prose lessons in the prescribed textbook for class VII, which discussed topics such as crocodiles, fingerprints and hovercraft. The language and thought content of these texts argued that the students should deal with comparable texts in newspaper supplements for young readers, such as *The Hindu’s* ‘Young World’, which I had duly taken to class. The problem was that they were only able to read phrases from this material. I list in Table 1 the phrases read by each student in the first two

sessions. Remember that half an hour was allowed each time for the students to look over the material and choose something from it that they wanted to read.

Table 1: Phrases read by students

| Student | Session in Week 1 | Session in Week 2 |
|---------|---|---|
| V.S | get up, get out, God | A. Shekhar, English, with more people going in for ..., in the news, Mahesh Menon |
| S.Y | postbox, woman in green, free, Colgate, The Saturday morning show | Summer-flowering trees, if all goes well, out of the mouths of babes, book talk |
| R. | summer | Siddharth, with love from dad, the first bank, do not chicken out, looking good, Kashmiri cooking |

The students were reading headlines (Kashmiri cooking, In the news) and authors' bylines (A. Shekhar). They were not reading texts or meaningful stretches of discourse, due to either a lack of confidence or a lack of ability. Similar problems in their reading were apparent in the way they interacted with the prescribed textbook. My impression was that an emphasis on accuracy had paralysed their reading: they read aloud slowly, word-by-word, rather than in sense groups, or silently. Their focus was more on understanding the content of the textbook than on the language. They were not sufficiently engaged with the language; they did not appear to struggle to make meaning (Prabhu 1987), but rather expected the teacher to read and paraphrase the text.

4. Teach the text, or continue with authentic material?

All this put me into a dilemma: what was the best way of continuing my interaction with these learners? Giving them newspapers or similar material to read did not appear to make the best use of my limited time with them. On the other hand, my teaching the textbook by paraphrasing it for them did not promote genuine reading or foster language acquisition in the students.

During the next session, therefore, I made them read the third paragraph of the lesson 'Crocodiles' on their own, and struggle to make meaning of it, after I had read out and explained the first two paragraphs. I thought it reasonable to expect that the students continue where I left off. We covered that one paragraph in half an hour. By the end, the students were sullen and rebellious, and I was at my wits' end.

The next week, on an impulse, I invited them to 'find something you want to read *from the textbook*.' In a half-hour, they collectively covered three times as much print as I had taught in the previous half-hour session. They began by leafing through the textbook (note that this task involved some rudimentary skimming and scanning). As I watched them find texts to read and listened to them read, and as we interacted further about these texts, I found myself for the first time confronting the questions:

- What did the students themselves perceive as learning English?
- What was authentic for these learners?

5. Authenticity from the learners' point of view

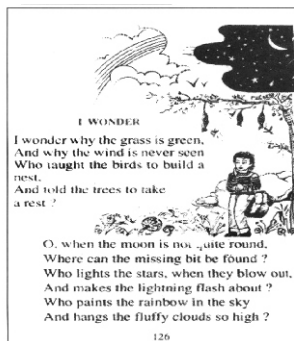
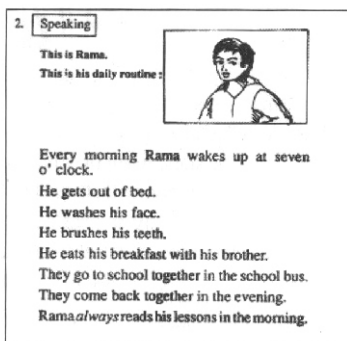
For learners whose mornings were spent doing chores as domestic helps, and evenings helping their families, the idea of reading for pleasure or for general knowledge could only seem an aimless activity. The newspaper supplements for young readers were as irrelevant to their lives as the packaging of goods they never bought, or the name boards of shops they never entered. Making their own choices of what to read from a source that needed to be read anyway for their certification – their textbook – met twin concerns: goal-focused and an immediate capacity or interest; and for the first time, the latter seemed to be adequate for the former.

I realised that a distinction between authenticity and genuineness, first made by Widdowson (1979), was very pertinent to my teaching. Widdowson points out that 'real' language may be genuine but not necessarily authentic. This is because authenticity is 'not a quality residing in instances of language but... a quality which is bestowed on them, created by the response of the receiver.' Learner-chosen instructional materials are authentic in this sense: they proceed from a 'response from the receiver' right from the beginning, in the very act of the choice of material.

The emergence of a picture book

After this weekly half-hour activity of choosing from the textbook their own texts to read had continued for a few weeks, I looked back at the texts that had been picked in this way, and put them together. A surprising fact emerged. Every selection was characterised by either dialogue, or pictures (black and white sketches, in this economically produced textbook distributed for free in state schools). It was as if the textbook had given birth to a new book, a children's book.

Figure 2: Students' selections



Visual appeal: a feature of 'encompassable' texts

What were the features of these learner-chosen texts? We have already mentioned the first: visual appeal. By that I do not mean glossy paper and colourful pictures, but the appearance of the text on the page. A full page of text – full paragraphs of prose, solidly filling up the page – must look daunting to the emerging reader. Where the lines are broken up, either by conversation, by convention (as in a letter with its various parts), or as in poetry, language occurs in chunks that the learner can conceive of as readable within her span of effort and attention. I call this 'encompassable' text. Its visual appearance is a clue to two other factors that make it reader-friendly: its length, and its comprehensibility. Pictures, even if they are sketches, intangibly add to text comprehensibility. Where pictures are accompanied by a line of text – a 'legend' – they promote retention of language in the mind.

A choice of poems

The second surprise was the early choice of poems. The textbook included well-known poems such as *The Swing* that I had not thought of teaching. The children turned out to be sensitive to the rhythm of the language; their reading the poem aloud was much more rhythmic than their reading of prose. More importantly, the language of poems encouraged a broader search for meaning equivalences in their own language than for single words, such as for the phrase 'Up in the air so blue', for which the students volunteered a meaning and discussed it. I must mention a parallel finding in research into children's reading choices in their first language. Hall and Coles (1999) remark that inner-city children, generally weak in reading, were (surprisingly) more likely to be reading poetry. Learners, then, are consistent in their choice of poems as 'encompassable' texts, whether they are inner-city British children, or marginalised children in India learning English as a second language.

'Encompassability': short texts, short sentences

This feature of poetry, of its being economical with words, was shared by some other parts of the textbook labelled 'Learning Words,' 'Doing Things,' 'Speaking,' and so on. These sections, titled *The Wonderful World; Mr Ramamurthy and Family; A Letter; Swimming and Diving; or Kindness to Animals*, had anecdotes and observations. I give below the word and sentence count for some of these texts chosen by the learners:

| | Text 1 | Text 2 | Text 3 | Text 4 | Text 5 | Text 6 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Words | 60 | 92 | 59 | 53 | 83 | 72 |
| Sentences | 10 | 12 | 06 | 13 | 10 | 07 |

The reader can easily see how short the texts and sentences were. One may wish to compare them with beginner readers' material meant for younger children. One must certainly compare them with the prose pieces that make up the core of the textbook. These are the lessons that both teacher and student see as having to be covered for the examination, on which comprehension questions are set and answers elicited or given, and on which the bulk of teaching time is expended. Perhaps then we shall begin to see why the system encourages the erosion of the learner's autonomy. When the distance to walk is a marathon, the novice walker can do little other than surrender, allowing himself to be simply picked up and transported to the finish line.

6. Comprehensibility

Finally, I would like to comment on the issue of comprehension and comprehensibility. It is now a truism that our system produces reading without comprehension, if that is a possible outcome at all of reading (we must distinguish reading from mere decoding). When we watch learners choose and read their own texts, we realise that comprehensibility is no more inherent to a text than authenticity is. Learner-chosen texts are not a priori more comprehensible than teacher choices, or the choices of syllabus designers and curriculum planners. The difference lies in the learner's option and ability to leave open what does not make immediate sense, if this is not judged relevant to the learner's immediate purposes. A moment's reflection will tell us that it is an essential part of learning to read by oneself. Let me first illustrate the point.

A slightly older learner in my project who had successfully completed Class X, passing the exam, was given the homework task of choosing something to read from a paperback, *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. He brought and read out this passage:

Every Day was Mother's Day – 1

Richard Burton, Lord Haldane (1836–1928), British War Secretary and Lord High Chancellor, wrote a letter to his mother every day for forty eight years. Beginning with the year 1877 when his father died and continuing until May 1925 when his mother passed on, at the age of 106 years and 6 weeks, Lord Haldane never missed writing to her – a single day.

I could see the appeal of this passage to this student, who was by nature conscientious and dutiful. When I took the book from him, I was surprised to find that there was a second paragraph to this item. It continued:

Every Day was Mother's Day – 2

This statesman and philosopher is the only British Cabinet member who was simultaneously a member of the German Cabinet for one day. The appointment was made by Kaiser Wilhelm II to enable Haldane to take part in one meeting of the German Cabinet of ministers.

Guided by his instinct of what he was capable of understanding and appreciating, this student had cropped the passage as admirably as, or perhaps better than, a seasoned editor. This act of the student allowed me to understand Prabhu's (1987: 58 and 66, n.14) observation that comprehensibility is not inherent to a text, but is a relation between the learner, the text, and a criterion of adequacy:

'The same sample of language can be comprehensible to the same learner at one level and for one purpose, and incomprehensible at another. Teaching is, therefore, primarily a matter of regulating the level of comprehension needed...'

When neither the text nor the criterion of adequacy of comprehension is within the learner's control, the learner surrenders all investment in learning.

7. Conclusion

These ideas from the project are shared in the hope that they will encourage other teachers and learners to see how they can intervene in the system to recover some autonomy for the student in the process of learning. We can no more hope for a single recommendation for promoting learner autonomy than we can hope for a universal syllabus for language teaching. But the sharing of these teaching stories may help us better understand the theoretical concepts we encounter, and better understand our learners and ourselves.

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Understanding our ELT Contexts: The Starting Point for Developing Appropriate ELTE Programme Goals, Content and Processes

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Abstract

The title of the conference 'English Language Teacher Education in a Diverse Environment' explicitly acknowledges that a uniform set of goals for English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) programmes is unlikely to be appropriate for the range of 'diverse environments' in which classroom English Language Teaching (ELT) takes place. Consequently, in order to provide ELTE programmes with environmentally appropriate goals, content weightings and teaching processes, teacher education curriculum planners need to understand the main features influencing the educational environments or contexts (used synonymously throughout this paper) into which they will be sending their novice teachers.

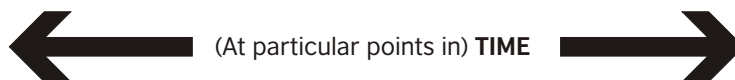
1. Understanding diverse classroom contexts/environments

Any educational context is a complex construct. In order to understand the main factors that might influence the classrooms in which particular groups of English teachers work, we need some kind of framework that will enable us to describe educational contexts in as systematic a manner as possible.

I suggest that any context can be described in terms of three main components. The first is again suggested by one interpretation of the conference title 'a diverse environment', which to me suggests a physical place. If one asks teachers to describe their working context, it is this physical place, their classroom or school that they usually refer to first. The second component of any educational context is both the people working and studying in a place, and also some of those (e.g. parents) in the community that surround it. Both places and people of course change over time, and so the third component to consider when describing any educational context is the point in chronological time at which we are describing it. A framework that can be used as the basis for building up a description of an educational context is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: A framework for describing visible and invisible features of an educational context (adapted from Wedell and Malderez 2013:17)

| Visible aspects of the context of PLACE | | Invisible aspects of the context of PLACE |
|--|--|--|
| Classroom | P E O P L E | Group dynamics |
| School/institution | | Institutional culture |
| Village/town/city | | Local attitudes |
| Region | | Regional educational culture |
| Country | | National educational culture and socio-political belief system |
| Part of the world | | Balances of power and philosophical tradition |



At the centre of any educational context (any of the diverse environments for which we might be preparing English teachers) we have people working and living in one or more layers of the visible place context at a point in time. Their experiences, how they understand education, teaching and learning and how they think it is appropriate to behave as learners, teachers, school heads, teacher trainers or educational administrators will have been influenced by features of both their visible, and their (equally real but invisible) contexts. I will try to illustrate what I mean in what follows.

Table 2 briefly illustrates some of the factors at different layers of the visible educational place context that may affect what happens in classrooms. (Many factors may of course be part of several layers.)

Table 2: Some visible contextual features at different layers of **PLACE**

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Classroom/school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● physical space ● number of learners ● access to materials/resources- ● level (primary, secondary) ● ownership (public-private) |
| Village-town-city/ region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● local geography and building design ● class size and institutional size ● ethnic and/or religious background of learners ● degree of multilingualism ● range of mother tongues ● socio-economic environment and funding available ● local roles of English |
| Country/part of the world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● geography and climate affecting building design and materials, e.g. how easily noise carries |

- proportion of age group attending school regularly
- school leaving ages
- gender balance in classrooms
- socio-economic situation affecting educational funding
- official goals for education and English
- English education policies: when learners start learning English/whether learning English is compulsory, importance of English exams within the education system

When one asks a teacher to describe their context they tend to first respond in terms of their classroom (e.g. number or level of learners/access to resources) or their school (e.g. its size, the resources it makes available, exams). These are all contextual factors that influence what a teacher feels it is possible or appropriate to do – but these classroom-school factors may in turn be influenced by whether the school is in a rural or urban area, or what region, country or part of the world it is in. Different parts of a country may vary socio-economically, ethnically, linguistically, religiously, in terms of how they view the role and relevance of English and how important they consider school-based English learning to be. Insofar as ELTE programmes do try to fit their goals to their environment, they tend to do so in terms of the most visible features of their context, for example:

- if large classes are the norm, teacher education may (if the trainees are fortunate) spend some time considering how this affects what it is possible to do in the classroom and ways to overcome the hurdles it poses
- if most learners (and their parents) in a particular region or part of a country belong to a particular ethnic group, teacher education may try to make trainees aware of any significant beliefs or expectations.

The second point introduces the idea that as well as visible aspects of context, for example ethnicity, there are also invisible aspects of all layers of context (beliefs and expectations) that can strongly influence what does and does not happen in classrooms. I turn to these next, beginning at the bottom of the right-hand column in Table 1 above.

At different points in time, different parts of the world have different degrees of power, defined here as the ability to control what happens and how it happens in their own, and/or others' environments. Changes in the balance of power are often very obvious, for example the relative power of the UK and India between the 16th century and today has shifted several times. The balance of power in the world/part of the world at a given point can have widespread effects. For example, would the interest in ELTE around the world be so great if English language teaching had not spread so quickly, (at least partly) due to the power of the USA during the latter part of the 20th century?

As well as differing in terms of their power over time, different parts of the world have also developed different philosophical positions regarding, for example, the organisation of society, the aspects of human life which are emphasised and beliefs about whether truth derives principally from religion, science or the individual. Such positions interpreted by different people in different places over time have led to different sociopolitical belief systems underpinning human behaviours in different countries. An example here might be the extent to which a society emphasises the desirability of behaviours that support group harmony or of those that celebrate individual fulfilment. Such belief systems more or less formally influence people's everyday lives, of which education is, of course, an important part. Consequently, different countries have more or less different educational cultures whose view of the primary role of education may (very broadly) be seen as existing somewhere along a continuum between the two extremes in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The primary role of education



Where the educational culture of a particular country situates itself on this continuum will influence how its members interpret terms like knowledge or learning, and their view of the appropriate roles for teachers and learners. These views and interpretations will strongly affect what members of a society believe ought to be happening in classrooms. Some of the invisible beliefs and expectations that may be influential at different layers of a place context are summarised below in Table 3.

Table 3: Some invisible contextual features at different layers of **PLACE**

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Region | Regional history, geography, religious/ethnic composition and economic profile may have, over time, resulted in interpretations of and views about education and classroom teaching and learning that differ from elsewhere in the country. |
| City-town-village | Local variations regarding any of the above, or differences in urban rural mentalities, may lead to more or less differing educational norms, expectations and priorities. |
| Institutions | The above, together with the different ages, experiences, characteristics and biographies of the people who lead or work in each educational institution (and often those of the learners' parents), may result in particular institutional cultures which emphasise particular behaviours or set different priorities. |
| Classrooms | The experiences, beliefs and behaviours of teachers and learners in classrooms have probably been affected by many of the above. This will affect what they do in the classroom, what they consider to be appropriate behaviour, what they expect the outcomes of learning to be and what forms of interaction are encouraged. |

It is not possible in this paper to deal any more fully with the complex and time-consuming task of fully describing any ELT context. It is anyway not feasible to expect ELTE planners to develop such a full description. Instead I suggest that through using the framework outlined in Table 1, it becomes possible for such planners to identify the most important visible and invisible features influencing what teachers and learners do in classrooms in any educational context. Such features then provide a starting point for thinking about what realistic goals for an appropriate ELTE curriculum might be.

2. Goals of teacher learning

The goals of teacher education and the processes of supporting teacher learning are again a complex area of study with a growing literature. Here I am unable to do full justice to the topic and so draw mostly on Malderez and Wedell (2007), together with Sharma (2012). Possible goals proposed by these authors are listed in Table 4, and will be briefly discussed one by one below, although readers will of course notice that when considering the implications of the goals for the ELTE curriculum there is considerable overlap.

Table 4: Possible goals for (English language) teacher education

| TO PRODUCE... | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Good teachers | 2. Good teaching |
| 3. Teaching professionals | 4. Reflective practitioners |
| 5. Technicians | 6. Gurus |

Good teachers

If the main goal of an ELTE programme is to produce good teachers, then its focus is likely to be on helping trainees to become a teacher. For the trainees this may initially be a matter of developing the self-belief to stand up in front of learners as a teacher, being confident about knowing the subject matter and about using their voice and body language in a way that makes them look like a teacher. However, when one asks non-teachers about what makes a good teacher, it is the personal qualities such as being dedicated, patient, kind, humorous and knowledgeable that are mentioned far more often than what the teacher actually does in the classroom (Lamb and Wedell, forthcoming). An ELTE programme with this goal would then need to develop a curriculum that included opportunities for trainees to develop:

- confidence in their teacher identity
- the ability to understand learners as individuals whose feelings about their learning experiences will affect their feelings about learning (English)
- the skills needed to make their classrooms positive learning environments, including interpersonal skills such as relating to and advising learners.

Good teaching

This goal focuses on learning the activity of teaching. Views of how teaching can best be learned vary. Is teaching a craft best learned by asking trainees to copy expert, experienced teachers? Is it a science and so best learned by studying theories developed by educational or linguistic scientists and then applying these in the classroom? Is it a complex open skill with many possible options for a teacher at any point in the process of teaching, and so best learned by developing teachers' abilities to be flexible, creative and able to cope with the unexpected? Depending on how the context understands the process of learning teaching, an ELTE curriculum with this goal would need to include:

- a craft – opportunities to spend time learning from, observing and being mentored by experts
- a science – opportunities to understand the theoretical ideas underpinning whatever teaching methods, approaches or techniques were being recommended, as well as how to apply them
- a complex open skill – opportunities to observe, experience, practise, discuss the parts and whole of the skill through, for example, educator modelling, classroom observation, micro teaching, 'real' teaching.

Teaching professionals

This goal suggests that teachers in the context are viewed as professionals. In most societies people called professional have high status and pay, are expected to keep themselves up to date in their field and are accountable for their work. They have usually received some specialised professional training after their initial degree and belong to a professional body. They are acknowledged to be autonomous

and are expected to use their professional knowledge and skills to make appropriate decisions in whatever situations arise. An ELTE curriculum whose goal was to develop English teachers who are professionals might need to include opportunities to:

- become autonomous, through giving trainees (some) personal responsibility for their own learning, and chances to develop their flexible decision-making skills in real classroom settings
- become well informed through providing access to up-to-date thinking in the field and information about/practice at accessing such knowledge in the future
- understand to whom they are accountable and in what ways
- understand how to access opportunities for further training/updating throughout their professional careers.

Reflective practitioners

If we think about the diversity across the different layers of the place context in which English may be taught, it seems clear that teachers need to be helped to develop confidence in making their own judgments in the light of their classroom reality. Put very simply, the idea of teachers as reflective practitioners (RPs) is one of teachers who work to develop their own understanding of why they do what they do when they do it. Such a view emphasises the importance of the thinking behind any teaching behaviour, and views teachers as people who think about what they do, and through such thinking continue to learn teaching throughout their professional lives. Learning teaching becomes a process of lifelong learning.

An ELTE curriculum whose goal is to enable trainees to begin to become RPs will need to include opportunities to:

- develop noticing and observation skills and experiences of using these in real classrooms
- spend time alone and with others thinking about and discussing what has been observed/noticed, and its implications for their understanding of teaching and learning behaviours
- learn how to access other people's thinking now and in the future, through literature, conferences and networks, and to develop criteria for deciding whether and how to integrate, adapt or reject such thinking.

Technicists

A technicist is someone whose role is primarily to carry out plans devised by others. Often, education systems, especially those where human and material resources are limited or where the emphasis is on accountability and standardisation, view producing technicists as a desirable goal for ELTE. Where this is the goal the ELTE curriculum is likely to emphasise opportunities to:

- learn about and fully understand the thinking underlying the syllabus and the materials that trainees will be expected to use
- develop the behaviours and skills needed to cover the syllabus content in the time allocated, using whatever in-class materials, activities and techniques the syllabus recommends.

Guru

Sharma (2012) does not discuss the idea of a guru in terms of teacher education. He describes gurus as people who constantly strive both as a person and as a teacher, who have an on-going commitment to the growth of their students, who are committed to supporting their own and their learners' learning, and who are concerned with the well-being of society. I feel that the above features of a teacher as guru do mirror many features of the possible ELTE goals that have already been mentioned. The features of

professionalism, reflection, being a good teacher able to provide good teaching implicit in the idea of teacher as guru, suggest that if this were the goal, an ELTE curriculum would need to provide many of the opportunities outlined above.

3. Conclusion

The optimum result of any ELTE provision is that novice English teachers find themselves able to work successfully to support learners' learning in the teaching environments in which they find themselves. The likelihood of achieving this will be increased if the goals of ELTE programmes are decided on the basis of an understanding of the main features that influence what happens in English classrooms in institutions in which trainees are likely to work. Discussions about ELT and ELTE curricula in India today (e.g. NCF 2005, NCF for Teacher Education 2009) suggest a desire to change aspects of the status quo in English classrooms. Whether the desired changes ever become widely visible in Indian ELT classrooms will ultimately depend 'on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that' (Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991:117). The provision of ELTE implicitly assumes that it can influence what teachers do and how they think. This assumption is more likely to be valid if trainees can see that the ELTE curriculum they are following fits the working environments in which they will find themselves. Understanding the main features of ELT contexts is thus a starting point for developing ELTE curricula that can be seen as relevant by trainee teachers, and so can perhaps positively affect what they do, and what and how they think when they begin to work as teachers in actual English classrooms.

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Theme one

**The institutional environment:
approaches to English language teaching
and English language teacher education**

Realisations and Perceptions of Preferred Languages in Indian Classrooms: Teacher Education Implications

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Abstract

Language policy in India requires the study of language(s) other than the one serving as the medium of instruction. Typically the regional language is the medium, with Hindi and English as additional languages; wherever Hindi is the medium, another modern language is chosen. In English medium contexts, it is the regional language and/or Hindi that is taught as a language. The spaces and relationships that these languages share are neither neutral nor equal. English and Hindi are the more powerful languages. The regional language taught in school (the vehicle of thought and emotion if it is the mother tongue of the child) is often only tolerated by those in power and by peers, particularly outside the classroom, in corridors or in the playground. School timetables also reflect this division in terms of priority timings to one rather than another language. An analysis of the language block of school timetables and the status representation reflected in them will be presented along with teachers' and learners' perceptions of the relative values attached to these various languages (collated from questionnaire responses and informal interviews). The findings will inform the outlining of a component in teacher education programmes on language politics.

1. Background and theoretical assumptions

Nature of everyday language use in India

Multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in India (Pattanayak 1990). Most people use two or more languages to fulfil their everyday language functions, making India both societally and individually multilingual at the grassroots level. Many Indians switch from one language to another depending on role relationships and topics discussed. Languages therefore continue to be maintained, and assimilation (Skuttnabb-Kangas 1981) to any one language (as is the norm with the language use of a migrant population in monolingual countries) is never a goal. Unity in diversity, resulting in a plurilingual ethos (Khubchandani 1997) is therefore the norm.

Language use in educational contexts

One attempt by policy makers to recognise and value a few aspects of this many-splendoured language use resulted in the three-language formula (Hindi, English and the regional/state languages).

It was meant to be pan-Indian but its actual realisations vary from state to state, depending on whether the state is a Hindi-speaking one or not, and also school to school, depending on the medium of instruction.

In regional medium non Hindi-speaking state schools, the first language is always the state language (Telugu in Andhra Pradesh/Tamil in Tamil Nadu) and the second language could either be Hindi or English. The third language is therefore either English or Hindi, with the actual choice of prioritisation being left to the state. In Hindi-speaking state schools, the first language is Hindi and the second/third language could either be English, Urdu or Sanskrit.

In English medium schools the space for the first language is reserved for English and the second language is the state/regional language in non-Hindi speaking states and Hindi in states where it is the official state language. The same situation applies to the third language (except in Tamil Nadu, which follows a two- and not a three-language formula).

This description would make it seem that the three-language formula works very well and that all languages spoken in India are covered through it, but that is not the case; while the state languages are given some importance in regional medium schools, which are unfortunately decreasing in number, English and Hindi are vying for space as the 'value-added' languages.

Nature and role of Hindi and English in schools

English is perceived by nearly everyone in the country as the language that will pave the way for social and economic mobility and as the language required for international communication. Policy makers also seem to view English in a similar manner, for in most states it is now being taught from class one; some states are even converting all their regional medium government schools to English medium ones (Andhra Pradesh is a classic example). In apposition to this, Hindi is perceived as the language of national integration and is accepted by nearly all Indians as the medium that is needed for intra-national movement and communication. One result of this foregrounding of two languages is that the language of the home and heart(h) is often being 'othered'.

The argument being made in this paper is that this valuing / othering of languages covertly done by the system (through language planning and policy) shapes and controls the perspectives and attitudes of its speakers.

Languages and their intertwining relationships

Languages do not exist in either mutually exclusive environments or live in complementary distribution. A dominant/powerful language can either negate, recognise, tolerate or respect the other languages that it comes into contact with. In some contexts it can actually nurture the other language (as in the case of an attempt to revive endangered/dying languages). In extremely rare cases a language can actually share mutual space (both societally and educationally, and in the minds of the people) with another language. A critical examination of the relationships between languages does not fall within the purview of either theoretical linguistics, which examines the influence/interference of one language system on another, or sociolinguistics, which examines who speaks what language (or code) to whom in what context and the mixing and switching of these codes. Neither of them is able to account for the varied prioritisations (as captured in attitudes) of language use in grassroots multilingual contexts. Either the Vygotskian, socio-cultural perspective, which argues that all learning happens through socialisation, or its extension, where learning happens through apprenticeship in communities of practice, seems necessary.

Languages are more than mere communicative tools. They may be learnt (with the help of caregivers and more abled peers) and used without any formal teaching but they are also taught and learnt in

educational contexts; language is the medium through which subjects are taught in schools. In multilingual contexts, therefore, where more than one language is taught and learnt, the value given to the different languages by the country/state/educational institution/teachers and other adults (various communities of practice) will be automatically passed on to students.

Nature of language learning and the role of socialisation

Neither learning in general, nor language learning in particular, happens instinctively; all learning occurs within communities of practice through social participation and apprenticeship (Lave 1991). The development of language capability/proficiency is also socially and culturally mediated. The speech community that a language learner/user belongs to plays a big part in this mediation. The family and other caregivers are the primary speech community; more than the wider speech community at large, the school is the secondary speech community, for a child's language life is shaped by it. The shift from oracy to literacy happens in school and this acquisition of literacy also modifies ways of thinking and being. Oral, context-dependent ways of thinking give way to free logical thinking, reasoning and problem solving, and eventually critical thinking skills are added. Thus, a child's attitudes, discourses and language/literacy practices are affected and influenced (reshaped) through discursive practices in school. In multilingual contexts, along with learning how to learn, attitudes to languages are also influenced and shaped by these schooling practices, but these influences are never perceived or accounted for. One tenuous yet tangible but rarely accounted method of attitude shaping is the school timetable; teachers and students also carry their own baggage of attitudes.

2. Data analysis

Two types of data have been collected and analysed in this paper, namely school timetables and teacher/student perspectives on language preferences (elicited through responses to open-ended questions). A sample of school timetables from five states in India, namely, Kerala, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Madhya Pradesh, were analysed with a few queries in mind. They included the way in which languages were indicated on the timetable (as first or second or third language, or as Malayalam, Tamil, etc); the number of hours allotted per week; and the placing of the language in the day (morning or afternoon, first or last period). In the teacher questionnaire, along with a few general questions, teachers were asked to name the language they thought was the most important for students to learn and the language class they would choose for a school inspector to observe, and to justify their choices. The student questionnaire focused on the language they found most and least difficult to learn/score marks. Students were also asked to list the languages they used for communication in and outside the classroom and with their class teacher. The number of timetables that could be collected was not very large; similarly the number of teachers and students who responded to the two questionnaires did not exceed 20. As such, the data provided here is only a sample. It has been used to get a sense of languages and perceptions and should not be seen as representative of all teachers and learners in the Indian subcontinent. The responses, it was hoped, would reveal the attitudes that students and teachers have towards the three or more languages that are a part of their educational language life.

Timetables and realisations

The sample of school timetables from five states in India: Kerala, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Madhya Pradesh, showed that in some states the first and second languages were indicated as FLO and SLO, but in other states the name of the language itself (Hindi, English, Malayalam) was used. But in all contexts where Hindi is studied as a third language (with Sanskrit as an alternative option), it is never indicated as a third language, but as Hindi/Sanskrit. It was interesting to note that in English medium schools, where all subjects are taught through English, the number of hours per week devoted to English was more than the second language (which is likely to have been the mother tongue of most students and should have been given more space and time on the timetable).

In regional medium schools the picture that emerged was even more interesting. This is captured in Table 1 below:

| States/languages | English | Regional language or Sanskrit | Hindi |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------|
| | Number of hours given to each language in the school week | | |
| Assam | 7 | 6 Assamese | 4 |
| Odisha | 7 | 6 Odia | 3 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 6 | 6 Telugu | 4 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 6 | 6 Sanskrit | 6 |

As seen in the table, except in the case of Madhya Pradesh (where all three languages have been given the same number of periods), the other three states show a clear prioritisation of English in terms of number of hours per week devoted to it. Regularity across the week did not seem to be a problem except in cases where Hindi was taught as the third language. (In these cases it moved across the timetable, from morning to afternoon and back.) The prioritisation of English was largely echoed by teachers and school students, but tertiary level students with some awareness of language-use issues had different views.

Teachers' perceptions of languages in school

When teachers were asked what the most important language was, nearly all of them said English. Their responses ranged from 'English is the most important language that a child must know' to 'Don't you know that English is a global language?' to an affirmation that English is the most important language. The language was described as most important to students because it has become 'a passport to the world'. By contrast, most teachers felt that the mother tongue does not need much training because the students can learn it at home.

In order to find out which language class is the most preferred, an indirect question, 'Which language class should a school inspector observe?' resulted in every teacher (except one, who said she would choose the Malayalam class) choosing English and the reasons ranged from what students could do in the language; that pupils could be easily prepared to recite a poem, put up a short play, have a panel discussion or a debate; to a justification that the inspector would then admire the talent of the students and the teacher. One of the claims made was that the range of functions in day-to-day life is more diverse in English. The other justification was that if the English class was chosen then that would make the students use the language more actively and carefully! The perceptions of students were not very different from their teachers, but the reasons given were illuminating.

Students' perceptions of languages in school

Most of the students liked studying English because either it interested them, or because it was a common medium of communication or because it could be used in any country worldwide. An interesting statement was that English is 'really understandable'. The most important language was, of course, English, either because teachers were concerned with the language or as one student put it, 'It is a public school and a good school too'.

No student selected English as the language that they did not like to study; the reason they did not like to study the mother tongue, by contrast, was because it was 'tough' or 'full of errors'. Most of the students spoke to their friends and to their class teacher only in English. The justifications for this

choice were very interesting. One problematic explanation stated that ‘English is much more easier to understand’ but the other reasons were even more worrying. One student said ‘It is a rule’ while another described English as ‘The basic language’. A third very honestly stated, ‘If I do talk in another language than English they will fire me’ and others confessed that it was expected of them, and that they ‘had’ to speak it.

These justifications for the ‘English only in school space’ bothered me, and therefore I attempted to elicit the perceptions of some language-use-aware postgraduate students from my university. Three succinct statements made by them capture the difference between the two groups. One of them, whose mother tongue is Malayalam, said, ‘We blindly called English our first language, Hindi our second, and Malayalam our third, though...’ and another Keralite who gave up Malayalam early in her school days said, ‘I wish I had continued with Malayalam; I can’t read literature in it and now I regret it’. A third, who comes from a family where English is spoken at home, said, ‘English is my first language and that is my safe zone, but I would have liked to have learnt an Indian language.’

3. Interpretation of data

A cursory examination of the spread and positioning of languages in timetables could be seen as non-problematic and it would be equally comfortable to state that English is a world language and the language of economic and social mobility in India, so it is natural that teachers and students alike give it so much importance. Unfortunately, reality is not as simple as that. The importance credited to English at the cost of all other Indian languages is a colonisation of the mind (Phillipson 2012). The Indian body may have never been colonised (as was the case with African slaves); India may have recovered from the colonisation of her territory and natural resources, but this internalisation and echoing of the values of a dominant power is even more dangerous for it is akin to a re-colonisation (Nyerere 1991).

India may have a three-language formula in place but the attitudes of her people are not governed by this mere fact. A policy that describes the ethnography of speech would have to account for plurilingualism, while the values assigned by its members and their beliefs are actually shaped by an ideological policy. The constitutional establishment of an official policy (which also influences the ideological stances) is more a question of language management (Spolsky 2012). Students and teachers alike clearly preferred one language over many others and this is a clear case of ideology, which will eventually lead to language power problems. The overriding use of English (and Hindi in some cases) is a case of management. If this re-colonisation of the mind is to be reduced, or if possible, stopped completely, a beginning has to be made where it matters, with teacher education.

4. Language awareness in teacher development programmes

All teacher education programmes in multilingual countries like India should have a compulsory component on language education. It should begin with a self-reflection on language use, particularly on the language used for thinking. The component can then move on to a discussion on the kinds of language education projects in India and then examine the various goals of language education (assimilation, maintenance, enrichment, etc.). It can then raise teachers’ critical awareness of the use of languages in school and the power play involved and if possible even examine the pros and cons of having combined language classes.

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Nurturing the Prospective Teachers of English in India: An Assessment

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Abstract

India has a long history of paucity of trained teachers of English. The colleges of education have always failed to keep pace with the quantitative requirement of teachers of English in the country. Consequently, the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of 2006 are similar to those of the Study Group (Government of India, 1967). According to Graddol (2010), India does not have sufficient English-proficient teachers to deliver the programmes now being embarked upon. This moves our attention to the qualitative requirement of the teachers, but also raises the issues pertaining to the teacher-training programmes in India. In its modest attempt to study the pre-service teacher-training programmes, this paper critically evaluates the objectives and course content of the existing syllabi of the BEd (English Methodology) paper and MA – English Language Teaching (ELT) paper offered in some universities in the state of Maharashtra, India. This study points out the gaps in these pre-service teacher-training courses. The study suggests the existing syllabi of pre-service teacher-training courses should be refurbished to equip the prospective facilitators of English to deal with the diverse Indian ELT scenario.

1. Introduction

India has a long history of paucity of trained teachers of English. The colleges of education have always failed to keep pace with the quantitative requirement of teachers of English in the country. The recommendation of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) of 2006 to induct graduates with a high proficiency in English and good communication skills (but without formal teacher-training qualifications) as teachers is a response to this situation, though an imperfect one. It follows the suggestion of the Study Group (Government of India, 1967) to increase the number of students taking admission to the BA and MA (English) courses in Indian universities. However, Graddol (2010: 94) observes that India does not have sufficient English-proficient teachers to deliver the programmes now being embarked upon. He thus not only seeks to bring our attention to the qualitative requirement of the teachers, but also obliquely raises the issues pertaining to the pre-service and in-service teacher-training programmes in India. The present paper examines whether pre-service teacher-training programmes cater to the diverse needs of prospective teachers of English. It makes some observations with special reference to the objectives and course content of the existing syllabi of the BEd English Methodology (EM) and MA – English Language Teaching (ELT) papers offered in some universities in the state of Maharashtra, India.

2. A brief review of the studies in pre-service training of teachers of English

Some researchers have worked on the syllabus of the BEd (EM). In one of the important studies in pre-service teacher training in India, Bose (1989) has analysed the BEd (EM) syllabi drafted in 1985–1987 and implemented in 12 universities in India. He states that the vague and ambitious objectives of the BEd (English) courses do not reflect the needs of the trainees. The studies by Natarajan (1999), Ray (2008) and Venkanna (2010) at the EFLU, Hyderabad and Shillong campuses are replications of the doctoral research by Bose (1989). Some of their observations provide a glimpse of the (English) programmes in Indian universities:

- Bose (1989) and Venkanna (2010) note that the syllabi are theory-oriented and considering the BEd (English) syllabi of three universities in Assam, Ray (2008) states that practice teaching in the BEd programmes is done in a ritualistic manner.
- According to Bose (1989), in the Madras University BEd syllabus ‘the teaching of spoken English’ is confused with teaching the trainees spoken English in order to develop their own speech (p. 59). Natarajan (1999) notes that even after ten years of this observation by Bose (1989), the aim of units on spoken English still remains unchanged.
- Both Natarajan (1999) and Venkanna (2010) present the salient features and shortcomings of the Madras University BEd syllabus and those of the AP Govt. BEd (English) respectively. The former study concludes that the BEd course is inadequate in meeting the challenges posed by the high-school syllabuses, whereas the latter states that there is a mismatch between the teacher-education syllabus and the secondary-school education in AP.

Since ELT training is not an essential qualification for college and university teachers of English, MA (ELT) syllabi have not been studied from the point of view of teacher preparation. The doctoral research by Roy (1985) is one of the few studies in this regard. Roy (1999, p. 64) is of the view that pre-service programmes for college and university teachers may be less relevant than in-service programmes, mainly because of the deep-rooted bias against training for college lecturership prevalent in many college and university teaching contexts. In his review of pre-service teacher education in the country, Gargesh (2006) concludes that the pre-service education programmes are supposed to develop teaching competence of the teachers, while the in-service programmes are needed to reinforce their skills and to update their knowledge (p. 279).

3. The position of English in education in Maharashtra

Since this study mainly focuses on the courses offered in some universities in Maharashtra, it is appropriate at this stage to know the status of English in the state. English is widely used for educational purposes in Maharashtra. As in the case of some other states in India, in Maharashtra English was introduced from Class I onwards in 2000 in the Marathi medium schools. The majority of the schools in Maharashtra offer the curriculum prepared by the Maharashtra State Board for Secondary Education and the textbooks prepared by the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research. However, the rapid growth of English medium schools following the curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) cannot be ignored. Besides, Maharashtra has the highest number of International Baccalaureate (IB) and Indian General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) schools in the country – 109 out of 296 (The Times of India, Nashik, 12-02-2013, p. 4). These developments have led to an increase in the demand for teachers of English in the state. In the light of these developments, it is imperative to evaluate the in-service teacher-training programmes in the state. Hence this paper makes an attempt to study the objectives and course content of the BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) papers in some universities in Maharashtra.

4. A critical evaluation of the BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) papers

The present study deals with the syllabi of the BEd (EM) papers offered in the University of Pune (UoP); Shivaji University, Kolhapur (SUK); North Maharashtra University (NMU), Jalgaon; Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University (SRTMU), Nanded; Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University (SGBAU); Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University (SNDTWU); Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU), Aurangabad; and Solapur University, Solapur (SUS). Similarly, the MA (ELT) syllabi of the University of Mumbai (UoM); the UoP; Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMNU); BAMU; SUK; and SRTMU have been considered for the purpose. Table 1 below provides an overview of the papers offered by these universities.

Table 1: BEd (English Methodology) and MA (ELT) papers offered in the universities in Maharashtra

| Sr. No. | University | Title of the BEd (English Methodology) paper and (year of implementation) | Paper No. and title of the MA (ELT) paper and (year of implementation) |
|---------|------------|---|--|
| 1 | UoM | – | P-XV and XVI – English Language Teaching (w.e.f. 2013–14) |
| 2 | UoP | English Education (during 2012) | P-3.2 and 4.2 – English Language and Literature Teaching (w.e.f. 2009) |
| 3 | RTMNU | – | P-304 (B) – Teaching of English (w.e.f. 2012-13) |
| 4 | BAMU | Methodology of Teaching English (w.e.f. June 2012) | P-VIII (B) – English Language Teaching (June 2010 onwards) |
| 5 | SUK | English Methodology (w.e.f. June 2008) | P-VII – English Language and Literature Teaching (during 2011–12) |
| 6 | NMU | English-Content-cum Methodology: Communicative Language Teaching | No paper offered (w.e.f. 2008–09) |
| 7 | SRTMU | English Methodology (2010 onwards) | 11 B – Principles and Methods of Teaching English (w.e.f. June 2009) |
| 8 | SGBAU | Methods of Teaching English (during 2011) | No paper offered |
| 9 | SNDTWU | English Language Education (w.e.f. 2008) | – |
| 10 | SUS | English Methodology (w.e.f. 2009) | No paper offered |

The following are some of the main concerns emerging from the analysis of the objectives and the course content of the BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) papers (refer to Tables A and B in the Appendix).

Linguistic competence of prospective teachers of English

The inclination of the majority of the students of the BA and MA (English) courses towards the teaching profession led the committees and study groups appointed to review the teaching of English in India to persistently recommend incorporation of linguistics in these courses. Thus, the purpose of introducing linguistics in the BA and MA (English) courses in Indian universities is mainly to develop linguistic competence of the prospective teachers of English (see Tasildar 2012). Besides, in the sample syllabus of 'Methods of Teaching English for the BEd degree of Examination' suggested by the Study Group (Government of India, 1971), the first part constitutes a content course in English to help pupil-teachers to improve their proficiency in spoken and written English. In the universities under study, NMU is the only university to acquaint trainees with the phonology and grammar of English to prospective teachers of English. This supports Graddol's contention (2010). Since the students opting for English as a second method in the BEd courses are not specialised in English at the undergraduate level and in some universities like SGBAU, for instance, students study English only at the general level and it is optional at postgraduate level, it is imperative to incorporate units on phonology and grammar to develop linguistic proficiency of the student-teachers, as suggested by the Study Group (Government of India, 1971).

Confusion over the status of English in India

In the BEd (EM) courses, SRTMU treats English as a subject whereas SUK considers it as a language. Similarly, there is confusion over whether to consider English as a foreign language or a second language in SGBAU. Thus, the status of English language in India is not clear to the syllabus designers. In the objectives of the course English has been considered as a foreign language whereas in its course content the first unit includes 'the aims and objectives of teaching English as a second language'. Most of the universities under study, except NMU and BAMU, acquaint the trainees with the objectives of teaching English in India through their BEd (EM) syllabi. However, NMU has a unit entitled 'The place of English in Maharashtra state and in the present school curriculum'. Surprisingly, in the MA (ELT) syllabi 'Objectives of teaching English in India' is the only unit common in all universities.

Lack of training in teaching the basics of English

Vocabulary, grammar and spoken English play a crucial role in the development of linguistic competence of second-language learners. However, prospective teachers are deprived of initial training in this regard. SNDTWU is the only university to incorporate a separate unit on vocabulary teaching in its BEd (EM) paper and there is a passing reference to vocabulary teaching in SUK. However, SGBAU, NMU, UoP, SRTMU and SUS fail to include separate units on vocabulary teaching. In the MA (ELT) papers all the universities (except BAMU) include units on vocabulary teaching. In their BEd (EM) papers, SRTMU, SGBAU and SNDTWU have no units on teaching grammar whereas in the MA (ELT) paper only the UoP and RTMNU have separate units on teaching grammar. In their BEd (EM) papers the UoP, NMU and SUS include units on the teaching of spoken English whereas SUK, SRTMU and SGBAU avoid it.

Teacher training for +2 level

The teaching objectives of the BEd (EM) paper focus on developing prospective teachers' abilities to teach English at the secondary level. SRTMU clearly mentions this. The UoP and NMU make a mention of higher secondary level in their objectives. However, the student-teachers with MA (English) do not get exposure to teach at +2 level during practice teaching in the BEd course. Among the universities under study, NMU, SGBAU and SUS do not offer either elective or core papers in ELT at MA. An elective paper in ELT is offered in the second year of MA in the UoM, RTMNU, BAMU, SRTMU. The UoP is the only university in Maharashtra to offer a core paper in ELT (in the next syllabus revision the paper will be elective). Furthermore, in SUK the elective paper in ELT is restricted to a handful of regular students studying in the university department.

In its report, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) for English (1989) states that the objective of the MA (ELT) paper is to equip the student to teach English at the +2 and undergraduate levels (p.283). However, the universities under study fail to specify the level (school/junior college/undergraduate) at which they prepare the postgraduate students to teach. RTMNU, BAMU and SUK have not spelt out the objectives of the MA (ELT) papers. At the intermediate level (classes XI and XII) the teachers have to deal with minor forms of literature like short stories and one-act plays. Furthermore, from the academic year 2009–10 onwards, English Literature has been introduced as an optional subject by the Maharashtra State Secondary and Higher Secondary Board (Circular No. 5501 dated 28 August 2008) at the intermediate level. Here one needs to teach major literary forms like novels and drama. In the MA (ELT) papers only the UoP has separate units on teaching the major forms of literature – fiction and drama, and RTMNU has separate units on prose and poetry. SUK and SRTMU have general units on teaching literature. Thus, neither the BEd (EM) nor the MA (ELT) papers in their current forms meet the requirements of prospective teachers wanting to teach at intermediate level.

Inadequate practicum

Though the syllabi of the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education standard V to standard XII are the same, the course content of the BEd (EM) papers differ widely. This gives an impression that the syllabi of the BEd (EM) papers do not prepare the teachers to teach effectively even in state board schools. BAMU includes a unit on 'Present curriculum and syllabus of Secondary and Higher Secondary level in Maharashtra'. In SRTMU there is a unit on analysis of curriculum and textbook. There is a separate unit on course evaluation in SUK. NMU mentions teachers' handbooks and syllabi of standard V to XII in its 'recommended books'.

Since the vacancies in government schools are limited, the graduates and postgraduates in English may get jobs mainly in the private unaided English medium schools. Most of these schools offer the CBSE curriculum. The schools following the CBSE curriculum use task-based books brought out by different publishers. Hence along with the syllabi of the state board, the analysis of the central-board syllabi and textbooks needs to be encouraged in the BEd (EM) papers. In the BEd (EM) paper, SUK expects reports on action research in its practicum whereas NMU expects a unit test plan. BAMU and SUS each provide four options to the student-teachers. The options provided by BAMU include preparation of a digital unit plan and student support materials with the help of computers.

Even though the report of the CDC (1989) notes 'practical work is an important part of the MA (ELT) course' (p. 283), 'practice teaching' is part of an internal evaluation only in the UoM and SUK. The UoM includes topics like analysis of actual syllabi at school/college levels, peer-group teaching, the production of texts and error analysis of written assignments for internal evaluation. In SUK as well internal evaluation (practical) includes peer teaching. As recommended by the CDC (1989), other universities should also include 'A critical scrutiny of the syllabuses of one's own and some other universities'.

The neglect of the needs of prospective teachers of English

It is evident in this study that the focus of both the BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) papers is on theory orientation (see Tables A and B in the Appendix). The MA (English) students may also join as faculty in engineering colleges and other technical institutions. Hence, there is a need to acquaint them with English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Moreover, at no point do these syllabi acquaint prospective teachers with using interactive and participatory methods in large classes with mixed-ability learners. In their MA (ELT) papers, only BAMU and SRTMU have made separate mention of the Bangalore Project (procedural syllabus) and 'task-based language learning/teaching' respectively. It is necessary to train student-teachers for continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE). Besides, there is no unit on professional development of teachers in the MA (ELT) syllabi.

5. Conclusion

The present study of the syllabi of BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) papers in the universities in Maharashtra gives a cross section of the nature of the pre-service training in the country. What we can see is that the actual needs of the prospective teachers of English are ignored in the pre-service teacher-preparation programmes in India. The Study Group (Government of India, 1971) aimed at remedying two major drawbacks of the teaching of 'Methods of teaching English for the BEd degree' – (a) the trainee's command of English, and (b) theory-oriented introduction to various methods and techniques. Four decades after this report was published teacher preparation in Indian universities remains just more of the same.

The present study points out that the syllabi of BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) not only fail to nurture the prospective teachers who aspire to teach at +2 level but also do not equip the prospective teachers of English in India to deal with mixed-ability classes. Moreover, these syllabi appear to be inadequate, as they fail to train the prospective facilitators of English to handle new task-based textbooks prescribed by the Maharashtra State Board (for English and non-English medium schools), CBSE, IB and IGCSE at the secondary and higher secondary levels. Furthermore, when compared to the ELT courses for prospective teachers elsewhere [e.g. Trinity College London TESOL Certificate course (Watkins 2011)], where large parts of the assessment are based on a practice teaching component, the above discussed syllabi with their emphasis on theory (often of inappropriate methods of teaching) appear less relevant. It is imperative to reform the existing syllabi of BEd (EM) and MA (ELT) courses now if we are to have new generations of well-trained teachers who can teach English in the challenging multicultural and multilingual contexts in our schools. We know that the presence of a well-trained teacher in a classroom has a profound effect on learning outcomes, and our children deserve a more stimulating and appropriate classroom experience if they are to learn as a result of better teaching. This publication contains several papers that talk about the social and economic need for the population to have better skills in English both for personal and national reasons of development. There is no more time to lose.

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Appendix

Table A: Components of the BEd (English Methodology) paper

| Sr. No. | Components | UoP | SUK | NMU | SRTMU | SGBAU | SNDDT WU | BAMU | SUS |
|---------|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|----------|------|-----|
| 1 | Place of English in India | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 2 | Objectives of teaching English | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 3 | Three-language formula | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | XX | XX | XX |
| 4 | Content-cum-methodology | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | XX | ✓ |
| 5 | Methods/approaches to teaching English | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6 | Communicative approach | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7 | Teaching of LSRW | ✓ | XX | ✓ | XX | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8 | Teaching of prose | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | Teaching of poetry | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | Teaching of grammar | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11 | Teaching of composition | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12 | Use of AV aids/support system | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13 | Diagnostic testing and remedial teaching | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 14 | Evaluation procedure | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 15 | Unit/lesson/year plan | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 16 | Teacher professional development | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Table B: Components of the MA (ELT) paper

| Sr. No. | Components | UoM | UoP | RTMNU | BAMU | SUK | SRTMU |
|---------|---|-----|-----|-------|------|-----|-------|
| 1 | Status of English in India | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 2 | Objectives of teaching English in India | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Problems related to ELT in India | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 4 | Theories of language acquisition and learning | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 5 | Curriculum and syllabus | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | XX |
| 6 | Methods/approaches to language teaching | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7 | Communicative language teaching | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8 | Teaching of language skills –LSRW | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | The teaching of vocabulary | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | Use of AV aids – ICT/CALL/ language laboratory | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ |
| 11 | Peer teaching | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | ✓ | XX |
| 12 | Materials selection and development | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13 | Error analysis | ✓ | ✓ | XX | XX | XX | ✓ |
| 14 | Teaching of literature | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ |
| 15 | Evaluation and language testing | ✓ | ✓ | XX | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Research and the Language Teacher

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Abstract

Most practitioners consider that their professional expertise derives primarily from reflection on experience; academics and teacher trainers, however, prioritise knowledge based on insights from empirical research. Practising teachers do not, on the whole, read the research, partly because they do not have the time and partly because they find it inaccessible and impractical. In this article it is suggested that research is a secondary but substantial and valuable source of professional knowledge, providing insights into aspects of teaching that the practitioner may not have encountered in his or her own practice. Individual research studies, however, need to be carefully selected, and then read critically by the teacher. Conclusions from any research article should be drawn by the teacher-reader, as well as practical implications for the classroom. Even after such initial selection and critical reading, there remains the problem that teachers are often too busy to find the necessary hours to devote to study. It is recommended, therefore, that any English teacher's job description should include the allocation of time and money to enable him or her to read and attend conferences and courses.

1. Is research the best basis for pedagogical knowledge and expertise?

If you ask a teacher of English as a foreign or second language, 'What is the main source of your professional teaching knowledge?', the answer you are most likely to get is, 'Reflection on classroom experience'. There is support for this in the literature on the development of professional expertise in general – see Donald Schön's classic *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) for example. However, if you ask an academic expert on ELT, they are more likely to say, 'the research':

The teaching profession, as with all high-standard professions, needs the best available academic knowledge in order to fulfil its commitments to society ... Teachers have to be familiar with the latest knowledge and research about the subject matter. (Niemi 2008).

Most university-based courses in English language teaching take it for granted that research is the basis of professional knowledge:

The goal of this introductory course is to help practicing and prospective teachers to understand and explore the complex ... world of second language acquisition. Through readings, critical analyses, in-class and online discussions, students will be able to foster their beliefs and understandings of theories of second language acquisition. Students will critically examine

foundational theories and research perspectives in the field of second language acquisition (Second Language Acquisition, course syllabus, University of Maryland, 2009).

In recent years, moreover, there has been a noticeable ‘academicisation’ of the field of ELT: a journal like *TESOL Quarterly*, for example, set up in the 1960s as a source of practical classroom ideas for teachers, has subsequently developed into a research-based publication with clear academic criteria for the acceptance of articles. Thus, there is a very real mismatch here between the perceptions of practitioners and those of academic specialists, as represented in the ELT literature and conference presentations. This has been noted and extensively discussed by, for example, Rod Ellis (2010, 2012).

I was an English teacher in state schools for 30 years, but have also taught language methodology and pedagogy at university level. I therefore have an understanding of and sympathy for both points of view: but in my opinion there is no doubt that for the ELT practitioner the main source of professional learning remains classroom experience with the accompanying reflection during and after action. For the best teachers, who continue to develop throughout their careers, such learning will be enriched by discussion with colleagues, feedback from students and input through reading, conferences and courses, of which the research is one important component. Research is thus not, in my view, the primary basis of ELT knowledge for the practitioner; but it is a valuable supplement.

2. Teachers do not read the research

However, relatively few teachers do in fact avail themselves of this resource. Most do not go to conferences or courses; still fewer take time to read the research literature. The main reason for this is that they do not have time (Borg 2009): preparing and teaching lessons, as well as checking student assignments, takes up most of their day, and they are naturally reluctant to give up leisure time for work-related activity. Time for professional learning is not built into the job description of most teachers. Indeed, as one teacher recently told me, employers often convey the message that they would rather their teachers did not ‘waste their time’ on conferences and reading, but devoted all their energies to their classroom-teaching duties.

The problem of time has been alleviated to some extent by the advent of the internet: today teachers can search for and read at least the abstracts of research they are interested in at the click of a mouse, instead of looking for journals in libraries. Increasingly, entire articles are also becoming freely available online.

Another substantial problem, however, is the fact that many teachers perceive research as lacking relevance for classroom practice (Borg *ibid.*). There are various reasons for this:

- The research published in ELT journals such as *TESOL Quarterly* relates almost exclusively to second-language acquisition (SLA). It only very rarely deals with pedagogical issues such as classroom management and discipline, homework, interest and motivation, teaching heterogeneous classes, using the course book, exams and so on. Yet it is these issues that in the majority of cases will determine actual selection of procedures and materials in the classroom, rather than empirically demonstrated methods of facilitating language learning in controlled conditions. It is these issues, therefore, that practitioners need to learn about, at least as much as they need to learn about SLA. The research offered to English teachers thus offers solutions to only a relatively small proportion of the problems they face in their daily practice.
- Many studies, even if they address language-acquisition problems that the teacher is interested in solving, may not be directly relevant to a specific teaching context. State-school teachers find that most classroom research is based on groups of young, academic adults (these being most easily

accessible for university-based researchers) and their conclusions may not be easily applicable to my classes of unruly teenagers.

- The topics on which studies are published are understandably selected primarily for reasons which serve the interests of the researcher, and which have less to do with their usefulness to the practitioner. They tend, therefore, to be ones that are readily researchable, and are likely to provide a basis for articles which will be accepted in refereed journals: very often statistically measured differences between the performance of experimental and control groups operating under different conditions. Topics which are difficult to research, though possibly more valuable for the teacher, tend to be neglected: why and how classroom language-learning procedures tend to arouse – or deaden – learner interest, for example.
- Sometimes different studies reach different, even contradictory, conclusions. One example is the literature on grammar practice, where some researchers claim it has little value (e.g. Ellis 2001) and others the opposite (Salaberry 2008).
- Researchers are not practitioners: many have very limited, or non-existent, teaching experience. Their ideas on pedagogical implications of their results may not, therefore be very practical, and need to be related to with caution (see below).

3. The contribution of research to teacher knowledge

Even if we acknowledge the reservations expressed above, there remains a huge body of research into English learning and teaching which is readable, accessible, relevant to many contexts and can provide valuable insights to the practitioner. Such insights may take various forms:

- Research may provide underlying theory that can explain or predict common classroom phenomena. For example, there has been extensive study of types of error correction which can tell us why learners often do not seem to perceive and implement corrective feedback on their mistakes, and suggest why some kinds of correction are likely to be more effective than others (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998; Sheen 2004).
- It may investigate specific popular practices and reveal unexpected weaknesses. For example, there is a substantial body of research showing that ‘inferencing’ new vocabulary items from context is usually unreliable as a means to access meaning (Laufer 1997; Nassaji 2003). Another example is the demonstrated inefficiency of learning lexical sets (such as colours or parts of the body) all together (Tinkham 1997; Erten and Tekin 2008; Papathanasiou 2009).
- It may provide overviews of areas of language teaching, and give us some general research-based conclusions as to the effectiveness of a whole set of practices. For example, Norris and Ortega (2001) on the clear benefits, in most cases, of the use of explicit grammar teaching; or Macaro et al. (2012), which concludes that there is little evidence that the use of computers in language teaching enhances learning.
- It may examine underlying assumptions of policy makers or curriculum writers, subject these to rigorous research procedures and suggest modifications. For example, there is the issue of the age of starting English in schools in non English-speaking countries: the popular assumption is the younger the better, but the research would indicate that this is at best an over-simplification, and at worst simply wrong (Muñoz and Singleton 2011).

4. Selective and critical reading: some tips

The teacher who wishes to read the research in order to develop further expertise will need to do so selectively and critically. Below are some tips that I have found helpful.

- **Selection** – none of us has the time or energy to read the enormous amount of such literature published every day. There are various ways of selecting topics that interest you:
 - look up keywords representing your interest on Google Scholar (not just ordinary Google). Google Scholar allows you to define your search using words, phrases, names of authors, years, names of journals and so on
 - register your name on Google Scholar and ask for regular updates on the topic that interests you: references to recent publications on this topic will be emailed to you
 - check the conference websites (such as TEC, IATEFL or TESOL), which often show recordings of sessions in the form of YouTube clips, as well as summaries of talks.
- **A critical approach** – having located articles or books of possible interest, you then need to read critically.
 - Check for clarity. If you find that the article is very difficult to understand, this is probably the fault of the writer rather than your own. If it is too time-consuming to wade through, skip it.
 - Check for applicability to your teaching. The context and population studied may be quite different from your own: results and conclusions may or may not apply to your own situation. It is up to you to decide.
 - Draw your own conclusions. Very often the writer will have a section entitled ‘implications for teaching’ or something similar. The content of this section may or may not be useful; in my experience researchers’ recommendations for classroom practice are very often impractical, demanding time, money and effort from the teacher that are not normally available. In any case, the most important implications for teaching are those which you, the reader, work out for yourself.

5. Summary and conclusion: the place of research in English language teacher development

For practitioners who wish to develop their expertise – to improve their own teaching and/or to move into areas such as teacher training or materials writing – personal professional experience, even when enriched with discussion with colleagues and reading of teacher handbooks and practical journals, is never enough. The research gives access to ideas and information that practical experience alone cannot provide. It is up to the teachers to select research literature that is relevant to practice, and to assess individual published works critically in the light of their own professional judgment in order to draw appropriate conclusions for classroom practice.

There remains the problem of teachers’ unwillingness and/or inability to read the research on a regular basis. Even with increased accessibility through the internet, the basic problem of heavy work schedules remains. Most teachers will be unable to enjoy the benefits of learning from the research until and unless their job descriptions include the provision of time and funding to attend conferences and study professional literature.

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Teaching English Using Multilinguality in the Classroom: The Teacher's Role as a Learner

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover the teacher's language pedagogy in a primary classroom in order to explore the use and teaching of languages as a resource in a multilingual classroom. The exploration and assessment of the teacher's language pedagogy approach were undertaken to find out the tools used in a children's language classroom. The social interaction theory of Vygotsky has been reflected in teacher's pedagogic practices that helped the teacher to develop the ways through which she made use of children's language in her classroom interactions. The study was conducted in the city of Bhopal. The data was gathered through questionnaires and classroom observations and transcribed for content analysis. The findings of the study reveal the different approaches and methods used by the teacher to teach English. It further exposes the coexistence of both teacher's and children's native languages that enabled the teaching and learning processes in different contexts. The study also reveals how the teacher's role as a learner informs her pedagogic practices and becomes an instrument for language teaching.

1. Introduction

Language is the main tool through which education is imparted in classrooms. Language as both subject and medium of instruction, together with the pedagogy used, govern the effectiveness and efficiency of classroom interaction, which in return regulates the comprehension and achievement of students. The medium of instruction as well as the textbook are key constraints that hamper learning in our classrooms – and this is especially the case with students from marginalised communities who do not speak the language of the formal classroom.

Fifty per cent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition. (World Bank 2005).

Textbooks and teaching are often in a language these students neither speak nor understand. The consequences for many children are predictable and have been described in many researches. Through the analysis of language policies and research literature, it can be said that the classroom

pedagogy which excludes children's native language and the monolingual policies in multilingual speakers' classroom has been a focal reason for their failure and poor comprehension.

In the language-teaching context of India, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 has given a fresh impetus, in the following ways:

- a renewed attempt should be made to implement the three-language formula
- children's mother tongues, including tribal languages, should be considered as the best medium of instruction
- proficiency in multiple languages including English should be encouraged
- reading should be emphasised throughout the primary classes.

Although the position paper of NCF mentions multilinguality in the classroom and also recommends its use as a classroom resource, there is no specific mention of how to go about it. NCF omits two issues related to its policy – it does not mention the strategies that the teacher should employ to incorporate the multiple languages in the classroom, and when the teacher does not know the language of the children, how can he/she incorporate their language in the classroom.

2. Present research

The present research posed the following questions:

1. How does the teacher use multilinguality as a resource to teach English?
2. If the teacher is also a learner of the children's native language, how does he/she teach English through that language?

The objectives of the study were to explore the language pedagogy of the classroom and to explore the aims and effectiveness of the use of the native language in the classroom.

Method – a primary classroom of a school in the village of Bhopal city was the subject of study. The class consisted of 14 children: six girls and eight boys, and a female teacher. The study used 'classroom-centred research'. The sources of the data included school, teacher and student profile, checklists developed to study the language profile of the children and the teacher etc., a semi-structured interview designed to understand the teacher's awareness of classroom language diversity etc., and observations that were used to assess the teacher's language pedagogy.

3. Results

Activity 1: *vocabulary teaching in the form of filling in the blanks. 'I eat...'*
T: Ab apan khane wali cheez bolenge, theek hai? Kya bolenge? Eat (Now we will say the eatables, ok? What will we say? Eat)
S: Eat
T: Jaise, Chapatti ko, 'I eat roti, ya, I eat chapatti'. Ab sab log ek ek cheez bolenge. (Like, I eat chapatti. Now everyone will say one thing each).
S1: I eat mango.
T: I eat mango. Good. Ab tum bolo (next child) (now, you say).
S2: I eat aam.
T: Aam, ok, Tum? (next child).
S3: I eat khana.

T: khana, toh food. I eat food.

S3: Ok. Tum bolo sunny. (now you say Sunny).

Sunny: I eat sebphal (apple).

T: sebphal. Ok. Tum bolo Reeti (u say Reeti).

Reeti: I eat beehi (guava).

T: beehi? Beehi matlab amrood na?

S: hmm (nods).

T: Ok. tum bolo simla (you say simla).

Simla: I eat samosa.

T: I eat samosa. Chalo tum bolo (next child).

S5: I eat paani.

T: I eat paani? Khane wali cheesein batao beta jaise. Jawa khati ho, aade khati ho, aur bolo, kele khati ho. (I eat water? tell eatables. You eat food, and say more, you eat banana).

S5: I eat khana.

Analysis: English teaching mainly consisted of general behaviouristic strategies. The drilling technique was effectively applied for embedding English syntax through a filling-in-the-blanks activity. The principle of reinforcement was applied wherever appropriate. The teacher randomly corrected the Hindi/Gondi to English words in the sentence 'I drink or 'I eat...' without following any particular pattern. There was reasonable freedom for code mixing between three languages, which allowed the children to furnish wide-ranging responses. The child was operating within the syntactic structure of English language (SVO, which is also similar to Gondi syntax), where he had the freedom to code switch only one word. When an incomplete sentence was given and the child furnished the word, he was able to upgrade the blank space with Hindi/ Gondi words while this could not have been done with limiting the exercise to English. In this exercise, 'I eat...', the child S5 incorrectly answered 'I eat paani'. This can result from two possible reasons: firstly, in Gondi, eating and drinking come under a single category, and secondly, the child had misplaced the category of 'paani' in 'eating'. Since the first possibility was not feasible to be verified, the second possibility was explored to ascertain the teacher's approach to English teaching. Instead of correcting the child with 'paani is to drink and not to eat', the teacher gave him a few examples of the eatables in Gondi words like jawa, aada without mentioning the correct answer. As a result, the child changed his answer to 'I eat khana' (correct category). When the incorrect answer was replaced with examples from the correct prototype, the child was able to reply positively.

Activity 2: illustration

Three children sat in a group with a picture book, naming the animals in the book. The teacher acted as a facilitator of the process in group interaction. S1 was elder to S2. S3 was the eldest.

Analysis: it was observed that S2 could not retain the English word for fish, repeatedly calling it *meen* (Gondi). But after the intervention of the elder child S3, he said 'machli' and later named it as 'fish'. In this informal group discussion of naming animals from a picture book, the open discussion between small groups of children was possible because of the free seating arrangement. The moderate involvement of the teacher facilitated richer communication and also scaffolding learning among each other. Vygotsky's theory explains the mechanism by which children are able to learn languages through each other in a small group. When children from different age groups come together to name pictures in the story or give an elaborate description of the story, various ideas come together. It was seen how items were named in three languages appropriate to the level of understanding of children of different ages, and how it contributed in teaching new words to each other. As stated by the teacher in an interview, '*Jo bhasha ghar mein boli jaati hai, usi ko istemaal karke padhana chahiye*'. The teacher clearly believed that a child being taught in a language not spoken at home would hinder the process of the child's thoughts, which convinced her to use more Gondi language with children.

4. Discussion

English language pedagogy: from bilingualism to multilingualism

English pedagogy entailed a structured approach, probably because there were fewer resources in English as compared to Gondi and Hindi. There were not many attempts to assist the children in discovering the structures of the language. Apart from the behaviouristic approach, the model for teaching English incorporated cognitive elements. As seen in the filling-in-the-blanks activity, when the child failed to say a correct sentence but filled the gap with a correct category, the teacher provided the child with a prototype in his language in place of the answer. As a result, the child placed the answer in the correct category producing a correct sentence. The acquisition in this learning was through productive patterns and generating schema. The use of a prototype for teaching English syntax and vocabulary was seen as a cognitive approach for teaching language which holds that second-language approaches (SLA) are construction-based, rational, exemplar-driven and dialectic.

The failure to generalise behaviouristic strategies for all of the English language teaching showed that it is not completely true that language learning depends on the application of reinforcement. The technique that the teacher applied in teaching the English language was largely to teach English structures with Hindi as the medium of instruction, getting children to fill the blanks of the sentence in any of the three languages. This was a clear example of how classroom multilinguality was used as a resource. It also showed that a child could learn to make a correct sentence without the need for formalised drilling. This learning occurred in the child in a more abstract manner than prescribed by structural approaches. This aspect of language learning verifies Chomsky's speculations about psychological realities underlying language development. This study can be augmented by Chomsky's theory, which endorses that the rules or principles underlying linguistic behaviour are abstract (applying to all human languages) and innate (part of our native psychological endowment as human beings).

Code mixing and code switching

Code mixing is a phenomenon, as defined by Wardhaugh (2010), in which a word or an expression from one language is used in a group of words whose structure belongs to another distinct language. If, however, complete sentences from both languages follow each other, the phenomenon in question is called code switching. Code mixing generally came into use in both the teacher's and the children's conversations. However, it was more frequent in the teacher's communication. Code switching was a phenomenon frequently observed in the children, who were capable of speaking both the languages (unlike the teacher).

The English pedagogy observed encompassed devising activities where there was freedom for code mixing between languages that led to wide-ranging responses. Code mixing and code switching were used as a pedagogical instrument which acted as an effective tool in a linguistically divergent classroom situation. The teacher incorporated the target language with the help of the multilingual composition of the class. Since the teacher was a non-Gondi speaker, the extent of code mixing by her was limited only to vocabulary exchanges. However, facilitation of the negotiation of the two languages was done optimally in some of the activities. The replacement of Hindi words with Gondi in activities enabled the children to understand the concept at the cognitive level as described above in the prototype technique (Activity 1 above). In a way, code mixing and code switching were crucial phenomena that explained the nature of bilingual exchanges in the classroom. When a child was asked to fill the incomplete sentence, he was operating in the English syntactic structure. The freedom for code mixing made him upgrade the blank space with Hindi/Gondi words which otherwise would have been blocked in the direct approach of language teaching. This kind of free code mixing reflects the communicative method of language pedagogy which uses it as a tool for transference of meaning.

Classroom structure and communication – through Vygotsky’s lens

The use of all the three languages or negotiation processes in bilingual exchanges was helped by the arrangement of the classroom and communication in group activities that the teacher held. When children could talk and discuss among themselves the concepts taught by the teacher, they could construct their thoughts freely. The mutual exchanges and sharing of knowledge during group activities led to scaffolding of their learning. When a younger child could not produce an English name for a picture, an intervention by the elder child who knew the English word and another child naming the object in Hindi helped him learn the name effectively. Provision of the word in three different languages along with visual stimuli enabled him to connect the ideas and learn the vocabulary. The moderate involvement of the teacher helped communication and also scaffolded learning among the children. The response of verbal interactions between the teacher and the children uncovered the negotiation processes that took place in these picture-naming activities. This was possible because the children were allowed to communicate in their own language, assist each other in learning, and use their everyday experiences for understanding academic concepts and ideas, etc.

5. Summary and conclusion

In this study the teaching of English did not follow any particular method of language pedagogy such as grammar translation or direct method, etc. It was a set of mixed methods which were applied as per the context. The focal point of the research that emerged is the use of children’s native language in teaching of English. The result of this use was seen in three ways:

- the freedom given to children to answer/speak in their L1 (Gondi) led them to think and answer more freely.
- the use of cognitive strategies like prototype and template matching was possible because of the teacher’s knowledge of the children’s language
- the flexibility in the classroom seating arrangement led to informal groups of mixed age-group children and minimal intervention of the teacher. Such learning was possible for the youngest child when he was allowed to think and speak freely naming pictures in his own language. He was then provided with the additional vocabulary for those pictures in different languages by older children.

The findings of the study show that even when the teacher was not a speaker of the children’s L1, she was a learner of that language. Her sensitivity towards the children’s language allowing freedom of usage of that language in class had a positive impact on the learning of English. This kind of model, where the teacher is also a learner of the children’s language and freely allows children to use it in learning other languages proved to be a successful model in this study. This goes some way to providing an answer to the problem faced by Multilingual Education (MLE) models where there is either a lack of teachers who know the languages that should be used in the classroom or simply are not made aware of the value of using L2, L3 or L4 in the English classroom to facilitate learning.

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An Experiment in Multilingual Pedagogy for English Language Teacher Professional Development

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Abstract

This paper proposes a model of multilingual pedagogy for enhancement of English language capacity of state government teachers in India. In India, teacher professional development in English language has not caught up with the developments in research on multilingualism: it remains largely monolingual. Efforts have to be made for respecting and building on the home and school language of teachers for strengthening English language capacity development. This paper conceptualises the situation of English language capacity enhancement of teachers from state board schools in India. It proposes a model of multilingual pedagogy for teacher development by building upon Cummins Dual Iceberg Model and Learning Quadrant which specifies the range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities. This quadrant is interpreted in the Indian context. The paper defines multilingual as a person (teacher) who has knowledge of two or more languages. These languages could include their school language, the dialect that they speak at home, English and Hindi as school languages. Multilingualism for the purposes of this paper does not mean simultaneous proficiency in all the languages known. Experiments undertaken by the author based on the model of multilingual pedagogy are discussed with reference to the quadrant. The author proposes a design/model for multilingual pedagogy.

1. Introduction

This paper proposes a multilingual pedagogical model for English language capacity development of teachers in state government schools in India. The paper argues that a multilingual model is a theoretically, culturally, and practically feasible solution to the scale, diversity and challenge of English language teacher education in India.

What is the rationale behind a multilingual approach to teacher capacity development in English?

- **Policy:** the position paper for Indian Languages 2005 clearly states that a multilingual approach to teaching English is an answer to the 'burden of incomprehension' that a student faces. If a multilingual approach has to be adopted in the classroom, it is necessary to begin with the teacher.
- **Principles:** the scale and diversity of the English language capacity development of teachers poses several challenges which could be overcome by a multilingual pedagogy as it is inclusive, constructivist and caters to diversity.

- **Theory:** language theory has long since advocated a multilingual approach to language learning. This paper conceptualises a multilingual pedagogical model for teacher development.
- **Experiments:** the author has conducted successful experiments in multilingual pedagogy in remote, rural areas of Karnataka. In this paper the author describes her multilingual model of English language development of state board elementary school teachers.

2. Situational context

The 2011–12 District Information System for Education (DISE) data states that there are 14 million schools spread across India and 90 per cent of them are in rural areas. Only 30 per cent of teachers who work in these schools have qualifications beyond higher secondary level. Only 39 per cent of existing teachers receive in-service training (SSA): 2011–12). An analysis of the teacher-training packages designed by SSA for the year 2011–12 and the training conducted thereafter reveals that none of the training modules have any scope for multilingual awareness or pedagogy. They seem to be largely monolingual (SSA INSET: 2012).

State board elementary school teachers have no special training in English language during their education; they are products of the same system. They learnt English in the same way as any other subject, by memorising a few questions and answers. There was no input-rich environment for the acquisition or learning of English. The selection of these teachers was not made on the basis of their English language ability. There was no expectation that they would have to teach English when they were appointed. Krishnan and Pandit remark, ‘the basic fact is that teachers with little English knowledge themselves and who have lesser inclination to teach it, are being coerced into teaching the subject.’ (*The Hindu*, 2003).

Sonali Nag, in her 2005 research paper ‘Language Attainments and Learning Opportunities – Pointers for a new Curriculum Framework’, describes the linguistic diversity of children in Indian primary schools in the following way, ‘...there are children in Indian primary schools with no English in the home and neighbourhood and there are others for whom English is the dominant language’. The situation is the same with teachers teaching English – there are teachers with no English in their education, home or neighbourhood, and no motivation to learn English. ‘Worryingly’, Nag says, ‘for a large number of children fear, panic and bewilderment are the main emotions that the English class evokes’. (Nag op. cit.). When teachers from state board schools are given English classes, they feel the same emotions of negativism, lack of confidence and non-acceptance. The burden of incomprehension lies on both sides of the classroom: the teacher and the taught.

The 2005 position paper on English Language Teaching (NCERT) conceptualises the English teaching situation in India in terms of both the teachers’ English language proficiency (TP) and the exposure of pupils (and teachers) to English outside school (EE). These parameters for classification have been drawn from research, most notably Nag-Arulmani (2000) and Kurrien (2005) who identified four types of schools in India. Here I focus on the four types of teachers they identify.

3. Four levels of English language capacity among teachers in India

The categorisation of teachers and schools outlined in Figure 1 gives us a fair idea of the enormity and diversity of the English language capacity development situation in India. It also seems to create classes of teachers. In this paper we are concerned about the teacher development of the last two groups of teachers who urgently need to become autonomous learners.

Figure 1: Four levels of English language capacity of teachers in India (cf. Nag-Arulmani, 2000)

Four levels of English language capacity of teachers in India

TP = teaching proficiency

EE = exposure to English

1. ***** TP, *** EE** (e.g. English medium private/urban government-aided elite schools) with proficient teachers and varying degree of English in the environment, including home or first language.
2. *** TP, * EE** (e.g. new English medium private schools), use both English and any other Indian language, teachers with limited proficiency, children with little or no background in English.
3. *** TP, *EE** (e.g. government-aided regional medium schools). Schools with a tradition of English education along with regional languages, teachers with poor proficiency and very little English in the environment.
4. ***** TP, *** EE** (e.g. regional government medium schools in rural areas) have recently introduced English in Class 1 but no teaching beyond a few words is going on. Teachers have no proficiency in English (position paper for English, NCERT).

In conjunction with the recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and the Knowledge Commission Report, most states have introduced English at the level of Class 1. Have the states done anything for the English language capacity development of the teachers in these schools? What does policy recommend to overcome this situation? The position paper on English says, 'The level of introduction of English in India has now become a matter of political response to popular aspirations, rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of early introduction,' (NCERT 2006:1). To address this question, we hope through multilingualism to counter the burden of sheer incomprehension.

4. Defining a multilingual teacher-student situation in India

Three situations can be used to characterise the nature of the teacher-student situation in India:

- teacher and student share home language and teacher has knowledge of two school languages, one of them is English
- teacher and student do not share home language, teacher has knowledge of two school languages: one of them is English
- teacher and student have acquired the school languages (English and regional language or Hindi) through the environment and share or do not share home languages. In this case, teacher and student share some knowledge of school and home languages.

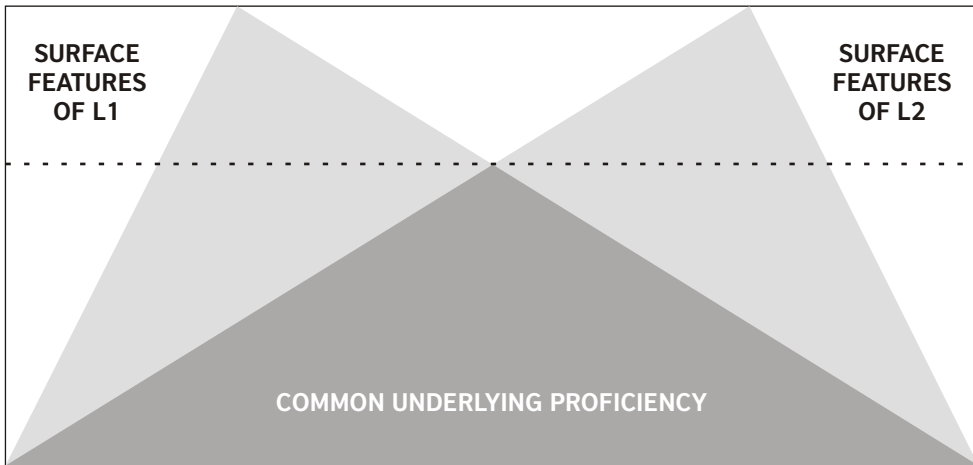
5. Existing teacher knowledge – language awareness

What should a teacher know to be able to teach a language? The teacher should be able to speak, read and write the language, a teacher should know about the language, a teacher should know the appropriate techniques in order to teach the language. Almost all teachers teaching in government rural elementary schools in India have very little knowledge of English. What is worth teaching in a teacher development programme? Is it possible to teach someone to speak, read and write the language in such a context?

What is language awareness?

The Association for Language Awareness (ALA) defines language awareness as ‘explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use’ (ALA home page). Figure 2 describes Cummins’ model of language awareness.

Figure 2: The Dual Iceberg Model (Cummins: 2005)



Beneath the tip of the iceberg of L1 one can see a large area of academic underlying knowledge which later filters down to form the common underlying proficiency (CUP) between L1 and L2. I interpret this CUP to be largely consisting of language awareness. But we could also widen this out to consider what knowledge a teacher possesses that could be developed to set her on the path of learning and teaching. A teacher teaching in a state board school in a rural area has the knowledge of his/her own language, and possibly some pedagogical experience of teaching her language (or the state language). She has a fund of cultural knowledge, but more importantly there is an underlying language awareness that she possesses about her school language of which she may not be aware

6. Developing Cummins’ model: what significance does it have for a multilingual pedagogy for teacher capacity development in English?

In this section we are going to work on the model proposed by Cummins and reinterpret it in terms of a proposal for multilingual pedagogy of teacher capacity development. I propose that if we can tap this underlying knowledge of L1 of the teacher and convert it into a cognitive linguistic language awareness that is common to both languages, the learning of L2 will gain momentum. This will also give the teacher a viable tool to begin explorations in the target language in the classroom.

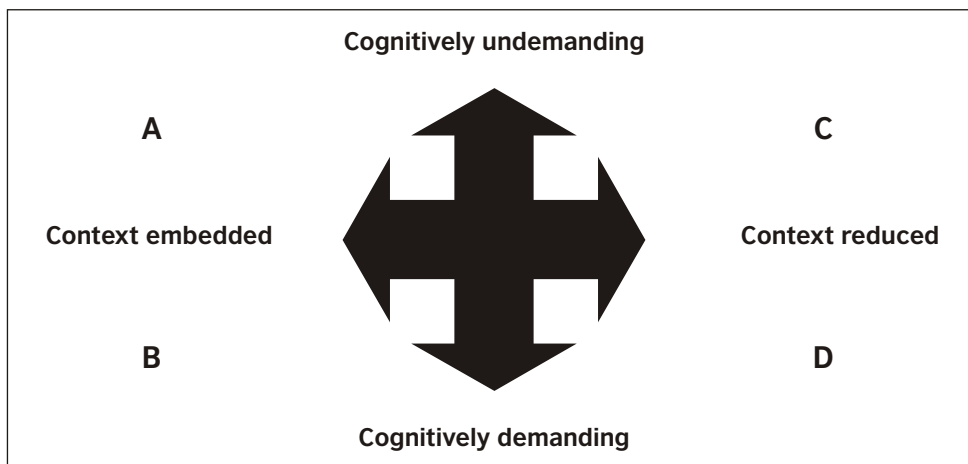
What is the underlying language awareness that a teacher has which can form a bridge between L1 and L2?

- **Phonological awareness:** the knowledge of the sounds of the L1 and how they combine to make words.

- **Morphological awareness:** how words combine to make other words, how inflection allows for changes in words.
- **Syntactical awareness:** how words combine to form sentences.
- **Semantic, pragmatic and socio-cultural awareness:** when to say a certain thing, poems and stories and cultural knowledge.
- **Cognitive skills:** analysis, synthesis, comparison, translation, visualising, creativity.

In order to consider how a pedagogical model based on this awareness of L1 might work it is important to look at the learning quadrants proposed by Cummins and interpret teacher education in terms of the learning quadrant.

Figure 3: Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities (Cummins 1984).



The proposed model for a multilingual pedagogy for teacher professional development can be described as follows:

Quadrant A: this is the quadrant which describes language acquisition by the teacher due to certain circumstances which are specific to his or her family. There is a context, an environment of English, and there is motivation and a survival-need, which leads to acquisition of the language. The English that is acquired is conversational not academic. It does not need any special effort. It is mostly spoken English but may also involve reading or writing.

Quadrant B: this is when language learning happens through training which is traditional. When knowledge about the language is taught in classroom mode the trainee does acquire language and makes a conscious effort to learn the language. Since this training is context-reduced the trainee does not get a chance to use what she has learnt in the classroom situation. This learning is soon forgotten. It is thus of very little use to the teacher and her classroom.

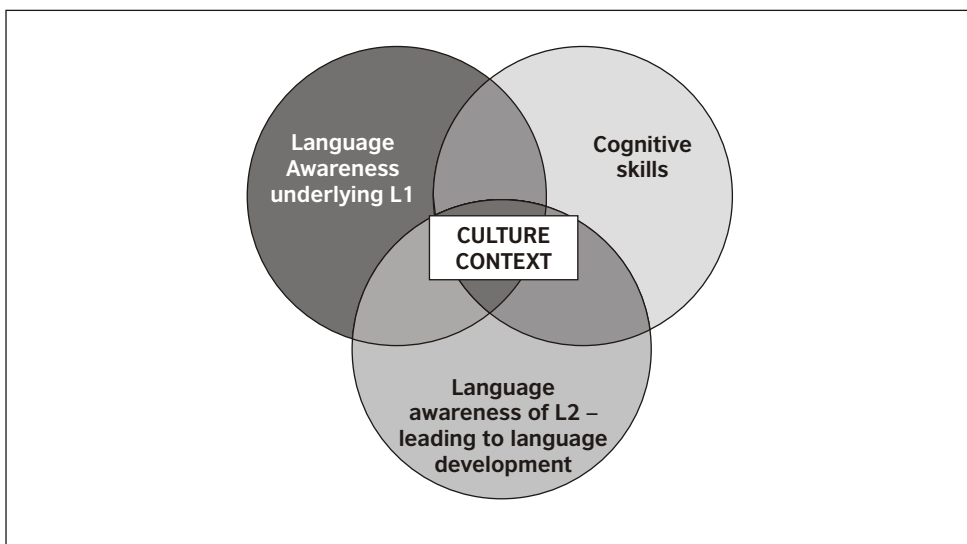
Quadrant C: this is when teacher development incorporates the culture, context and environment of the learner. The learner learns the language in a cultural and contextual setting, which is simulated but involves cognitively demanding material or situation. It poses a challenge to the learner through her

previous knowledge. The learner develops her language awareness, which makes her positively inclined to experiment with English in the classroom.

Quadrant D: this learning situation is where the learner/teacher becomes an autonomous learner, when the context is not available and the learning experience is cognitively demanding. This is when a teacher develops metacognitive language awareness: she explores the content and pedagogical knowledge of language to develop her target language. The teacher reads books, follows a learning path and her teaching is informed by her learning.

Any pedagogical model for teacher education should aim at moving teachers from Quadrant A to Quadrant D. The model that I propose is a culturally sensitive and contextually meaningful model, which at its simplest exercises academic cognitive skills and at its best is challengingly metacognitive.

Figure 4: Model for multilingual pedagogy for English language development of state government elementary school teachers



7. Multilingual pedagogy: the experiments

Experiments with Quadrant C: using culturally relevant material and cognitively demanding tasks

The first experiment was conducted with 30 teachers from elementary schools in Mandya. Mandya is a rural district in Karnataka where state board teachers have little or no access to English. They are mostly first-generation learners. After conducting an assessment of the developmental needs of the teachers it was discovered that the teachers did not have the confidence to speak and learn English. The rural environs of Mandya did not provide any opportunity for the teachers to speak, read or write English. In a programme comprising four workshops, I designed a multilingual pedagogy for developing reading skills. The cultural and contextual tool that was used was newspapers and bilingual stories. The cognitive skills the teachers had to use were visualising, connecting text to text and connecting text to life. They read texts/news in Kannada and spoke about the connections between the news and their life in English. They visualised stories in Kannada and spoke about them in English. In these experiments teachers read a text in Kannada and did exercises in English. The teachers did

analytical exercises where they compared news in two languages. They matched subtitles that were separated from news items. They matched photographs from different newspapers with news in English. They looked at how one piece of news was expressed in two languages, the words used, the meanings and contextual relevance of words used, how headlines work in two languages, their expansion and the conventions related to their expansion.

The tasks get progressively more cognitively demanding...

The second experiment was conducted with 30 resource persons from elementary and secondary schools in Surpur. Surpur is one of the most educationally disadvantaged districts in Karnataka. The teachers are products of the state board. There is no environment of English in this remote district where schools are isolated. This experiment is a long-term capacity development programme (ongoing). Through a series of workshops the participants explored a range of multilingual materials ranging from the cognitively undemanding to the cognitively demanding. The materials were always contextually relevant and culturally enriching as well as authentic. A simple contextually relevant and culturally cognisant activity was to read a headline in one language and expand it in another. So we read headlines of the day's newspaper in Kannada or Hindi and expanded them in English and vice versa. Later, we moved around to read the headlines and expansions and discussed what was meaningfully expressed and what was not. What does India share culturally from the remotest corners to the metropolis – a love for cricket. Where would one find this love expressed in the remotest corner – the answer is in the newspaper. Even if it is a day old, this news had resonance with teachers – male, female, young and old. So sports pages of newspapers in two languages were examined, compared and analysed. We examined the syntax of a Kannada sentence and an English sentence, how verbs work in both languages, the use of tense markers and use of auxiliaries in English and the use of inflections in Kannada. The group concluded that English was an easier language than Kannada.

8. Conclusion

Experiments in multilingual teacher education in India have many challenges but a beginning has to be made in this direction. Translating policy into practice creates tensions at many levels. This model and the experiments have attempted to show how multilingual theory translates into practice for teacher education. We have explored in general terms the pedagogical implications of multilingualism to develop teacher capacity in English. The vast canvas of regional languages and dialectic variations poses many challenges. The burden of incomprehension, the lack of access and materials and a history of immersion approaches loom large on the historical horizon of multilingual pedagogy. Yet experiments on a small scale tell the story of a culturally viable pedagogy which needs to be developed if we want to have equal access to English education in marginalised areas.

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Inspiring English Teachers in China and Indonesia: Implications for Indian Teacher Educators?

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Abstract

Inspiration is at the heart of good educational practice, yet it is an almost entirely unresearched phenomenon. This paper reports a research project that set out to explore inspiring English teaching in the state school systems of China and Indonesia. Learners of English aged 14–22 were invited to recall and describe inspiring teachers they had had, and a number of individual teachers were identified and observed at work in their schools. It was found that, though quite rare, inspiring teaching did exist and that teachers could have profound long-term effects on some learners' motivation to study English. However, the way teachers inspired their learners was quite different in Chinese and Indonesian classrooms, reflecting local educational cultures and practices. This suggests that teacher educators have an important role in helping early-career teachers to shape their pedagogy in such a way that the maximum number of learners can be inspired.

1. Introduction

Many of us can remember a teacher at school who inspired us to learn, who changed our relationship to a subject, and who persuaded us to invest effort in learning it, inside and outside school. In the era of communicative language teaching, there is plenty of published advice for practitioners on how to make classes stimulating, and there is also an emerging line of research that examines the motivational strategies that teachers use in class. But genuine competence in a foreign language only develops through sustained effort over many years, and we need to know what kind of teaching can inspire such a lasting commitment. In this paper I will report on a research project that aimed to identify and describe the characteristics of inspiring English teachers in two Asian state-education systems, China and Indonesia. I will then consider what value the results may have for Indian teacher educators, in particular by considering whether there are generalisable and transferable teacher qualities that underlie inspiring teaching, and if so, how trainers can help teachers become inspiring.

2. What we know about motivational teaching

Given the huge amount of research that has been conducted on second language (L2) motivation in the last 50 years, it is, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) write, 'hard to believe that until the mid-1990s there had been no serious attempts in the L2 literature to design motivational strategies for classroom application' (p. 105). Researchers' attention in the past tended to focus on the level and type of

motivation that the learners brought to class – for example, whether their motivation was mainly intrinsic or extrinsic, or whether they had positive attitudes to the people and culture whose language they were learning. This emphasis is all the more surprising considering that a common complaint of teachers the world over is that their pupils lack motivation to learn an L2 in school (Chambers 1999; Littlejohn 2008).

While the interest in learner motivation continues, there is now a new research initiative underway that examines how learners' motivation may change, and in particular how teachers can promote it. In his pioneering book *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, Zoltan Dörnyei (2001) proposed a four-part framework for describing the methods that teachers can use to motivate learners:

1. creating the basic motivational conditions, e.g. through building a pleasant classroom atmosphere
2. generating initial motivation, e.g. through ensuring the learners all have their own goals for learning the L2
3. maintaining and protecting motivation, e.g. through giving enjoyable tasks in class
4. encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, e.g. through giving timely and constructive feedback.

Recently researchers have attempted to test whether these strategies actually do motivate. For example, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) and Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012) observed language teachers in action and showed that their use of motivational techniques (e.g. the way they talk to learners, the kinds of activities they do) correlated with learners' enthusiasm for their lessons as measured by their alertness, participation and volunteering. Moskovsky et al. (2012) trained 14 Saudi teachers in some basic motivational techniques and then found that their learners emerged more motivated than a control group after an eight-week course. By demonstrating that specific teacher behaviours do boost learner motivation, these studies offer encouragement for teacher educators in combating the problem of demotivation.

It is recognised that the precise techniques teachers use should be made appropriate for the learners' language level, age and particular interests. But it is also important to consider whether motivational strategies need to be adjusted for different national or educational cultures. Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) addressed this question by comparing Taiwanese and Hungarian teachers' views of motivational strategies, and found that although both nationalities agreed on the need to promote learner self-confidence and create a pleasant classroom climate, for example, they gave different priority to other methods such as promoting learner autonomy (favoured by Europeans) and recognising students' efforts (favoured by Asians).

3. Inspiring teaching

Valuable as this research is, an important element is missing. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) point out that 'there is a critical difference between "motivating" students and "developing their motivation"' (p. 136). A teacher might successfully get learners to do what (s)he wants them to do in class, by carrot or stick, i.e. by providing pleasurable experiences, or by threatening dire consequences if they do not obey. But unless the learner internalises this motivation, it is unlikely that they will continue to put effort into learning English after the course. Learning a language is a long-term endeavour, and for most young people it requires a great commitment of time and overcoming many obstacles – especially, perhaps, in the state-school systems of developing countries, where official provision of English is limited in resources and time. Thus, one might argue that a truly motivating teacher is one who anticipates this future, and inspires their pupils to learn when they are no longer there.

4. The research project

This was the kind of teacher we sought to find and describe in our research project. Our specific research objectives were to find out:

- what kind of teaching learners regard as inspiring, and what effect it has on them
- whether inspiring English teachers from China and Indonesia exhibit the same qualities.

We chose Indonesia and China largely because the researchers (myself and my colleague from the University of Leeds, Martin Wedell) had experience of working there, and had contacts who could support the research process. The project had two phases:

Phase 1 In this phase we created an online survey for learners aged 14–22 in the Chinese city of Guangzhou and the Indonesian city of Jakarta. The survey asked learners whether they had had an inspiring English teacher – someone who had changed the way they felt about the subject and inspired them to put more effort into learning English – and if so, to nominate and describe them. We also asked the learners to describe the effect the teachers had on them. The survey was publicised in schools through our research assistants' professional contacts, and in Indonesia also through a Facebook page. Once the surveys were completed, we analysed the data by categorising the learners' comments according to theme. In addition, we identified eight state-school English teachers who had been nominated multiple times.

Phase 2 These eight nominated teachers were contacted and invited to take part in the second phase of the project. This involved us visiting the teachers on a normal working day in their schools, observing them teach a typical class, and interviewing them about how they came to be such inspiring teachers. As one teacher was ill on the day, seven teachers were included in the research (three from China, four from Indonesia) and the lessons and interviews were recorded for later analysis.

5. Results

In this section I will summarise some of the key findings of the project. These can be viewed online in more detail in the data tables in Lamb and Wedell (forthcoming).

How common is inspiring teaching?

Overall, we had 381 responses to our online survey, from a roughly equal number of boys and girls. The average age of the respondents was 16–17, and they were inspired on average at the age of 13–14, i.e. in junior high school. The response rate was lower than we had hoped, and to test whether this was because our survey had not reached enough learners, or whether it was because inspiring English teaching in state schools is quite rare, we gave a supplementary paper questionnaire, similar in design to the online survey, to over 200 English-major students at a high-status university in Jakarta, Indonesia. One would expect this population to be the most likely to have been inspired, given that they were now training to become English teachers themselves. However, only 18 per cent of them could remember an inspiring teacher. From this we conclude that inspiring teaching of English is probably not very common in the state schools of Indonesia and China.

What are the qualities of the inspiring teachers?

There were three broad categories of comment about the teachers who were nominated as inspiring:

- ***Things the teacher did (54.3 per cent)***. This included a broad range of strategies, the most commonly mentioned being 'giving advice on how to learn' (especially popular among Chinese learners), 'making the lessons fun' (especially popular among Indonesians), and giving suggestions

for specific ways of learning English. It is notable that teaching methodology featured only occasionally in learners' comments, though learners could be inspired by teachers who used novel methods.

- **What they were like as a person or professional teacher (33.1 per cent).** Learners valued two professional qualities above all: having a sound knowledge of English, and being a hard worker. In terms of personality, the most favoured characteristics were being kind and patient.
- **Their relationship with the learners (12.7 per cent).** Inspiring teachers were frequently cited as having good relations with their classes, and also with the individual learner; for example, they offered reassurance when learners felt uneasy or offered personal encouragement to succeed.

How did the learners' feelings about English change?

The most common response to this question in the online survey was that, after being taught by the inspiring teacher, English classes became more interesting, and they enjoyed learning it more. For example, some learners said that it became 'more than a school subject' to them. The next most common response was that they now felt they were making progress in English, which is closely related to the third most frequent response, that they felt greater confidence in their own English. Other learners became more aware of the importance of English, either in the world at large or in their own lives.

What were the learners inspired to do?

The final item in the online survey asked learners to report what they did to learn English as a result of having the inspiring teacher. Over 100 learners specifically reported putting more effort into learning, while others detailed particular activities. For the Chinese learners, these were often related to their schoolwork; for example, revising the content of lessons or preparing for class tests. The Indonesian learners tended to mention more independent learning strategies, such as watching films, listening to English-language songs and seeking out speaking partners. Surprisingly, technology did not feature heavily in their responses – possibly this is because they were looking back a few years, before the internet became readily available.

Were inspiring teachers from China and Indonesia similar or different?

In general, the survey responses of Chinese and Indonesian learners were similar, with only a few significant differences, such as those mentioned above. However, when we visited teachers in the two contexts, some remarkable contrasts emerged. Despite having similar comments made about them, the three Chinese teachers taught very different kinds of lessons from three of the Indonesian teachers (the fourth one was different again). These contrasts are summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Features of observed lessons of the inspiring teachers in each country

| China | Indonesia |
|--|---|
| Fast-paced lesson with multiple stages, each lasting less than 10 minutes. | Just a few stages, usually taking 15 minutes or more. |
| Lesson dominated by the teacher throughout. | Group work is the main activity for most of the lesson. |
| Focus on language throughout, with frequent error correction. | Focus on student-generated topics, with almost no correction of language. |
| Emphasis on competition among learners/groups. | Emphasis on collaboration of learners in groups. |
| Materials based wholly on textbook and syllabus. | Materials often generated by learners. |

I am not suggesting that these teachers are typical of their compatriots; in fact, being regarded by their learners as inspiring means they are probably by definition atypical. Furthermore, since we only observed a handful of teachers, we cannot be sure how common these features are, even among excellent, inspiring teachers (as noted above, the fourth Indonesian taught in a different style again). Nevertheless, it is likely that the contrasts noted in their teaching approach can be ascribed at least partially to aspects of the educational system and culture in each country. For one thing, Indonesian English lessons are usually 90 minutes long, in contrast to 45 minutes in China; this may help to explain their relatively languorous pace. The Chinese education system is notoriously exam-oriented (Cheng and Curtis, 2010), encouraging both teacher and students to stick closely to the class textbook and to emphasise mastery of its contents. The recent decentralisation of education in Indonesia has handed greater autonomy to schools, and Indonesian teachers confident of their head teacher's approval feel free to innovate with new methods, including passing on more autonomy to learners (Björk 2004). Finally, the three Indonesian teachers had all spent time on teacher development programmes in the UK or US, reflecting the relative openness of Indonesia to Western educational ideas over recent decades, and possibly this was the source of their belief in the value of learner-centred education.

6. Implications for Indian teacher educators

What we found, then, was that learners and teachers from two Asian countries speak in quite similar ways about inspiring pedagogy, yet the classroom realisation of that pedagogy was quite different. If, hypothetically, the inspiring Chinese teachers were transferred to Indonesian schools, and practised in the same way, it is very unlikely they would have been considered inspiring – and vice versa. This finding accords with that of Elliot et al. (2005) who, in their large-scale study of the motivational beliefs of teachers and students in the UK, USA and Russia, comment:

Teachers across all three milieux coincided in their views about what the key variables were affecting student motivation to learn in school. What they could not be aware of was that the parameters of these variables were strongly influenced by contextualised school practices and cultural pre-suppositions and values. (p. 134).

But if good practice is always context-bound, is it impossible to draw generalisable conclusions about what makes teaching inspiring?

I would argue that there are three lessons that can be learned from our research with possible relevance for teacher educators in India and elsewhere:

- Firstly, in establishing a link between inspiring teaching, changes in learners' feelings about a subject, and effortful learning, our study corroborates the findings of previously cited work on L2 motivational strategies and reaffirms Anderman and Anderman's (2010) assertion, in the introduction to their book on classroom motivation, that 'teachers can and do impact student motivation!' (p. 2).
- Secondly, while their practices differed, our inspiring teachers shared one very salient characteristic – they cared deeply about their work. They loved their subject, English, and cared about whether others learned it well. In other words, a likely general truth is that inspiring teachers are themselves inspired (cf. Csikszentmihayli 1997). That in itself is not enough, though, and that brings us to the final lesson:
 - Thirdly, teachers still have to learn how to convey their care to their classes, in a way that respects the sensitivities of their individual learners, the demands of the curriculum and the traditions of their education system, in order to maximise the chance that individual learners will be inspired.

All this has to be learned so, contrary to popular belief, inspiring teachers are made, not born, and teacher educators have an important role in enabling them to shape their behaviour so that it fits the particular context of work. To fulfil that role, teacher educators need a sound knowledge of pedagogy themselves, of course, and long experience of the 'school practices and cultural pre-suppositions and values' (Elliot et al, op. cit.) that characterise the Indian state-school system. But they need a keen awareness not just of the typical classroom, but of those where local teachers are operating at the boundaries of the field, like the ones described in this study. Perhaps what is needed is research to find inspiring English teachers in India.

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Satellite-based Supplementary English Programme for Students in Scheduled Areas of Gujarat

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Abstract

*WELCOME English is a satellite-based programme to supplement the regular English curriculum in about 230 schools. It seeks to address the widely found cumulative backlog of students' English achievement at entry to standard VIII and the low levels of teacher capacity in the scheduled areas – both of which seriously reduce the value and effectiveness of the state textbook-based approach to teaching and learning. Implemented by Unnati, an NGO, it is supported by the Tribal Development Department, Gujarat. The programme enables students to **Watch, Explore, Learn, COMMunicate and Enjoy** the experience of learning English. It aims to reduce their fear and inhibition and develop confidence in using the language. It consists of 50 DVDs and three workbooks for standard VIII and 30 DVDs and two workbooks for standard IX. These contain high-quality studio lessons followed by a live phone-in interaction with students and a worksheet linked to each lesson for reinforcement-cum-extension. Teachers are provided orientation and training on using the components of the package effectively. The focus has been on contextualising the package, overcoming the limitations of using satellite communication and enhancing viewership and engagement of students and teachers. The paper shares the learning that has emerged over three years of implementation.*

1. Context and rationale

The *WELCOME English SATCOM* (satellite communication) programme seeks to supplement the regular English curriculum in about 230 schools run and managed by the Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat. This programme is being implemented by UNNATI Organisation for Development Education, an NGO that works, among other themes, on social inclusion of the marginalised sections of society.

The Tribal Development Department, Gujarat, conducted a study that revealed that the academic gap between students in tribal and non-tribal areas has been found to increase by the time they reach secondary level regardless of any differences in their intelligence levels. A significant factor that contributes to this situation is the quality of teaching inputs that children in the majority of the scheduled areas receive. In the long run, such limited levels of achievement, especially in English, are due largely to inadequate exposure and support and curtail the students' later opportunities.

Low availability of trained and motivated teachers, especially for teaching English, impacts on the quality of education and language-related input to students. The extent and nature of in-service training support that teachers receive has been reported to be inadequate. Teachers in tribal schools lack clarity on teaching methodology and can benefit from input on participatory teaching methods, along with attitudinal training (Dasra 2009: pp. 21–24). Teachers tend to attribute students' limited language achievement to the lack of support from the home rather than question the efficacy of the curriculum implementation. The diversity in the schools managed by the Tribal Department manifests in several aspects:

- the student selection processes
- teacher quality
- financial resources
- infrastructure facilities
- input for human-resource development
- engagement and support provided by the management.

Together, these impact on the learning of the students, including the potential for students' language enhancement.

The students in tribal areas do not have exposure and support for English learning in their environments. The SATCOM Programme for English Language explores ways of utilising the potential of SATCOM-based instruction to provide quality exposure to English language within their current learning environment and enhance the quality of the English curriculum, importantly by providing teachers with a practical model of an enriched pedagogy (Sacha et al. 2011: p. 4).

The programme reaches out to 230 participating schools and over 8,500 students across 15 districts of Gujarat. It would have been difficult to achieve this coverage geographically and numerically through face-to-face language teaching inputs by a small group of specialised teachers. As the number of teachers with a background and expertise in teaching English as a second language is extremely limited in the areas covered, the option of training master trainers and percolating the training also did not appear viable. The availability and effective functioning of the SATCOM network in Gujarat made the use of this medium for connecting to such a wide and spread-out audience feasible.

2. Programme design

The programme was conceived as a synchronous model of technology-based learning (TBL). Instructors and learners meet at a specific time in a physical or virtual classroom. It was designed to be used in harmony with, rather than as a replacement for, the traditional face-to-face instruction. For optimal use of the potential of TBL, it should build in spaces and scope for human interaction (either face-to-face or electronically), and 'it should provide opportunities for the active engagement of learners, provide content that is relevant and linked with what learners already know, and offer opportunities for feedback and support.' (Koller 2006: p. v). These were the key principles that guided the design of the content, as well as the implementation of the programme.

With few precedents in the area of satellite-based language teaching, the initiative evolved based on experience and feedback from language experts and participating teachers. These pointed to the need to develop a learning package that would address the needs of both the students as well as the teachers and actively engage with the teachers in the schools since the programme was visualised as a supportive mechanism rather than a standalone.

The programme design focuses on creating a community of learners, where students practise the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in their own school environment as well as use a phone-in platform for connecting to the other schools and learners. The latter was guided by the premise that demonstration of a skill by peers as doable encourages children to try it (Prasad, work in progress: Section 1).

3. Key components of the programme

The English teachers of the participating schools are oriented on the specific aspects of *WELCOME English* in action prior to the relay of the programme. Participating schools are equipped with the necessary hardware (a TV and a set-top box) to receive the programme. The pre-recorded classes, usually of 35–40 minutes duration, are relayed three times a week for an hour after school from the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG) SATCOM studio. These are followed by a phone-in interaction where students and teachers call on a toll-free number to speak to the studio teacher. A two-way audio and one-way video facility enable students to see the studio teacher while all schools tuned in can hear the interaction between the caller and the teacher. This space is used to convey messages, model good practices for teachers and share performances by students, with the aim of enhancing student and teacher participation. The English teacher is expected to be present during the relay of the programme and play a facilitative role pre-, during and post-class. This presupposes that there are no technical glitches, students attend, conducive viewing conditions are created and students are supported to comprehend the class components, attempt the worksheets and receive opportunities to practise the language. Members of the curriculum development and programme team visit selected schools on relay and non-relay days to understand the issues in the implementation and provide support to teachers in performing their facilitative role effectively. The impact of the programme is gauged through multiple modes.

4. Learning package

The *WELCOME English* learning package for Standard VIII contains 50 DVDs of pre-recorded classes and three workbooks. The Standard IX package has 30 DVDs of pre-recorded classes and two workbooks. The packages have three major components: high-quality studio lessons followed by a live phone-in interaction with students, a worksheet linked to each lesson for reinforcement-cum-extension and involvement of the English teachers in facilitating lessons as well as guiding and monitoring workbook activity.

The learning package for standard VIII was developed in two parts. The first part – the Bridge course – focuses on helping students revise some of the language functions covered in standards V–VII while the second (text-linked) focuses on language and grammar covered in the standard VIII textbooks. The package for standard IX is similarly linked to the learning focus and levels prescribed in the curriculum. Methods used demonstrate pedagogical nuances and classroom practices that can enhance language development among students.

Students are provided exposure through interesting contexts, interaction through grammar and vocabulary activities and consolidation through fun activities. It relies on language necessary for initial interaction.

5. Challenges, learning and good practices

Implementing the programme threw up challenges and resulted in the learning and adoption of the good practices recounted below:

- **Balance between quality and timely production.** The programme was visualised in three broad stages: course design, course development and course delivery. It was important to ensure that the learning materials developed are engaging, contextual and easy to understand; attractive and helpful to students in understanding abstract concepts in the curriculum; the workbooks are aligned with the audio-visual materials of the package for the reinforcement of students' reading and writing skills; production happens in time and the programme is delivered efficiently and effectively. It also entailed collating feedback from several fronts and making revisions to the packages. All the three stages of each package (for standard VIII and IX) had to be completed in a year. The team struck a balance by planning well in advance, staying constantly connected, taking corrective action on time and fixing and meeting deadlines.
- **Convergence of multiple tasks, skills and roles.** The programme entailed performing a wide range of tasks and roles and giving the right job to the right person. The tasks included reviewing state-prescribed textbooks; developing a broad structure for the package; selecting the activities for a class and choosing the pedagogy; visualisation, scripting, recording and editing; converting activities into a reading and writing format for the workbook; developing illustrations, proofing and printing the workbooks and much more. The team was small and included professionals with a background of teaching ESL, developing English curricula, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, design, film-making and development education. Their experience ranged from two to 30 years; however, they did not necessarily have the expertise for the multiple roles that they were required to perform. The team members were at multiple locations. It was important to discuss, bring in varied perspectives, give feedback to each other and stay connected. Contact was maintained using face-to-face meetings, Google applications, hangouts and group mailing systems; roles were allocated and distributed based on identified capacities; and through on-going capacity-development inputs, the team was enabled to assume multiple roles and adopt multiple orientations.
- **Building collective ownership through stakeholder engagement and support.** Active involvement of all stakeholders in programme implementation is critical to building collective ownership. This needs articulation of their roles, providing consistent support and above all reposing and communicating trust in their abilities. Talking with all stakeholders helped them to articulate their envisaged role that was enlarged based on experience. Support to teachers ranged from helping them acquire the technical skills for programme operation to developing strategies for garnering management support. Capacity development inputs were directed to appreciating the benefits of interactive pedagogy in language learning and the rationale for use of diverse formats in the learning package, providing space to experience the joy of being an active learner to contributing ideas to course design. Teachers perceived that students in tribal schools have limited abilities to learn and require repeated inputs even for basic concepts. Some were even apprehensive about their abilities to learn from the medium used in this programme. Video clippings of students' capacities to engage and learn from the programme were shared through different forums. Learning materials to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills were provided. Face-to-face interactions through orientations, review meetings and school visits, telephonic and postal communication and satellite-based interactions were deployed. The Tribal Development Department provided support for logistics and liaison support for events, troubleshooting at the school level, dissemination of the package and other materials, and through participation in meetings and motivating the schools to implement the programme. The technical team at the BISAG studio was engaged in streamlining the phone-in interaction and recording the calls received.
- **Creating monitoring systems to enhance viewership.** The presence of viewers and a working infrastructure are two pre-conditions in any satellite-based programme. Strategies were evolved to track these and make amends. Monitoring only by external agencies/actors is often fraught with a fault-finding approach/tendency. Involving the key actors in a programme and adopting an

approach of monitoring for support can lead to a greater level of participation and ownership of responsibility. Teachers were engaged in developing self-monitoring indicators and tracking their own progress. Viewership was thus tracked through periodic reporting by schools, phone calls to schools by rotation and visits made by SATCOM Fellows appointed to provide support to schools. Reasons for low viewership (functions in school, teachers' engagement with administrative duties, technical failures, no local technical support and lack of support from management) were addressed. The programme relay schedule was based on the academic calendar. Student teams were formed to take charge in absence of a teacher; local technical support was sourced and funds created, the school management was approached for support and the programme relay team at BISAG and the administrative and monitoring teams in the department were engaged. Three similarly structured tests of ability with a built-in gradient of task complexity across them were administered to students and scored by the teachers. Variation in the score levels between sections within each Special Worksheet matches the expected patterns built into the design. This variability of scores is a vindication of the trust in the teachers.

- **Complementarity for sustainability.** The key responsibility of providing educational inputs to students lies with the teachers. Programmes of non-government agencies aimed at education should aim at complementing and strengthening the existing systems and not replacing them. This requires use of supportive strategies, handholding and engaging with the teachers to build their stake in the alternate programmes with the ultimate aim of mainstreaming them. The programme focused on involving teachers at all stages – right from programme design to monitoring. The DVDs of the learning package were provided for repeated use by schools.
- **Staying connected.** With the diverse range of actor and skill requirements, it was important to keep in touch, receive and give immediate feedback, share ideas, resources and skills. A number of virtual spaces and platforms were used to interact and share documents, ideas and feedback.

6. Indicators of student learning and teacher engagement

A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to gauge student learning and teacher engagement: phone-in participation and feedback of studio teacher, school visits and interactions, studio activities repeated in class or outside the classroom, self-monitoring and feedback from the English teachers and use of special worksheets/tests.

Trends in viewership have increased progressively over the years. More than 65 per cent of schools had viewed 75 per cent of classes or more. Students' engagement has led to the formation of teams to take care of administrative arrangements for ensuring viewership, putting on performances in English and engaging with the language in daily interactions. Workbooks have been viewed and used as a resource and this potential needs further exploration. Teachers have assumed greater responsibilities and have begun using the interactive methods with their students.

The number of schools and new callers has increased during phone-in time. There is a gradual increase in duration and challenge level of interaction. Students' level of comfort appears to have increased and this reflects in their listening and speaking ability.

A series of graded tests administered in the third year of the programme to capture progress in learning have indicated positive trends. Students have performed better on vocabulary and comprehension of short passages as compared to grammar and comprehension of instructions.

An external evaluation of the programme indicated that it 'has shown its expected effect as obtained difference in score of experimental schools was substantially more than that of control schools' (TALEEM 2011: p. 25).

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English Language Resources and Teachers' Attitudes in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is aimed at assessing the relationship between English language resources from the viewpoint of quantity, functionality, frequency of usage and teachers' attitudes. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. A correlational design was adopted while a 29-item researcher-made instrument, tagged English Language Resource Material Questionnaire (ERMQ), was used as an instrument for data collection. Out of a total of 184 English language teachers in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, 43 (24 per cent) formed the sample size from six out of ten local government areas. The data collected were analysed using mean standard deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result indicated that there was a significant relationship between quality of language resources and teachers' attitudes towards their use. Also, there was a significant relationship between functionality of language resource materials and teachers' attitudes. The third result revealed that there was no significant relationship between frequency of language resource usage and teachers' attitudes. Recommendations made included the fact that English teachers should be trained in how to improvise as well as make use of modern language resource material to enhance the teaching and learning of the subject.

1. Introduction

Although English is not a Nigerian language, it is technically not regarded as a foreign language, because it has deeper functional roots in the society and the culture than a foreign language. English is regarded as a second language in terms of function. The language is required principally for international diplomacy, connections and interactions (Adegbja 2005). By implication, the bulk of national development and the development of human and material resources in Nigeria hinges on the use of the English language. At all levels of education, the medium of instruction is English. Most instructional resources, examinations and all information processing are conducted in English. The

language has continued to enjoy pride of place in the nation's education system. Accordingly, English language never has fewer than five periods daily, and may even be given as many as seven or eight periods, particularly now that oral English examinations are compulsory. According to Fafunwa (1998) cited in Awobuluyi (2012), English language enjoys a profusion of pedagogical materials, but is affected by the problem of quality and functionality, and the competence of the language resources and teachers in the schools. This is based on the fact that teachers are basically L2 speakers.

Whawo (2003) explained that irrespective of the method of training that the language teacher is engaged in or the availability and quality of teaching and learning resources, emphasis should be placed on improving teachers' skills – how they use instructional materials, evolve modern methods of evaluating students and deepen their knowledge of the English language.

There is an interplay between the resources available, their quality, functionality, frequency of use and the attitudes of teachers during the teaching and learning process. Thus, the quality of a product is based on the quality of the production process. Some teachers lack good training in contrastive linguistics and written composition due to second-language circumstances; it therefore requires extra efforts on the part of English language teachers to adequately utilise the material resources, coupled with effective pedagogical strategies for combating learners' errors that occur in their written and oral performances due to mother-tongue interference.

Nigerian students desire the ability to use English correctly. They want to understand meanings and connotations in terms of the culture of the target language. They desire to develop the ability to understand the speech and writing of natives of the target culture in terms of their meanings, ideas and achievements. In order to achieve this it is necessary to work across all four language skills as part of a holistic approach to developing competence.

2. Statement of the problem

In Nigerian schools, two groups of resources come into play – the human resource represented by the trained teachers and the material resource represented by the raw materials or instructional materials used in order to enhance the teaching/learning process. For staff to be able to give learning instruction efficiently and effectively for a desired output, he or she must have the skills, knowledge and appropriate teaching strategies. Thus, since knowledge is dynamic, the language teacher's ability to access and utilise adequate language resources for the purpose of attaining educational goals is very important.

3. Objectives of the study

This study seeks to:

- examine the relationship between the quantity of English language resources and teacher's attitudes
- assess the relationship between functionality of English language resources use and teachers' attitudes
- determine the relationship between frequency and teachers' attitudes in the use of English language resources.
- Our research hypotheses were that:
 - there is no significant relationship between the quantity of English language resources and teachers' attitudes
 - there is no significant relationship between the functionality of English language resources and teachers' attitudes

- there is no significant relationship between frequency of English language resources use and teachers' attitudes.

4. Method

The research adopted a correlational approach for the study, with quantity, functionality and frequency of English language resources usage as independent variables, while teachers' attitudes was the dependent variable. Some 184 English language teachers from 82 public secondary schools within Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District constituted the study group. In order to ensure a sufficient representation of the various segments of the population, a stratified random sampling was used to classify the local government areas in the district and six out of nine local governments were selected for the study. For each area English language teachers from four schools were used for the study at a ratio of 1:4. This resulted in a sample size of 43, which is 24 per cent of the total population of English teachers in the district.

The instrument used for the study was a researcher-made questionnaire tagged English Language Resource Material Questionnaire (ERMQ). The scope of the study covered quantity of both human and non-human resource material, functionality of resource material and frequency of resource material usage. A 29-item questionnaire was used for data collection. The structure of the instrument varied depending on the variable involved. Each of the variables consisted of six items, except attitude, which had 11 items to elicit responses from respondents. The face and content validity of the instrument was checked by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established through the test-retest method in which Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was adopted as a statistical tool with 0.69 as reliability co-efficient. Subsequently, the instrument was administered by the researchers to the teachers in the schools. The data collected was later analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while PPMC was used to test the hypotheses.

5. Results

Table 1 below shows the r-value of .425 for research question 1. The result means that there is an average positive relationship between the quantity of resources materials and teachers' attitudes.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and PPMC analysis for quantity of resource materials and teachers' attitudes.

| Variable | Mean | Std. deviation | N |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Quantity of resource materials | 13.0233 | 4.23977 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | 25.4884 | 2.46279 | 43 |
| | | Quantity | Attitude |
| Quantity of resource materials | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .425(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .004 |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 754.977 | 186.512 |
| | Co-variance | 17.976 | 4.441 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | Pearson Correlation | .425(**) | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 | |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 186.512 | 254.744 |
| | Co-variance | 4.441 | 6.065 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Entries in the table reveal that the calculated r-value of .425 is less than the critical r-value of .304 at .05 alpha level with 42 degrees of freedom. The result is significant. In simple terms, the quantity of resource materials is significantly related to teachers' attitudes.

Table 2 shows the r-value of .375 for research question 2. The result means that there is a weak positive relationship between functionality of resource materials and teachers' attitude.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and PPMC analysis for functionality of resource materials and teachers' attitudes.

| Variable | Mean | Std. deviation | N |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Functionality of resource materials | 14.1163 | 3.23823 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | 25.4884 | 2.46279 | 43 |
| | | Resource materials | Attitude |
| Functionality of resource materials | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .375(*) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .013 |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 440.419 | 125.558 |
| | Co-variance | 10.486 | 2.989 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | Pearson Correlation | .375(*) | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .013 | |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 125.558 | 254.744 |
| | Co-variance | 2.989 | 6.065 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Entries in the table reveal that the calculated r-value of .375 is greater than the critical r-value of .304 at .05 alpha level with 42 degrees of freedom. The result is significant, and indicates that the functionality of resource materials is significantly related to teachers' attitudes.

Table 3 shows the r-value of .172 for research question 3. The result means that there is a weak positive relationship between frequency of use of resource materials and teachers' attitudes.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and PPMC analysis for frequency of use of resource materials and teachers' attitudes.

| Variable | Mean | Std. deviation | N |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Frequency of use of resource materials | 16.4419 | 2.63043 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | 25.4884 | 2.46279 | 43 |
| | | Frequency of use | Attitude |
| Frequency of use of resource materials | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .172 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .271 |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 290.605 | 46.721 |
| | Co-variance | 6.919 | 1.112 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |
| Teachers' attitude | Pearson Correlation | .172 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .271 | |
| | Sum of squares and cross-products | 46.721 | 254.744 |
| | Co-variance | 1.112 | 6.065 |
| | N | 43 | 43 |

Entries in the table reveal that the calculated r-value of .172 is less than the critical r-value of .304 at .05 alpha level with 42 degrees of freedom. The result is not significant, meaning there is no significant relationship between **frequency of use of** resource materials and teachers' attitude.

6. Discussion of findings

There is no room in a paper of this kind to talk in detail about the statistical implications of our study. Essentially, what the study has helped us to understand better is the interplay between important factors that we see in the teaching and learning process, specifically that:

- There is a significant relationship between the quantity of both human and non-human resource materials available and teachers' attitude of usage to enhance teaching and learning. We see from observational studies that teachers seldom improvise with instructional materials in the classroom, which has some influence on student competence and achievement as evinced in examination results.
- The absence of functional English language teaching resources has a detrimental impact on teaching and learning, and this is especially so in resource-poor environments. This is in line with the findings of Odo (2011).
- An over-reliance on the textbook as the only instructional material used in the classroom leading to negative results is evident and this seems to influence the teachers' attitudes to the use of other supplementary materials where they are available. This is supported by Whawo (2003) and Ivowi (2009), who state that teachers should be able to use material resources including ICT in order for them to teach English successfully. Broadening this out, results also indicated negative attitudes by teachers to becoming involved in extra-curricular activities. Thus, there is seemingly a low level of understanding of and sympathy for the idea of educating the whole child and engaging them in

every possible way to stimulate them and enhance their learning experience. Iloka (2009) observed that English-teaching programmes should be aimed at developing the four aspects of communication skills in learners and that priority should be given to active participation during extra-curricular activities under the teachers' auspices where all skills can be exploited in a less formal context.

7. Conclusion

The paper assessed English language resources against quantity of resource materials, functionality of resource materials and frequency of resource materials usage as it relates to the attitude of teachers towards language resource material usage. Taken as a whole, there is a need to positively influence the attitudes of teachers towards positive and adequate use of instructional materials during lessons to facilitate effective learning. Such an approach is likely to lead to enhanced teaching and learning during English lessons in schools and ultimately achieve more positive learning outcomes.

As far as the implications for teacher education are concerned, our study also indicates that more training should be provided to teachers both pre- and in-service on how to utilise a wide range of instructional materials in the classroom to make the environment as rich as possible. This is, of course, constrained by the financial resources available to teachers and we know from studies elsewhere in this publication that in resource-poor contexts the challenges are great. The enhanced training of teachers about the use of resources but also their purpose in the learning process will equip teachers better to deal with the different learning needs and styles they see in their students. Of course we would like to see more teachers being employed in the system to bring down the very high teacher:student ratios we see in Nigeria, where it is often 1:100.

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Appendix

ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOURCE MATERIAL QUESTIONNAIRE (ERMQ)

Dear Respondent

This research is aimed at accessing the quality, functionality, frequency of use and teachers' attitude towards language resources in Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area. Kindly respond appropriately, as your response will be treated in strict confidence.

INSTRUCTION: Indicate with a tick (?) on the appropriate option or specify your answer where necessary.

PART A: QUANTITY

1. How many English Language teachers do you have in your School?

ONE TWO THREE Specify

2. The number of English Language related clubs in the School are

ONE TWO THREE Specify

3. How many English Language instructional materials do you have?

ONE TWO THREE Specify

4. The number of English Language club competitions, students are exposed to per term is?

ONE TWO THREE Specify

5. How many times do teachers improvise instructional materials for teaching per term?

ONE TWO THREE Specify

6. Students/Teacher ratio in the School is:

1:40 1:50 1:60 Specify.....

PART B: FUNCTIONALITY OF RESOURCE MATERIALS

Rate the level of functionality of the following resource materials in your School.

| S/N | Resource Materials | HF | F | LF | NF |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|
| 1 | English Language Laboratory in the School | | | | |
| 2 | ICT Facility in the School | | | | |
| 3 | The School Debating Club | | | | |
| 4 | The School Press Club | | | | |
| 5 | The School Library | | | | |
| 6 | Language instructional materials in the School | | | | |

KEY: Highly functional – HF, Functional – F, Lowly Functional – LF and Non-functional – NF

PART : FREQUENCY OF USE

| S/N | ITEMS | MF | F | LF | N |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Teachers have access to School Library | | | | |
| 2 | English teachers write their lesson notes? | | | | |
| 3 | English teachers use media resources like newspapers in the class? | | | | |
| 4 | Teachers use language instructional materials during lessons? | | | | |
| 5 | Teachers use the exercises from prescribed text, during lessons | | | | |
| 6 | English teachers take their students out for field trips or excursion | | | | |

KEY: More Frequently – MF, Frequently – F, Less Frequently – LF, Not at all – NT

PART D” ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS LANGUAGE RESOURCES USE

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD |
|------------|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | I like teaching English Language to students | | | | |
| 2 | I mark students’ assignment and return on time | | | | |
| 3 | I am excited about ICT resources for teaching English Language | | | | |
| 4 | I use ICT facilities for teaching English lessons | | | | |
| 5 | Teaching English is very boring | | | | |
| 6 | I rarely use the School Library for my teaching | | | | |
| 7 | The school library has no updated resources | | | | |
| 8 | I improvise instructional materials for my lessons | | | | |
| 9 | I sometimes take my radio to class to teach | | | | |
| 10 | I use my laptop during classes | | | | |
| 11 | I am not familiar with ICT, so I do not use them for my lessons | | | | |

KEY: Strongly Agree – SA, Agree – A, Disagree – D, Strongly Disagree – SD

Online Courses: The Better Platform for Continuous Professional Development in Sharing Ideas and Solving Classroom Issues

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Abstract

This paper discusses the efficacy of online courses in enhancing the continuous professional development of teachers and points out how online courses can be a better platform than the traditional in-service teacher-training programmes conducted by various teacher-training agencies. The paper is based on the personal experience of the author who underwent an online TESOL course offered by the University of Maryland (UMBC) in the US, which was funded by the Regional English Office at the US Embassy in New Delhi. The paper is descriptive as well as reflective, as the intensive online course gave the author a unique opportunity of participating in an internationally recognised online course, rich in theory and practice. It positively impacted his classroom practices and assisted in resolving classroom issues. This course enabled the author to gather recent information and techniques as well as hands-on-experience and enhanced his competence as a teacher trainer. Additionally, the course helped him design activities that enabled participants to realise their roles, change their thought patterns and take a journey in their professional growth. Thus, the experience of the course confirmed that online courses contribute greatly to teachers' continuous professional development.

1. Introduction

The explosion of knowledge and scientific advancement in the recent past has changed the goals of education. Information and communication technology has made the world a global village. Internet facilities available today have made it possible to explore the possibilities and potentials in this global village. Teachers need to familiarise themselves with recent developments in their field of study, keeping in mind the transformation of classroom practices, as they continue their professional growth through such courses that provide strategies to suit 21st-century language users. This paper discusses the efficacy of online programmes as a better platform in continuous professional growth in the context of English language teaching as a second language in sharing and resolving classroom issues. Thus the paper examines the concept of professional development, 21st-century skills and competencies, activities and roles in learning, and finally, continuous feedback and worldwide networks to support the effectiveness of online courses.

2. Continuous professional development and online courses

Online continuous professional development (CPD) programmes with content-rich environments help immensely in stimulating educational change and school improvement. Professional development reflects teachers' practices in enhancing school performance. Carlin (2013) argues that it 'is a result of reflection, knowledge, and skills,' that is necessary for each classroom practitioner to bring about change in their own practices, enabling students to perform better in language learning. Evans (2002, p. 131) calls it *'the process whereby teachers' professional performance may be improved.'* Darling-Hammond (1994b) calls it 'restructuring teaching knowledge' (as cited in Evans *ibid.* p. 3). This process of restructuring should be the spontaneous initiative of an individual, which Woodward (1991, p. 147) describes as 'a voluntary, holistic, continuous process-oriented and long-term process...' This initiative should exclusively be targeted towards teachers' personal growth for better classroom insights. Guskey (1995), and Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) argue that CPD may also 'occur as a result of self-directed, collaborative inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to the teacher' and online collaboration may be a better alternative in this regard (as cited in Carlin *ibid.*). Self-study, and attending conferences, seminars and workshops are some of the most popular means of professional growth. Conversely, these, according to Harwell (2003, p. iii) are 'one-time events' which should not be 'an Event,' but rather 'a Process', and are limited to only a selected few professionals. Nevertheless, professional development is a must for all teachers as 'the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement', notes Hargreaves and Fullan (1992, p. ix, as cited in Richards and Renandya 2002). Harwell (*ibid.*, p. v) argues that there is a need for a sense of the 'urgency of providing teacher professional development that changes teacher behaviors in ways that lead to improvement in student performance.' Proactive attitudinal change is the key to educational success, and online courses aim at changing teachers' classroom behaviour so as to make teachers aware of recent trends in classroom practices.

Online courses are designed by keeping in mind the students' performance and the school's improvement. These courses provide participating teachers with opportunities to practise what they learn over a relatively extended period of time and an ideal environment for interaction among participants. Thus the courses offer a venue for thinking about and reflecting on teacher and student learning at their own convenience (Harwell *op. cit.* p. iii). The online courses offered by worldwide recognised bodies (IATEFL, BC, RELO, TESOL) are designed in such a way that teacher professionals not only get access to recent theoretical input but also hands-on teaching strategies for their classroom practices. These materials develop a theoretical base; the threaded discussions held on them broadens participants' understanding and helps professionals to solve problems and resolve issues. The content demands a lot of reading and systematic reflection. Hence, online courses provide teachers with an interesting way to develop professionally and to apply new strategies and techniques that engender learning in their own local contexts.

3. Twenty first-century skills and competencies

English teachers need to make themselves familiar with 21st-century skills and competences. Successful 21st-century educators have to be more than student-centric and holistic. They should also teach about how to learn as much as teach about the subject area, notes Churches (2009). This is because the students of this generation have different needs and their ways of thinking are completely different. The traditional approach to teaching does not match with many students' learning styles and, as a result, teachers fail to realise their learning objectives; thus, teachers fail to create and sustain students' interest in learning. Consequently, teachers' ways of handling classes, instead of yielding the desired impact, de-motivate and frustrate students. Alternatively, online courses provide a platform for sharing information, solving problems and resolving issues such as students' de-motivation and

frustration, etc., through discussion and debate among participants taking part from different parts of the globe. Therefore, professionals can overcome most of these challenges sitting at their own desks.

Online courses provide the training necessary for one to overcome the challenges of e-learning, which are especially evident at the initial stages. One such challenge is making oneself familiar with the virtual classroom, such as the Discussion Board, Announcement, Course Materials, etc. The most important of all these is finding Threads so as to submit the assignments. All the same, such courses train teachers to meet those challenges by conducting tests and quizzes during the pre-course orientation programmes. Other issues of online courses get resolved as participants proceed with the course. Consequently, online courses not only enrich professionals with content and hands-on experiences but also enable participants to learn technology skills and needed competences as well. Therefore, these courses constantly help them search for new strategies in their own learning and in turn develop students' 21st-century skills and competences.

4. Online courses – learning strategies

Online professional development courses provide a foundation for developing learning strategies and assessment tools to evaluate one's own classroom performance. The benefits that can be accrued from the online courses are manifold. Having undergone a few programmes (especially 'The Best Practices in TESOL Methodology' course offered by the University of Maryland [UMBC], funded by the Regional English Office at the US Embassy in New Delhi and other [RELO] webinars), I feel that a warm-up activity should create interest and activate students' learning. Teaching is not a transfer of knowledge but an act of construction through co-operative and collaborative actions. For this reason, a platform for collaboration in learning should be created, teacher talk should be restricted to and best utilised when giving instructions, and reading should be considered a process of meaning-making. Further, students should be made aware of the fact that meaning is a kind of 'constant flickering of presence and absence together and reading a text is more like tracing this process of constant flickering' (Eagleton 1983: p. 128). Hence, adopting top-down, bottom-up and interactive approaches is necessary in helping students to negotiate meaning. Similarly, writing is easier if steps are followed like planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting), editing and reviewing. These steps help to demystify writing skills themselves. Furthermore, mastery over cognitive strategies and most essentially metacognitive skills in learning are necessary to reduce the learning burden. Moreover, explicit grammar rules may develop confidence; understanding rules implicitly helps language use in social contexts. That being so, co-operative and collaborative learning not only provides a platform to gain from each other's efforts and construct new knowledge but also develops leadership, decision-making and communication skills.

Online programmes give priority to discussion and debate. This is crucial in developing critical thinking and logical deduction. It provokes sustained engagement and discussion on essential issues that enable one to understand concepts more clearly and from different perspectives. Therefore, teachers today need to provide such scope to develop students' critical thinking skills that are needed in the personal, social and professional contexts of real life. Teachers are no longer the only depositors of knowledge as material now is available for students through the internet. Developing critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, adaptability, initiative, communication, curiosity, etc., is the main goal of a 21st-century paradigm of learning. Additionally, online courses make participants alert in using metacognitive skills and harnessing the skill of critical analysis. This in turn helps participants in sensitising students to their metacognitive skills and strategies in learning. Research supports that: as learners become aware of the variations in interpretation and construction of meaning among a range of people they construct an individual meaning in their own learning (Alexander 1997: p. 2). These courses further teach systematic processes of peer observation – to investigate classroom practices, develop deeper understanding and reflect critically on different aspects of classroom activities, their

transaction and in giving feedback. Feedback from fellow scholars and course instructors helps to re-examine the issues and overcome challenges in learning. Besides, these courses help to plan classroom management issues like classroom behaviour in ESL practice and make teaching most effective to maximise learning. Finally, the best practices in online programmes can revolutionise one's philosophy of teaching as well.

5. Online courses – tasks and roles in learning

Online courses are often focused on context, content and process to help professionals design tasks and activities for classroom practices that engage students and engender learning. The course that I have undergone recently had all those elements. It provided opportunities for teachers to initiate changes in order to deepen subject-matter knowledge, sharpen classroom skills and to try new behaviours in practice such as arranging classroom procedures like learning centres, readers' theatre, exit slips and tasks for developing language skills based on students' learning styles and multiple intelligences. Tasks that involve students in their reading, presentations, workshops and discussions are no longer a problem either at the preparation stage or while implementing them. Translating prescribed texts into theatre activities is fun both for teachers and for students. The only challenge in undergoing an online course I faced was in maintaining brevity and relevance while writing reflective essays. However, I could understand the techniques and hone my writing skills through the assignments. This knowledge has helped me to sensitise my students to their metacognitive skills, strategies and styles, and consequently to help them to be successful learners. Therefore, writing assignments is another important activity that makes reading and writing successful. Additionally, the steps of classroom practice like planning, designing tasks, using questioning techniques, making logical transitions, etc., become effective when students are involved and collaborating with one another. This encourages the students to undertake responsibility throughout the entire process. Collaboration becomes successful when teachers are aware of their own classroom behaviour and the process of observation itself. Most significantly, the critical thinking that normally takes place during the pre-reading and post-reading stages pervades, even during the while-reading stage. Thus, I feel that involving students in peer learning is an act of helping their self-inquiry and finding and researching their own learning strategies.

6. Online courses – continuous support, feedback and worldwide networks

Online professional development courses provide rich experiences, continuous support and worldwide networks which break down isolation and improve the quality of planning, organising and improving classroom performance. Additionally, these courses facilitate self-inquiry and reflection. For instance, I had been following a linear fashion in my reading prior to joining such courses. The opportunity for discussion and reflection had always been limited. These courses have enabled me to understand that the classroom practices and approaches in this post-method era should be based on some well-established principles to achieve learning goals (Brown 2002: p. 12). This knowledge is helpful in providing scope for discussion in classroom practices. These online courses have enabled me to join worldwide professional groups like the Global TESOL International group, peer groups like English Language Teaching to 21st Century ELLs, Teaching English to Teens, and so on. These groups allow me continuous theoretical input, constant discussion on current issues in language teaching, innovative practices and other related areas. Such groups provide scope for co-operative and collaborative learning and in planning more successful approaches to overcome problems of traditional ways of teaching and learning. These groups also enable me to re-evaluate an issue and interpret it logically, and explore the possibility of quality instruction.

Online CPD is a process in upgrading academic extension, experiential expansion and proactive attitudinal change in an individual. Many professionals do not get opportunities to attend face-to-face

seminars, workshops and conferences due to systemic constraints. As a result, the professionals who desperately need scope for improvement rarely get opportunities to undergo such programmes, and sometimes when they get the chance, it is already too late to take advantage of the opportunities for both the organisation and the individual. Moreover, the topics discussed in such short-term, face-to-face programmes are mostly theoretical and may not be implemented directly in the classroom. Thus, online courses for professional development are the only option left for them. Any professional development programme should include scope that encourages changes in teachers' behaviours in classroom practices. This holds true in online courses where the instructor's constructive feedback enables participants to see things from different perspectives and encourages them to practice ideas in their respective classrooms. Thus, those who are concerned about individual professional development while being at home should place emphasis on online courses as they provide hands-on experience in involving students in active learning. Considering all this, it is now clear that online courses are a better platform in sharing ideas with the instructors, fellow e-scholars and colleagues about useful practices in teaching EIL. They also help to resolve all classroom issues to make practices effective.

7. Conclusion

Online continuous professional development programmes are important for accessing input into recent research on language teaching to bring about desired educational change. These courses enable classroom practitioners to understand the 21st-century needs of students and offer strategies to help them master new competences for better communication. These programmes provide a platform in evaluating classroom practices and upgrading pedagogy and assessment skills, focusing more on designing tasks and activities that suit students and engage them in learning. Finally, these courses provide practitioners scope for discussion with other practitioners worldwide and enable them to improve their content and practice. It also breaks down professional isolation. As a result, online courses are good platforms for teachers' professional growth in managing the classroom, catering to the diverse learning styles of students and multiple intelligences and resolving other classroom issues. As a next step, it is worthwhile undergoing different online programmes like webinars, workshops and e-teacher scholarship courses as part of a programme of professional development. Another step is to disseminate experiences, practices and reflection through academic papers, articles and reports. This personal initiative in the professional journey in English as an International Language (EIL) will go a long way in equipping a classroom practitioner to empower students with greater confidence and ability and can ensure English language teacher education in a diverse environment.

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Developing Coherence in Writing: A Study of Pre-Service German Teachers of English

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Abstract

To impart sound language skills, EFL/ESL teachers need to have a high level of proficiency in English. In this paper, we study the effects of instructional input on writing coherent texts in a group of pre-service teachers. Some 24 learners enrolled in a teacher-training programme in a German university served as subjects. The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the teaching phase, discourse features of sample texts were studied and summaries were written to understand text coherence. In the second phase, the assessment phase, the learners wrote summaries. Learner texts were analysed according to four features – the selection of ideas, coherence, cohesion and text length. The findings show that two thirds of the learners could select appropriate ideas and attend to text coherence by representing the macro structure of the original text and by using appropriate reminder phrases to signal topic changes (e.g. the author introduces, concludes). However, only a third of them were successful in building topic unity consistently. So it can be concluded that awareness-raising on building text coherence can improve academic writing, critical thinking and employability skills of pre- and in-service teachers.

1. Introduction

Writing is a multidimensional activity that requires the use of linguistic and cognitive abilities to express one's thoughts in a logical and coherent manner. In formal education, writing is given a lot of importance and a lion's share of language assessment is based on the ability to express one's understanding through writing.

Writing as a meaning-making process does not stop at the expression of a set of ideas in a language. It requires one to arrange those ideas in a logical manner and establish valid links between the ideas. Both of these are mental steps that require cognitive skills to make a text coherent and cohesive. Surprisingly, such complex skills are seldom formally taught to EFL/ ESL learners. But they are expected to display these skills in end-of-term tests when performances are evaluated. Low achievement in writing is almost always attributed to learners. It is hardly ever seen as a teacher's failure to train learners to effectively use logical thinking and establish links between ideas in a text.

This study was conducted on a group of pre-service teachers who were trained in coherence and cohesion (Glosser and Deser 1990), and how to develop metalinguistic awareness on academic

aspects of writing. It was assumed that this training would help these teachers note what to include in programmes on teaching writing. Though both coherence and cohesion are crucial language components required to establish text unity, there are differences in opinion about the psycholinguistic ease of defining and teaching these concepts. While cohesion can be measured with the help of explicit linguistic devices (e.g., ‘so’, ‘however’, ‘as’), assessment of coherence is largely considered to be subjective and fuzzy, as it is difficult to identify any overt criteria to measure this feature (Lee 2002b; Watson Todd et al. 2004) and can be dependent on the reader’s perception (Hoey 1991). For instance, let us look at texts A and B below:

| Text A | Text B |
|--|--|
| <p>It was a sunny day in the city on the hill. Hills are higher than valleys. The central valley contains a number of interesting museums. Museums often have antique weapons to show what people in ancient times used for self-defence.</p> | <p>It was a sunny day in the city on the hill. Maria was happy to see the bright sunlight as she drew open the curtains in her bedroom. Finally the kids could go out to play and not bother her daylong! And she could go and get some fresh stock of meat and other supplies from the market.</p> |

In text A, though each sentence pair is interconnected with explicit cohesive devices, a reader can hardly generate any meaning here. The text lacks overall coherence, as the ideas do not flow smoothly from the beginning of the text to its end. In contrast, in text B overt cohesive devices are absent. Yet the ideas are interconnected throughout and the reader can easily generate the meaning of this text.

In the late 19th century, researchers conceptualised coherence as a feature of sentence grammar and measured it by the presence of sentence links and the creation of autonomous paragraphs (Bain 1890). On account of discourse analysis formulations in the 1960s, researchers shifted focus to viewing coherence as a discourse feature to create meaning and considered it as a constituent of the text itself. It was measured through the presence cohesive devices and readers’ understanding of text unity (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Some researchers considered coherence to be based on the notion of topic and comment and attempted topic analysis to understand coherence through topic unity (Lautamatti 1987; Connor and Farmer 1990; Watson Todd et al. 2004). Due to advances in information processing approaches in the 1970s, researchers measured coherence through propositional analysis (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). In this paper, we adopt a combination of two models to measure text coherence – the van Dijk and Kintsch model (1983) based on propositional unity and the Watson Todd et al. model (2004) of topic unity based on the salient communicative moves in written discourse.

2. The study

The purpose of this study was to examine whether instructional inputs help EFL learners build text coherence, so the learners were taught to attend to text coherence by using several strategies.

The teachers

Some 24 German pre-service teachers, 20 female and four male, aged between 21 and 25 years, served as subjects for this study. During the time of study these learners were enrolled in a master’s programme on Teaching of English as Foreign Language. On average, the subjects had 8–10 years of exposure to English, mostly in a classroom context. Some of them had also spent one semester in an English-speaking country. In their education system, these learners were required to write term papers and make formal presentations. No proficiency test was conducted to ascertain the subjects’ proficiency levels. On the basis of previous performance, it was inferred that they had low-upper intermediate levels of proficiency in reading and writing in English.

The method of study

The experiment was conducted in two phases: a teaching phase that lasted for 13 weeks and a testing phase. In the teaching phase the learners were trained to write different text types – summaries, paraphrases and short reports based on writing methodology and results sections of experimental studies. Throughout the course, the learners were instructed to build text coherence. However, for this study we present the strategies and tasks used to train learners to write summaries.

A set of six texts, two each of expository texts, argumentative texts and short experimental reports (taken from *TESOL Quarterly*), were used to practise summary writing. Initially the learners were taught to look for propositional unity. They were made to do a propositional analysis of texts to identify main ideas and the author's style of argumentation. For instance, let us look at the links between the propositions (a proposition being the smallest meaningful unit with a truth value) in the text in Figures 1 and 2 below (Kintsch and van Dijk op.cit.):

Figure 1: A text with propositions

This is the story of a boy named Mowgli and his friends Bhageera, the panther and Balu, the bear. Mowgli grows up in the jungle with a wolf family. They call him man-cub. One day a tiger named Sherkhan comes to the jungle. He wants to eat Mowgli. So, Bhageera thinks it will be best to take Mowgli to the man-village to keep him safe.

Figure 2: Propositional analysis of Mowgli text

| | |
|---|--|
| This is the story of a boy named Mowgli and his friends Bhageera, the panther and Balu, the bear. | Proposition 1: <i>be</i> : [story, boy, his friend] |
| Mowgli grows up in the jungle with a wolf family. | Proposition 2: <i>grow up</i> : [M, jungle, wolf family] |
| <i>They</i> call him man-cub. | Proposition 3: <i>call</i> : [they, him] |
| One day a tiger named Sherkhan comes to the jungle. | Proposition 4: <i>come</i> : [one day, tiger, jungle] |
| <i>He</i> wants to eat Mowgli. | Proposition 5: <i>want</i> : [he, to eat M] |
| So, Bhageera thinks it will be best to take Mowgli to the man-village to keep <i>him</i> safe. | Proposition 6, 7, 8: <i>think</i> : [B, an idea] <i>take</i> : [B, M, man-village] <i>keep</i> : [man-village, M, safe] |

In this text, the main propositions are built around Mowgli, his friends and the place where he grew up. Then there is a shift of topic focus from Mowgli to Sherkhan. This results in transferring Mowgli to a man village. The propositions are also connected to each other by linguistic devices, shown in the text in italics (see Figure 2).

Then the learners were trained to do a topic analysis of each text using a set of cue questions. In solving these questions, it was expected that the learners would notice the key ideas, links between the ideas

and shifts in topics (see Appendix) (Chou 2012). Thereafter, the learners wrote summaries and were given individual and group feedback on the following points:

Organisation and links to ideas (to develop topic unity)

- What should the introductory sentence contain?
- What should the body of the text contain?
- How should the text be concluded?

Academic conventions (to attain objectivity and formal style of writing)

- Use of in-text reference in the introductory sentence and elsewhere in the text.
- Use of reminder phrases to refer to the author(s) of the original text and to avoid plagiarism (e.g. the author further states/advises/concludes that...).
- Use of neutral verbs (to state/discuss/present) instead of evaluative verbs (to claim/argue/believe) to refer to the author's stance from the original text in a neutral manner.

Finally, they were shown sample summaries of the texts they had previously worked upon (cf. Appendix).

In the testing phase learners' development in writing coherent texts was examined through an assignment where they had to summarise a text by Icy Lee that appeared in *English Teaching Forum* (Volume 40, 2002). This text had a problem-solution-evaluation type structure (Swales and Feak 1994).

Research questions

The four research questions addressed in the study were:

1. Are EFL learners able to select main ideas to summarise a text?
2. Are they able to formulate a topic sentence in the text?
3. Can they maintain topic unity in the text?
4. Does use of cohesive devices contribute to making texts coherent?

If the subjects are able to present the first three features in their texts, then it can be proved that instructional inputs can have positive effects on developing text coherence.

Method of data analysis

Although the summaries were formally assessed, for the purpose of this study the texts were analysed with respect to the degree of coherence achieved. Coherence was measured according to the presence of the following features:

Table 1: List of features to measure coherence in summary texts

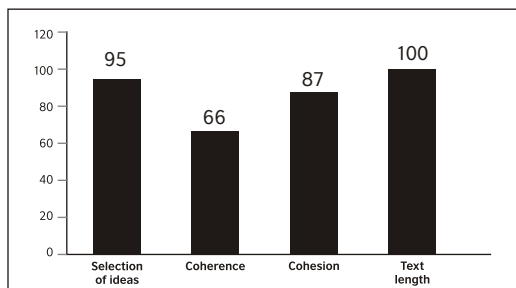
| FEATURES | Present (✓) |
|---|---------------|
| <i>I. Selection from the original text</i> | |
| Key ideas selected | |
| Organisational structure | |
| <i>II. Coherence</i> | |
| 1. Topic analysis | |
| Identification of topic in the first sentence | |
| Development and closure of propositions according to the topic identified | |
| Maintenance of propositional unity throughout the text | |
| 2. References | |
| In-text reference in the first line | |
| In-text reference consistently in the entire text | |
| Use of reminder phrases | |
| 3. Organisation of the summary text: tripartite structure present | |
| <i>III. Cohesion</i> | |
| Cohesive devices used adequately and appropriately | |
| <i>IV. Text length</i> | |

We measured the presence and appropriateness of four types of features: (i) selection of features from main text, (ii) coherence, (iii) cohesion and (iv) text length, to interpret the quality of text coherence achieved. These features were included as they were felt to capture text coherence at both local and global levels (Gloser and Deser op.cit.).

4. Findings and discussion

Based on the four features to measure text coherence as specified in Table 1, the main findings are presented in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Degree of text coherence achieved (in percentage)



The following trends were found in learner performance:

- **Selection**
 - most of the learners were able to identify the main ideas and the organisational structure from the original text.
- **Coherence**
 - two thirds of the learners could create a tripartite structure – introduction, body and conclusion
 - only **half** of the learners could present a topic statement and develop topic unity
 - the learners who could not attend to the tripartite structure also could not attend to topic development; their texts had incoherent topic drifts
 - **all** the learners referred to the source/author at the beginning, but only **a third** of the learners referred to the author consistently using neutral verbs and reminder phrases.
- **Cohesion**
 - most learners used cohesive devices appropriately to express reference, substitution and conjunctions.
- Text length
 - all the subjects maintained appropriate text length.

Sample text analysis

Here we present topic analysis of a sample text by adapting the models of Watson Todd et al. (2004) and Swales and Feak (1994). This analysis will show that a writer can maintain topic unity in writing a summary text by establishing appropriate links between topics.

Since the summary used for analysis in the study had a problem-solution-evaluation structure, it would involve the following topic moves:

Step 1 topic nomination: identification of a problem and source

Step 2 topic development: solution provided

topic maintenance/mapping

topic shift – links to the main topic maintained

*topic drift (non-coherent)

topic renewal/insertion

Step 3 topic termination: end of solution

Step 4 closure: evaluation of solution.

Below is a sample summary text written by a subject who had a relatively high proficiency in the target language:

Figure 4: Topic analysis of a learner's summary text

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Step 1 | Recent research has shown that a great number of ESL/EFL students find themselves unable to write coherent and well-structured texts, because they rely on their knowledge of grammar and rather focus on word and sentence levels, which result in a neglect of coherence in the overall discourse. |
| Step 2 | In her article 'Helping Students Develop Coherence in Writing' (2002) published in English Teaching Forum (Vol. 40, No. 3) Icy Lee emphasizes the necessity of a pedagogical focus on coherence, which she describes as the relationship that link the ideas in a text to create meaning. Furthermore, she demands that the teaching of coherence be a significant aspect of L2 writing instruction. |
| Step 3 | In order to teach coherence, teachers, as Lee points out, need to have a thorough understanding of this field, which is why Lee provides a narrow and a broader definition of the term, concluding that coherence can be defined in terms of macrostructure, information structure, propositional development, cohesion and meta-discourse. Lee designed a framework for her EFL classes at a university in Hong Kong, which she presents and illustrates in a next step. The materials of her framework are arranged in five stages of instruction, namely introductory activities, explicit teaching, student handouts, awareness raising tasks and follow-up writing practice, which all in all aim at training each of the previously mentioned aspects of coherence... |
| Step 4 | In conclusion the students of Lee's EFL classes were able to benefit from what they learned and their awareness of the role of coherence was increased by showing them new strategies for their writing. |

The text shows that the topics of the original text have been systematically and coherently developed. Note that all four moves specified in the model of topic analysis above are present here and are signalled by the use of appropriate cohesive devices. There are no cases of non-coherent topic drifts. This subject's performance shows that she has been able to incorporate the ideas and strategies taught during the training sessions. This has helped her attain a high level of text unity.

On the basis of the overall findings and the sample text analysis, we can conclude that instructional input had a positive impact on developing coherence in particular and academic writing style in general. This development is evident because most of the learners have been able to:

- refer to the source in the first line of the summary
- identify the main argument of the original text and include it in the first sentence
- refer to the author throughout the text by using reminder phrases
- maintain text unity through appropriate topic development.

Our findings corroborate the findings of Lee's study (2002b) where a group of college students in Hong Kong were found to benefit from classroom training on building text unity as they could write coherent essays.

The fourth research question was proved to be partially true: learners who wrote coherently also attended to deep cohesion so that appropriate devices were used to signal ideas of *temporality*,

causation and sequence. In contrast, learners who did not write coherently could not attend to deep cohesion. So, the mere presence of cohesive devices does not make a text coherent (Crossley and McNamara 2010).

Error patterns in cohesion

The following error patterns in using cohesive devices were found in some of the learner texts:

- use of markers to signal sequence – though the learners could use markers to signal sequencing of ideas like ‘firstly’, ‘secondly’, some of them failed to do so consistently
- use of markers to signal tripartite structure – inconsistent use was observed and in some texts markers to signal conclusion or topic shift were absent
- use of wrong markers – some learners used inappropriate cohesive devices:
 - ‘however’, ‘but’, ‘nevertheless’ to suggest addition
 - ‘moreover’ to signal conclusion
 - used ‘further’ to introduce a new idea
- Grammatical errors – a few of the learners made grammatical errors.

4. Conclusion

Teaching the importance of coherence and getting learners to write coherently can be quite a daunting task for teachers (Hinkel 2004). However, as the results of this study show, if teachers have clarity on what the concept is and how it can be taught in a structured manner, then ESL/EFL learners would immensely benefit from such an exercise. They might be able to write in a more logical, structured and formal manner. Hence, further research needs to be conducted to study the long-term effects of instruction on several discourse features of writing.

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Appendix

A sample text used to write a summary:

The Egyptian landscape has been changing for centuries. One area which has undergone dramatic change over the last 7,000 years is the Nile River basin. One of the most notable aspects of this transformation is the year-round irrigation of land for agricultural purposes, rather than a strict reliance on the annual flood. Conversion to continuous irrigation, which began around 1500 and was limited only by the level of technology, led to improved agricultural productivity. This in turn contributed to an increase in the population of the area.

Large-scale conversion of agricultural land involving perennial irrigation began in 1800 with the availability of more modern technology. Water could be retained, raised, and distributed to summer crops with the aid of barrages* constructed on the Nile below Cairo and at sites on 30,000 km of new canals. Large dams were built on the Nile at Aswan in 1902, 1912, and 1933. The final transformation to continuous irrigation was finished with the completion of the Aswan Dam in 1960. This full-scale change brought about a major shift and expansion in agriculture.

Cash crops such as cotton, sugar cane, and vegetables tended and still tend to be produced at the expense of subsistence crops. Because Egyptians have historically preferred to live within or near the cultivated land area, agricultural expansion has also had an impact on the environment and livelihood of the Nile population. As the amount of land available for agriculture increased, so did the population. Egypt's population has increased from 2.5 million in the early 1800s to 9.7 million in the late 1800s, 18.8 million in the 1940s, 37 million in the mid-70s, 46 million in 1984. The population is projected to be 65 million by the beginning of the next century. In 1907, urban dwellers constituted only approximately 17% of Egypt's population. By 1976, however, they were 43% of the total. Recent studies have indicated that approximately 1–2% of Egypt's arable land is lost annually to human encroachment.

@Steven M. Goodman, Peter Meininger, et al., eds. *The Birds of Egypt* (1989)

| Cue questions | Expected answers |
|---|---|
| Paragraph one 1. What kind of change has taken place and where? | What is the impact of this change? A landscape change in Nile basin in Egypt a. Made year round irrigation possible b. Improved agricultural productivity c. Brought an increase in population. |
| Paragraph two 2. What else helped the growth in agricultural products? | Modern technology aided agricultural productivity – easy growth of cash crops. |
| Paragraph three 3. Why has population increased around the area of the Nile basin? | People prefer to live around the area of agricultural expansion due to reasons of livelihood. |

Table 2: Cue questions to select main ideas from the Nile basin text

A sample summary text (shown in the feedback session)

A text titled '*Transformation of the Nile basin*' by Steven Goodman (1989) discusses about landscape changes over centuries in Egypt with specific references to a series of positive changes in the area of Nile Basin. For instance, landscape changes in the basin area has made year round irrigation possible and has greatly improved agricultural productivity of the place. In addition to this, modern technology has also accelerated agricultural growth. Consequently, the area has seen an increase in population as Egyptians prefer to live around this area of agricultural expansion.

Transacting in Multilevel Classrooms: Experiences from the Field

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Abstract

Large classes are not unique to the Indian context. In addition, learners' learning patterns, economic background, culture and home languages vary markedly. This heterogeneity is characteristic of multilevel classes within the same grade. In English language classrooms differences emerge in terms of comprehension, fluency and accuracy. Proficiency levels of learners may be below-level, at-level or above-level, and these may differ across the four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. A learner may be proficient in one or more skills but not all at the same time. Teaching a large and multi-ability class is demanding and tiring. The challenge lies in recognising that a multilevel class is a cultural and linguistic resource that can be used to teach L2. Interesting teaching-learning situations can be generated within a multilevel class to facilitate participation and encourage language use. Challenges like class management, burden of evaluating large numbers, capturing the learners' interest and ensuring their participation despite diverse learning styles, and maintaining the pace of learning need to be addressed. Innovations, customisation of materials, tasks and strategies adopted by teachers and teacher educators such as grouping strategies and instructional strategies can help foster a positive and constructivist learning environment.

India is a diverse country and its diversity is reflected in all aspects of life. In the educational sector, too, we have diverse situations ranging from elite public schools to single-room schools with multigrade classes. My initial experience, as a practising teacher and current role as a teacher educator, has given me the opportunity to interact with several teachers and to share some of their concerns. A common condition across teaching-learning situations has been the existence of multilevel classrooms. According to Brown (2001), 'class[es] of 60 or 75 students are not so exceptional around the globe. Therefore large multi-level classes can be defined not in terms of numbers but learner's leaning styles as well.'

1. What makes a class a multilevel class?

There are many factors that contribute to making a class a multilevel class. It would not be an incorrect assertion that almost every ESL (English as a Second Language) class has learners with mixed ability. Some of the factors include:

- **Language diversity** English is not the mother tongue of the learners and there is a rich diversity in the variety of home languages in an English classroom. The level of proficiency in English also varies because children come from different social contexts and backgrounds. While some may have had previous exposure to the language and are comfortable with the sound system, vocabulary and grammar, others may have had little or no exposure. An input-rich communicational environment is a pre-requisite for learning a language. The more language learners use English in their everyday life, the more quickly they learn the language and the more their proficiency improves. The most crucial aspect therefore is a learner's access to the language. Besides this, some learners are first-generation learners. It is this varied language proficiency, across home languages, mother tongues and English, that makes an English language classroom in India a multilevel classroom.
- **Levels of proficiency** Further, learners' proficiency levels in a multilevel classroom range from low language proficiency to high language proficiency. The four language skills may also be at varying levels. The same student may be good at reading and writing but weak in speaking; another may need support in writing and so on. This makes a classroom unique, one where all the learners may not have comparable levels of proficiency and one-size-fits-all lesson plans and activities may not work.
- **Learner's profile** The learners' age, interest, cognitive levels and individual personalities also make a class a multilevel classroom and a teacher has to cater to each one's needs as per their interest and cognitive level. Some are extroverts and are willing/motivated to participate in activities and take the initiative to use English in different situations. There are learners who are introverts/shy/lack confidence. Therefore, we can say that their learning styles vary. A teacher needs to ensure that to she/he accommodates these different styles of learning. Further, with the introduction of the Right to Education in India and the provision of age-appropriate admission, multilevel classrooms are a palpable challenge.

2. Teaching a multilevel class

Since it is clear that learners' levels of proficiency in a multilevel classroom vary, learning instructions for a multilevel class need to vary. In a given class there will be learners who are proficient beyond the targeted level of a class, some perform as per the targeted level of the class and some are below the targeted level of the class and need scaffolding from teachers. These learners struggle to keep pace with the rest of the class. They require scaffolding from peers as well. It is the observation of practising teachers that these students have low self-esteem and do not generally speak up in class. They lag behind in comprehension as well as in expression. Learners who are 'at level' do well with the teachers' scaffolding. Learners who perform 'beyond level' have more language proficiency and often understand the tasks/activities quickly. In order to engage these learners in meaningful learning and to prevent them from becoming bored or frustrated, more challenging tasks/activities are needed. Some learners may be good at comprehension, i.e. listening and reading, but may not be able to articulate themselves due to lack of confidence. The same students may perform beyond the targeted level in one skill but may be struggling in another. Here, the teacher needs to understand the strengths and learning gaps of each student. This data/information will help her create learning situations as per their needs.

3. Experiences of teachers

Interaction with the teachers has revealed that they appreciate this situation but require active mentoring and in-service training to be able to address practical aspects of classroom management, such as large numbers, student-teacher ratio as well as multilevel classes. Even though some conduct activities that involve group/peer work they are unable to achieve the desired results. A common experience across the board is that considerable extra effort and planning must be done in order to

prepare lesson plans/activities to cover extreme differences in levels of learning. While in private schools, comparatively smaller classes allow teachers to split their time and efforts between individual students they, like their government-school counterparts, are unable to achieve the optimum outcomes of activity-based teaching and learning. For most, group work is a checklist item that brings variation into the routine teaching-learning mode. With curricular reform, since the focus has shifted away from rote memorisation and performance in exams, teachers are also faced with the challenge of reinventing their approach to methods of teaching and learning. Teachers across the various types of schools 'simply do not have the required level of training that is necessary to handle a more interactive, inclusive teaching style. Deviating from the textbook is a frightening prospect unless you are completely comfortable with your subject' (Williams 2010). Most teachers revealed in anecdotal evidence from teacher-training sessions conducted across sectors, that they depend on the prescribed textbook completely and rarely introduce material beyond the textbook. The same applies to writing tasks. To develop writing skills one needs to practise. Listening and speaking are often neglected and reading levels of students are not good. However, a large multilevel class can be turned into an advantageous situation when the focus is on co-operation rather than the competition. The aim is to turn such challenging situations into interesting teaching-learning situations.

4. Teaching strategies

To develop English language proficiency among learners, teachers focus on developing the four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Focus on vocabulary and grammar is also aimed at language development. The real challenge, however, lies in catering to the needs of learners as per their level. Some instructional strategies that teachers may adopt involve devising a lesson plan with variable components and skills integration. Any new lesson/topic should be introduced to the whole class in the form of warm-up activities. Thereafter, give activities as per the learners' learning levels. This requires a variety of activities. Cowels (1997) said, '[leveled tasks] can be varied to suit the skill levels and interests of the learner'. It is always a good idea to consolidate the lesson with the whole class.

To begin the lesson, the teacher can conduct role-play. Using role-plays, teachers can integrate all four skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing. While preparing the dialogues, learners listen to the other group members and speak/interact with each other. While enacting, they listen to others as well as speak their own parts. This can be followed by asking the learners to present their views in the form of a written paragraph to integrate writing skills as well.

Other activities that can be taken up are:

- dictation – this can be followed by self-assessment, where the teacher provides words on the blackboard
- open-ended questions – since each learner can respond as per his/her level
- writing tasks – should also be authentic and meaningful
- reading – should be followed by a variety of questions.

5. Grouping strategies

Managing a multilevel class is a real challenge. The best option is to introduce different types of group work such as pair work, group work, team work or whole-class work. Here the teacher's role is really crucial since how the groups are formed is very important. S/he should keep changing the groups so that mixed-ability and like-ability groups interact and work together. Group work can help both teachers and learners of a multilevel class since learners learn from each other. A large and multilevel class is a multilingual and multicultural resource that can be used as a strategy to teach L2. Beyond-level learners too can become a resource for the teacher.

While conducting the activities, pair work/group work/team work should be used as a classroom strategy. The teacher might have to prepare three or four types of activities with slight variations. For example, after reading a poem, the beyond-level learners can be given short-answer questions, the second group can be given true/false options and the third group can be given fill in the blanks. To do such tasks, cross-ability grouping is beneficial because learners at the higher level can provide additional support while honing their own skills. Collaborative reading too can motivate others to read. Whole-class activity/tasks in the EL classroom should focus on learning the vocabulary that will be used in the story/poem/drama. This would ensure everyone's participation. The class as a whole gets the teacher's attention. It is always beneficial to conclude the class with a whole-class activity. Individualised performances too can be promoted in this space via portfolio projects that include learners' own writing, such as articles, letters, reviews, etc. as per their level, age and interest. Open-ended questions and extrapolation too have scope for individualism. In a large multilevel class where it is difficult to give individual attention, such strategies can prove to be very effective. In addition, peer assessment and group assessment ensures the involvement of learners and develops social and personal qualities.

Having variety in terms of tasks and activities will not only engage the class in a meaningful way but will ensure the involvement of all levels of learners. Maintaining the pace of tasks is another aspect that needs to be kept in mind. In this regard, teachers may adopt both the drill and discussion method.

Capturing the interest of the learners and ensuring their participation depends on the kinds of tasks that are given, keeping in mind the paradigm of social constructivism. The tasks should be related to the learner's immediate surroundings. This would ensure their participation, meaningful discourse, as well as stimulate their imagination. Collaborative work means learners learn together, arrive at ideas together, and then create. A teacher is expected to create varied teaching-learning situations for learners in a multilevel class and this is also essential for the assessment for learning. 'Successful multi-level classrooms demonstrate best practices in assessment that include:

- targeting student learning outcomes
- using a variety of assessment methods and tools
- differentiating assessment for developmental and cultural appropriateness
- assessing students performing authentic tasks
- involving students in reflecting on and assessing their own learning
- setting and revising learning goals.' (Manitoba 2011).

When teachers provide informal feedback to learners on a regular basis on the activities or tasks in the classroom, learners are able to improve themselves with this feedback. This kind of feedback, which may not be reflected in report cards, helps augment the learner's progress.

6. Conclusion

To empower the teacher to successfully handle multilevel classes, she/he should be provided with teachers' handbooks and other resources where there are additional activities, academic and administrative support because one-size-fits-all will not work. Teachers must also be encouraged to realise that a large multilevel class is also a place for the teacher to explore new methods/techniques of teaching. Innovating and customising to learners' needs can in turn help the teacher grow professionally. 'Providing quality education that meets students' and society's needs is a never-ending quest.' (Chhikara 2010).

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Assessing Language Teaching Competences – Why and How?

Richard Rossner, EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services)

Abstract

*Competence can be defined as the dynamic combination of knowledge, values and practical skills. Teaching competences and professional development are key factors in assuring the quality of education, including language education. Effective quality assurance and professional development imply that teachers, including English language teachers and those employing and training them, have a shared appreciation of their current levels of competence and of teacher development needs. EAQUALS, an international association focused on the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services, has developed a tool for describing the key competences of language teachers. The descriptors it contains have now been validated through the **European Profiling Grid (EPG) project** so that the grid can be used effectively by managers, teacher trainers, and by teachers themselves for self-assessment purposes. This paper explains the principles and content of the grid, and outlines the aims of the EPG project. Readers are asked to consider and inform the author whether the grid might be useful in non-European contexts such as India, and, if so, what might need to be adapted to suit the needs of teachers in such contexts, their trainers and heads of department.*

1. Key background issues

High quality is crucial in any kind of education and at the centre of all formal education is teaching and the teacher. Teachers are the ones who can do most to maintain and raise quality standards in education. For this reason (among others) teachers need to be empowered to ensure that the ways in which they support learning through their teaching are of consistently high quality and continually improving. Meanwhile, those who train, mentor and manage teachers need ways and means of helping them to do this.

2. Teacher development

Mann identifies some key features of teacher development:

- it is in principle a bottom-up process, and so can be contrasted with staff development which is organised top-down

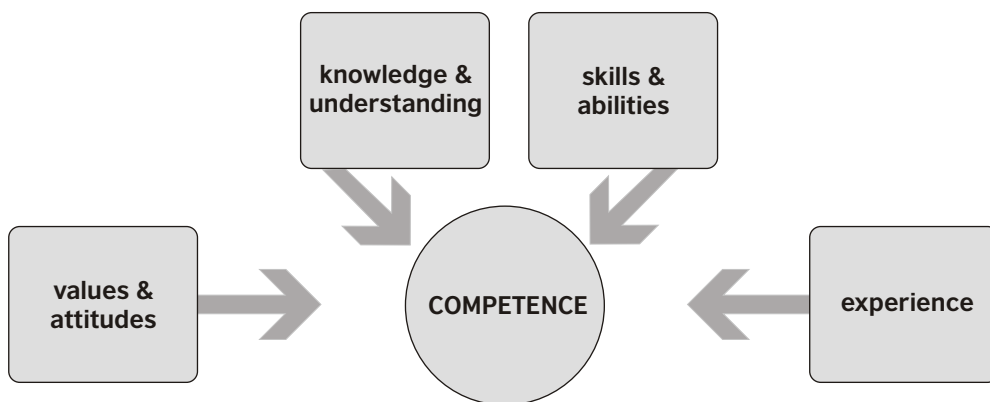
- it values the view of the teacher as an insider rather than the view of outsiders such as inspectors
- it is independent of the organisation but often functions more successfully with the institution's support and recognition
- it is a continuing process and can never be finished, i.e. teachers, however experienced, can always develop further
- it is a process of articulating and reflecting on inner-conscious choices in response to the outer world of the teaching context
- it is wider than professional development, as it includes personal, moral and value dimensions (Mann 2005).

Assessment of teaching and self-assessment by teachers can play a very important role in identifying teacher-development priorities at an individual and team level. However, valid and appropriate tools and simple procedures for assessment and self-assessment are needed for this.

3. Language teaching competence

Competence is complicated to define and analyse. On the one hand, in its most observable form it is the technical skill demonstrated by a professional in his or her work. Thus, in language teaching we look for the ways in which activities and tasks in the classroom are handled, how students are managed and monitored, the use of the target language by the teacher, and so on. However, behind these practical skills there needs to be knowledge and understanding acquired in education and training as a teacher as well as that accumulated through experience. In other words, underpinning technical ability there is knowledge and awareness that inform the choices the teacher makes. In addition, underpinning both knowledge and skills are sets of values and the attitudes (to society, to education, to language and culture, etc.) that have evolved during the individual's own personal development from childhood onwards. A schematic diagram of this view of professional competence is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Components of professional competence



Of course, not all of these elements of teaching competence are easily observable, and the full scope of teaching competence may consequently be hard to assess. Nevertheless, it is important that it should be assessed.

4. Why assess language-teaching competence, and who can do it?

Various people may assess teaching competences for different reasons. However, the most important reasons are as a support for professional development (including the professional development of the person doing the assessment), and as part of quality assurance, that is, to check whether the teaching being assessed is up to the standard agreed within a school and is adequately supporting the learning in which students are engaged.

Quite often in practice these two assessment aims are not clearly separated: in particular, heads of department managing a team of teachers and responsible for checking quality often observe teachers with both objectives in mind. After all, while quality standards for teaching and the support of learning may be institutional, teachers are individuals with different ways of using their competence and with differing individual professional-development needs.

Other people that may assess teaching competences include:

- trainers and mentors, whose concern is mainly individual development and training, but may be related to the standards required to meet the demands of, for example, an in-service training course
- colleagues wishing to compare their own practice with that of the teacher they are observing (and implicitly assessing) and to learn from her/him
- students, who make instinctive and usually private assessments of the teaching they experience, and are frequently asked to give an opinion at the end of a course
- crucially, the teacher herself/himself, thinking about her/his own work and development needs. Self-assessment can play a big part in that most valuable element of teacher development: reflection (c.f. Wallace 1991).

5. Reasons for teachers to assess themselves

In fact, consciously or subconsciously, we all assess ourselves constantly, and it is inevitable that professionals assess how they have performed on a given occasion. Think of chefs, or surgeons, or actors. Teaching is a demanding and complex professional activity involving continual interaction with learners. The kinds of questions teachers are likely to ask themselves when assessing their own work are to do with their sense of well-being (am I doing a good job? Was that a successful lesson?); their learners' well-being and learning (Are my students progressing? Are they motivated? What works best for them as a group and as individuals?); and future planning (Do I need to change what I'm doing? What adjustments do I need to make to plans for upcoming lessons? Do I need to try something new with these learners or that individual learner?, etc.). Another useful question is to do with individual professional development: Are there areas where I need to grow in competence and/or confidence? Do I need help with this? What kind of help?

6. Describing language teaching competences

Various descriptions of teaching competences and specifications of teaching standards have been developed at national level (for example AITSL 2011, LLUK 2007), and two or three descriptions of language-teaching competences have been developed as part of European projects, for example, Kelly, Grenfell, Allen, Krisza and McEvoy (2004), Newby, Allan, Fenner, Jones, Komorowska and Soghikyan (2006). Both of these – the first as a profile for teacher education, the second in the form of a portfolio for student teachers – were initially developed with trainee teachers in mind, not experienced teachers. The European Profiling Grid (EPG), on the other hand, is a tool that was designed to support the assessment and self-assessment of language-teaching competences among practising language teachers who have varying degrees of experience ranging from a few weeks as trainees to many years.

7. The European Profiling Grid – scope and contents

The descriptors that the EPG contains, mostly in the form of can-do statements, cover the following key areas:

- **qualifications and experience** proficiency in the target language, educational qualification, teaching qualifications and teaching experience
- **key teaching competencies** methodology – knowledge and skills, planning, interaction management and monitoring and assessment
- **enabling competences** intercultural competence, language awareness and use of digital media
- **professionalism** professional conduct, including participation in professional development, contributions to the institution, collegiality, etc., and dealing with administrative tasks.

Altogether, 13 categories are covered under these four main areas. The descriptors in each category are organised over six phases of professional development, ranging from trainee to very experienced, yielding a total of 78 descriptor cells. Each cell in the grid contains between one and five descriptors depending on the category and phase of development. The layout and the categories of the grid are summarised below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: the grid – layout, categories and phases

| | Development phase | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 |
| Qualifications and experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ language proficiency ◆ education and training ◆ assessed teaching ◆ teaching experience | | | | | | |
| Key teaching competences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ methodology ◆ lesson and course planning ◆ interaction management and monitoring ◆ assessment | | | | | | |
| Enabling competences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ intercultural competence ◆ language awareness ◆ digital competence | | | | | | |
| Professionalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ professional conduct ◆ administration | | | | | | |

Descriptors at different phases in a given category are cumulative: it is assumed that a teacher at phase 2.1 will have acquired the competences indicated at 1.1 and 1.2, so these are not repeated. The differences between descriptors across the phases indicate increasing competence either through incremental changes in wording relating to a subtopic, or the addition of new descriptors or elements. An example derived from one key competence category is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: excerpt from the grid – key competence ‘interaction management and monitoring’ (phase 1 omitted)

| Phase 2.1 | Phase 2.2 | Phase 3.1 | Phase 3.2 |
|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● can set up and manage pair and group work efficiently and can bring the class back together ● can monitor individual and group activities ● can provide clear feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● can set up a varied and balanced sequence of class, group and pair work in order to meet the lesson objectives ● can organise task-based learning ● can monitor learner performance effectively ● can provide/ elicit clear feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● can set up task-based learning in which groups carry out different activities at the same time ● can monitor individual and group performances accurately and thoroughly ● can provide/ elicit individual feedback in various ways ● can use the monitoring and feedback in designing further activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● can set up, monitor and provide support to groups and individuals at different levels in the same classroom working on different tasks ● can use a wide range of techniques to provide/ elicit feedback |

8. The EPG project

The EPG project, which is co-funded by the EU’s Leonardo da Vinci programme, involves EAQUALS and ten other partners in ten European countries, including the British Council, the Goethe Institut, the French research agency, CIEP, and Instituto Cervantes. As part of the project, the grid (in five language versions) was tested on over 2,000 teachers, over 60 managers and 100 trainers. The purpose was to validate the descriptors contained in the grid and to identify changes that needed to be made before the final version of the grid is published. In the validation process, teachers responded to one of four different online surveys, each containing the descriptors from four categories. Their task was to consider the individual descriptors, which were presented in random order, and to indicate whether or not they considered themselves capable on that particular point. Managers, on the other hand, did a jigsaw task on descriptors relating to qualifications and experience in order to identify problems of wording or sequencing, and then assessed four of their teachers using the whole grid. Many managers also asked these teachers to assess themselves so that the two forms of assessment could be compared. Finally, trainers of language teachers did similar jigsaw tasks on selected categories, again to test whether the wording of the descriptors was clear and the sequencing was valid. Both managers and trainers responded to questions about their experiences and made comments and suggestions about changes in wording and layout or raised issues to be considered in the user guide.

At the time of writing (spring 2013), the grid is being finalised and re-translated on the basis of the research that was undertaken, and the user guide is being prepared. More information on the project is available at www.epg-project.eu/the-epg-project/ where the grid and user guide in their final form will be made available from November 2013.

The main intended uses of the grid The grid has three main groups of intended users: language teachers themselves, trainers and mentors working with language teachers, and co-ordinators or heads of language departments. As stated above, the main intention is that the grid will be used to support professional development, but it also has a role to play in quality management and in determining whether the goals of a teacher-training/development programme have been attained. The main potential uses can be summarised as follows:

Teachers could use all or part of the grid:

- for self-assessment and as a stimulus for reflection
- for thinking about their own development needs
- for preparing review meetings with their managers.

Trainers and mentors might use the grid:

- to plan training courses or a programme of workshops
- as a source for observation criteria and discussion of an individual's teaching
- as a way of raising trainees' awareness about the specific competences they need to be working on.

Managers could use the grid:

- to prepare for review meetings with teachers, comparing their assessments with teachers' self-assessments
- to discuss professional-development needs
- to help prepare observation sheets for lesson observation
- to review the make-up of their teaching team, for example to decide what the profile of the newly recruited should be.

9. Profiles of teachers' competences

When using the whole grid or sections of the grid, it should be borne in mind that the profile of any given teacher's competences will not fall neatly into one phase vertically. For example, it is extremely unlikely that a very experienced teacher will consider that she or he is equally competent in all areas. Figure 4 shows what a typically jagged profile might look like when created by a fictitious teacher after assessing her or his key competences. It is this feature that shows clearly where, depending on the context and the job requirements, further development work in a given area might be needed. In this example, clearly the teacher is less confident about her competence in the area of assessment of students' learning than she is in her planning.

Figure 4: Example of a jagged profile after self-assessment

| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Methodology – knowledge and skills | | | | | | |
| Interaction management and monitoring | | | | | | |
| Lesson and course planning | | | | | | |
| Assessment | | | | | | |

10. The EAQUALS Framework for Language Teacher Training and Development

The related *EAQUALS Framework for Language Teacher Training and Development* (TDFRAM for short), which is the result of an internal EAQUALS project, contains more detailed descriptions of the values, knowledge and skills that make up teaching competence. It covers five areas: planning teaching and learning, teaching and supporting learning, assessment, language and culture, and professionalism. TDFRAM is intended as a reference tool for organising in-service training and continuing professional development and could be adapted as a portfolio for in-service development. It is also intended to be open-ended: descriptors for other areas and special contexts can be added following the same model.

11. Conclusion

Defining and describing language teaching competences is not a simple matter. The pilot grid went through many drafts before field testing, and the field-testing process threw up numerous additional points that are taken into account in the final validated version of the European Profiling Grid and its user guide, which will be released in autumn 2013 in printed and electronic form. These will be accessible via the EPG project website www.epg-project.eu/the-epg-project/ by November 2013.

It is clear that, whether using a tool such as the grid or not, the assessment of teaching needs to be done with care, and must be valid, transparent and fair. Encouraging teachers to regularly assess their own teaching competences and reflect on these self-assessments should be an integral part of teacher development. Managers and trainers are sure to find that comparing and discussing the similarities and differences between their assessments of a teacher's competences and the teacher's own self-assessment will make for a richer interactive process if handled well, and will lead to more informed support for teachers' individual professional development. The European Profiling Grid is intended to be a useful aid to this process, and its user guide will offer advice to managers, trainers and teachers as to how it can best be used for the purposes for which it has been designed.

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The Role of Programme Evaluation in Curriculum Development OR ‘How Are We Doing?’

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Abstract

This paper presents an overview of language-programme evaluation and its potential in curriculum and professional development. Key themes explored are:

- *the range of purposes, designs and methods which inform contemporary theories of and practice in programme evaluation*
- *the identities and roles of programme stakeholders*
- *the challenges of using the processes and outcomes of evaluation for improvement of programmes*
- *management of change issues which are implicit in both learning and evaluation use.*

Readers will taken through key shifts in language-programme evaluation, from large-scale testing projects, to an organisational quality-assurance perspective, and to a view of programme evaluation as a way for teachers to understand and improve their own programmes.

1. Introduction

Programme evaluation should tell us how good a programme is, and what we can do to improve it. We can interpret programme in different ways: as learning theory, as method, as course book, or as e-learning experience. The assumption in each case is that the design features of these aspects of the curriculum are fixed: they generate the same classroom practice, regardless of teacher, learner or contextual factors. And thus they generate a predictable pattern of outcomes, whether these are viewed as test results or measures of student satisfaction. There have been many critiques of the problems with these assumptions: classrooms are social spaces, and to a large degree, learning success depends on the relationships and investments in the teaching-learning context A programme cannot be perfect from its design: rather it has to adapt to the context, and be improved upon as teachers and others learn about its potential.

My definition below captures some of the dynamic features of programme evaluation:

...a set of strategies to document and understand the programme. It involves research activity (conventional studies or action research by which teachers learn about and transform aspects of their practice) and assessment data (conventional measures of outcomes). In addition to these, evaluation has to engage with the social, cultural and historical identity of the programme, as a

product of the institution, as a phase in the biographies of participants, and as a context of personal investments of individual stakeholders. (Kiely 2009: 114).

This definition emphasises the coming together of two data sets: assessment data, which quantifies how well students have learnt, and process data, such as observation studies, student-satisfaction surveys or feedback through interviews or focus groups. These data bring the process and product aspects of the programme together, and thus allow for analysis that can explain why these phenomena occur. Where the test results are strong, and the student feedback refers to the positive atmosphere of the classroom, the opportunities to use English, or the accessibility and usefulness of online resources, then we can begin to understand why the learning is effective.

The second part of the definition focuses on the identity of the programme: its history, values and culture, and accumulated expertise. These dimensions may explain why certain practices endure, and determine the extent to which change is possible. I will return to this notion of practice from Wenger (1998:45) when I discuss innovation and change in programme evaluation. For example, when examining the effectiveness of an e-learning module of a programme, it is important to consider how this fits with the tradition of classroom teaching, the expectations of students, the expertise of teachers and the readiness of participants to integrate e-resources into their teaching and learning practices.

2. Evaluation purposes, designs and methods

We can identify three purposes of programme evaluation:

- Firstly, accountability, where the focus is on demonstrating to programme sponsors, policy makers and managers that the programme has been implemented as planned
- Secondly, development, where the focus is on understanding the programme so that strategies to improve it can be identified
- Thirdly, quality assurance, where the focus is on illustrating the ways in which the desired quality levels have been achieved, and to which further enhancement is possible (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992; Kiely and Rea-Dickins 2005).

These purposes are of course overlapping and mutually re-enforcing: the deeper the probe into one purpose, the more likely it is to shed light on another.

We can identify two types of evaluation design relevant to language programmes, experimental comparative and case study. The key features are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Principal features of programme-evaluation designs

| Evaluation design features – type 1 | Evaluation design features – type 2 |
|--|--|
| Experimental/comparative | Case study |
| Probability | Possibility |
| Policy-oriented | Practice-oriented |
| Programme theory (explicit) | Programme theory (implicit) |
| Product-focus | Process-focus |
| External | Internal |

Type 1 designs are usually large-scale, with two groups of schools, classrooms or students. One group experiences the innovative programme (the focus of the evaluation), while the other has the default programme. A well-known example of such an evaluation is the Bangalore Project evaluation: a study of the innovative Communicational Language Teaching Programme in India in the 1980s (Beretta 1990; Beretta and Davies 1985). The statistical analysis of the data in such studies is comparative, and the probability of success is the outcome of the comparison. Such large-scale evaluations are typically based on theories of instructed learning, with the goal of developing policies to guide teachers. They tend to be product-focused, and initiated and implemented by researchers external to the programme team.

There are two major critiques of such evaluations: first, the assumption that the innovative pedagogic features have actually contributed to the test results – improved or otherwise – may not be well-founded. Test results are subject to many different influences, and it can be difficult to assess the contribution of one specific factor. Second, programme evaluations that rely largely on the results of tests provide very limited insights into how practice should develop. So even where the results are good, it may be difficult to understand why, and consequently to take the appropriate actions for sustained or further improvement.

Type 2 designs address some of these issues. Such case studies are often with small samples (classroom size), and so point not to probability findings, but rather to what is possible. Such studies are often exploratory studies of practice, making sense of what happens in programmes, and how these practices facilitate learning. They are typically carried out by members of the programme team (teachers) and, as such, the sense-making and findings feed directly into planning and practice in programmes and classrooms.

We can identify three templates for case-study evaluation designs – quality assurance, programme support and teacher research. The typical activities within these are set out below:

Table 2: Programme evaluation type 2 templates with activities

| Template 1 quality assurance | Template 2 programme support | Template 3 teacher research |
|---|---|--|
| End-of-course questionnaires | Mentoring | Action research |
| Surveys | Peer observation | Reflective practice |
| Focus groups | Reading circles | Exploratory practice |
| Audits | Assessment workshops | Study for research degrees |
| Assessment data | Meetings | |

Table 2 provides an overview of the activity that tends to occur within case-study evaluation. Template 1 – quality assurance – focuses on understanding of student learning, both in terms of the experience of the programme and learning achievements. Template 2 – programme support – is a range of social and relationship-based activities that support teachers in making innovative programmes work. Template 3 – teacher research – is a set of frameworks for research projects through which teachers individually and in teams can extend their understanding of their practice in focused studies, which draw on the literature and practice elsewhere. These three templates look very different in implementation, as the list above suggests. They also differ in motivation and initiation. The emphasis of quality assurance is the role of the institution, or the body responsible for quality. The emphasis on programme support is teacher collaboration and co-operation. And in action research it is the curiosity and drive to investigate of one teacher or a small group of teachers.

3. Identities and roles in programme evaluation

We all participate in programme evaluations with an identity. Typically, participants are students, teachers, teacher educators, programme leaders and managers. There are also more remote stakeholders such as parents, employers and policy makers. However, within these roles, different identities can be forged: either assigned or adopted. For example, students can be learners or customers, and this distinction can be profiled in programme evaluations. As learners, they are invited to provide accounts of their own learning and how the programme enabled them to invest in learning and reap the benefits. As customers, however, they can focus on the level of service: their evaluative comments describe the teachers' performance rather than their own. Teachers can be included as professionals with serious leadership roles, or as service workers, accountable for how they discharge specific tasks. They can be considered as transmitters or transformers, advisors or assessors, different identities that reflect how they see themselves, and how the institution sees them. At its most effective, programme evaluation problematises these roles and identities, and initiates reflections and discussions that can extend or transform them.

In terms of identity and voice, programme evaluation can be a context for developing student agency and autonomy. Over 20 years ago, within a framework of humanistic ELT, Legutke and Thomas emphasised this role for students:

Engaging learners in communicative encounters, especially if their aim is to explore emotional content and experiences, can become too bound up in itself unless this activity also reaches an evaluation stage. Trying to understand what has happened while undertaking a particular task, why it was suggested by the teacher, and contributing actively to the evaluation of learning arrangements, sequences, resources and input materials by means of reflection and meta-communicative discourse – all these are considered indispensable learner activities in ELT. (Legutke and Thomas 1991:65).

This stance on the part of students positions them as evaluators of their own learning, reflecting on how well they are participating in and learning from the activities. Such activity has the potential to enhance the autonomy, agency and motivation of students.

4. Using the processes and outcomes of evaluation for the improvement of programmes

It is important to make use of the evaluation process and outcomes to improve programmes for all stakeholders. In addition to the management processes of changing policies and using resources to alleviate specific problems and facilitate good practice as widely as possible, there are three ways in which teachers should consider using evaluation processes and outcomes to extend teacher learning. First, they should pay attention to feedback from students, whether this is in formal feedback opportunities at the end of the course, or through on-going informal discussion and conversation. Second, teachers should avail themselves of opportunities for peer observation, coaching and mentoring where these are available. It is always preferable to have teachers opt in to such activities rather than have them imposed. Third, teachers can consider the ways they are a community of practice, and share reflections, insights and analyses with colleagues. Recognising their work context as a community of practice is not always easy for teachers: they tend to work in isolation in their classrooms and time pressures may limit sharing and collaborating (Fullan 1991; Markee 1996). Where teachers can work together, then through activities such as reading groups, marking/assessment workshops and shared planning activities, they can learn from each other, develop a critical perspective on ways of approaching the tasks of teaching and gradually improve learning opportunities in their classrooms.

Teachers can also learn from evaluation at the individual level. The work of teaching is always a learning opportunity: even where it is constrained by obstacles and problems. Making the most of these learning opportunities for continuing professional and personal development is a form of professionalism. In addition to sponsored professionalism, which is based on the social recognition of role and qualifications, teachers can also develop 'independent professionalism: a commitment to careful and critical examination of the assumptions and practices embedded in sponsored professionalism' (Leung 2009:53).

5. Programme evaluation and change

Independent professionalism, guided by these principles, is the best guide for teacher change. To understand the challenge of change, it is useful to consider Wenger's account of established practices in social settings:

Being alive as human beings means that we are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds, from ensuring our physical survival to seeking the most lofty pleasures. As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit together, we interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn.

Over time this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense therefore to call these 'communities of practice'. (Wenger 1998:45).

The key point here is that practices are not just what we do: they are established over time, give us a social identity and constitute the means by which we relate to other people within the group and beyond. Thus practices are valued in ways that are not reflected in their functional usefulness. Practices in this sense, however, are not static: they change slowly over time. If we consider traditional social practices such as weddings or religious festivals, and compare what happens now with what happened 30 years ago, we notice many small changes. These may be due to technology, economic circumstances or other trends, but they often exist alongside perceptions of maintaining traditional practices.

All teachers change their approach, style and activities as they progress through their career. Even where they feel their teaching is the same from class to class or year to year, say where they are using the same materials, a moment's reflection will reveal changes in focus, emphasis or technique. Such variation is integral to our human nature: we are not machines, and should not try to be machines in our work. Rather, we should be responsive to emerging situations and needs, and at the same time, analysts of how our practice is changing. For example, if in teaching from a course book a teacher notices that she is spending more time than recommended (in the teacher's book) on grammar exercises and writing tasks, and less on speaking tasks and project activities, then this direction of change is a context for reflection and analysis. The reasons for the change may lie with the teacher's own preference for tight control of the language of the lesson, or of the behaviour of the students. It may be due to the students' desire to focus on what they see as similar to test activities or to the teacher's own thinking on what best contributes to language learning. The way forward in cases like this is not judgements of right or wrong; rather, it is in the emphasis on description of what happens, and the factors which shape this in programme evaluation. The teacher in this case will still do what she deems possible and required by the situation, but with awareness of the direction of change may be in a position to influence this.

In summary then, we need to see curriculum development as a process of change that occurs at the teacher's pace. Although practices change over time, they may not be visible to the naked eye: teachers may not be conscious of the small ways in which their teaching is changing. Reflection and analysis contribute to teacher awareness, and where the teacher is aware, she will be in a better position to establish the right direction for change and negotiate with students and colleagues how this can be implemented.

6. Conclusion

This short paper has outlined key current themes for the use of programme evaluation for curriculum development in English language teaching. There are three key points, which can be summarised as follows:

- 1) evaluation for development needs to be located in the actual social spaces of learning, and descriptions of these which can stimulate analysis and reflection should be drawn up
- 2) evaluation should involve all stakeholders, but recognise the central role of the teacher as mediator between curriculum design and impact
- 3) evaluation should contribute to the understanding and direction of change in the curriculum, and serve as a bridge between what is desirable (the curriculum design) and possible (the situation in actual classrooms) (Kiely 2012; Kiely 2013).

Evaluation cannot just test the theory. It has instead to focus on understanding practices in their social and historical contexts, and identifying the opportunities for key stakeholders, such as teachers, to achieve gradual, sustainable improvements. In this way teachers can lose their fear of the how are we doing? question, and explore their practices with confidence and a sense that their efforts are recognised, and their opportunities for teacher learning are real.

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Theme two

The socio-economic environment: English for development

Brave New World: English and the Global Indian

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Abstract

This article presents the experiences of the teacher-practitioner while developing an English language and theatre programme at Union Chapel School, Kolkata, India and in working with an adult professional in Kolkata. It has been written on the basis of a paper delivered at the Third International Teacher Educators Conference 2013 held in Hyderabad, India. Perspectives gained from other speakers at the conference have shaped and modified the argument expressed. Students attending the school programme had a first-language background in Hindi and Bengali, and were among the first generation in their families to receive formal instruction at all, including instruction in English. Students were in the 14–16 age group. The adult student who attended separate English language classes is an entrepreneur who has moved from disadvantaged, rural India to a successful position in urban India. Students' responses, suggestions and feedback are discussed in the context of the following questions: Who is a global Indian?; What is her/his relationship with the English language, and can this be better understood in the light of an understanding of deep cosmopolitanism (Holliday 2013) and in conjunction with a teaching process that uses the resources of the students' unconscious and imaginative instincts?

1. Introduction

The central subject of this paper is the global Indian. Who is the global Indian and what is her or his relationship with English? India's economic presence in the world is growing significantly and the country has retained a growth rate in the face of a worldwide recession. The exposure of the country's citizens to the rest of the world through the medium of English, and their influence on the rest of the world in turn is a phenomenon of considerable interest.

This discussion will look at two kinds of English learner, considered to be integral to these questions. The first set of learners concerns students of Union Chapel School in the 14–16 age group. Urban teenagers from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds, these students agreed to address questions raised by the teacher-practitioner in feedback forms, which provide some central material for this paper. The second kind of learner is an adult professional. A successful entrepreneur who made the transition from rural to urban India, the student in question has also contributed written feedback that has provided answers to questions raised. Both kinds of learner belong to one of the first generations in their families to enter the educational system, and largely the first generation to formally take up the study of English.

The concept of deep cosmopolitanism (Holliday 2013) and its possible meanings in relation to the global Indian will be addressed. In addition, the significance of the semiotic (Kristeva, in Bailey 2013) or

unconscious, instinctive and emotional processes within the human mind, and the child's expression of these materials as babble (Kristeva *ibid*) will be investigated to assess their value in supporting and achieving language learning.

In writing this paper, it is not claimed that an objective presentation of findings is possible. It is therefore of some relevance to consider the factors that have shaped the teaching practice discussed. The teacher-practitioner (the author) was born and raised in India and lived, studied and worked in the United Kingdom for 15 years. I was trained as a scholar in the protocols of English literature and not in linguistics. My understanding of classroom dynamics has been shaped by experience of English language theatre in India, and forms of contemporary performance in the United Kingdom.

Responses to questions asked both formally through the feedback forms used and informally in the space of the classroom indicate that the students in question did not perceive me, the teacher-practitioner, as Indian in the same way that they viewed themselves. My life outside India was perceived as having changed my cultural affiliations. Students viewed me as someone outside their usual frames of reference, and this appeared to encourage a greater openness of response in engaging with forms of communicative classroom practice.

2. The English and theatre-programme context

The English and theatre programme developed at Union Chapel School used Shakespeare's *As You Like It* as a resource text. This was because the programme was devised to complement the English literature syllabus for the national ICSE (Indian Council of Secondary Education) examinations that the students were following. I was asked by the school to devise activities focused on listening and speaking. The school also asked that the students be given creative practice exercises, which would introduce them to the first elements of theatre and public performance.

Accordingly, over the three months of the programme, students were given a number of improvisational exercises that used vocabulary, themes, characters and situations from *As You Like It*. An example is a mirroring exercise in which students worked in pairs. Each student was asked to show through their facial expression and body language their understanding of these emotions: happy, sad, amused, surprised, angry. Their partner had to mirror or reproduce what they did. The activity was then reversed, with the second student responding to the prompts and the first following them.

While the students initially tended to break into laughter in the course of the activities, they gradually became accustomed to the physical and unexpected nature of the exercises they were being asked to do. They were supported in this by being taken through a short, physical and vocal warm-up with music at the beginning of every session. They were also encouraged to ask questions about why they were doing particular activities.

Over a number of sessions the students showed themselves comfortable with a sophisticated range of vocabulary chosen from *As You Like It*. They also became adept at showing the emotional motivation of invented characters and at creating their own dialogue in response to written prompts they were given as groups of three and four.

The thinking behind these exercises was to allow students to relax into a place of instinctive and emotional openness in relation to English, a second language for them all. Following from the idea that attitude and perspective determine learning in observable and significant ways, the programme was further developed to draw on the imaginative and emotional dimensions of theatre and performance. The intention was to support students in achieving a level of comfort with English similar to that held in relation to languages learnt in childhood. In this case the languages were Hindi and Bengali.

3. Semiotic and babble

Julia Kristeva has talked about the idea of the semiotic (Kristeva op. cit.) and the child's babble (Kristeva op. cit.), by which she is taken to mean the instinctive and sensual and bodily drives that we experience and then express in semi-coherent forms as children before we enter the structured world of spoken and written language. While Kristeva developed the concept in the context of a feminist and psychoanalytical approach to the formation of meaning, it may be equally usefully applied to the learning process under discussion.

In essence, babble (Kristeva op. cit.) predates and organically gives rise to the child's ability to enter formal language, and it also offers access to the creative materials from which that language may be modified and developed. In offering these students – Hindi and Bengali speakers – a chance to play with language through theatre and communicative activities, the hope was to uncover a relationship between their own unconscious semiotic resources and capacity for babble, and English – a relationship that would then underpin and strengthen their growth as English speakers, listeners, readers and writers. In terms of preparing them to be global Indians, the intention was also to bypass the second-language or foreign-language relationship with English, which these students would otherwise be likely to enter into. The truly global potential for English, it is contended, lies in the extent to which learners such as these students are able to forge a natural and instinctive relationship with it. In doing so, students are also perhaps able to enter into elements of that deep cosmopolitanism (Holliday 2013) which has been argued to be a shaping force in contemporary language learning.

For this reason, a lot of the theatre work done in class did not focus immediately on verbal accuracy but rather on physical and emotional fluency, which it was hoped would translate into linguistic fluency and into communication as a whole act involving the face, the body, flexible speech patterns and intonation.

The students' regular attendance and enthusiasm for the programme, as well as their increased confidence and speaking ability as evidenced from the assessment integrated into the programme, were indicators that the methods used achieved some positive results.

As mentioned earlier however, the students themselves voiced some interesting views in their feedback forms, which throw light on questions raised by this discussion.

4. The questions

The form asked the following questions:

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Do you feel the English and theatre workshops you did this term helped you? If so, how did they help you? |
| 2. | What did you enjoy the most? |
| 3. | What was not so enjoyable or useful? |
| 4. | Was there too much freedom in the class? |
| 5. | Did you think your own opinions were important in the class? |
| 6. | How will you keep up your English language learning and theatre skills? |
| 7. | Your own comments |

Of the completed forms received from the two groups, the following responses have been chosen to questions 2, 4, 5 and 7. They either represent some generally held opinion among the groups or are

significant because of their difference from that opinion. Questions 1, 3 and 6 will be discussed separately.

Responses to question 2:

‘I enjoyed the sudden situations.’

‘The thing I enjoyed the most was the physical exercises and the voice exercises.’

‘The acting workshops where we were divided into groups and given topics and made to enact.’

Response to question 4:

‘Yes of course there was freedom in the class but not too much.’

Responses to question 5:

‘Not every time, but sometimes my own opinions were important in the class.’

‘No, I don’t think so because of my less [lack of] confidence.’

Responses to question 7:

‘Thank you ma’am for teaching us in a friendly manner.’

‘My confidence level has gone up.’

(Feedback forms, English and Theatre Programme, Classes IX and X (2012), Union Chapel School, Calcutta).

The first three responses seem to support the idea that the students came to feel positively motivated by the unusual nature of the programme in bringing together both physical, vocal and other theatre practices and the games and activities of communicative teaching. They lend credence to the idea that in trying to access the semiotic (Kristeva op. cit.) the programme gained the active support of the students, because it helped in opening a gateway to the use of English that had perhaps not been previously accessible.

The fourth response provides insight into how the students felt about the active level of freedom the programme provided. Class numbers of usually 40-plus and the pressures of the national examinations mean that most teaching at Union Chapel School takes place in an atmosphere of relatively strict discipline. Students sit in rows of desks facing the teacher, and are not usually expected to move about the teaching space or to write on the blackboard. At this programme, however, the students usually sat on the floor and were invited to move about the open space provided at will, in relation to the exercises underway. Students were given the lead in deciding how activities could be interpreted and in nominating other groups and students for participation, as well as asked consistently for peer feedback. From this response and from classroom feedback it appears that students were sensitive to the shift in classroom dynamics the programme sought to achieve, and responded to it with some awareness of the need for a group to enforce its own discipline through shared responsibility.

The final four responses largely support this view, except for the second one given in answer to question 5, Did you think your own opinions were important in the class?

The statement ‘No, I don’t think so because of my less [lack of] confidence,’ was quite an uncommon one but points to a general issue which also arises with reference to answers given to questions 1 and 3. The questions Do you feel the English and theatre workshops you did this term helped you? If so, how did they help you? and What was not so enjoyable or useful? (feedback forms *ibid.*) were written with the aim of allowing students to provide a balanced perspective of the programme. While they were asked to let the teacher-practitioner know what worked for them, it was equally important that they should be able to explain what did not or what could have worked better/differently.

5. Questioning the teacher figure

All the written feedback received in answer to both these questions, however, was overwhelmingly positive. Clearly, students felt uncomfortable disagreeing with the teacher-practitioner even under conditions of anonymity.

The over-centralisation of power in the figure of the teacher is perhaps embedded within the Indian cultural context (although this is not an attribute of socio-intellectual traditions found only in India), and is a concern for several reasons. For present purposes, two are of particular importance:

First, it limits the development of critical and comprehensive thinking and by extension the discursive capacity of the student. The ability to disagree without a breakdown in communication is essential to the development of a truly comprehensive and cosmopolitan (Holliday 2013 op. cit.) voice for any English speaker.

Second, it creates a barrier to the open engagement of student and teacher, which means that the teacher is constantly and unknowingly cut off from valuable information about the learning processes s/he is seeking to sustain in the classroom, and their consequences for the students concerned. In overinvesting the teacher with power the student also transfers almost all responsibility for learning to the teacher, which may be one reason why students' answers to question 6, How will you keep up your English language learning and theatre skills? were quite limited.

Could this reluctance to question the teacher figure be a function of the age group or the relatively modest economic backgrounds of the students attending the English and theatre programme?

Answers might be provided in turning to the adult student whom the teacher-practitioner taught in one-to-one sessions separate to the programme at the school. A first-language Hindi speaker and successful entrepreneur who grew up in rural India, then moved to Calcutta and carved a niche for himself in the fashion and clothing industry, this student might be expected to approach the teacher-student relationship with more confidence. As a global Indian, this student is in the process of establishing a material understanding of his own cultural position in the international context. Because of his financial success he regularly visits countries outside India including China, New Zealand and the USA. His medium of communication on these trips is English.

The programme developed for his benefit also drew on creative and theatrical practice in order to plant the seeds of an instinctive and natural relationship with the English language. The student responded positively to activities involving verbal and rhythmic play, and, in contrast to the younger students in the groups discussed above, volunteered areas of language development for classroom time.

Yet this student, despite the advantage of years and financial status, showed a reluctance to openly question or disagree with the teacher-practitioner. His answer to the question, What was not so enjoyable or useful? (in relation to his English classes) was, 'For me my teacher's opinion is important' (feedback form 2012–2013). When asked further questions the student became clearly uncomfortable with investigating the taboo he was being implicitly encouraged to explore.

6. Conclusion

The global Indian, then, would seem to be a new speaker of English. A generation ago s/he would not have had access to education in English, but far from being intimidated by this s/he welcomes the complexities and cosmopolitanism (Holliday *ibid.*) of establishing a natural and instinctive relationship with it.

What does this mean for teacher education and for the on-going development of the teacher-practitioner?

One conclusion is that in response to the global Indian student, teacher-practitioners are also called on to act and think globally and with an openness to cosmopolitanism (Holliday *op. cit.*). Finding ways of opening up students' instinctive language resources or babble (Kristeva *op. cit.*) can help to do this. A second conclusion is that the teacher-practitioner is called on to actively aid the student in dismantling an overly rigid classroom hierarchy.

Despite the limitations of a teacher-student model in which power is heavily over-invested in the former, the future is open and one may say appositely with Shakespeare's Miranda:

*[...] O brave new world
That has such people in't!
(The Tempest Act V, Sc I)*

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English Skills for Employability in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to discuss the changing needs of courses designed to prepare students for careers. English skills for employability began with ensuring students were sufficiently fluent in English to function in the workplace. Today, the needs have morphed into a mix of English for academic purposes, English for professional purposes, and English for social purposes, including upward mobility. This paper is based on data collected at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, through the coaching of final-year students. Approximately 60 students were taught in each institute. Employers were also consulted in the design of lesson material, based on feedback from internships. The results show that the employers' needs keep changing to keep abreast of the needs of a 21st-century office. The outcome is that students need to be fluent in English, be aware of the rules of written genres such as official letters, emails, press releases and taking minutes, and be familiar with etiquette, cross-cultural communication and fine dining. Despite the diversity of needs, the general belief of employers is that graduates can barely spell, let alone achieve the multifaceted tasks expected of them.

1. Purpose of education

The purpose of education has been traditionally associated with the philosophy of life as demonstrated in the vision statement of universities: *Ipsa scientia potestas est* 'knowledge itself is power' in Latin, or its Pali version, *pagnyaya parisujjati* in the vision of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. However, in recent times, the purpose of education has undergone change because universities are no longer functioning in splendid isolation in their ivory towers. Most societies are now calling upon higher-education institutions to provide training to make university graduates employable.

Education in Sri Lanka, at one time the star of the South Asian region, has not kept up with its reputation. Student assessments show a modest level of quality, and employers' assessments of graduates' cognitive and attitudinal skills are also largely negative. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) of the UGC has taken bold steps to introduce a culture of accountability in the sector (cf. sort of justification www.siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/.../Sri_Lanka).

This statement from the World Bank highlights the role of employer assessments of the cognitive and attitudinal skills of graduates in discussing the quality of education provided by institutions of higher learning. This is a far cry from the days when university education was mainly to broaden the mind of

undergraduates or to engage in the discourse of contemporary issues. The fact that an agency such as the World Bank is involved in assessing the quality of higher education heralds the changing times we live in.

In addition to the changing nature of stakeholders in education, most postcolonial societies, inhabit a world of many cultures, many languages and many discourses. The selection of English as a medium of instruction is in itself a thorny issue, in an environment of diversity.

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. (Rao 1938: Preface to Kanthapura)

This quotation from the Indian writer, Raja Rao, signifies some of the issues of English skills for employability. It is because English functions alongside other languages in the former colonies of the British Empire that learning English for employment is fraught with challenges. It was only in the late 1990s that former British colonies such as Sri Lanka succeeded in making at least one course unit in English mandatory for a degree from a Sri Lankan university. Unlike India, which has always had English as the medium of instruction in most universities, the struggle to re-establish English has been a long and hard one in Sri Lanka.

The objective of this paper is to discuss what English skills are required of graduates from the perspective of all stakeholders.

2. Literature review

The employability of graduates has been much discussed in recent years, with varying definitions of the term. Pool and Sewell (2007: 281) propose a model illustrating the essential components of employability and suggest it is the key to employability. This model for career-development learning is based on experience (work and life); degree subject knowledge; understanding and skills; and generic skills and emotional intelligence (abbreviated to EDGE). This model encapsulates the salient features of employability, with generic skills translating into what is now called soft skills such as imagination/creativity, adaptability/flexibility, etc. (Pool and Sewell *ibid.* 282). While EDGE is a useful model for teaching skills for employment, the exclusion of entrepreneurial skills can be considered a drawback since it is one of the problems of graduate unemployment in South Asian countries.

Ranasinghe and Herath (2011) examine employer satisfaction of business graduates, based on a study of 65 private-sector employers. The findings of this study reveal that graduates lack ICT skills, English language proficiency and applicability of practical knowledge. The authors cite the case of Nigeria (Dabalan, Oni, Adekola, 2001) as further proof of employer dissatisfaction, due to the lack of oral and written communication skills among graduate employees. Ariyawansa (2008) outlines that there are many jobs for engineering, science and management graduates, but fewer opportunities for humanities and social science graduates. From a different perspective, Gunesekera (2012) deals with the challenges faced in syllabus design to keep abreast of the diverse calls on universities to be more practical and market-oriented to ensure employability of its graduates.

3. Methodology

English skills for employability are taught in many ways at a university. For example, in the University of Kelaniya, the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) teaches English for Professional Purposes, and Soft Skills for Final Year Students, while the Department of English teaches courses such as English Skills for Employment and Projects and Presentation Skills. At Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, at the Business School, the culmination of the Business Communication courses is an internship, which is mandatory for all final-year students. The data collected for this paper consist of the syllabi of the Departments of English, and feedback from students and employers. Interviews with employers in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Singapore, and anecdotal evidence are part of the data collected for this analysis.

4. Results from the employer's perspective

Sri Lankan graduates refuse to take responsibility. Even when managerial positions are offered to them, they'd rather duck than accept the position. (CEO of software company, Colombo, Sri Lanka).

This comment from a private-sector employer highlights the problem faced by employers of the more eligible graduates for employment, such as engineers. According to the feedback, the common tendency is that new, young employees do as little as possible in the office, and avoid taking on additional responsibilities in a company, even after working there for years. This avoidance of accepting responsibility is a severe criticism of graduates since the general belief is that private-sector culture is too alien for the average graduate.

A related comment from a director of a leading private-sector company is the reluctance of graduates to seek employment in the private sector. He cites the example of his driver's son, who was offered a position in the private-sector firm he heads, but chose to be a government-sector teacher instead. In an effort to circumvent such reluctance, this company has resorted to offering scholarships to undergraduates, possibly in an attempt to woo them to join the company on graduation.

Sri Lanka's private sector wants local grads

Sri Lanka's private sector is currently looking at attracting increasing numbers of graduates from local universities and urging them to consider employment in non-state institutions. The John Keells Group has financially assisted 49 students qualifying to enter local universities aimed at encouraging more graduates to consider employment in the private sector... (Business Times on Sunday, Sunday Times, 19 May 2013, p. 8).

This instance of attracting graduates from Sri Lankan universities is a dramatic change from the 1990s when Sri Lankan employers preferred foreign graduates to their Sri Lankan counterparts, citing reasons of attitudinal problems and lack of English as the main cause for not recruiting them (Raheem and Gunsekera, 1994).

In Singapore, graduates are attracted to jobs in the public sector as much as the private sector, but employers tend to moan about the quality of service provided by the recruitments from universities. Lack of competency in writing skills such as spelling and grammar tend to be highlighted as drawbacks in training young graduates recruited as management trainees.

5. Results from the institutional perspective

The results of the study show the overall need to establish a firm link between higher education and industry. This century's universities are openly wooing the corporate world in order to become self-

sufficient financially, and possibly to support their research agenda. For example, in December 2012, Mobitel, a leading mobile-phone distributor in Sri Lanka, signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Kelaniya to conduct an online course in business communication called Master in Business (MBUS). As a spin-off of this agreement, the university is able to establish internships at Mobitel for its final-year undergraduates. Such arrangements between industry and university are relatively new in South Asia, which traditionally had agreements or exchange programmes with other universities or scholarship agencies rather than sponsors of courses.

Another aspect from the institutional perspective is the role of donor agencies. This is largely a 21st-century phenomenon since donors of yore endowed a chair, established a gold medal in honour of an esteemed colleague or relative or awarded scholarships to young people deemed worthy of financial support. In 2013, the donor agency is a leading actor or stakeholder in giving grants to reform the education system, change syllabi and even the contents of tests and evaluations. For example, the IRQUE project on Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education, which is funded by the government of Sri Lanka with credit assistance from the World Bank, gives funds to develop the skills of information technology, English language competency and social harmony.

The re-launch of a standardised English test for all undergraduates, the University Test of English Language (UTEL) is another case in point. UTEL was first launched in 2001 by the English Language Teaching Unit Heads' Committee of Sri Lankan universities. For whatever reason, it lost momentum, and was re-launched under the auspices of the World Bank in 2010. Its objectives are significant in terms of nurturing particular skills to make the graduates employable.

The University Test of English Language (UTEL) is a standardised blended examination which measures the general English language proficiency of the undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities to uplift employability. (Wettewe and Kulasingham 2013: 3).

6. Student needs

'Social etiquette was the best thing you taught us.'
(Comment in student evaluation, Department of English, 2012).

Such comments are common from grateful students who consider the course Projects and Presentation Skills offered as a core course by the Department of English to be the most useful course they have followed, due to its pragmatic nature. The course includes application procedure; preparation for interviews; practice interviews; writing memos, official letters, reports and emails; business etiquette; cross-cultural communication; and presentation skills.

We learnt to write concisely and to the point, but our courses have little practical value, although the analytical skills are helpful. (Comment by English Honours graduate, now working in the private sector, 2013).

The general belief is that discipline-specific knowledge is insufficient; it needs to be matched with exposure to the workplace. In keeping with this belief, the Department of English, University of Kelaniya has instituted internships in the final year for undergraduates. This is in line with business schools such as Nanyang Business School, Singapore, with its final-year project, which includes an internship.

7. Pedagogical implications

Most of the responsibility for creating employable graduates for the 21st century seems to fall on the shoulders of the teaching body. This is because the employer needs, student needs and institutional

needs find their way naturally into the classroom. It is a difficult task, especially because the system of education in most South Asian countries is based on the brilliance of the individual warrior, not the team. As stated by a presenter at the third International Teacher Educators Conference (TEC 2013) at Hyderabad,

Our education system is competitive, but we have to make the students fit into the workplace, which is cooperative. (Balivada Sai Lakshmi, March 16, 2013).

The employer requires team players with team spirit, which again needs to be fostered in the university after several years of competitive and sometimes combative play by the students at examinations and competitions.

From a pedagogical point of view, the learners need both communicative competence and grammatical competence. The prescriptivist approach is required for grammatical accuracy and familiarity with the mechanics of language: spelling and punctuation. Additionally, communicative competence of audience analysis, message structure, channel choice, communicator strategy and culture strategy is required to function effectively in the workplace.

While grammatical competence and communicative competence remain in the academic domain, another requirement of the employer and the student is improvement of social skills. Generally, academics tend to skirt this issue because of the notion of the Department of English morphing into a finishing school. However, employers do complain that graduates from Sri Lankan universities are not polished and lack the understanding of etiquette expected of future managers and leaders. Business schools tend to teach business etiquette to their students in the same way that a staff college would teach the officers table manners. Therefore, in the first quarter of the 21st century, the need for English for Academic Purposes seems to have given way to English for Professional Purposes, and now to English for Social Purposes.

With reference to grammatical issues, the basic problems are that some deviations are more acceptable than others, while some are perceived as errors, and it is only the native speakers of these varieties who seem to be aware of the difference. The following example demonstrates this:

“Your Honour, this case is filing today.’ The senior lawyers present exchanged glances, with a suppressed smile on their lips, the learned judge looked the other way. The young lady, unmindful of the amused reactions of her colleagues, went on to present the details of the case” (Madhavan 2010: 33).

The overuse or incorrect use of prepositions as in ‘You studied the statistical packages by your own?; the complexities of question formation as in ‘Why you have used two different terminologies?’ and so on reflect common problems with English syntax. While these examples may be acceptable in informal speech, they would be considered errors in writing for the workplace.

8. Conclusion

In preparing undergraduates to face the challenges of the workplace, most teacher-educators are willing to adapt to the changes taking place around us by practising competency-based learning, facilitating and enabling rather than lecturing, being conscious of gender sensitivity and compliance with environmental standards and sustainability. In short, all the buzzwords are in place, but the need to work closely with the employer and re-structure courses to suit the needs of the workplace is time-consuming, subject to constant change and difficult to implement. The best news is that the learner is as anxious as the employer to please the boss, and enhance her communicative skills.

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Soft Skills for Success at Work

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Abstract

A skilled workforce is an absolute need in all organisations. As companies start embracing new social technologies to collaborate and correspond with an ever-increasing diverse workforce, the need for soft skills and adaptability to technologies continues to grow. This paper explores the methodologies that can be used for imparting soft skills to those students who are on the verge of entering the corporate world. Students who join a workforce are expected to possess a set of managerial skills and soft skills for various roles for which they have been employed. This is one area in which business programmes have been unable to meet the expectations of the corporate world, though recruiters aim at hiring graduates who have more than adequate knowledge of their subject and can also deliver it effectively through soft skills. The objective of this paper is to show how soft-skills training can be conducted most effectively in the classroom by using an eclectic method that is practically oriented, challenging and enjoyable at the same time. It also explores collaborative workforces that embrace technologies as the new social norm and how soft-skills education can assist in this process.

1. Introduction

In its broadest sense, learning can be defined as a process of progressive change from ignorance to knowledge, from inability to competence, and from indifference to understanding ... In much the same manner, instruction or education can be defined as the means by which we systematize the situations, conditions, tasks, materials, and opportunities by which learners acquire new or different ways of thinking, feeling, and doing. (Fincher 1994).

Most people assume that the purpose of learning is to incorporate new information or skills into the learner's existing knowledge structure, and once this has been done, the responsibility of the teachers and the educational authorities is over. However, it has to be remembered that the information that is learnt has to be processed, structured and connected in such a way as to be accessible in the future. Does this happen in the current educational scenario? It is quite a challenging task to address the needs of every student in the classroom and most of the time teachers are not able to do justice to their students. Consequently, teaching does take place, but has it been effective?

The importance of soft skills, such as presentation skills and communication skills, is stressed in various studies, as it has become an integral part of an employee of an effective workforce, to work in an

environment that is dynamic, corroborative and diverse. Effective soft skills have become a de-facto requirement in most workplaces today, where adapting to an ever-changing work environment constitutes an inseparable part of the skill-set of a working individual.

There is a lot of argument in the industry as to whether it is possible to enhance soft skills in a few hours of training, especially when one considers the fact that a person has lived with certain traits all his life. To this, the answer is harsh but real – a professional who wants to do well in his/her career does not really have a choice. However, when it comes to growing in an organisation, it is your personality that matters, more so in large organisations where several people with similar technical expertise will compete for promotion. Training on soft skills becomes all the more relevant in a country like India where the education system does not delve into personality development. While numerous studies have been done in the area of soft skills, there has always been a need for better solutions and methodologies because of the changing environments in commerce and industry and the changing workflow needs of a challenging and competitive global environment.

The online encyclopaedia Wikipediagives a very broad definition of soft skills, which leaves much room for discussion:

Soft-skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, language competency, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft-skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job. (Wikipedia, 2007).

Soft skills, usually called people skills, such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills, are not as easily measurable; hard skills, such as computer skills, language skills and machinery skills, can be easily taught and measured.

Soft-skills training is essential because we do not have it in our academic curricula. *What is important to realise is that companies are aware that a person's soft skills are an important part of their individual contribution to the success of an organisation.* Twenty-first century employers are seeking employees with polished soft skills; unfortunately, the current entry-level job candidates severely lack these skills. Glenn (2003a: 9–13) concluded that individuals who can successfully integrate technical (hard) skills with human relation (soft) skills have the competitive edge over other candidates and will excel with ease. The paradigm shift in the 21st-century workforce has forced employees to be well armed with soft skills (Ganzel 2001: 56–60). James and James (2004) confirmed that soft skills have become crucial even in technical environments. Evenson (1999: 29–31) added that when students are equipped with soft skills, it could make the difference in obtaining and retaining the job for which they have been prepared.

2. Purpose of the study

Students of communication and soft skills come from various backgrounds of expertise and inclination. Therefore, a different approach in the classroom is needed to make soft-skills study engaging to everyone. This though, needs to be backed up by a quantitatively sound method to measure progress as well. Both of these are needed to produce effective individuals with a high degree of proficiency in language and communication.

The purpose of this study was to provide information that may be used by educators to improve the skills of students entering the workforce because the findings reported will help identify the most important workforce skills, along with innovative techniques to integrate these skills and add to the existing body of information on soft skills. Furthermore, this information may allow educators to better plan and implement employability skills into their courses.

This paper explores the methodologies that can be used for imparting soft skills (including language skills) to those students who are on the verge of entering the corporate world and who are expected to possess a set of managerial and soft skills for various roles for which they have been employed. This is one area in which business programmes have been unable to meet the expectations of the corporate world, though recruiters aim at hiring graduates who have more than adequate knowledge of their subject and can also deliver it effectively through soft skills.

The objective of this paper is to show by means of primary data gathered and analysed at the end of a training programme that soft-skills training can be conducted most effectively in the classroom by using an eclectic method which is practically oriented, interactive, needs-based, challenging and enjoyable at the same time.

3. The experiment

The sampling frame of the study was 80 students in their internship period, who, having completed their final semester in a reputed Management Institute, were imparted soft-skills training by the authors of this paper. The authors attempt to show how teachers can use an eclectic method of imparting soft skills to the students, who were taught and evaluated for the following three soft skills over a period of one semester:

- communication skills and business etiquette
- presentation skills
- team dynamics and social graces.

The soft skills of the students were assessed before the training programme, in order to get a good idea about their level and what soft skills they required to prepare them for the workplace. A pre-test was administered in the three above-mentioned areas and an assessment of their capabilities made. Then the students were imparted training in soft skills. At the end of the training period, they were once again evaluated and their scores were evaluated. The findings show that the students, having been taught soft skills by using innovative methodologies, learnt more easily, with enjoyment and they also understood the importance of possessing soft skills.

4. Discussion

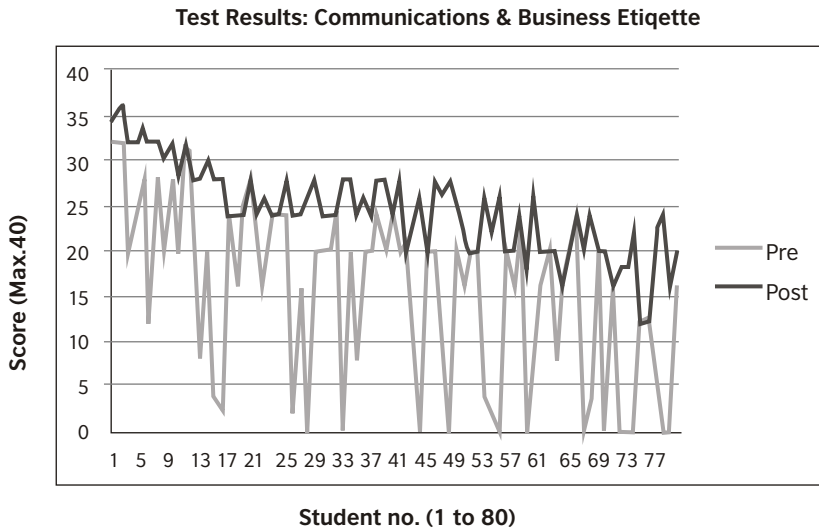
The process of the study followed this pattern:

1. An objective test worth 40 marks covering the use of written communication was given to the students.
2. Every student was asked to give a presentation for ten minutes on a given topic and their presentation skills and non-verbal communication skills were evaluated. A video recording of the presentation of every student was also made. The evaluation on the basis of various parameters consisted of 40 marks.
3. The students were observed doing some team activities and taking part in a group discussion for their team spirit and 40 marks were assigned for the evaluation.
4. The students were given some role playing and some typical scenarios in an organisation to examine their business etiquettes and social graces and the evaluation was worth 40 marks.

The scores of every student for each of the skills tested were entered on a template and then the average per skill tested and the overall class performance were calculated. While communication skills are one of the most sought-after characteristics in potential employees, they are also the skills that are

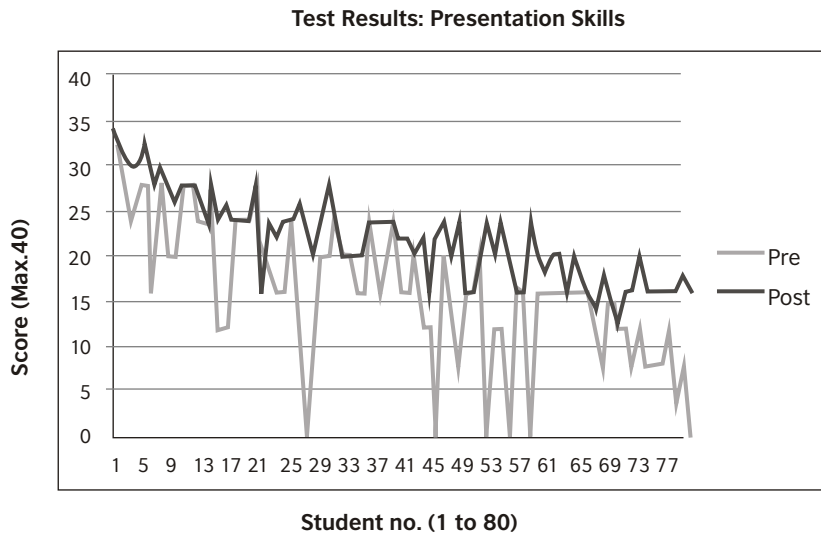
most often missing. Quibble (2004: 155–167) agreed that many recent college graduates have difficulty communicating. A respondent in the Moss study (1995: 63–76) said, ‘Our experience with college grads concerning communication has been poor. They cannot write, they cannot speak, and generally have poor communication skills’ (p. 74). Although there is an enormous emphasis placed on the ability to communicate, many job applicants entering the workforce do not possess the skills needed to be successful. Twenty-first century employees must be able to write clearly and to speak appropriately in various situations including oral presentations, phone etiquette and communicating with others on team projects (Employers Value Communication and Interpersonal Abilities 2004: 1–6).

Figure 1: Results of communication and business etiquette component



As an individual advances in their career, there is a greater demand for public speaking and the delivery of presentations (Stowers 2004: 26–28). Incidentally, many students and working professionals believe that their greatest fear is public speaking. The students were next asked to give a presentation on a topic of their choice for about ten minutes and they were evaluated on various parameters such as language proficiency, non-verbal communication, presentation skills, ability to take criticism and negative feedback and handling the question-and-answer session. The results were largely average.

Figure 2: Results of presentation skills component



The students were also asked to participate in a group discussion to observe their team dynamics and were evaluated on various parameters, and most of them also did very poorly in this area. Finally, the students were asked to do some role playing and participate in various group activities. Their knowledge of business etiquette and social graces were observed and evaluated. Most of the students scored below-average marks. In summary, the students appeared to be most comfortable in writing skills.

Then an eclectic teaching methodology was used to educate and train the students on these soft skills. They were made to watch their presentation, which had been recorded, and feedback was given to them to improve the performance. The teacher taught them business communication and made them take part in various group discussions after telling them the Dos and the Don'ts of a group discussion. They were given practical training in business etiquette and social graces and made to watch several videos on the same. Role playing, presentations, poetry reading, elocution, drama, and real scenarios including case studies became the norm, all day, for the duration of the training period, which was one semester.

At the end of the training programme, the students were asked to take a test on business communication once again, give a presentation, take part in a group discussion and were given various exercises and practical activities at group level to test their social graces and business etiquette. Evaluation was done along the same lines as before.

The results were entered once again, so that a comparative analysis could be made. Then, as before, the averages of the scores of each of the soft skills were calculated.

Since the average results do not provide much information on an individual student's performance and the variance scores among the group, a statistical tool, SPSS, was used to plot the distribution of scores and get a visual representation of the variance of scores through a normal distribution.

Figure 3: Overall results of all components

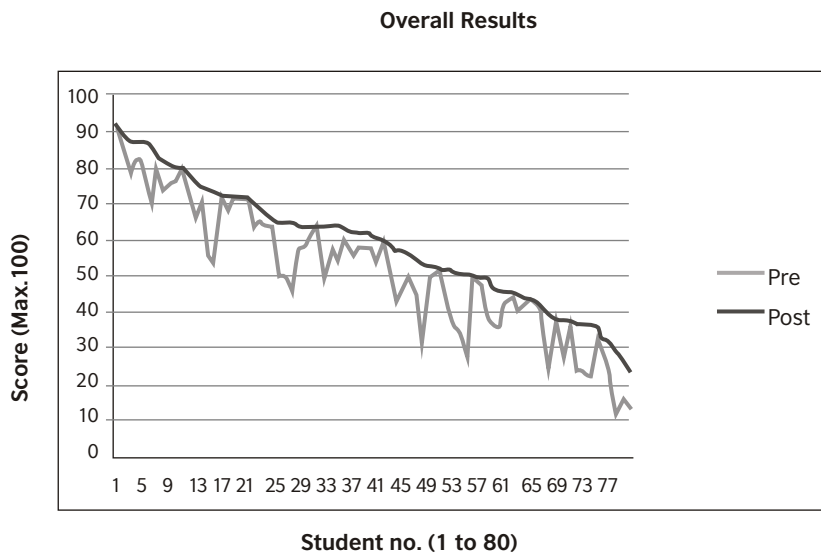
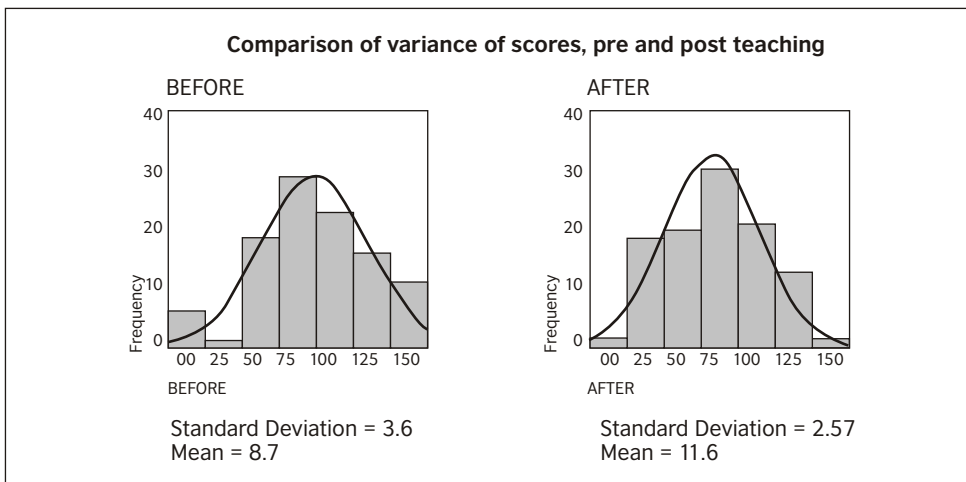


Figure 4: Visual representation of the variance of scores



5. Findings

The results show that the teaching was effective, though not entirely satisfactory because of the limited time period at the trainer's disposal. It is also an indication for the teachers to adopt diverse and innovative teaching strategies or aids to assist the students with the subjects, and this is a wake-up call for educators and administrators to give teachers more time to tweak the potential and the competencies of students in soft skills.

The result of this kind of feedback is that teachers have a much better grasp of their effectiveness, it gives them a significantly better view on what the focus should be, and if required they can undergo some training so as to adopt better strategies or techniques which can be more effective.

6. Conclusion

Customised training is difficult because of the amount of time that it takes and the efforts that are expended to deliver it. It does not suit most institutions where there is a paucity of time. But looking at soft skills as just another subject to be taught would probably be wrong. Soft skills are not something that someone learns overnight; it has to be inculcated over a longer period of time. Some aspects of soft skills can be classroom-taught, such as the proper use of language, intonation, paraphrasing, negotiating and so on. There is also a role for providing opportunities for observing skills in action, as with presentation skills and language styles.

The above mode of study would require monitoring language and communication in every subject of study that a student takes up. For example, an English teacher might not be suitable to comment on how a technical topic needs to be presented, and vice versa. But this is precisely what many students face in the workplace where they are required to present and communicate on technical topics.

Educators have a special responsibility regarding soft skills, because during school and university they have major impact on the development of their students' soft skills. Besides raising awareness regarding the importance of soft skills and encouraging students to improve their skills, lecturers should actively practise soft skills with their students. A very effective and efficient way of doing this is to include soft-skills training into the teaching of hard skills. Learner needs have to be considered as globalisation requires students to understand communication in general and especially cross-cultural communication. As Giroux said, '...the language teacher is a transformative intellectual'. He/she should create the conditions to develop the necessary skills in the students. The teacher thus plays a major role in ensuring that his/her students are ready for the 21st-century workforce.

According to Rucker and Reynolds (2002: 1–20), technology is advancing relentlessly. Enhancing a student's soft skills at critical times can make the difference between a failed promotion and a successful one. It is often a significant success factor in capitalising on potential versus wasting it, and can mean the difference between a career turnaround or termination.

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Crossing Frontiers: English Language and the International Dimension

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Abstract

To participate successfully and effectively in this ever-changing and competitive world, nations as well as organisations have to reconsider their own roles and reposition themselves in order to operate securely and productively in the global marketplace. Widespread educational reforms, including in English language education, are taking place in many countries all over the world as a result of this urgent requirement to operate successfully in globalised commerce. Educational reforms in the area of language education, and English language in particular, are being witnessed in almost all non-English-speaking nations at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary. The learning paradigm shift towards constructivism has led to the promotion of collaborative learning. This paper will discuss how online collaborative learning helps to fill the communication gap through various online projects. One of the central research questions undertaken is whether globalised classrooms make a difference in teaching English. The paper will discuss pedagogical considerations behind online collaboration feedback gathered from a pilot group; the impact of this project on students' critical thinking and key skills; and the merits and potential drawbacks of online collaborative work.

We didn't all come over on the same ship, but we're all in the same boat. (Bernard Baruch, American financier and statesman).

1. Globalisation, communication through language and cultural understanding

The business world has become increasingly global and the need for effective cross-cultural communication is essential. Cross-cultural communication in business plays a vital role in building international customers, employee relations and business partnerships. Cross-cultural communication in business requires effort, technique and the addressing of different hurdles that commonly prevent communication from being effective.

Culture is defined by anthropologists in a variety of ways; the definition usually includes some notion of shared values, beliefs, expectations, customs, jargon, and rituals. Language is the set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate. Societies may include a number of cultures

and languages. For example, while a very large proportion of the world's population speaks English, a significant proportion is Mandarin-speaking. And among English speakers, accents, dialects and vocabularies differ from one region of a country to another (Abdallah-Pretceille 2001).

Multiculturalism, or the tolerance of many different cultures and languages, is becoming more prominent in the fields of communications and ELT. This shows up in a number of ways. One of the most tangible of these is the recent growth of business communication. In the past, stress was laid upon children being taught in English so that they could become global citizens, but today we find that there is an increased effort to include culture and communication skills. This is viewed as an outcome of the major growth in trade and commerce (Brislin 1990).

2. A model of culture and a model language

Trade between individuals is facilitated when all traders share a common culture (of trade and business in this case) and language. A common culture allows individuals to trade with one another without intermediaries. In the case of language, this is most clear: if two agents speak the same language, they can negotiate a contract without the use of a translator. A common culture allows the traders to have common expectations and customs, which enhances trust.

3. Understanding the importance of culture in global business

The concept and reality of a global economy has expanded consumer awareness, defined new standards and rules of operations, and increased the need for national and corporate interdependence. Recent studies indicate that while some corporations compete successfully in the global marketplace, others have failed to sustain their competitive advantage because of cultural imperialism or inadequate acculturation of their managers to international cultural contexts.

The need to develop cross-cultural communication A survey of current literature consistently indicates that the contemporary business context is globally interdependent and interconnected. It further demonstrates that corporate leaders should provide opportunities for their managers in international assignments to learn cross-cultural business etiquette in order for them to excel in their interpersonal relationship overseas. Furthermore, training in cross-cultural etiquette will enable managers to cope with cultural differences (Asante et al. 2007).

An understanding of the subtle challenges in the use of English with non-native speakers, as well as the nuances of non-verbal communication, is critical to achieving business objectives when operating across cultures. In East Asian cultures, communication is very subtle and indirect. Thus, the direct style of Western communication can easily create serious offence, despite the best of intentions. The term 'no', for example, is rarely used in deference to more indirect methods of communicating and an American may hear the Chinese cue for the word 'no' — including the phrases 'maybe', 'we shall see', and 'we shall study it', without ever realising that these phrases are the Chinese equivalent of 'no'. Failure to understand these cues wastes time and money, and is the basis of communication failure that can jeopardise the achievement of business objectives. Failure to understand simple but subtle issues in communication may also cause both parties to lose face. Creating a loss of face for a Chinese counterpart is devastating to the business relationship and often irreparable – leading once again to loss of opportunity.

4. Virtual companies crossing cultural borders: cross-cultural business communication

The aim of the Cross-Cultural Business Correspondence (CCBC) project was to formulate a model of European business-culture values and to prepare an appropriate training methodology of business-culture values linked to the preparation of a catalogue of strategic competencies. Set up in 1999, the project's target groups are educational institutions and business consulting organisations. The CCBC project was tasked with creating a virtual platform to allow students from different European countries to study through close collaboration.

The main goals of the CCBC project were the upgrading of Business English (BE) teaching practice and the development of the individual through a collective learning process. The partners wanted to do this by integrating up-to-date technology with interdisciplinary content, and by using student-centred learning approaches. They aimed to use the online environment to raise students'

- cross-cultural awareness
- communication skills in Business English
- information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- ability to work in a (cross-cultural) team.

Each partner country was to establish a simulated company, with links to other simulated companies in the related partner countries. The target groups were students and tutors and young people considering employment opportunities outside of their own country (Europe and worldwide) and where ability to use Business English would improve their chances of success. The project was managed by the University of Primorska, together with educational institutions from Slovenia, Italy, Hungary, Estonia, Germany, Switzerland, India, Romania, France, Croatia and Austria.

5. Findings and results

The main result of this project is a well-established international network of institutions, teachers and students currently linking 17 partners from 11 European and non-European countries. The communication medium is the internet and the language is Business English. Cross-Cultural Business Communication is an interdisciplinary teaching module using ICT and the internet for international networking. It allows students from different European environments to study by working closely together and to carry out virtual business transactions in multicultural settings, so as to simulate real business life. For example, in Fast Track One, which was part of the overall project, students set up a simulated company to market a service or product and carried out commercial transactions with companies in Germany, Hungary and Slovenia. The project also developed supporting tools for students, including a student's book, a student's portfolio and the CCBC website. The portfolio – which allows students to record all new insights and to evaluate their own progress – was used for assessment and certification.

A virtual learning environment gave learners the opportunity to guide his/her own educational experience. Each student had the opportunity to work with classmates/ learners from around the world. Chat rooms, email, video conferencing and bulletin posting allowed students to connect with and learn from their peers from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Varying insights, knowledge and experiences can all add to the learning environment as students across regions and cultures exchange information and collaborate on tasks and assignments. In addition, web-based learning has helped us move from passive to active learning. As such, the project is a successful experiment in virtual individualized learning.

Since its inception the project has completed 13 years and has made significant progress in virtual learning. The virtual-learning environment of the project has achieved the following:

- connected teachers and students across national boundaries and enabled cross-cultural collaborative working using English as a medium
- encouraged social interaction and facilitated cross-cultural communication through the medium of English
- facilitated exchange of information/messages/business correspondence among these participating groups requiring them to use culturally appropriate forms of English
- provided a platform for the application of theoretical principles and constructs to simulated business functions and situations
- enhanced understanding of attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours of cultures
- encouraged stimulating discussion where students can put questions or raise issues ranging from business ethics in their countries, social dimensions of business decisions and even issues of domestic life.

This project's virtual business environment, the internet, is for use by both current and future partner countries who are interested in developing Business English language skills. In addition to the simulated network on the internet, a dedicated website has been developed to ensure the availability of the project's teaching materials and to further disseminate project results. There is clearly a strong pan-European dimension to the project but the inclusion of countries outside Europe has strengthened further the fundamental aims of the project. The project deliverables are well documented and easy to use, which enhances the prospects of commercialising them (Byram and Fleming 1998).

6. Conclusion

As business organisations embark on global competitiveness, managing cultural differences, intercultural communication, and cross-cultural negotiation and decision-making are the most common challenges to international management. Success or failure in managing a diverse or multicultural workforce largely depends on the ability of managers to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds and nationalities. International business is the outgrowth of globalisation, which is driven primarily by economic interdependency and advances in technology, but success in global business ventures will be affected by the ability of international managers to understand the appropriate business etiquette, customs and values needed to conduct business among nations of the world. As a number of studies strongly indicate, an understanding of cultural differences as well as effective intercultural communication competence will not only assist businesses to bridge the communication gap among countries involved in international trade negotiations, but will also enable multinational and multicultural managers to succeed in building multinational operations, global joint ventures and strategic alliances. Because communication is culture-bound and culture-specific, it is important that countries involved devote adequate time to learn, understand and appreciate the different ethical and cultural habits and appropriate etiquette for conducting business transactions on a global scale. This has implications for the nature of teacher professional development and the focus of many school and college curricula. If the aim is to develop, at least in part, an effective global population of young people who are able and equipped to contribute to the socio-economic development of their country, then institutions and governments have to invest in developing the right kind of language skills based on specific scenarios and needs. The acquisition of these competitive global skills and competences will enable high-growth businesses to establish lasting strategic relationships. In light of the advantages and complexities of globalisation in 21st-century business

management, cultivating cross-cultural awareness, and developing multicultural sensitivity and a global mindset by managers will lead to sustainable growth in international business. English is clearly the dominant language of global business at the present time and will remain so for some time to come. And it is the mastery not just of the English language but the development of cross-cultural communication skills through the medium of English that holds the key to global competitiveness.

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Cultural Diversity as a Resource for Children's L2 Development

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Abstract

'Scholarship on the use of L1 culture in teaching ESL appears to be at an emerging stage. It straddles such diverse topics as arts in enrichment in education, intercultural communication and L2 learner identity dynamics' (Igoudin 2009:14). Drawing support from this view, this paper emphasises the need to maximise the potential that the cultural diversity that prevails in the Indian classroom has for children's L2 development. It explores the ways in which teachers in the classroom work towards enhancing the linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional literacy skills of young ESL learners (of grades 2 and 5 – aged 7 and 10 years). It examines how a set of tasks designed around culturally familiar content are used to facilitate L2 development with a special focus on speaking and writing. The data for the study are gathered mainly through classroom observation and field notes made when children are set given tasks. This is supported by informal interviews with teachers before and after task completion to assess the achievement of task goals and to ascertain the quantum of skill development. Findings reveal that tasks that are woven around culturally familiar content not only offer linguistic and emotional skills gains but also make L2 learning personally meaningful for children.

One might wonder why we should try to use L1 cultures in teaching L2. The benefits are numerous, to ESL students and instructors alike. Lane Igoudin (2009:1).

1. Introduction

Language and culture have always shared inseparable ties and the importance of culture learning (as a fifth skill) is now well established. A body of research has focused on the inextricable relationship between target language culture and L2 teaching (Byram 1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b and Kramsch 1988; 1993; 1996; 2001). Scholars have also emphasised the need to exploit the potential that L1 culture has in maximising learning opportunities for second-language learners. And yet there is a paucity of research in this area, as voiced by Igoudin, 'Scholarship on the use of L1 culture in teaching ESL appears to be at an emerging stage. It straddles such diverse topics as arts in enrichment in education, intercultural communication, and L2 learner identity dynamics' (2009:14). Taking a cue from this view and drawing support from the arguments of researchers such as Byram and Grundy (2003), Kramsch (1993) and Prodromou (1988), this paper emphasises the need to maximise the potential that the cultural diversity that prevails in the Indian classroom has for children's L2

development. It explores the ways in which teachers in the classroom work towards enhancing the linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional literacy skills of young ESL learners (of grades 2 and 5 – aged 7 and 10 years). It will specifically examine a set of culture-oriented/specific tasks with which children are engaged in the classroom and the ways in which these tasks are used to facilitate L2 development with a special focus on speaking and writing. Before we move further let us we understand the term culture.

2. What is culture?

Culture is the loop that connects a community of people together. It represents the collective consciousness of a society through artefacts such as folklore, festivals, food, fashion, art (painting and sculpture), music (folk, popular, classical), movies, etc. Culture encompasses the commonly held values, beliefs and traditions and shapes, and reflects the worldview of a given people. It is a social legacy (Peck 1984) that is handed over from one generation to the other through accepted and patterned ways of behaviour.

3. Our reality and culturally responsive pedagogy

Educating linguistically, culturally and racially diverse students is a reality in most schools in the Indian subcontinent. Such a scenario of linguistic and cultural plurality not only benefits from but also demands a positive orientation to the use of L1 culture in the language classroom. It is argued that in light of the 'limitations of their hard-won communicative competence' (Kramsch, 1993:1), use of L1 culture will help children cope with the anxiety of having to learn an unfamiliar language by equipping them with the schema required to make sense of both the linguistic code as well as the social world of the target language. A Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) comes to our aid in this context. CRP refers to a teaching/learning experience where teachers are sensitive to the cultural background of their students and help them 'make connections between their local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities' (Ladson-Billings 1994, cited in Stairs 2007:42). In fact, CRP is used interchangeably with several terms such as culturally responsible, culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, culturally compatible, culturally relevant and multicultural, to describe a variety of teaching approaches in culturally diverse classrooms. These terms all imply that teachers should be responsive to their students by incorporating elements of the students' culture in their teaching. Thus learners' culture is accorded a primacy of place in classroom pedagogy in CRP wherein its potential for ensuring meaningful task engagement and maximal class participation is gainfully exploited. Further, the underlying assumption of CRP is that diversity is an asset that enriches the learning experience of all students, not a deficit to overcome (Stairs 2007:38). Cultural diversity is thus celebrated instead of deplored or at best ignored.

4. Aim and hypothesis of the study

To explore the ways in which teachers in the classroom work towards enhancing the linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional literacy skills of young ESL learners of grades 2 and 5 through tasks designed around culturally familiar content. Culturally familiar content has the potential to lower children's affective filter and sustain optimal participation in the enterprise of classroom learning. It will offer children the linguistic scaffolding required to function reasonably well.

5. Literature review

- Juan (2010) posits that textbooks play a major role in fostering students' cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence and investigates the extent to which college textbooks in China achieve this. A detailed content analysis of College English (New) reveals that although some

culture details are implicitly embedded in the pre-reading exercises, texts, footnotes, etc., cultural content has not received the attention it deserves.

- Genc and Bada (2005) examine student perceptions about the impact of culture teaching to a set of third-year student-teachers at Cukurova University in Turkey. Findings reveal that the culture classes students attended are beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession.
- Hong (2008) showed in a study conducted at the Indiana University, Bloomington how, in classes where heritage and non-heritage students are equally represented, intercultural competence can be developed by using heritage students as facilitators. This helped not only bridge the cultural proficiency gap, but also lessened the impact of the linguistic proficiency gap as well.
- Izadpanah (2011) investigates teachers' opinions and beliefs on the place of target cultural information in EFL classrooms in higher education contexts in Iran. The study showed that teachers mostly define culture in the sociological sense, such as values and beliefs, and these definitions involve more visible cultural aspects such as food and clothing. Teachers display positive attitudes towards incorporating cultural information in their instruction.
- Nguyen (2012) argues that teaching a language implies teaching a culture, and stresses the importance of teaching Vietnamese culture to foreign students at the College of Foreign Languages, Hue University, Vietnam. The techniques proposed include cultural islands, culture capsules, dramas, media/visuals, celebrating festivals, quizzes, mini researches and presentations, and music.

This paper is therefore based on the following theoretical propositions, that:

- Cultural and identity permeate all learning, including the learner's everyday experience with reading, writing, and literacy in the classroom. Considering this, all practice needs to be culturally responsive (Porto 2010:47).
- Topics related to students' cultural experience may elicit more interest among them and produce a richer L2 output than those that don't (Igoudin 2009: 1).
- ESL instructors can also benefit from acquiring better knowledge of their student communities and as a result, develop a deeper connection with them (ibid.).
- For K-12 learners, learning about their L1 cultures can foster their sense of pride in their roots and affirm their emerging identities in L2 society (Diaz-Rico 2009).
- Textbook material, whether locally or internationally produced, authentic English or local varieties of English, can all be sources of content, but they can at the same time be methodologically processed in such a way that they relate more closely to the culture and experience of the learners (Prodromou 1988:80).

6. Methodology

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Scope | This paper examines a set of tasks based on culturally familiar content with which children are engaged in the classroom and the ways in which these tasks are used to facilitate L2 development with a special focus on speaking and writing. |
| Setting | The study is conducted at S. R. Digi School, Nacharam, Hyderabad. The school caters for clientele from middle-class homes and can be taken as reasonably representative of the so-called mid-level English medium schools. |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Subjects | Children from grades 2 and 5 (aged 7 and 10) participated in the study. |
| Tools | Field notes of classroom observation when children are completing tasks, and informal interviews with teachers before and after task completion to ascertain achievement of goals are tools used in the study. |

The data are presented in terms of gains in the following domains: linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional. The data regarding grade 2 children is presented first, followed by grade 5 children.

Grade 2

Task 1: Speaking

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| What is your favourite festival? Tell the class about it. Group task (four children in a group) | Managed to frame five full sentences (Diwali, Dasara, Holi, Christmas, Ramadan) | Organised the information coherently with teacher's help | Listened to each other; struggled to decide on the festival and the person who will talk about it | Were more competitive than co-operative |

Discussion: children understandably needed a lot of teacher support and monitoring, but they were able to impose some order on their ideas; they competed with each other in the selection of a festival that they as a group can tell the whole class about. They thoroughly enjoyed the idea of sharing their knowledge with peers in their group first as well as with the whole class later. This gave them a sense of ownership and agency.

Task 2: Speaking

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Tell any bedtime story that mummy/daddy/grandma/grandpa told you. Individual task | Narrative structure Tenali Rama Akbar – Birbal Panchatantra tales; Aesop's fables and several others | Thinking to make a selection and organising the story in a coherent series of events | Paying attention to others (hush, let's listen) | Encouraging peers to volunteer to tell ("Teacher, he knows but he is not telling") |

Discussion: it is possible to infer that children had a sense of how a story is narrated: it has a theme; a beginning, middle and an end; there is usually a problem that gets resolved at the end. Their stories usually had a moral and were a lot of fun and covered quite a range of themes. It was evident that they chose to tell stories that were personally meaningful to them.

Task 3: Writing

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Describe your favourite food | Using appropriate verbs/nouns/punctuation marks and the correct tense | Brainstorming and collecting information about a topic; sequencing information coherently | Exchanging information with friends; clarifying doubts | Helping each other to write down the correct responses to the prompts provided |

Discussion: this activity was modelled by the teacher as a whole-class activity before children were asked to write. Some of the prompts provided were: What is your favourite food? How does it look (shape/consistency)? What is its colour? When do you eat it? Why do you like it? Do you make it or buy it? Who makes it? These prompts helped the children to write coherently with a logical sequencing of the information they wanted to present.

Grade 5:

Task 1: Speaking

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Tell any Indian story that you know. What is the moral of the story? 1. individual responses 2. group work | Narrative skills; coherent and complete sentences; active listening and comprehension (provide the moral for the story of the rival group) | Recollecting; retelling; relating new information to old and already known ideas; negotiation – which story to tell and who will tell | Peer co-operation – supporting each other through non-linguistic cues, body language, etc. | Cheer friends up by repeating their name; involve loners |

Discussion: this activity had a lot of personal meaning for children: it activated their schema by triggering memories about who told them a story and when, and what they liked about it. The element of choice and selection the task required gave children a sense of freedom and control over what they wanted to say and why they chose to say what they said.

Task 2: Speaking

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>What clothes do you wear every day (home/school)?</p> <p>What clothes do you wear during parties/celebrations/special occasions?</p> <p>Group work.</p> <p>Discuss in groups and one student presents the information to class.</p> | <p>Framing questions (e.g. Can we write on paper? Plenty of vocabulary reinforcement: types of clothes (kurta, dhoti); brands (colour occasions)</p> | <p>Negotiation (e.g. Can we see and say, T?)</p> | <p>Listen 're'; Clap 're'; turn taking; convincing; persuading</p> | <p>Cheering up peers. We celebrate all festivals – accommodating other cultures; Support for peers – one girl feels very shy and her friend volunteers</p> |

Discussion: children were quite excited because they were talking about themselves; the task gave them an opportunity to use all the language they had at their disposal. Language learning happened in a very stress-free and uninhibited manner. They helped each other and also sought the teacher's help in instances where they could not find a word for a particular type of clothing.

Task 3: Writing

| Description | Linguistic | Cognitive | Social | Emotional |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Talk about any special food that you eat during Ramadan/Diwali/Christmas or any festival of your choice.</p> <p>Group work.</p> <p>Students discussed in groups, collected points and submitted responses the next day.</p> | <p>Coherent writing; organisation of ideas; what they do; how it is celebrated; what food is made; how it is made; why they like it</p> | <p>Listing; prioritising; organising; processing information to establish connections and coherent links</p> | <p>Allowing each other to talk; making space for everyone to contribute; taking responsibility for the group's collective achievement</p> | <p>Respecting other cultures/customs; empathising; actively getting involved in discussion; showing genuine interest in knowing other life styles</p> |

Discussion: children were quite committed to the task and dutifully submitted their write-ups the following day. They learned to negotiate with peers, collate ideas and present them in a coherent manner.

7. Findings and implications

Tasks based on culturally familiar content and administered in the backdrop of a culturally responsive pedagogic framework can:

- provide linguistic gains for children
- augment their cognitive skills
- develop their social skills of negotiation and transaction for meaningful communication
- enhance their emotional literacy by providing them with a platform to manipulate their own emotions and to empathise with others' emotions.

Through gainful exploitation of cultural content of L1 we could inculcate in children intercultural competence of the kind Byram (1997) argues for, including attitudes (respect for otherness, empathy, acknowledgement of identities, tolerance of ambiguity); knowledge (specific and general forms); skills of discovery and interaction (behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness); skills of interpreting and relating (seeing similarities and differences), and critical cultural awareness.

It is important to organise awareness-raising workshops for teachers on the importance of culture teaching and the interface between L1 and L2 cultures where training is also offered on how to select appropriate content and design meaningful tasks.

Further research in this area can usefully:

- explore teacher and student (grade 4 upwards) perceptions of the importance of L1 culture in achieving L2 proficiency
- investigate current teaching practice in terms of what methods/tasks teachers use and how students respond to these and the resources and training teachers need in order to teach more effectively
- examine how best to incorporate L1 culture in terms of what methods work best, what methods and tasks yield best results and how to assess these
- focus on content and materials design for cultural syllabuses.

8. Conclusion

Culturally responsive pedagogy can have far-reaching effects for children's linguistic as well as social-emotional skill development. Children that experience diverse cultures have an inherent advantage and should begin to perceive plurality as an asset that can be an efficient classroom tool in the hands of sensitive and committed teachers.

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Enhancing Functional English Skills to Empower Underprivileged Youth

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Abstract

Enhancing functional English skills is critical to empower learners from regional medium schools. It opens the doors of higher education and employment. Many underprivileged youth lack the confidence to communicate in English. The main reasons for this are inadequate exposure to English, poor English skills of teachers and inadequate knowledge of teaching English as a second language. Our market research revealed that there weren't any effective courses to improve the spoken English skills of underprivileged youth. Most of these courses were not able to help young learners build their confidence levels. Many learners spent long hours and valuable money learning grammar and a few structures that teachers thought were important. There were very few courses that understood the methodology and pedagogy involved in teaching English as a second language. Our study, based on the result of a pre- and post-test with 1,600 learners, has shown that an intervention that has an interactive, learner-centred and bilingual approach has made learners more confident than before and has been effective in improving the English skills of underprivileged youth. This paper focuses on the above aspects by presenting the results and the impact studies.

1. Introduction

The knowledge of English has gone far beyond the realms of academic interest. It has become a requirement of securing a job, gaining status in society and gaining respect. Our study of more than 1,600 underprivileged youth has reinforced the above statement. Most of these learners have studied in regional medium schools. They have therefore studied English as a second or third language for at least 6–7 years. In spite of studying English for that long a period, they are still unable to speak English with any degree of confidence. Some of the reasons for the low levels of English among these learners can be ascribed to an inappropriate methodology of teaching English as a second language; the low English skills of the teachers; the lack of exposure to English on a daily basis and the absence of a home environment where it can be practised; the great emphasis on the teaching of grammar as a theoretical concept as it is seen as a shortcut to score easy marks in exams; and learning English by rote rather than with understanding. Being aware of the above issues, our organisation developed a short course specifically designed for these learners.

2. Background to the study

A preliminary test was conducted with the students of urban and rural secondary schools in Pune as a precursor to the Yuva (meaning 'youth' in Hindi) course. These schools were selected on the basis of a random sampling process. All the learners were about to take the Class X board exam in March that year. The objective of the test was to understand the level of English of the learners in order to inform the final design and focus of the training course envisaged for these students. A listening, speaking and writing skills test, covering both receptive and productive skills, was conducted with these learners. To test listening and speaking, they were asked a range of questions such as:

- What is your name?
- Which school do you go to?
- Which class are you in?
- What did you do last Sunday?
- How did you go home yesterday?
- You have 10 rupees. What will you buy?
- How much does a pencil cost?

These questions tested a range of tenses, as it was anticipated that the learners would know such structures well. The result is given in the table below:

Table 1: Student responses: speaking

| Replying in correct sentences | Percentage number of learners (out of 90) |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 15–20 questions | 1% |
| 10–14 questions only | 13% |
| 5–9 questions only | 47% |
| 0–4 questions only | 39% |

The writing skill was tested by showing the learners a picture depicting a scene of a school playground, with some students reading, some having their lunch and some playing. The students were asked to write at least five grammatically correct sentences about the picture. Table 2 records the results.

Table 2: Student responses: writing

| Able to write in correct sentences | Percentage number of learners (out of 90) |
|---|---|
| Unable to write a single correct sentence | 51% |
| 1 sentence only | 16% |
| 2–5 sentences only | 26% |
| More than 5 simple sentences | 8% |

The results clearly indicated that these learners had very poor English skills and were barely able to speak or write properly. Their speaking skills were particularly weak, as this skill had never been taught or given importance during their school years.

3. The development of an English course addressing the unique learning needs of these learners

A need was felt to develop an English language course that provided ample opportunities to the learners to participate in the class, exposed them to listening to English in the classroom through controlled language structures and used the home language of the learners as a tool to study English as a foreign language. At the same time it was equally important that the content of the programme generated high levels of interest among the learners and was socially and culturally sensitive to the home environment of these learners.

4. Pedagogical principles of the Yuva English Course – an English course for post-secondary youth from regional medium backgrounds

- **Bilingual approach** Using the home language (L1) of the learners as a support to learn English was essential. In the initial period the use of home language was more prominent so as to make the learners more comfortable in the classroom. As the learners started engaging with English, the use of L1 reduced, thus resulting in a greater use of English.
- **Interactive** The course structure ensured that the learners participated in the class through various activities, group discussions, games, etc. This made the class very interactive and enhanced the confidence of the learners.
- **Learner-centred** The course was based on a storyline that appealed to the target audience. Apart from maintaining a continuity aspect, the content dealt with various themes like career choices, marriage versus career, environmental awareness, women's empowerment and so on.
- **Instructors** A structured course like Yuva English does not necessarily need trained English language teachers who might have completed teacher-training programmes. But what this course does need is an instructor with adequate spoken English skills, a repertoire of basic teaching skills and a familiarity with the home language of the learners. Also, these instructors should have the energy and competency to deal with adult learners; this is very important as the course is very interactive with lots of teaching aids, games and songs. Since we did not expect instructors to be trained teachers of English, a two-day orientation was conducted with the selected instructors. This was done with the use of a training video that showed actual classroom sessions. These instructors then role played some selected modules, with support from master trainers who also provided input. During the initial days these instructors were either met personally or were mentored on the phone.
- **Content of the course** Yuva English is a 140-hour course. The content of the course has been developed in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the learners. It teaches all four aspects of language learning, but the focus is on speaking. Grammar and vocabulary are also taught. Since the learners do not get adequate opportunities to practise the concepts learnt in the classroom, regular periodic review of the concepts taught is an integral element of the course structure. As most of these learners will be taking up jobs or trying for higher education, the Yuva English course has dedicated certain hours to look at the functional uses of English. Once this course was developed, it was piloted in five cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Pune. A pre-test was done on the second day of the course. The results have been very interesting. The learners were tested on all four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. We analysed each question in each skill to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of these learners.

5. The testing system

These tests were developed by our organisation and were benchmarked at level A2 as per the Common European Framework of Reference developed by the Council of Europe. Since our organisation is not primarily an English language testing organisation, we involved experts in this field to assist us in developing the test.

- The pre-test** The pre-test was taken by the students who had enrolled themselves on the course and was taken by them on the third day after their enrollment. Around 1,600 learners took the test. The post-test was taken by these same students at the end of the 140-hour course to gauge the impact. The graphs given below give an insight into the performance of a typical young person who has had no external intervention on improving his or her English skills.
- The post-test** After the 140-hour Yuva English course was completed, a post-test (which was the same as the pre-test) was taken by the learners to examine what impact was evident on their English competence as a result of the course. The results showed significant improvement in all the skills, especially in speaking. The comparative graphs given below show the improvement of the learners in all the four skills.

Graph 1: Pre-test vs post-test: speaking

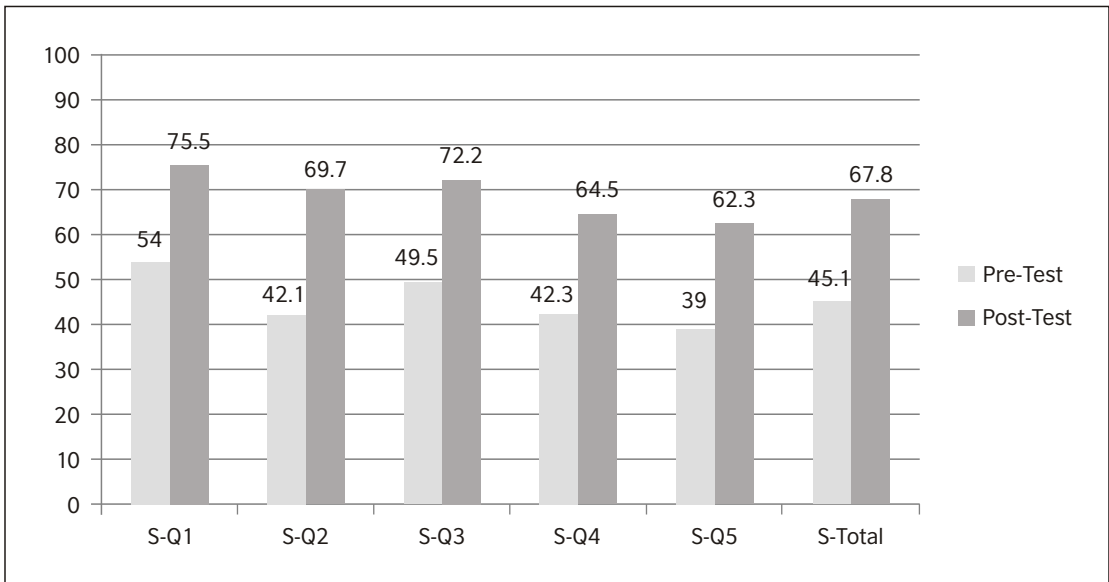
Q1 Answering and asking questions in the present tense (with cues)

Q2 Answering and asking questions in the past tense (with cues)

Q3 Picture-led basic grammar concepts (prepositions, adjectives, pronouns)

Q4 Free speech – present tense

Q5 Free speech – past tense

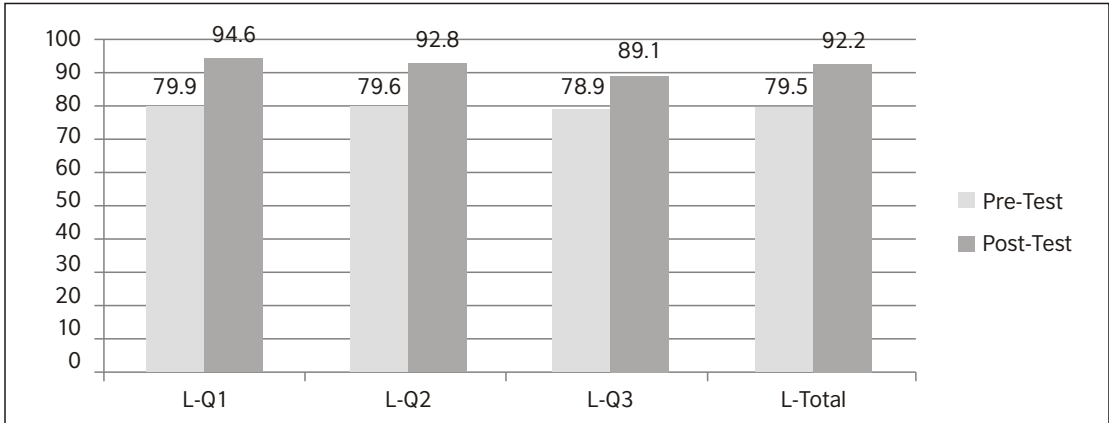


Graph 2: Pre-test vs post-test: listening

Q1 Answering questions based on a listening text using picture clues

Q2 Short dialogues

Q3 Announcement



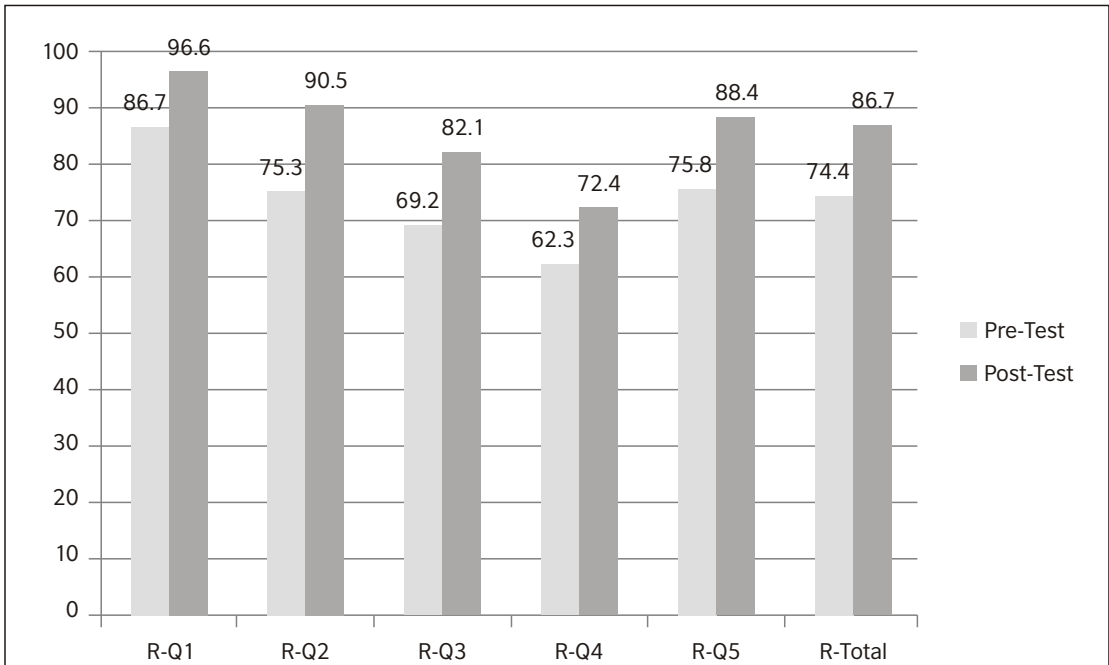
Graph 3: Pre-test vs post-test: reading

Q1 and 2 Interpreting signs and notices

Q3 Understanding a letter written by a friend

Q4 Understanding a paragraph with factual details

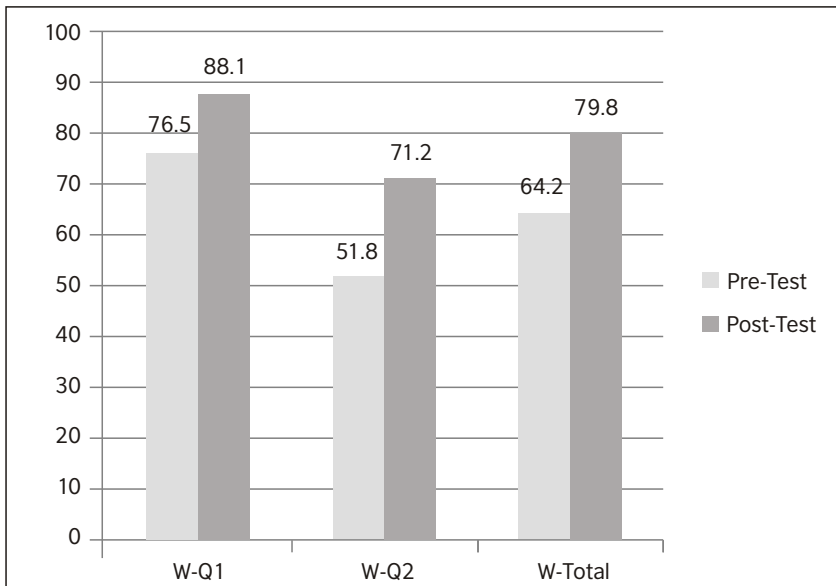
Q5 Understanding a long paragraph with conversation



Graph 4: Pre-test vs post-test: writing

Q1 Writing personal information

Q2 Writing a message to a friend based on the inputs given



It is quite evident from the comparative graphs given above that the learners have done well in listening skills compared to speaking skills. It can be inferred from these graphs that the seven years of limited exposure to the English language has probably improved the passive skills of the learners. Hence they are much more comfortable in attempting questions that require them to apply their passive knowledge. Moreover, since the listening scripts were played twice for the learners, it provided ample time to use contextual clues to answer the questions. The problem arose when they were tested on more productive skills such as those of the speaking test. These graphs show us that learners were more comfortable with the use of the present tense (Q1) than the past tense (Q2). The performance also dropped when they were tested on the use of free speech vis-à-vis responding to a picture-led question (Q3). The results of the reading test were particularly interesting: the performance of the learners was better than the speaking test. Again the reason for this could be that reading is a receptive skill and the learners have been exposed to reading English over the years. Besides this, in the reading test the learners had the advantage of going back to the text in case they had missed out any parts. Though they may not have understood each and every word, they did make sense of the overall meaning of the passage. Though the writing test tested bare minimum competencies, the learners still struggled to answer a simple question like 'write a short note to your friend'.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the study has revealed that given the learner profile (students from regional medium schools, who have studied English as a second or third language) and instructor profile (confident speakers of English who have a working knowledge of the home language of their students), the importance of attending the instructor-orientation programme to understand the pedagogy of teaching English as a second language, a short course like Yuva English can help learners to reach a point where they can begin to engage with the English language and become confident in the use of English, be it in an educational institution or at a workplace.

‘Global Readiness’ of Indian Students with Special Reference to English Language and Communication Skills

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Abstract

The convergence of a rapidly changing socio-economic global scenario with fast-advancing technology demands building up ‘cosmopolites’ in order to respond to the demands of the global market. Greater urgency is being felt to redefine the objectives of education, keeping in view the specific competencies required for global citizenship. Some of the universally accepted components of global competencies are global knowledge and skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills and the ability to understand cross-cultural implications. In the Indian context, there is no dearth of substance or content-based core skills, as the Indian educational system provides adequately for these areas. However, the Indian student is mainly deficient in language and communication skills, which is a major hindrance in their participation in global activities. Based on this premise, our paper is an attempt to gauge the global readiness of Indian students in terms of cultural competence, English language and communication skills. Further, the study aims at suggesting remedial measures for enhancing cultural sensitivity, developing a global outlook and competences, and expanding the usage of English. The claims made here will be substantiated through a case study undertaken on a sample group at the local level.

1. Introduction

One of the perceptible experiences of globalisation is the way it has facilitated cross-national flows of people, goods, capital and information, simultaneously throwing up challenges such as the intensification of competition and the pressure to perform in multicultural settings. The compulsion to cope with otherness, to look beyond differences and to adjust in an alien atmosphere, serve as major obstacles in global performance. The answer lies in *readiness* – a positive approach towards differences, a reconciliatory attitude to deal with diverse groups, a cosmopolitan perspective.

Essential ingredients of global readiness are global education and global competency. A variety of frameworks in education have been developed by several universities and institutions worldwide, but the complexity of the subject makes it difficult to arrive at a consensus on what exactly should constitute global education.

2. Global education

Global education is an extensive process that includes knowledge and understanding of the world as well as awareness and understanding of cultural diversities. Recognising that we are members of a world community looking at a shared future, it is imperative that we integrate intercultural knowledge and competence into education at this juncture of transformative learning. Hence, it is essential to internationalise the curriculum at the discipline and programme levels. This implies that we either redesign existing curricula to include global themes, or supplement it to fulfil this requirement.

3. Global competency

Global competency requires the development and honing of skills and abilities that can ensure success in this rapidly changing world of diversity and interdependence. The framework of reference for the identification and assessment of traits and competencies would possibly include:

- **Knowledge** An awareness of geography, cultures, languages and global perspectives, and an understanding of the complexity of global events and issues. This is possible only when one has in-depth knowledge of one's own culture and history in relation to others.
- **Skills** Critical and comparative thinking, research and analysis, problem solving, coping with divergent views, understanding and use of foreign languages, non-verbal communication, social skills, conventions and practices in written communication, situational appropriacy in the use of English (the most frequently used language of communication in foreign countries) in presentations, meetings, negotiations, etc.
- **Values and attitudes** Being open-minded to ideas and divergent ways of thinking, flexibility, self-awareness about identity and culture, sensitivity and respect for differences, empathy and valuing multiple perspectives, comfort with ambiguity and unfamiliar situations.
- **Behaviours** Being non-judgemental, initiating dialogue, reaching out, showing goodwill and tolerance, a willingness to consider multiple opinions and perspectives, forming opinions based on exploration and evidence, building relationships, a willingness to share knowledge and information.

4. The case study

The aim of the researchers was to evaluate the students at undergraduate level on universally accepted parameters of global readiness. The expansiveness and cultural diversity of India makes this a daunting task because of the variations in educational patterns in different states, as well as the glaring differences between education in rural and urban settings. We confined our case study to the undergraduate students of The Bhopal School of Social Sciences in Madhya Pradesh. Bhopal is a small city with a conglomeration of people from different regions of the country. The student population of the university can be considered as indicative of the global readiness of average students of urban India.

Our sample size was 50, within the age group of 19–21. The tools used were a questionnaire, a written task and interviews.

- **A. Questionnaire:** this consisted of ten multiple-choice questions, which dealt with areas including level of interest in diverse cultures, global knowledge and understanding, inclination to build intercultural relationships and willingness to travel abroad. The questionnaire also elicited responses regarding tolerance, initiatives to connect and comfort levels in multicultural settings. The multiple-choice options helped to bring forth positive, neutral and negative attitudes.

- **B. Writing Task:** this required the respondents to write about 50 words on one of the two given tasks. Apart from global readiness, the task was assessed on the use of English language as the global lingua franca. Linguistic features such as relevance, completeness of response, clarity, coherence, correctness, appropriacy and register were also gauged.
- **C. Interviews:** the following questions were asked to assess the oral communication skills of the students:
 - What new things would you like to do in the near future?
 - Do you have a dream place or destination that you would like to visit?
 - Would you like to marry somebody from a different country or culture?

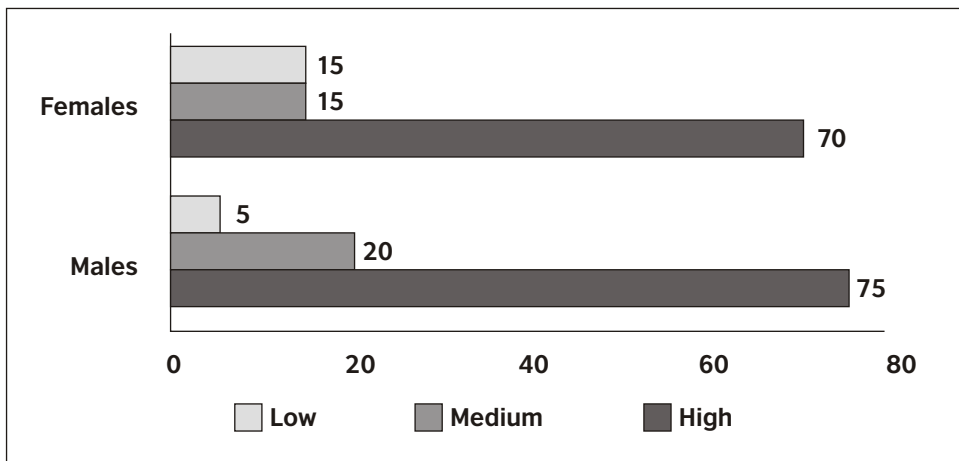
The speaking assessment criteria were the same as writing. It also examined direct/indirect ways of speaking, fluency, comprehensibility, L1 interference and behavioural issues like confidence, body language, etc.

5. Case study findings

The key findings are grouped under the categories of the three tasks outlined above.

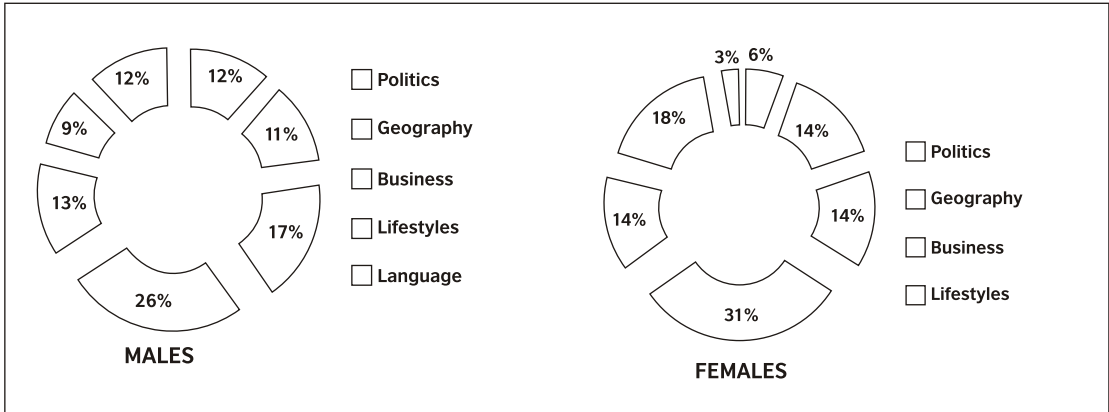
A. *Questionnaire:*

- **Level of interest in different cultures**



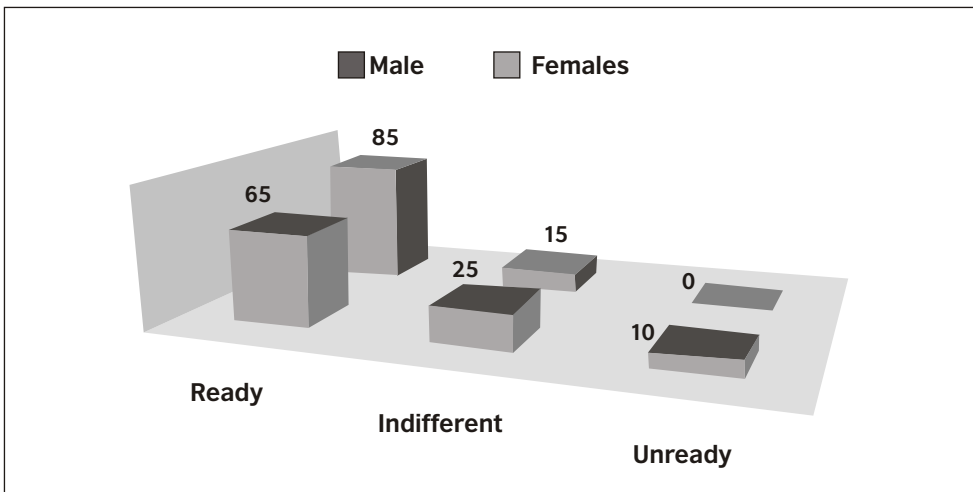
Approximately three-quarters of the respondents showed a high level of interest. However, on average, males showed relatively more interest in exploring diverse ethnicity – people, culture and geography – than their female counterparts.

● **Areas of interest in other cultures**



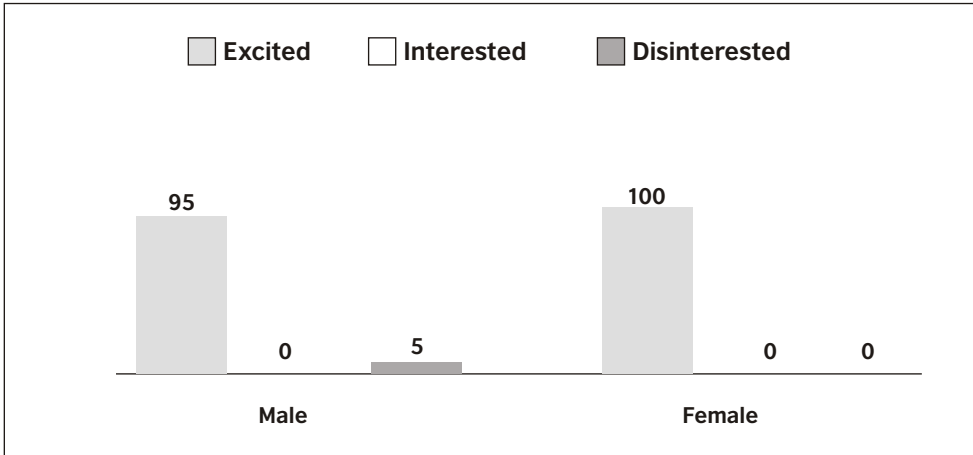
We assigned higher weighting to areas like politics, geography, business, lifestyles and languages, in comparison to entertainment and sports. Responses to question 3 reveal that overall, students have a high level of interest in finding out about other countries. However, females evinced a relatively high interest in lifestyles (31 per cent), followed by entertainment (18 per cent), and equal interest in politics, geography and language (14 per cent each). Conversely, 26 per cent of males were interested in lifestyles, 17 per cent in business, 13 per cent in languages and 12 per cent in politics and sports.

● **Readiness to explore new things**



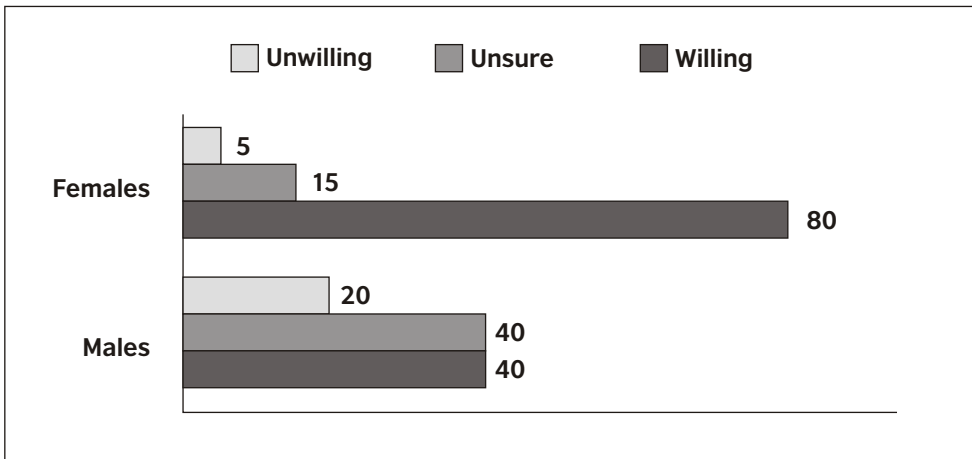
Girls showed a more adventurous streak, as 85 per cent of them expressed curiosity to explore new things. This was 20 per cent more than the boys.

- **Willingness to build relationships**



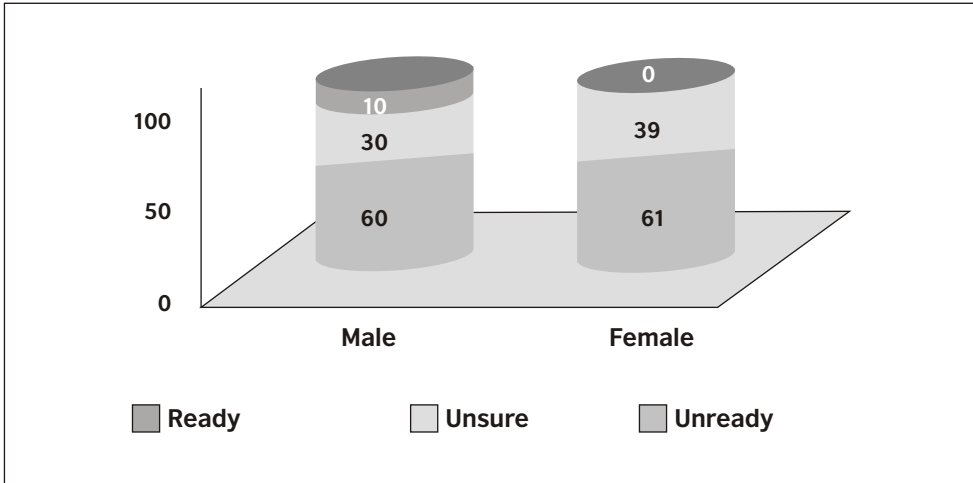
Almost everyone gave affirmative answers: 100 per cent of the girls showed excitement and readiness to build cross-cultural relationships; 5 per cent boys, however, regarded it as a waste of time.

- **Willingness to take the initiative to build relationships**



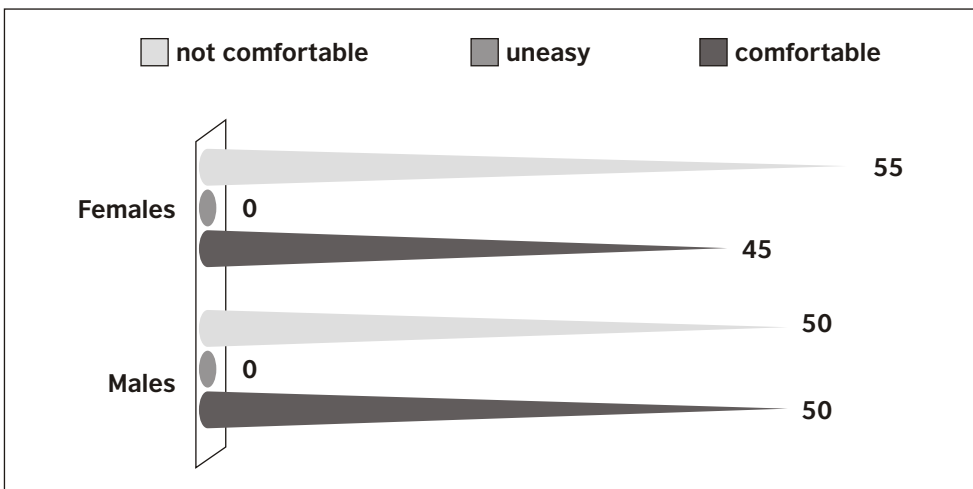
The responses to taking the initiative came across as a contradiction of the positive response to building relationships. Where 100 per cent of girls opted to build cross-cultural relationships, only 80 per cent of them were ready to take the initiative. A meagre 40 per cent of boys showed enthusiasm in this area; another 40 per cent were unsure or indifferent.

● **Readiness to settle abroad for the purpose of study/job**



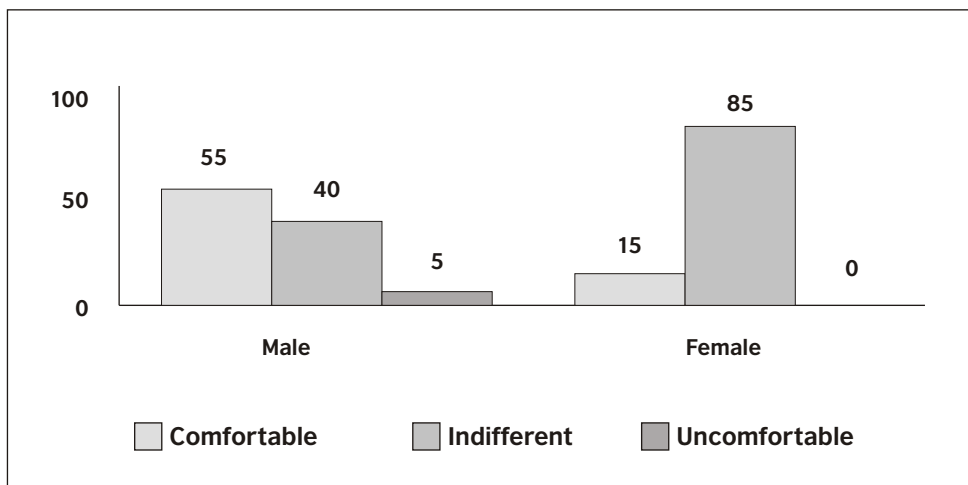
An average of 60 per cent of the respondents showed a readiness to leave India; 35 per cent were ready to leave their homes for other places within India; 10 per cent of the boys were completely unready to leave the comfort zone of their homes for study or work.

● **Level of comfort in accommodating different religious groups**



This emerged as a sensitive area where opinion was clearly divided equally between positive and negative responses. Significantly, none of them was confused or unsure on the issue.

- **Comfort level in associating with people of the opposite gender**



Differences in the responses of males and females was again evident on the issue of associating with people of the opposite gender.

B. Writing task

In the writing segment, the majority of the students showed a fair degree of inclination towards global thinking. However, the knowledge level, language proficiency and communicative abilities do not indicate a satisfactory level of preparedness. Some of the ideas were good but the expression and structuring was weak. 60 per cent of the respondents stated their ideas clearly. However, they did not develop them suitably. Other noticeable errors were a lack of clarity and coherence (75 per cent), a tendency to digress and circumlocute (55 per cent), and inappropriate register (45 per cent). In grammar and syntax 70 per cent of students made mistakes in the use of complex structures, connectors and conditionals, and 40 per cent used unsuitable language and repetitions, showing their limitations in the use of vocabulary and range.

C. Interview

During the interview a mere 30 per cent of the respondents showed a pro-active attitude towards studying or working abroad. About 50 per cent wanted to visit foreign dream destinations only as tourists. On being asked about future plans, 40 per cent were unsure and 30 per cent were not interested in relocating abroad. However, boys showed more inclination towards going abroad for business purposes. On the question of marrying outside one's culture, interestingly, 80 per cent of the respondents would like to marry within their own culture. Of these around 50 per cent feared parental disapproval.

About 60 per cent of the respondents lack the confidence and ability to develop and sustain conversation. Many of them tend to answer in monosyllables, are elusive and indirect and had to be

coaxed to respond more fully. The L1 interference, evident in almost 30 per cent, often resulted in faulty structures and translation from native/first language to English. The pronunciation of 60 per cent was satisfactory, whereas 20 per cent caused strain to the listener. All these factors lead to inadequate command over use of the English language, which dents their confidence. The lack of confidence was also evident in the body language of 40 per cent, who tended to slouch, fidget and not make or maintain eye contact for example.

6. Limitations and suggestions

The students' responses to the three tasks indicated a generalisable list of the problems they have with regard to:

- **Knowledge** – limited knowledge about the world and global viewpoints on important issues; content restricted to domestic and national context.
- **Skills** – in the area of English language proficiency and communication skills, students make errors that impede communication. Other weak areas include faults in word order, use of inappropriate words, noun-verb agreements, limitations in substitution, paraphrasing, expansion of ideas, ability to be analytical, lack of precision and directness, tendency to translate Hindi into English.
- **Values and attitudes** – a tendency to remain in one's own comfort zone, being judgemental, a conservative attitude, a strong bias in terms of faith/religion.
- **Behaviour** – preconceived notions often based on conventional thinking and stereotyping governs behaviour, a hesitation to initiate dialogue with people from unfamiliar cultures, an absence of independent opinions, a disinclination to take risks.

Many of these problem areas could be countered by tackling the following:

- developing internationally relevant curricula, introducing new programmes in keeping with global needs, international exposure through student and faculty exchange programmes, higher usage of the web for collaborative work, studying abroad, international internships, foreign language studies
- a skills-based rather than content-based approach to learning
- an emphasis on language learning through curricular and co-curricular activities
- the enhancement in international exposure of students to make them more interculturally competent and flexible
- an attitudinal change in parents towards their children that allows them greater freedom to venture out and explore.

On the basis of our study, we believe that Indian students are weak in perception management, but fare better in relationship management because of their interpersonal skills and ability to relate to all kinds of people. In the area of self-management, they are high on awareness of self-identity but low on confidence; however, they are optimists and cope well with stress, disappointments and frustrations. They have a strong survival instinct but not the drive to excel – they are accommodating enough to settle for less.

Looking at the pace of all-round development and change, it is impossible to achieve a state of global readiness that is ideal for any situation. This is a lifelong process with no end point. However, recognising cultural differences and orienting oneself with the culture and behavioural patterns of different regions of the world are important steps towards global readiness.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

1. When you meet someone from a cultural background different from yours:
 - a. Do you feel curious to learn about him/her
 - b. Look at this as an opportunity to know/learn something different
 - c. You are indifferent and generally ignore
2. Are you naturally interested in foreign countries, cultures and geography:
 - a. Genuinely interested
 - b. Indifferent and feel no curiosity
 - c. Not interested
3. When you surf the internet, what kind of information do you seek about other countries/cultures:
 - a. Politics
 - b. Geography
 - c. Business
 - d. Lifestyles
 - e. Language
 - f. Entertainment
 - g. Sports
4. In terms of your willingness to explore new interests and hobbies and to try things that are different from your normal routine, are you:
 - a. Curious
 - b. Indifferent
 - c. Feel annoyed
5. In building relationships with people who are different from you or who come from other cultures, are you:
 - a. Excited by the possibilities
 - b. Interested and willing
 - c. Consider it a waste of time
6. In a situation where you are placed with such people or find yourself amidst them, do you:
 - a. Take the initiative to engage with them
 - b. Wait for them to make the first move
 - c. Are not interested in any interaction with them
7. When you find yourself in the company of people from a culture different from your own, do you:
 - a. Feel absolutely comfortable
 - b. Adapt your behaviour to fit in and build positive relationships
 - c. Just ignore them
8. For the purpose of higher studies or finding a suitable job, given a chance, would you like to:
 - a. Go abroad
 - b. Go to a place outside of Bhopal
 - c. Stay locally

9. How comfortable would you be living in a place where the majority religion is different from yours:
 - a. Very comfortable
 - b. Uneasy
 - c. Would never live in such a place

10. How comfortable are you associating with people of the opposite gender:
 - a. Very comfortable
 - b. Moderately comfortable
 - c. Uncomfortable

Writing Task – *in about 40–50 words*

- You are visiting a European country for the first time. Write an email of 40–50 words to an acquaintance you have made from that country, enquiring about how you should prepare for the visit

Or

- 'Today's Young Indian is a Truly Global Citizen.' Would you agree?

The Role of English for the Socio-Economic Development of the Children of the Marginalised Seasonally Migrant Labour Community

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Abstract

The post-Independence era has witnessed the emergence of the English language as occupying a pivotal place in the varied aspects of our lives. In the light of Universal Elementary Education (UEE), and the Right to Education (RTE), it has become imperative to direct attention towards the literacy of the marginalised, also referred to as the underprivileged or disadvantaged, in order to empower him/her to use English as a tool for social mobility and for economic development, to change his/her status from that of a seasonally migrant labourer. This is a research-based paper involving the active participation and interaction of the researcher with the subjects of the study – the marginalised children of the seasonally migrant brick kiln workers, studying in the Work Site Sanjogi Shiksha Kendra schools (WSSSK) run by Sarba Shiksha Abhijan (SSA), under the Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) scheme. An attempt has been made to find out the problems inherent in the setup where learners learn, and also to study the role of English language learning for the socio-economic development of these children.

1. Introduction

The world has become a much smaller place due largely to developments in technology. In such a situation, very few communities have remained truly and exclusively monolingual. Being bilingual implies 'getting a job; a better chance to be educated; the ability to take a fuller part in the life of one's own country or the opportunity to emigrate to another; an expansion of one's literary and cultural horizons; the expression of one's political opinions or religious beliefs; the chance to talk to people from other cultures either in or out of your own country. A second language affects people's careers and possible futures, their lives and their very identities' (Cook 2001:1). The ability to be able to speak two or more languages has thus become very significant for millions of people around the globe. And the role of the teacher has also come under increasing scrutiny as one of the agents of positive change.

Every child is expected to learn a second language and every learner, irrespective of being disadvantaged or not, is unique, and so too are the problems he or she faces in learning a language. This problem is clearly manifested in the children of the migrant-labour community, most of whom are often school drop-outs or first-generation learners.

2. The concept of the marginalised/disadvantaged child

In the time of British colonialism, learning English was the privilege of the higher classes alone. But today with various educational programmes for various sections of people, such as Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan's (SSA) Work-Site Sanjugi Shiksha Kendras (WSSSK), where the children of seasonally migrant labours get a chance to continue their study, English has ceased to be the privilege of the rich alone. All schools in India have courses in English for students with different learning problems and areas of interest – a large number of whom are from the marginalised community. But the clear differences in learning outcome of these students, together with very high drop-out rates, raises many questions about pedagogy, learning styles and effectiveness.

The term disadvantaged is used to refer to a person who is incapable of realising their human potential (Fantini 1968). It includes people belonging to low-income groups, those who are physically or mentally handicapped or belong culturally to that section of society which is considered outside the mainstream, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees and so on who share one characteristic of almost all disadvantaged groups – that they occupy the lowest levels of the economic ladder in whichever country they are found.

3. Selection of the study group

Children of the seasonally migrant labours working in the brick kilns (and studying in the WSSSK schools) are considered marginalised and disadvantaged for the purposes of this study. These learners are characterised as:

- being between 5 to 14 years old and essentially child labourers
- having very limited formal schooling
- those whose first language is not English
- having missed years of schooling, or been part of an educational system that provided little beyond the basics, or never having been to school in their entire lives due to family and work obligations, struggling against extreme poverty, etc.
- mostly first-generation learners whose social and economic conditions of their home environment mark them out as being culturally disadvantaged.

4. Objectives of the study

The study attempts to analyse the importance of the English language as a tool for social mobility of these disadvantaged children. Its objectives are as follows:

- to identify the role of attitudes and motivation in the learning of the English language, in particular by the learners
- to find the problems present in the educational setup in which the learner learns the English language and its usage
- to attempt to study the reasons that lead to poor learning outcomes and low motivation towards the learning of the English language
- to study the role of English language education for the socio-economic development of the children of the disadvantaged seasonally migrant labour community.

5. Research methods and tools

The approach of the study is both theoretical and practical. The researcher selected seven schools operating under the AIE programme of SSA, in the Kaliabor subdivison of the Nagaon district of Assam. These schools are located in the hometown of the researcher within an area of 20 kilometres. For the study, an extensive fieldwork phase was planned and carried out. The fieldwork included two steps – the preliminary study and the main study, as it was necessary to get to know the teaching-learning conditions current in the schools as well as the home background of the learners. This was done with a view to preserving the authenticity of the data collected, as this study deals with the factors affecting language learning. The fieldwork spread over a period of almost two months with frequent visits to the schools, active interactions with the learners and the teachers who taught them, as well as with their parents and concerned officials of SSA.

The tools were developed for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on various aspects with regard to the status of the teaching of English, classroom interaction, textbook analysis, students and teacher competence, etc. The tools included:

- student questionnaire
- teacher questionnaire
- proficiency test in English
- text book evaluation
- classroom observations
- interviews with the teachers, parents and local SSA officials.

There were two sources of data, primary and secondary. The primary data was collected through the tools listed above. Secondary data was derived from published sources, government data and the internet.

6. The findings

A close study of the responses to the student questionnaire enables us to form certain conclusions regarding these children. In general, they are hardly aware of the place that the English language occupies in personal and professional life as well as in the present-day world – we should not be too surprised by this as their lives are lived outside the mainstream noise of the media, education and the world of work and travel. Very few of them have a positive attitude towards the English language and they also lack motivation towards learning it – though there is a case here for stating that the absence of a positive attitude may not necessarily be taken to mean a negative attitude. Within their community, learning the English language has no immediate use. For them, English (for those who have a formed opinion about it) is synonymous with mental ability and intelligence. They associate the language, and the ability to use the language, with the upper classes. The home atmosphere from which they come, the environment where they learn the language (within the premises of the brick kilns, in the WSSSK schools), coupled with the illiteracy of their parents as well as their seasonal migration, leads to their lack of continuity, which influences the motivation to stick with learning the language. In addition, they are not provided with much English language input. Their teachers mostly use the Assamese language when instructing. They also feel that their English teacher does not make the study of the English language easy for them. *(Editor's note: We have seen elsewhere in this publication the important role that L1 (or in some cases L2) plays in helping groups of students to learn English (which is sometimes an L2 or L3 for many children). This seems to be especially true for children from marginalised communities.)*

The interaction with the parents of the learners revealed that they were mostly illiterate, many being school drop-outs. Their illiteracy further worsens the prospects for their children as there is almost no opportunity for educational enrichment of any kind in the home (let alone use of English) and parents are not aware of any guidance they can offer to their children. Most parents in the study recognised the important place of English for personal, professional and socio-economic development, but they blamed their poverty as the main cause behind the illiteracy of their children. Their poverty forces them to engage their children from a young age in the world of work, thus denying them any opportunity to learn. This need to work can be said to have a significant influence on these learners' motivations and attitudes towards learning English – a classic sign of first-generation learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The circumstances of the migrant-labour community in a rapidly changing economic scenario mean that the lack of English proficiency further confines them to marginalised positions in society. Even a basic proficiency in English could enable them to carve a niche for themselves in societies which have a range of potential job opportunities apart from what their fathers had to take up or are engaged in now. With the increase in educational opportunities, especially with the implementation of Right to Education (RTE) and Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), a number of schools have emerged to meet the needs of such communities – both working adults and their children. Moreover, several English medium schools have penetrated the remotest part of India, and the remote villages where the brick kilns are located in Assam are no exception. Knowledge of English acts as a gateway to a better means of livelihood besides leading to a growth of a universal identity, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, culture, and sex, etc.

Interviews with SSA officials and the teachers of the WSSSK schools and even some members of the labour community included in this study, clearly assert the fact that knowledge of English as well as the ability to use it confidently in public and private settings, is a major confidence booster and a pre-requisite to getting almost any kind of job – a fact clearly accepted by some of the parents of the disadvantaged learners, the subjects of this study.

7. Conclusion

The study arrives at the following conclusions that act as influencing factors in the role of English language for the social, economic, academic and professional development of the seasonally migrating labour community:

- The parents of the children belonging to the marginalised seasonally migrant labour community are mostly illiterate. They come from poor backgrounds where the primary concern is to earn enough to run the family on a day-to-day basis. This need to earn is manifested in the children's participation in hard manual labour from a young age. They hardly get any motivation for obtaining a proper education. The causes are various, ranging from poverty, social exclusion, problems of access to educational opportunity, ignorance of the usefulness of school education, inappropriate pedagogy used in schools which does not facilitate learning, and so on.
- Though some learners and their guardians showed a positive attitude towards education in general and the English language in particular, it can be argued that the majority of the subjects of the study were ignorant of, indifferent to or not focused on the value of education in general and English specifically. The arguments in favour of promoting English, including social and economic development and empowerment which are so regularly outlined by academics, the media and policy makers have little or no resonance for these communities – it is outside their experience. This in itself is perhaps the starkest illustration of how much outside the mainstream they are.

- The subjects of this study are mostly accustomed to living in a society that is closed and with other members of their community at places where they work, without much social interaction with the outside world. They mostly remain preoccupied in their own world of work and subsistence. In such a society, the feeling that is prevalent is that the English language and its learning are required for them only if they are desirous of moving out of their community. They do not feel that it has any practical applicability or use in their lives – they identify it with only the people of the upper classes.
- Since most of the teachers of the WSSSK schools are not trained teachers, they are mostly ineffective in their job. Of all the teachers interviewed, only one was a graduate and had a B.Ed degree. The rest of the teachers were 12th-grade graduates without any diploma in teaching. We have referred to inappropriate pedagogy above and the lack of trained teachers is a major hurdle to overcome – these students require innovative methods to explore ideas rather than the traditional approach espoused in the Indian classroom with its emphasis on an unfamiliar L1 as the medium of tuition. Besides, all of the teachers belonged to the Assamese community, while the learners came from a non-Assamese community (Dhakaya), which imposes yet another level of difficulty to overcome (either linguistic or social or both). There were instances of children who could not speak or understand the Assamese language, due to their lack of exposure to the language. Due to this cultural difference, sometimes the teachers showed an indifferent attitude towards the education of the subjects of this study. In most responses to the interview questions, it was evident that the teachers considered the children as being from a backward community and were of the opinion that they could hardly learn the English language due to their lack of the kind of necessary learning culture that we all take for granted.
- Mention must be made of a few candidates belonging to the same seasonally migrant labour community who have successfully completed their formal schooling and English language learning, by dint of hard labour. For them the language-learning experience was not a simple process for all the reasons stated earlier. Some of them have succeeded in getting themselves employed. Some find themselves employed in the brick kilns as supervisors, observing and regulating the production of raw bricks made by other members of their community. Apart from those employed and working as labourers in the brick kilns, there are several instances of people from the same community making their presence felt in varied spheres of life, ranging from teaching to politics. The recently concluded Panchayat elections saw many leaders from their community win various positions. All the successful candidates from the community interviewed have agreed on the importance of the English language in their social mobility and economic development. One feels that even if the people holding high-profile posts, belonging to the same community, are asked the question regarding the role of the English language in their development in all spheres, they would give a positive answer.

The challenge is to put in place a system which makes (English) learning opportunities readily available, encourages these communities to send their children to school, is integrated into the economic realities of their lives, espouses an appropriate pedagogy in the classroom, and in the best case scenario integrates learning programmes for adult learners with those of their children.

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Learning English for Development and Economy in India: A Socio-Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

Since the beginning of English education in India, English learning has been directly associated with social and economic development. Although introduced as a window to the world and a medium to acquire modern knowledge, the middle-class people of India accepted English as a means to earn a living and gain social prestige. But now in the age of globalisation learning English in India is not for social prestige but for jobs, the economy and development for everyone. The increasing number of English learners is testimony to the fact that English is wanted and needed. This paper aims to assess the learning of English in India's development within the country's socio-cultural matrix. It also traces the extent to which English as a skill has been acquired by economically and culturally deprived groups for whom English was previously inaccessible. The participation of Dalits and the disadvantaged class/caste people in the mainstream of the country's social and economic activity is linked with their learning of English. It concludes that economic factors determine the choice of the people in accepting English with other socio-cultural factors becoming secondary determinants.

1. Introduction

When the British came to India and thought of teaching English to Indians, they could not have imagined that one day the Indians would outnumber them in terms of the number of users or speakers of English. Today, English is used by more non-native than native speakers. In India, English was used to create 'a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay (1835), in Bailey (1991:138). The terms cultural colonialism and linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) in relation to the spread of English have started losing their validity in the age of globalisation when English has become a language of opportunity (Crystal 1997) and people all over the world have accepted it for their economic needs.

English has the status of one of the Indian languages used by 125 million Indians in various fields such as business, education, travel, jobs and economic development. In a globalised world, modern technology, media and money power have become inseparable from English as an international language. Here the term money power stands for economic development, or earning power. Although the debate is still going on around the contribution of English in bringing economic development to developing countries vis-à-vis national languages. The presumption that weak competency in English restricts people's ability to compete with others in many developing countries is also very strong. In the

context of language learning, it is claimed that learning through L1 or the mother tongue raises learners' cognitive ability to understand subjects better (Bamgbose 1984). The academic discussion over the efficacy of English in the process of learning and as a language accelerating the process of development in developing countries will continue (indeed, many papers in this publication explore both sides of the debates), but the role of English in the socio-economic development of India is undeniable.

2. The growth of English in India

In India, people initially learnt English to obey, submit and please the ruling class. Now they learn it to connect, to know and gain equality in the global village. It is believed that by learning English they do not lose their culture or freedom, rather they gain in terms of cultural enrichment, global connectedness, and social and economic development. In the present scenario, development is directly linked with a knowledge of English, as this is the only truly global language which enables us to connect, share knowledge, scientific research, economic and commercial dealings and so on.

The increasing number of users of English as a Second Language (ESL) all over the world, particularly as a result of the globalisation of the 1980s, is testimony to the fact that a knowledge of English is pivotal to social and economic interaction. In the Indian context, the increase in the number of English speakers has grown hugely from 2 per cent in the 1951 census to 12.2 per cent in 2001 (Gandhi, 1979). The total number of speakers of English in India is second only to the USA, which has the highest number of native speakers.

Table 1: The status of English in the world

| Country | % English speaking | Eligible Population | Total English Speakers | As first language | As an additional language | Comments |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| USA | 95.19 | 280,950,438 | 267,444,149 | 225,505,953 | 41,938,196 | US census 2007 |
| India | 12.16 | 1,030,000,000 | 125,226,449 | 226,449 | 125,000,000 | India census 2001 |
| Pakistan | 10.33 | 181,000,000 | 18,690,000 | | 18,690,000 | Euromonitor 2009 |
| Nigeria | 53.34 | 148,093,000 | 79,000,000 | 4,000,000 | 75,000,000 | |
| Philippines | 78.53 | 97,000,000 | 76,177,000 | 3,427,000 | 72,750,000 | Census 2000, 1995 |
| UK | 97.74 | 60,975,000 | 59,600,000 | 58,100,000 | 1,500,000 | David Crystal, 2003 |
| Germany | 56 | 82,191,000 | 46,272,504 | 272,504 | 46,000,000 | Eurobarometer ,2006 |
| Bangladesh | 18 | 163,323,100 | 29,398,158 | | 29,398,158 | Euromonitor 2009 |
| Egypt | 35 | 80,289,500 | 28,101,325 | | 28,101,325 | Euromonitor 2011 |
| Canada | 85.18 | 33,355,400 | 25,246,220 | 17,694,830 | 7,551,390 | Census 2001 |
| France | 39 | 65,350,000 | 25,500,000 | | 25,500,000 | Eurobarometer 2012 |
| Italy | 34 | 59,619,290 | 20,300,000 | | 20,300,000 | Eurobarometer 2012 |
| Argentina | 42.3 | 42,192,500 | 17,847,427 | | 17,847,427 | |
| Australia | 97.03 | 21,394,309 | 17,357,833 | 15,013,965 | 2,343,868 | Census 2001 |

In India, users of English come second to Hindi, the principal majority language. The figures as presented might have gone up with the rise of the Indian population to 1.2 billion (2011 census) from just over 1 billion ten years earlier. The number of literates has also gone up, to 74.04 per cent.

Table 2: The status of English in India

| S. No. | Language | Users of L1, L2 and L3 (in millions) | Percentage | L1 (MT) speakers | Percentage speakers |
|--------|-----------|--|------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Hindi | 551.4 | 53.5 | 422,048,642 | 41.03 |
| 2 | English | 125.2 | 12.1 | 230,000 | 0.23 |
| 3 | Bengali | 91.1 | 8.8 | 83,369,769 | 8.11 |
| 4 | Telugu | 85.0 | 8.2 | 74,002,856 | 7.19 |
| 5 | Marathi | 84.2 | 8.1 | 71,936,894 | 6.99 |
| 6 | Tamil | 66.7 | 6.4 | 60,793,814 | 5.91 |
| 7 | Urdu | 59.0 | 5.7 | 51,536,111 | 5.01 |
| 8 | Kannada | 50.8 | 4.9 | 46,091,617 | 4.48 |
| 9 | Gujarati | 50.3 | 4.8 | 37,924,011 | 3.69 |
| 10 | Oriya | 36.6 | 3.5 | 33,066,392 | 3.21 |
| 11 | Malayalam | 33.8 | 3.2 | 33,017,446 | 3.21 |
| 12 | Punjabi | 31.1 | 3.0 | 29,102,477 | 2.30 |

Source: Govt. of India Census 2001

There is no valid data available regarding the increasing number of English users in India 'pushing back' the regional/national languages, but the trends are very clear – more and more people are participating in education and also adopting English for economic and job-related reasons.

Linked to earning or jobs or to be a part of the mainstream, English is no more the preserve of the Indian elite. For example, Indian engineers with weak skills in English either get low salaries or remain excluded from good job opportunities. ' ...The skill shortage is still one of the major constraints in most industries in India' (Blom and Saeki 2011). Azam, Chin, and Prakash (2010) also found that employers demand English skills. Specifically, their estimate (based upon a large household survey) is that English communication skills increase the hourly wages of men by a huge 34 per cent, and this return mainly accrues to young educated workers. As Indian economic activities go global, a better command of the English language is essential.

English is no longer a regular target of criticism or derision (for being considered elitist or foreign, destroying the native culture and linguistic identity of the people using either Hindi, dialects or regional languages – although as we have seen there is still a great deal of debate among academic circles about the nature of its influence). There has emerged a situation of cultural assimilation (Crystal 2000) in the wake of globalisation and it is not only Indians but peoples across various linguistic communities around the world that have accepted English with little or no cultural or linguistic bias or sense of superiority over their own native languages. As well as becoming more global, English has become much less British or American in character in the process. English is no longer the exclusive cultural property of the British but an accepted and required skill or tool in the hands of all who work for development and progress, cutting across the boundaries of nation, race, creed and language. English ability could be considered one of the disciplines of the sciences or social sciences, which has no national or regional colour, but an area of knowledge universally required for the sharing of ideas across cultures and for the development of society.

3. Caste, class and English: a socio-cultural and economic case

The elitist aspect of knowing English during and after British rule in India was very much linked with the kind of social prestige denied to socially deprived or marginalised people. The Dalits' move to learn English in modern India was to join 'the English-knowing caste', as phrased by Nehru in the following statement:

In the old days, we produced a relatively small, though numerically fairly large, class of people who knew English and who formed a kind of English-knowing caste in India. In this land of castes, everything turns into caste. And people who knew English, even though they may not have known it very well, considered themselves superior to those who did not. (Graddol 2010: Foreword).

"English-knowing proficiency" may prove to be a more powerful marker of difference than caste' (Srivastava 2013). He further accepts that 'a Dalit with English-language fluency will much more be accepted in upper-caste community (and get ahead) than an upper-caste non-English speaking person.' (Srivastava ibid).

The recent awareness among socially, educationally and economically deprived people in India for social status and political power has been a significant development as far as learning English is considered. There was a time when in the Hindi heartlands of northern India (Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), the leaders of the so-called backward castes/classes thought of the lack of English as a hindrance to their ability to compete with the educated and socially advanced classes. In Bihar during the 1960s, the then Chief Minister Late Karpoori Thakur ensured that students could pass secondary exams without English. Nowadays in Bihar, English is taught from the first class. The new move to teach English in all government schools is a welcome step and the Supreme Court's order to admit 25 per cent backward class / Dalit students in all English medium private schools should help to make education more inclusive.

The British successfully restricted the English language to an elite class. Subsequently it became a means for that elite to maintain their status in independent India. But the politics around English have shifted in the last decade. Where populist politicians once secured rural votes by promising to banish English, now there is a powerful grass-roots lobby to extend English to the masses. (Graddol 2010: 64–65).

Dalit leaders, intellectuals and activists like Chandrabhan Prasad and Kancha Ilaiah openly advocate for English education for the development of a large number of Dalits deprived of social and economic advancement. Ilaiah, in an interview while talking of the slow growth of Dalit economic progress in India said, 'The main barrier is the lack of English education, still a faraway dream for most Dalits' (Ilaiah 2013). Making a point that Dalits 'had no entry to the colonial English world', he strongly disagrees with the commonly accepted conservative view that 'English will destroy the culture of the soil' (Ilaiah 2012). There is no doubt that the recent trend among Dalits and others to learn English is directly linked with their aspiration to grow and develop.

4. Language conflicts in India

The complexity arising out of such socio-cultural and political issues in matters of accepting English as a tool for socio-economic development of those who have been denied or deprived of their role and place in India is deep and yet to be resolved. A key issue is removing obstacles to the development process, in a situation where a large section of society are marginalised and their potential is not allowed to develop. It is perhaps for this reason that many socio-political and linguistic movements surfaced after Independence, expressing their aspirations and discontent. It is recorded that the

language movements against Hindi in the south and English in the north and a cry for the identity and importance of regional languages were at their peak during the 1960s and 1970s. As Srivastava says, ‘... basic to all the language conflicts is the problem of social and economic growth of the members of a given speech community as a social group’ (1979: 82). The Indian government tried to mitigate the linguistic chauvinism disturbing social harmony in the name of languages and ethnicity and ‘to promote national integration’ (Srivastava 1990: 43) by adopting the three-language formula following the Kothari Commission Report. It was done without taking into consideration the economic and social aspirations of various linguistic communities. The formula proved a failure (Baldrige 1996: 12) and now, in an era of globalisation and economic reforms, there is no need of such a language formula for national integrity and to soften language conflicts. The linguistic communities or social groups are more concerned with their economic growth and development than language conflicts per se. Language movements in India, as prevalent during the 1960s and 70s, have waned and the place of English in education linked with development has been fully assimilated.

5. Conclusion

The denial of access to English, ‘the dominant language of global politics and economy’ (Crystal *ibid.*: 76) to a large number of socially and economically deprived people of India has proved to be a kind of unfreedom’ (Sen 1999); and ‘development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms’ (Sen *ibid.*: Preface XII). Dalits and the backward caste/class in India have moved positively to shake off this shackle of unfreedom by embracing English where they have been given the opportunity. Caste, class, ethnicity, linguistic affinity and national or regional sentiments become secondary when it comes to learning English for economic reasons, although we cannot ignore the fact that access is not yet universal and social attitudes and prejudices often hold back the ability of the marginalised to actively participate in social and economic life. Marx commented that human relations and culture are determined by economic relations. In his words, ‘the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life’ (Marx 1859, in Prakash 2011). The growing number of English speakers in India and the growing participation of the underprivileged in the mainstream of India’s economic and social powerhouses are indicative of a kind of freedom gained through education and a basic knowledge of English.

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Theme three

**The home environment:
issues in the home-school language switch**

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education as a Key to Access and Quality

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Abstract

Many countries in the world are linguistically and culturally diverse, but few education systems take this diversity into consideration in the curriculum. Using an inappropriate language for education has a seriously negative impact on children's educational achievements and large numbers of children, particularly those from indigenous and ethno-linguistic minority communities, struggle to understand, often failing to learn either the school language or the language of their communities. They also fail to learn the required concepts and skills, and are thus excluded. Children who begin education in the language they are most familiar with, on the other hand, have more chance of success, and this is seen in increased enrolment, reduced drop-out and improved achievement levels in all school subjects, including the dominant national or official language. In recent years, new initiatives have been taken by governments and NGOs to make education more inclusive for children from ethno-linguistic backgrounds. Using experience from India and Bangladesh, this paper describes the needs of such children and the steps taken to help overcome the many barriers they face in learning, where the language of instruction differs from the language of the home.

1. Introduction

Many countries in the world are linguistically diverse. Having complex language contexts presents enormous challenges to governments as they attempt to provide appropriate education for children from ethno-linguistic minority communities.

It is well understood that active participation is a necessary key for learning, but the language these children are most familiar with is rarely, if ever, used at school. Thus, they are unable to engage or participate meaningfully in their own learning. From experience of personal communication and interaction with communities in India and Bangladesh, it is clear that many children understand very little until grades 3, 4, 5 or even 8, depending on their proximity to communities speaking the second language. In a study in India, Jhingran (2005) found that by grade 5, some children can read grade 2-level texts, but with little understanding, and most are unable to answer or converse in school language. Most cannot score a single mark on language tests. Children struggle to understand, often failing to learn either the school language or the language of their communities, failing also to learn basic skills and concepts and achievement levels are low. School itself is unfamiliar and the content of

the curriculum and the textbooks are culturally distant to the tribal child, which results in a lack of interest as well as difficulty in comprehending (Jhingran *ibid*:1). Many become discouraged and drop out.

A similar situation is revealed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh where more than half the indigenous people have no formal schooling. They face a higher school drop-out risk where only 8 per cent complete primary and 2 per cent complete secondary (cf.;[www.irinnews.org/report.aspx? ReportId=94139](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=94139)). Countries that are highly linguistically fractionalised cannot afford to ignore the importance of language in education if learning is to be effective and if Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved (Pinnock 2009: 8–9; www.unesco.org.uk/education_for_all and www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml) and www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml).

Added to the already complex linguistic situation is the perceived need for English. English is a foreign language to these children and yet many parents as well as educators deem it necessary to use English as the medium for learning from the beginning of a child's school life (Graddol 2010: 72). But using an unknown language for learning can have a serious negative impact on children's social, emotional and cognitive abilities.

To help overcome the barriers children face and to bridge the gaps in their learning, a new way of thinking about language and education was required with the use of languages more closely related to the children's language competence and to the language-learning process.

2. Bridging the gap

The idea was to develop an education programme that included all the required languages and aimed to improve both access and quality for children from minority-language communities. Thus, after many discussions with the authorities in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa concerning the situation for the tribal communities, it was decided that multilingual education (MLE) would be introduced.

MLE begins by developing a strong foundation in the first language, and using the known language to teach content and concepts. This provides continuity and creates a smooth transition between the home and the school. The curriculum and activities relate as much as possible to the environment and lives of the children, as a child sees the world through his or her own language and culture and learns best from that familiar context. This puts the child at the centre of the learning process and creates a child-friendly learning environment. The learning process becomes responsive.

From a strong foundation of learning in the mother tongue, learning other languages and bridging the gap to the wider world becomes easier. A structured language programme allows children to develop appropriate cognitive and reasoning skills as well as enabling them to operate successfully in their native, state and national/international languages.

MLE ensures that the skills and concepts required by the government are covered within a context of local language, culture and environment.

3. The impact of multilingual education

Using the mother tongue has a positive impact on access with increased attendance by children, particularly girls (Benson 2005), and a dramatic decrease in repetition and drop-out.

Mastery of literacy and content material is easier in a language one knows and thinks in. Learning in the mother tongue has a positive impact on children's overall language and cognitive development and academic achievement, leading to higher competency in reading, mathematics and science (Pinnock 2010), and a better performance in tests taken in the official language of instruction later in their school careers (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008; UNESCO Bangkok 2008). Preschool children also tend to outperform their non-mother-tongue peers in almost every competency area (Vijayakumar et al 2010).

The benefits extend beyond cognitive skills to enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and classroom participation (Alidou et al., 2006; GMR 2010:173). Children learn the values and knowledge important to the community, creating continuity between one generation and another. It helps develop a sense of personal worth and value, and cultural identity, ensuring a place in the community, encouraging emotional stability and reducing alienation, social dysfunction and political instability (UNESCO 2012: 14).

4. Developing and sustaining multilingual education

There are several essential components to an MLE programme if it is to be sustainable and effective. These include developing a strong policy, ensuring support from all involved, curriculum planning, preparation of materials, training and monitoring and evaluation as well as continuous support of teachers. Using personal experience in India and Bangladesh, the remainder of this paper provides a brief outline of the processes followed.

Policy India has good laws and policies. The Right to Education Act confirms the right to quality, child-friendly education and states that children have the right to mother-tongue instruction, but adds the caveat 'to the extent *possible*'. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 also outlines the importance of children being able to learn in their mother tongue. But development and implementation of good practice is often more complicated and in order to gain support for changes to put policy into practice, advocacy at all levels is essential. The programmes developed in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh (see below) have shown that it is possible, and in 2013 Orissa began developing a state-level policy for MLE as the accepted approach to education (see draft policy document www.nmrcjnu.org/nmrc_img/ MLE%20Policy%20and%20Implementation_finalDraft_Nov20.pdf).

Programme development After gaining support from the state government in Andhra Pradesh, a feasible plan was developed with educationalists and linguists from local universities for eight language communities and was introduced in 2004 (NMRC 2009a). Following similar discussions in Orissa, it was decided to develop a similar programme in ten languages (NMRC 2009b), which began in 2006. The state script was used to develop the orthography.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was charged with developing the programme under the Peace Accord signed in 1997. The programme began there in 2008 in eight language communities. The scripts used were either traditional local scripts or Roman script. One group had developed their own script.

The first year was used to develop orthography, curriculum and materials (language, maths and environmental science studies) for the first year of schooling. The curriculum plan and design was based on National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 requirements. At all stages the programmes worked with local teachers and communities. As the first year was being piloted, second-year materials were being developed and produced. The programme continued in this way until grade 5, with continuous expansion in the number of schools using the curriculum.

Community participation and a sense of ownership, along with parental support, is critical for the

successful development and implementation of MLE programmes. In the initial stages, visits were made to all the villages where MLE was to be implemented and the issues were discussed with parents to gain their support. Members of the communities were involved in data collection and other aspects of curriculum planning and implementation.

Collaboration between different government departments, academic institutions, NGOs, local communities and experienced consultants with the required skills and technical ability was essential for curriculum design, curriculum content, materials and teacher training. In Andhra Pradesh, multilingual dictionaries (MT, Telugu, Hindi, English) in eight languages were developed in collaboration with the Education Department, university linguistics departments, NGOs and local communities (see www.gondwana.in/mh/dict/lexicon/main.htm (web dictionary) and www.gondwana.in/ap/index.htm (Gondi phrase book and dictionary).

Curriculum An integrated theme-based approach was used for the early years based on National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) requirements. The knowledge, skills, customs and environment of the local community were used to develop the themes with related materials and activities. A culture-based approach would not only achieve the required government competencies, but value the child and the community and link the children's experience at school with their prior learning.

Resource and materials development Original mother-tongue materials were developed for the first two to three years. Local storytellers, writers, musicians and artists were integral to the process. For later primary years textbooks went through a process of cultural adaptation rather than simply being translated. The following table shows the types of materials that were developed for the theme-based approach to the curriculum.

Figure 1: Mother-tongue materials for early-years MLE programme

| Materials | Use |
|---|---|
| Theme pictures (early grades) Textbooks | Developing MT oral language Language, maths: for developing skills and accuracy; plus activities to move away from textbook-based (rote) learning. Environmental studies and science: in upper primary grades |
| Theme-based activities | Developing skills and concepts in meaningful contexts |
| Big Book stories (with structured use of language) | Class or shared reading used for oral language learning and for learning to read |
| Listening stories | To read/tell to the students |
| Children's reading books for classroom/school libraries | Short sentences and pictures which the children can use by themselves, in small groups, or one to one, increasing in difficulty as children move through the school |
| Factsheets/books | Using the local environment and cultural knowledge |
| Classroom-made materials | Reading materials made by children and teacher together |

The bridging process: transitioning to other languages It has been suggested that additive bilingual programmes are the most effective, and only those who continue in the mother tongue throughout their school career are likely to become fully bi- or multilingual (Ball 2010). Heugh (2011) argues that

using the mother tongue for at least six years results in higher levels of achievement than for those who transition too soon. Moving to the second language too early or too abruptly creates problems, particularly as curriculum content increases in difficulty and abstraction.

Second and other languages are introduced gradually, developing oral capacity initially followed by reading and writing skills. In the early years, the second language is introduced using a structured yet informal approach, building children's vocabulary and use of language in simple and familiar situations. For older children, systematic teaching of the second language continues with developing oral and literacy fluency. The use of the second language in academic subjects in the curriculum is gradually increased as children become more familiar with it. During the transition process, the first language provides support for learning the new language and ensuring conceptual understanding.

Figure 2: Seven stages of language and concept learning

| | |
|---------|---|
| Stage 7 | Use all languages for lifelong learning |
| Stage 6 | Continue to build fluency and confidence in L1 and L2 for communication and learning. Continue to build Oral L3. Introduce reading and writing in L3 |
| Stage 5 | Use both L1 and L2 as Mols Build oral and literacy competency and concepts L1 and L2 Introduce ORAL L3 |
| Stage 4 | Use L1 and Mol Continue to build L1 ORAL and LITERACY SKILLS Continue to build ORAL L2 Introduce reading and writing in L2 |
| Stage 3 | Use L1 as Mol Continue to build L1 ORAL and LITERACY SKILLS Introduce ORAL L2 |
| Stage 2 | L1 as Mol Continue to build L1 ORAL competency Introduce reading and writing in L1 |
| Stage 1 | Build young children's oral fluency, competence and confidence in MT |

The pace and effectiveness of children's second-language learning will vary depending on how much they have developed literacy in their first language and how much exposure they have to the new language.

Figure 3: Possible plan for language use in pre- and primary school (time given for each language may differ; they may be taught as separate subjects and/or used to support comprehension)

| | Pre-school 1 | Pre-school 2 | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Language MT | Oral MT | Oral+ beginning reading and writing MT | Developing fluency oral, reading and writing | Developing fluency oral, reading and writing | Developing fluency oral, reading and writing | MT as a subject | MT as a subject |
| Maths | Number MT | Number MT | MT | MT | MT/L2 | L2/MT | L2 with MT support |
| Social Studies | MT | MT | MT | MT | MT/L2 | L2/MT | L2 with MT support |
| Language L2 | | Oral (term 3) | Oral + introduction to literacy | Oral, reading and writing | Oral, reading and writing | Language development | Language development |
| Language L3 | | | | | Oral | Oral + introduction to literacy | Oral, reading and writing |
| Approx % use of language | 100% | 90% MT 10% L2 | 90% MT 10% L2 | 80% MT 20% L2 | 70% MT 20% L2 10% L3 | 50% MT 40% L3 10% L3 | 30% MT 60% L2 10% L3 |

Training teachers Teachers of the early grades of primary education should be mother-tongue speakers of the local language and preferably bilingual. Teachers who are competent in the second language are not always available and so specialist teachers may be preferable. This is a particular problem in Bangladesh where teachers are more familiar with the Bangla script than with local scripts. Training programmes need to incorporate best practice for both first- and second-language learning, with engaging activities which are creative and responsive, focusing on meaning and comprehension rather than rote learning and memorisation (Bhattacharjea et al. 2011:35). Training needs to include reading and writing the mother tongue, a particular issue where the script is unknown (see conference report by Mohanty, A. and Panda, M. Mother-tongue based multilingual education: framework, strategies and implementation 19–21 September 2011, CIIL Mysore, www.nmrc-jnu.org/nmrc_img/P-1.pdf and www.nmrc-jnu.org/nmrc_img/P-2.pdf).

Teacher's guides containing weekly and daily plans with ideas for activities have been helpful where locations are remote and training and experience limited. Regular support helps build confidence, reflecting on the teaching process and responding to children's needs.

Monitoring and evaluation Evaluation procedures were eventually modified to address the needs of MLE, reflecting the new curriculum and languages. Textbooks, materials and teaching methods needed to be assessed with children's, teachers' and communities' responses.

5. Lessons learned

The development and implementation of MLE is best with the active support of government and other agencies, but where commitment was lacking and even opposed, the programme suffered. Without a clear policy, the whim of individuals takes precedence, and funding becomes hard to find.

Parental support is likely to lead to more effective functioning and with teachers from the local community, absenteeism and negative classroom practices can be reduced. However, the limited education background and lack of training for local teachers is a situation that will take time to resolve.

Preparing materials for the new school year requires sufficient time for publishing and testing. Where problems in timing have been experienced, teachers have had to resort to general school textbooks. A few resourceful teachers have made their own mother-tongue materials.

Using textbooks tends to lead to traditional teaching methods and teachers tend to return to rote and memorisation if insufficient training has been provided. Developing best practices in activity-based learning with on-going support is essential to ensure teacher professional development.

An area of concern that is only just being addressed is where classrooms have children from multiple language communities. Some suggestions have been made for policy and practice in such situations. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is now playing a more active role, for example.

6. Is sustainability ensured?

MLE in India and Bangladesh is still relatively fragile. Continual advocacy is required to keep MLE on the agenda and most of the programmes are seen as pilot initiatives. Integrating MLE into government structures and institutions with positive strategies to meet the state and national objectives of the Right to Education Act are required. MLE programme planning needs to be seen as part of the mainstream system, with a strong centre and all aspects of MLE embedded in the overall structures of government-related institutions. Added to this, a body of technical resources at national, state and district levels requires well-trained support teams.

And finally, for children to become fluent users of languages, there is a need to change the way language is taught. Teachers need to create a literate classroom environment with sufficient first- and second-language reading materials and activities to be available to engage the learners and encourage fluency in reading and writing. A review of reading and language training is vital for more competent teachers who are well trained in methodology and pedagogy of first- and second-language teaching at all levels of education.

7. Conclusion

MLE is more successful than programmes that ignore the mother tongue. While technically it is not a problem, MLE requires commitment on the part of the government and other agencies. Difficulties and obstacles can take time to overcome and implementation is not always easy, but the effort will be significantly worthwhile.

For an improved experience, changes in educational planning with regard to language are needed, including the rationale for education, curriculum, materials, teacher preparation, classroom practice, community participation and evaluation. A focus on advocacy forums, capacity building at national and state level with dedicated full-time teams, teacher education, the deployment of teachers corresponding to their own language background, changes in assessment procedures and a comprehensive long-term road map with achievable short-term goals is likely to facilitate progress.

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Using Learners' Home Language in Teaching English at the Secondary Level in West Odisha

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Abstract

In the Direct Method, learners' L1 was treated as a hindrance in L2 learning. However, theories of bilingual education advocate the use of L1 in teaching English. But these theories seem to have neglected the existence of multiple non-standard languages 'under' a language. This study examines the effects of adopting local dialects and culture in teaching English to indigenous speakers. The study assumed that Sambalpuri-speaking learners face comprehension problems as their home language is neglected in the classroom and focuses on related learning difficulties. This study hypothesised that the use of learners' home language and forms of culture may help them develop reading skills in English. Some 33 learners were used as the study sample. Questionnaires, interviews and reading comprehension tests were used as tools. The tests were intended to see the difference between the impacts of using local and standard dialect in reading comprehension in English. Analysis shows that learners benefit if their home language is used as a resource in teaching English.

1. Introduction and context

Few, out of many, bilingual studies have addressed an issue such as the problems dialect speakers face in learning when their L1 is not being used in the classroom for teaching and learning purposes. Studies in the 1970s and 1980s on the role of L1 in learning L2 brought in the bilingual method and then the National Educational Policy advocated the use of state regional languages in teaching L2, but it seems to have neglected the fact that every Indian language has many non-standard languages.

The 2001 Indian Census identified 1,652 mother tongues grouped under 122 languages out of which only 26 are used as media of instructions in schools (Jhingran 2009). Learners using non-scheduled languages or dialects face major language problems in schools. A rough estimate shows that almost 25 per cent of primary and secondary school children face moderate or severe language problems. The study under examination here focuses on the pedagogical situation and problems in western Odisha. Western Odisha comprises ten districts, including Sambalpur, where Sambalpuri is the first language. It is described as a dialect and is not used in academic contexts, causing teaching and learning problems to many in that district.

2. The research problem

The problem pertaining to L2 learning in this context is that the home language of the learners is not the language used in the school. Odia, the first language of the state, which is linguistically and structurally different from Sambalpuri, is used in teaching. Moreover, the forms of culture of western Odisha also do not find a place in pedagogy. In this context, the study explores the extent of the problems faced by learners there.

3. Problems specific to reading comprehension

When rural Sambalpuri learners get exposure to English only through textbooks, if reading texts are culturally alien and are dealt with using another alien language, they seldom do well in comprehension. Reading involves four types of comprehension: literal comprehension, making inferences, critical reading and creative thinking. It demands a high level of understanding of the text. But in the present context, the learners are not even able to decode the English text properly to get at least a surface-level meaning. Kamhi-Stein states that readers mentally translate the given target-language text into their home language as a successful reading strategy to get the meaning but in the present context, the use of the home language of the learners is not encouraged (Kamhi-Stein 2003). Moreover, the reading instructions, word meanings, motivation and explanations are also given in Odia, neglecting the learners' language resources and schemata.

4. Research questions

The study attempted to obtain answers to the following questions:

- is multilingual education practised in the learning and teaching of English when the community is largely multilingual?
- to what extent can multilingual education help the target group?

5. Hypotheses of the study

The study assumed that the learners face problems in understanding terms and concepts used in Odia and they do not get scope to read, think and comprehend English texts using their own home language as a resource language. It hypothesised that use of the learners' home language and forms of culture in teaching English might help them learn English better.

6. Literature review

Dhir Jhingran (2009) identifies four groups that face problems related to the medium of instruction in schools:

- tribal learners who speak their indigenous language
- dialect speakers having low comprehension of the standard language used at school – the school language becomes a second language for these children
- national and international immigrants
- children whose first language, though written and well developed, is not used as the medium of instruction at school.

This study is concerned with Sambalpuri dialect speakers. The extent and nature of learning difficulties faced by the children who do not speak or understand the language used as the medium of instruction

in schools depends on several factors, such as the level of intelligibility of the language used, the socio-economic background of the children, exposure to standard language outside the school, motivation to learn the school language and the attitudes of the teachers towards the language and cultures of the learners. Children learn faster through their mother tongue. Language practitioners like Jhingran, Mohanty, Rajagopal and Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas suggest multilingual education is a more appropriate approach for the mentioned categories of learners.

7. Bilingualism or multilingualism?

Definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism are often based on issues of competence, as follows:

'Native-like control of two or more languages' (Bloomfield 1933 quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas 1981)

'An ideal bilingual is, of course, two native speakers rolled into one' (Haugen 1972).

Going by these definitions, nobody in the described context would be a bilingual. The Sambalpur-speaking population would be monolinguals. A more accommodating definition is;

'At least some knowledge and control of the grammatical structure of the second language' (Hall 1952, in Skutnabb-Kangas 1981).

A multilingual person can communicate in more than one language, be it actively through speaking and writing or passively and interactively through reading, listening and perceiving. Thus, our target population is multilingual as they can function in four languages: Sambalpur, Odia, Hindi and English.

In the Indian context, the indigenous people are known as tribals and are users of dialects. Article 350-A of the Indian Constitution advocates mother-tongue education to linguistic minorities. Still, many dialect users fail to continue school after primary classes because of home/school language gaps/differences. Conventional educators profess strict use of the standard language of the state, whereas liberal educators recommend a bi-dialectical approach of a gradual phasing over a period of time from mother tongue to standard language. Some educators adopt a peculiar approach by accommodating a variety of dialects/speech in the classroom, but at the same time the focus shifts to standard language for the purposes of writing. This is a pluralistic model of literacy in which a variation in speech is regarded as a tool of communication. This study is related to the programmes for indigenous groups as it attempts to explore the learning problems of dialect speakers.

8. Teaching English in dialect speakers' contexts

English, a language and culture very unfamiliar to the dialect-speaking learners, is taught through the use of another unfamiliar language and culture, i.e. Odia. It becomes difficult for the learners to decode the input and thus, they face learning difficulties. The National Knowledge Commission (2008) considers this problem and suggests the promotion of multilingualism. It says that language issues must be explicitly taken on board in designing school curricula and methods of teaching English.

The role of L1 in L2 learning has long been an area of interest. Behaviourist ideology looks at L1 as a source of error in second-language learning. So language teaching mainly concentrated on drilling out errors from the repertoire of the language learner and treating L2 learning as fresh learning where L1 had little role to play. Later on, the studies in the areas of cognitive and psycholinguistic processing recognised the value of L1 in the learning of L2. Larry Selinker (1977) proposed the theory of inter-language which described that a language learner at any point of time shows a transitional competence where features of the already acquired L1 interact with the L2 features to be acquired. In the inter-language studies, L1 is seen as a system on to which the learner falls back whenever s/he feels the absence of the required L2 knowledge during communication.

Today the use of L1 in L2 teaching is considered beneficial but here we need to understand that first language, in many contexts, means the home language or the indigenous language. The use of another, alien language in the name of using L1 in teaching L2 makes the situation even more complex. Thus, it is necessary to see what model of bilingual education the context needs, which the present study attempted to explore.

9. The study

A specially designed study was conducted in the context to explore the existing problems involving 33 randomly chosen Sambalpuri dialect speakers of 13 years of age from class VIII of a rural regional medium government school. Five teachers from the Sambalpuri-speaking community were involved in the study. All the teachers mentioned Odia as their mother tongue.

Classroom observation checklists were used extensively together with reading comprehension tests in Sambalpuri, Odia and English. A questionnaire was also administered to learners and teachers, and some semi-structured interviews were also included.

The reading comprehension tests in three languages in the first phase of the study were intended to test the proficiency and performance of the learners in different languages. The second phase of tests looked at the impact of the scaffolding given in their home language, either Sambalpuri or standard Odia in English reading activities. Standard English passages were chosen to carry out these tests and were supported with glossaries in Sambalpuri, Odia, and English. Questionnaires were designed for both learners and teachers to gather information about the language used in and outside the classroom and to know whether there was difficulty for the learners in understanding the academic L1 of the state.

Phase I

Four types of reading comprehension tests were carried out in the first phase without any intervention in order to assess the performance of the learners in different languages. This is recorded in Table 1 below:

- Type 1 passage was a Sambalpuri passage containing a rural folk tale related to their cultural background. It was their first experience of seeing their home language in the classroom.
- Type 2 was an Odia passage. It was not related to their background or culture. Many students wanted the Odia words and phrases to be explained while at the same time comprehending it.
- Type 3 passage was an English passage based on the Sambalpuri culture. It was about their biggest local festival, Nuakhai. Although it was in English, they understood it successfully using their background knowledge, as they were familiar with it.
- Type 4 was an English passage of secondary level. The content of the passage had no relevance to the subjects' culture. They could not comprehend it.

Table 1: Learners' performance in Phase I

| Description of reading comprehension passages | Type 1: Sambalpuri passage | | Type 2: Standard Odia passage | | Type 3: English passage based on Sambalpuri culture | | Type 4: Standard English passage | |
|---|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|---|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| Type | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % |
| 0-5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9.09 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 30.30 |
| 5.5-9.5 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 57.57 | 4 | 12.12 | 19 | 57.57 |
| 10-14.5 | 6 | 18.18 | 11 | 33.33 | 12 | 36.36 | 2 | 6.06 |
| 15-20 | 27 | 81.82 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 51.52 | 2 | 6.06 |
| Total | 33 | 100 | 33 | 100 | 33 | 100 | 33 | 100 |

As table 1 shows, 81.82 per cent of the sample performed very well in the Sambalpuri reading comprehension but in the Odia test most of them (57.57 per cent) secured marks within 5.5-9.5 and 9.09 per cent of them scored below 5.

Phase II

Five types of reading passages were tried out in Phase II where all the passages were in English and had glossaries of different languages:

- Type 5 passage was an English passage with a Sambalpuri glossary. Some students needed an explanation of meaning in Sambalpuri.
- Type 6 was a passage in English with an Odia glossary. Students needed the Odia explanations to be explained further. Only Odia was used in the classroom during the lesson.
- Type 7 was an English passage with an English glossary. Classroom instruction during the reading lesson involved only English. It was difficult for the students. They had many questions about the word meanings and explanation of the sentences.
- Type 8 was a fusion of types 3 and 4. This passage had more of Type 3 and less of Type 4. The given English passage, a local story, was familiar to the learners. Most of the difficult words were explained using the Sambalpuri language and some of the words were explained in the English language. The learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds were strong determiners of marks awarded. They were comfortable with it and solved it without any question.
- Type 9 was again a mixture of two types but the reverse of Type 8. It was a fusion of more of Type 4 and less of Type 3. It was an English passage with an English glossary and a few glossaried words in Sambalpuri. English was dominant in this passage. The students faced some problems in comprehending the passage.

Table 2 also shows that learners performed well in passage types 5 and 3+4, which had a stronger Sambalpuri influence.

Table 2: Learners' performance in Phase II

| Description of passages | Type 5: English with Sambalpuri glossary | | Type 6: English with Odia glossary | | Type 7: English with English glossary | | Type 8: More of Sambalpuri | | Type 9: More of English | |
|-------------------------|---|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|--|-------|-------------------------------|------|----------------------------|-------|
| Type | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
| Distribution (marks) | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % | No. of learners | % |
| 0–5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9.09 | 10 | 30.30 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3.03 |
| 5.5–9.5 | 5 | 15.15 | 27 | 81.82 | 21 | 63.63 | 10 | 30.3 | 21 | 63.63 |
| 10–14.5 | 11 | 33.33 | 3 | 9.09 | 2 | 6.06 | 14 | 42.4 | 11 | 33.33 |
| 15–20 | 17 | 51.52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 27.3 | 0 | 0 |

10. Findings

An analysis of the scores of all the tests shows that learners have performed well in the Sambalpuri reading comprehension in Phase I, and the English text with Sambalpuri glossary in Phase II. Indeed, they have performed better with all the passages that were influenced by the Sambalpuri dialect. This suggests that the home language of the learners plays a significant role in supporting the comprehension of the target language.

When we look at the findings from the teachers' and learners' questionnaire and interviews we find some important and surprising observations.

Table 3: The learners' questionnaire results

| Findings from the learners' questionnaire | % of learners |
|---|---------------|
| Learners comfortable with the Sambalpuri dialect of Odia | 100 |
| Sambalpuri as home language | 96.96 |
| Use of the Sambalpuri language to converse with friends and to discuss the meanings of difficult words in English | 100 |
| Not comfortable with standard Odia | 84.84 |
| Interested and motivated when Sambalpuri is used in the classroom | 96.96 |

These strongly indicative responses are not mirrored by the responses from the teachers. They tended to regard their mother tongue as Odia even though they belong to the Sambalpuri community. They also argue that giving importance to such a local dialect in the classroom may lead to negative attitudes and results leading to academic failure in subsequent years of the students' education (due to an assumed lack of competency in the L1 of the state). The analysis of all items in the questionnaire therefore presents something of a paradox: most of the learners benefit from and need the use of their home language in reading instruction to assist with comprehension and learning and yet the teachers are not in favour of promoting such approaches in the classroom.

11. Conclusion

The study indicates that scaffolding in the home language helped the learners to perform very well in reading comprehension tests. It is suggested that teachers in the dialect speakers' contexts should attempt to provide such learner-centred approaches in the classroom to promote effective learning with primary importance given to the learners' language, culture and real-life experiences. Clearly the attitudes of the teachers uncovered in this study give some cause for concern because if they do not see the value of such an approach to using the home language in the classroom or, indeed, are hostile to it then we can assume that students will continue to struggle to understand English and in many cases in the Odia language of the classroom. There is certainly a case for conducting more detailed research to examine this in more detail and understand the implications for teacher-training programmes both pre- and in-service. The study also highlights the need for specially designed materials to develop proper teacher-training modules with a special focus on teacher attitudes, and bi- and multilingualism, which may lead to a richer atmosphere for learning L2 with an appropriate use of L1 to assist students and lead to better learning outcomes.

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Development and Empowerment of Marginalised Communities through English

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Abstract

Expanding globalisation involves expansion and growing interdependence among peoples of the world. English is of great relevance for marginalised groups the world over as they do not appear to benefit from these developments. They do not contribute to society though they possess valuable knowledge about nature, and have their own ethnic, cultural, and spiritual values. These communities share the following characteristics – low literacy; a multiplicity of dialects; vulnerability to exploitation; specific local traditions and customs; distinctive social structures; the social psyche of a patriarchal system; and poor economic conditions in the rural areas in which they reside. This paper begins with a brief discussion of how an understanding of the concept of development has changed even in semi-urban and rural India. In the rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, especially the districts of Panna, Balaghat and Vidisha where there are sizeable tribal populations, girls are marginalised more than their urban counterparts are: they are deprived of their education, career opportunities, etc. For their development, English is an essential means to bring them on an equal footing with males and raise their potential both at a social and economic level. The paper explores the role English plays in offering development opportunities and in empowering the marginalised.

1. Introduction

Education has the power to change lives. It widens people's freedom of thought and action, empowering them to contribute to their societies while providing them with the skills required to help them earn a living. For the marginalised, education can be a road to better social mobility and a way out of poverty. English as a global language is spoken by millions of people around the world. In India the superiority of English as a means of inter-regional communication over the other languages of the country remains unquestioned. The prestige attached to this language of the elite is also well known.

Development is the bridge between the hopes and dreams of people and the realities of the world. In the present scenario English is of great relevance for marginalised groups the world over as most marginalised communities do not appear to be benefiting from these developments. English is a huge potential asset for such communities to leverage their skills and expertise.

2. The Indian context

It would be helpful to address the term ‘marginalised’ in the Indian context. An individual from a disadvantaged background is defined as one who comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge required to participate in modern development. Likewise, people who have little or no access at all to lifelong learning opportunities are culturally marginalised. In India, the term applies to a group of people separated – or actively excluded – from the rest of society. Marginalised people are often regarded as an underclass – unable to access basic material needs, work opportunities, education, welfare or healthcare. Their needs are ignored or forgotten by the public.

Tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh constitute a sizeable population of 12.233 million people (20.27 per cent of the total population of Madhya Pradesh) with 46 recognised Scheduled Tribes (ST). Due to their different linguistic, cultural and geographical environments, the diverse tribal world of Madhya Pradesh has been largely cut off from the mainstream of development. The main tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh are Gond, Bhil, Baiga, Korku, Bhariya, Halba, Kaul, Mariya and Sahariya. The tribes in the state are overwhelmingly rural, with 93.6 per cent residing in rural and forested areas. The literacy rate among the tribes of Madhya Pradesh is lower if compared with that of all STs at the national level (47.1 per cent). Male and female literacy rates among the tribes (53.5 per cent and 28.4 per cent respectively) are also lower in comparison to those at the national level (59.2 per cent and 34.8 per cent).

The marginalised communities (especially from the tribal belt) do not often partake in and contribute to society, though they possess precious knowledge about the natural world, as well as ethnic, cultural, and spiritual values that can be of benefit to communities beyond their own. And yet these communities suffer from several systemic disadvantages including low literacy, a multiplicity of dialects, vulnerability to exploitation, the social psyche of the patriarchal system, a lack of value placed on girls’ education and poor economic conditions. The children of these communities have higher than average rates of drop-out from school, compounding their limited opportunities in society (young people with only a lower secondary education have limited opportunities to realise their potential and develop their skills). All of this means they are virtually excluded from the mainstream.

There are also several impediments for the tribal population of Madhya Pradesh in terms of engaging with new ideas, innovations, and technologies partly due to their lack of access to the required technology and also the fact that the overwhelming bulk of the content is in a language with which they are unfamiliar. While more and more government initiatives are headed towards use of the internet and other computer-based systems, the marginalised are unable to use the material available. In schools and colleges, access to libraries is very limited. Apart from textbooks students do not have access to reference books from the library. Generally there is no reading culture in rural areas (even if a functioning library were to be found). Internet- and computer-based resources in such a context can become very valuable but the lack of command of language hampers their opportunities.

3. Why English is important for the marginalised

English is important to raise general awareness. Our understanding of the concept of development has changed considerably over the past six decades. Amartya Sen states that, ‘Development can be seen ... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.’ English is important for employability, in international mobility, as a means for development opportunities and, very often, as a neutral language. Language helps to foster effective participation. Therefore, expanding the opportunities for the teaching of the English language, and more especially the learning of it, should be made more widely (Coleman 2009: 3).

English is critical for a country's participation in the global economy, it provides individuals with access to crucial knowledge, skills and employment opportunities and enables organisations to create and sustain international links. It plays a major role in enhancing an individual's employability by providing access to research and information. It is of great relevance in the life of the marginalised for the reasons cited above. In Madhya Pradesh, the native language is Hindi and the working language very often is English, but the STs have their own languages, so there is a great problem for the students coming from these communities to overcome: not only do they struggle with understanding and using these prestigious languages but the result is that they are not aware of science and technology, and they fail to obtain proper employment, in spite of being talented. With a knowledge of English, their life chances would certainly develop.

The question is how we can facilitate access to teaching English to marginalised youth. We have cited here a number of enabling factors which are likely to have a positive impact:

- linking literacy and basic life skills to education and access to the world of work in order to remove constraints for earning a living
- providing them with the opportunities and skills to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute
- prioritising the education of girls who suffer more from marginalisation in order to make them equal with males but also to contribute actively to their communities and improve the prospects for their children, thereby helping to break the inevitability of inter-generational deprivation
- developing communication skills to negotiate, make decisions and resolve conflict
- nurturing their self-confidence as a result.

4. The study

An initiative was taken to teach tribal students in the districts of Panna, Balaghat and Vidisha where the dominant mother tongue is Hindi. A bilingual approach was practised in the classroom in order to facilitate better understanding of the content. This was in response to the growing recognition that bilingual and multicultural teachers create conditions for interaction that expand the student's possibilities for identity formation and critical enquiry where marginalised voices can be expressed, shared and amplified. Lessons were simplified in order to facilitate practice in English. Special lessons on grammar and vocabulary, group discussions, interactive exercises, developing creative skills, etc. were practised. This was balanced with content specifically focused on the local context in order to remove any conceptual and cultural barriers that might hinder effective learning. This prioritised showing respect for local knowledge, values and culture. Students received regular counselling to increase their confidence levels. In order to empower marginalised girls, it was important to engage families, communities and social networks, and to examine their norms and systems. Listening to students, learning about their perceived needs and taking into account their knowledge and culture was another essential prerequisite for successful teaching with marginal groups. Teaching in remote areas, it was found that educators from marginalised groups themselves had better communication with these groups.

We have alluded to the simplification of lessons. This took the form of substituting complex vocabulary in texts, shortening sentence length and restructuring sentences to reduce their grammatical and semantic complexity. Sometimes, the text was elaborated, clarified and explained with implicit information. Words were often added to enhance comprehension. The goal was to make a text more coherent and limit the ambiguity within it. Brainstorming was regularly practised by the teachers in a mixture of languages, presenting a question or situation and giving the students a short amount of time

to freely suggest solutions or ideas. In buzz sessions students were divided into small discussion groups, each assigned a topic or assignment. Teachers were conscious of the vocabulary they used in class. Positive feedback was an important part of the approach in order to enhance self-confidence and aid learning – we have seen above the risks of drop-out as a result of poor confidence and motivation. Text reading was encouraged and familiarisation sessions were provided on the use of computers and the internet.

In Madhya Pradesh smart classes – virtual lectures – are initiated at school and college level making much more use of computers and the internet than in previous years. This has brought about a complete transformation of the classroom environment. Every child gets a visual input on whatever is taught and the concepts are well understood and internalised. This results in the quick and accurate understanding of concepts and helps improve the overall academic performance of students. Teachers are able to keep students busy in the learning process and also acquire an instant and accurate assessment of learning outcomes achieved at the end of the class.

This constitutes a huge opportunity for the marginalised communities if they are able to participate in such developments. However, if they are not even on the first rung of the educational ladder and fall further behind their compatriots then this great opportunity becomes an even greater obstacle for them. Thus, rural and remote areas need to be similarly connected through smart classes and marginalised communities need to be part of such wide-ranging educational interventions. The potential benefits across the education sector are multiple, including:

- developing teacher effectiveness and productivity in class
- bringing abstract and difficult curriculum concepts to life inside classrooms
- make learning an enjoyable experience for students
- providing access to more language learning tools and awareness in order to manipulative computer programs and the internet
- providing access to information and knowledge for more self-directed learning in both a formal and informal setting
- improving academic performance and enabling instant formative assessments of learning outcomes in class.

The kind of measures used to empower the marginalised that we have observed include:

- use of audio visual infrastructure
- preparation of customised modules, case studies, true-to-life situations and so on that prompt students to reflect and associate with the content even if the language medium is strange
- practical sessions including dramatisations, demonstrations, discussions, quizzes, mini-presentations, etc. to acknowledge students' ideas and personalise the content as far as possible
- groups of student teachers were encouraged to read more and more outside the curriculum to extend their knowledge. Interaction with teachers in English was encouraged and special efforts were made in Panna district to set up mock teaching with a focus on the use of English. A great deal of peer feedback was encouraged. The emphasis was on quality teaching, where a student teacher had the chance to reflect and improve, and to develop materials and approaches that were appropriate to the context and the students' needs. Every effort was made to increase the acceptance and comfort level between the teacher and the student.

5. Conclusions

It is the mission of the government to empower marginalised communities, with a focus on women and children, through enhanced educational programmes and community training to promote equality, economic well-being and basic human rights within those communities. This is intended to bring out leadership skills in women and also teach them about independence, initiative, self-motivation, and raise awareness about how to improve their families' nutrition, health and livelihoods. Empowering marginalised adolescent girls is possible through integrating new technology into educational interventions but only if it is part of an integrated approach which also prioritises getting girls (and boys) into schools, providing a sensitive and appropriate education and encouraging them to stay in school. The advent of mobile phones in rural communities, especially for women and girls, is a revolutionary opportunity: it allows greater access to, and the exchange of, information and opinions. It can also help to promote women's groups to exchange ideas, collaborate in on-going projects, teach and learn basic English skills, help with small businesses, and be positive role models.

Levelling the playing field for marginalised people is necessary. They are, at present, absent from national debates on education reform. Reaching the marginalised will take a concerted effort to tackle the interlocking structures of disadvantage that limit opportunity. Teachers deal with the most vibrant resource, i.e. human beings. They need continuous innovations to respond to the changing needs of students who are marginalised. In order to do this teachers need to be specially trained to both understand the point about including marginalised students but also in the specific skills required to make this effective. Bilingual and multilingual teaching strategies require the development of a specific range of teaching skills and behaviours as well as the ability to work in more than one language, including English. In an ideal scenario we would hope to see teachers emerge from these communities to continue the work of encouraging students to receive an education. This is a point that has been made in other papers in this publication. Student teachers need to be taught and trained to reflect on shared personal concerns, to ask questions, to seek answers from others, as this can become a vehicle for articulating, examining and changing beliefs. It is hard to underestimate the influence of teachers to help drive such social and educational change. Teachers have to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, the subjects being taught, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. Teachers as agents of change implementing these types of measures can help in empowering marginalised communities through the use of English language.

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Role of L1 (Assamese) in the Acquisition of English as L2: A Case of Secondary School Students of Assam

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Abstract

There has been a debate over the issue of using L1 in L2 classrooms for some time; however, those supporting the ban on L1 have not been able to provide compelling arguments in favour of it. Research evidence is not showing that L1 has a positive role in the English classroom. The present study on the tribal students of secondary Assamese medium school students of Assam and their English teachers revolves around a set of research questions: a) Is the use of Assamese language (L1) in the secondary Assamese medium schools of Assam a deterrent or facilitator in students' acquisition of English as L2?, and (b) How do the students and teachers view using Assamese language (L1) in the English classroom? Data collected through classroom observation and personal interviews with teachers and students reveals that L1 (Assamese) does not hinder learning English, rather it plays a facilitating role in the English language classroom. Also, the use of Assamese has not affected the academic performance of the majority of the learners. Even when Assamese is used, the chief medium of teaching still remains English. The author concludes that there should be appropriate guidelines on using L1 in teaching English in regional medium schools rather than attempting to ban its application.

1. Introduction

The general assumption that has prevailed for quite a long time that English ought to be learnt through English and not by the use of L1 is no longer valid. ELT professionals and several authors in the past wonder how students can acquire the target language if they continually fall back on their L1 and that L1 has no essential role to play in ESL teaching; too much L1 use might cripple learners of valuable input in the L2. But the arguments against using L1 in ESL classrooms are not always based on empirical research and could not provide sufficient reasons for avoiding it. Consequently, several teaching methods and trends supporting the use of L1 as a helpful teaching and learning tool have emerged (Al-Nofaie, 2010); and many researchers and authors stress the value of using L1 and the positive role this plays in EFL teaching (Auerbach 1993; Schweers 1999). Thus, many researchers and teachers have started to re-evaluate the role of L1 in the EFL classroom and think of ways to best incorporate it in the teaching of English.

2. Approaches

Two approaches have appeared with regard to using L1 in EFL/ESL teaching: the monolingual approach and the bilingual approach.

The monolingual approach maintains that the foreign language should be the only medium of communication in the classroom. The rationale for using only the target language in the classroom is that the more students are exposed to the target language the more quickly they will learn: as they hear and use it they will internalise it and begin to think in the language.

The bilingual approach, on the other hand, holds that L1 use is beneficial in the foreign-language classroom at more than one level. In other words, the use of the mother tongue is looked at as a common feature in foreign-language acquisition and is a natural act which seems to make a positive contribution to the learning process if used judiciously. Researchers who advocate this approach such as Atkinson (1993), Macaro (2001), Deller and Rinvulcri (2002), Widdowson (2003), Auerbach (1998) and Harbord (1992) argue that L1 represents a powerful source that can be used to enhance learning, but it should be used in a principled way.

3. Theoretical perspectives and psycho-linguistic arguments for the use of L1 in the L2 classroom

The process of foreign-language acquisition involves cognitive, social and emotional factors that are inseparable and equally related to the mother tongue and the target language.

- Firstly, cognitive processing theory argues that the L1 and L2 are not kept in separate conceptual stores. When a bilingual speaker is making an attempt to process the target language, the lexical items of L1 and L2 are activated. Kroll and Tokowicz (2001) put an emphasis on the fact that L1 can be employed as a temporary scaffold for L2 learners in the beginning of second-language acquisition (SLA).
- Secondly, Krashen (1985) claims that when the learner is unmotivated, lacks confidence or is anxious about his or her performance, then there is a mental block called the affective filter that prevents the input from reaching the language-acquisition device. As a result, second-language learning is minimal. This theory is also supported by the practices of the Natural Approach, Total Physical Response and Suggestopaedia.
- Thirdly, code switching supports the facilitative role of the L1 in learning a second language. Eldridge (1996) claimed that code switching is a natural and purposeful phenomenon that enhances communication and learning. Williams (2011), based on SLA research, argued that greater bilingual competency leads to an increase in the amount of code switching rather than a decrease and instead of considering code switching as a sign of deficiency of L2 learners, L2 teachers should acknowledge bilingual competencies and the strategies bilingual learners use.

Teacher use of the mother tongue in the classroom is unlikely to present a threat to ESL acquisition because learners already have a language base inherited from their mother tongue. Because of this basis, learners are more socially developed and have more short-term memory capacity and more maturity when they become acquainted with the foreign language (Cook 2001).

There are logical reasons also: interference from the mother tongue will always trouble the learner, no matter how much a teacher may wish, because he has already learned a language. There are some scholars who advocate that students think directly in the target language but this is open to debate.

4. Rationale of the study

It is against this backdrop that this study has been carried out. Regional-medium students and particularly tribal students come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. In most cases these students are first-generation learners. Unknown fear towards English is natural largely because exposure to the target language outside the classroom is minimal or nil. Because of poor language proficiency teachers also find it challenging to teach English. The students cannot learn English without the aid of their mother tongue in such circumstances. Both the teacher and student have to depend to a large extent on L1 in the teaching and learning of English. In all English classrooms it is very likely that these tribal students will be de-motivated and if compelled to (attempt to) use only English, the risk of drop out is increased. L1 use enables the learners to understand English better, makes the class easier and more supportive, and facilitates second-language acquisition.

5. Research questions

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

- does the use of Assamese language (L1) in the secondary Assamese medium schools of Assam have a deterrent or facilitative role in students' acquisition of English as L2?
- how do students and teachers view using the Assamese language (L1) in the English classroom?

6. Field of study

This study has been carried out among the tribal students of class IX of selected secondary Assamese medium schools in the Dhemaji district of Assam and their English teachers. Eight schools were selected on a purposive sampling basis from rural and urban areas. A sample of 300 tribal students (boys and girls) belonging to Mishing, Deori, Bodo Kachari, Sonowal Kachari and Lalung Tiwa were selected, together with 25 English teachers (in class IX).

7. Tools used

- **Classroom observation** – five English classes (45 minutes duration) were observed and recorded to find out the frequency of Assamese language use (Table 1).
- **Interview** – the five English teachers whose classes were observed were interviewed to ascertain why and when they use the Assamese language in the English classroom (Table 2).
- **Questionnaires** – two questionnaires were developed, one for the 25 teachers and the other for the 300 students (Table 3).

Table 1: Classroom observation results

| Purpose of using Assamese | Teacher 1 | Teacher 2 | Teacher 3 | Teacher 4 | Teacher 5 | TOTAL |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Setting a situation or giving a purpose | 03 | 07 | 13 | 06 | 12 | 41 |
| Explaining exercises in the book | 03 | 05 | 16 | 09 | 11 | 45 |
| Checking understanding | 02 | 07 | 09 | 05 | 06 | 29 |
| Translating English words, phrases, questions and instructions | 06 | 11 | 18 | 14 | 11 | 60 |
| Explaining meaning of abstract vocabulary | 04 | 12 | 14 | 09 | 10 | 49 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Explaining rules of grammar, pronunciation and spelling | 00 | 05 | 08 | 03 | 10 | 26 |
| Eliciting Assamese equivalents of English | 02 | 07 | 10 | 04 | 08 | 31 |
| Organising classroom setting | 00 | 00 | 02 | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Class management and control | 00 | 08 | 06 | 04 | 01 | 19 |
| Discussing classroom events | 04 | 03 | 03 | 02 | 02 | 14 |
| Praising | 00 | 01 | 00 | 02 | 00 | 03 |
| Telling jokes/anecdotes | 00 | 00 | 00 | 02 | 01 | 03 |
| Total | 24 | 66 | 99 | 60 | 72 | 322 |

Table 2: Teachers' interview questions

| | |
|------------|--|
| Question 1 | What is your opinion on the use of Assamese in the English classroom? |
| Question 2 | Do you think use of L1 (Assamese) aids in your teaching? If so, how? |
| Question 3 | What difference in attitude of your learners do you notice in the English classroom when using Assamese and in the 'English only' class? |

Table 3: Teachers' questionnaire

| | |
|---|---|
| Q1. How often do you use Assamese language in English class? | (a) always = 10% (b) sometimes = 25% (c) frequently = 65% (d) never = 0% |
| Q2. Do your students show interest in the English class when using Assamese? | (a) yes = 95% (b) no = 5% |
| Q3. For what purpose do you use Assamese language in English class? | (a) for explaining certain abstract and complex concepts = 65% (b) they demand the use of Assamese language = 10% (c) saves classroom time of long explanation = 15% (d) the interest of the students is drawn = 10% |
| Q4. There is no exposure to English outside the classroom for most tribal students. In such a situation do you think use of Assamese in the English classroom deprives the students from mastering the target language? | (a) yes = 90% (b) no = 10% |

| | |
|---|---|
| Q5. How much of the class time do you spend in using Assamese? | (a) whole class time = 0% (b) half of the class time = 5% (c) one third of the class time = 15% (d) one fourth of the class time = 80% |
| Q6. In what language do your students interact with you in the English class? | (a) English = 50% (b) Assamese = 50% (c) students tribal language = 0% |
| Q7. How many of your students pass in 'English' exam? (class size does not exceed 60 in surveyed schools) | (a) less than 20 = 5% (b) between 20–30 = 10% (c) between 30–40 = 15% (d) between 40–50 = 50% (e) above 50 = 20% |

Table 4: Students' questionnaire

Q1. Do you need the help of Assamese in English class?

(a) Yes = 95% (b) No = 5%

Q2. When do you need the help of Assamese in the English classroom?

(a) in explanation of difficult concepts = 25% (b) to say meaning of words = 25%
(c) to explain grammar rules = 20% (d) to relate ideas with real life situation = 10%
(e) in all the above situations = 20%

Q3. What amount of class time do you want your teacher to use Assamese in English class?

(a) whole class time = 10% (b) half of the class time = 10%
(c) one-third of the class time = 20% (d) one-fourth of the class time = 60%

Q4. When the teacher uses Assamese in English class do you understand better?

(a) Yes = 25% (b) No = 0% (c) fairly well = 75%
(d) does not make difference = 0%

Q5. Do you think use of Assamese in English classroom will act as hindrance in your English achievement?

(a) Yes = 5% (b) No = 95%

Q6. What percentage of marks did you get in the last examination?

(a) 30–40% = 10% (b) 40–50% = 20% (c) 50–60% = 30% (d) 60–80% = 25%
(e) 80–100% = 15%

8. Discussion

Almost all the students need the support of Assamese in English class and show interest in the classroom when Assamese is used. The students need the aid of the Assamese language basically in translating English words, explaining the meaning of abstract concepts and in solving exercises. If Assamese is used in these areas the students' level of achievement will rise. Teachers also make regular use of Assamese in checking understanding.

The use of Assamese has not affected the students' academic performance: the majority of students pass the subject despite using the Assamese language in their English classes. Students as well as the teachers favour the use of Assamese in the English classroom: they do not look at the use of Assamese as something detrimental. Both the teachers and the students are of the similar opinion that Assamese should not be used in all of the class time, just that they want its use to support English acquisition. Even when Assamese is used, the chief medium of teaching still remains English.

Appropriate use of L1 in ESL classes saves valuable class time, contrary to the popular belief of considering L1 as inappropriate. Instead of going through a long explanation in the target language (which is unlikely to be understood as it would imply a level of competence in English that is significantly higher than the target language being taught), it would sometimes be easier and more efficient to give a translation of a vocabulary item or an explanation of a grammar point. Moreover, a comparison of English and the mother tongue may actually be an enriching experience. In other words, when the similarities and differences of both languages are discovered, the target language learning is enhanced.

The summary of the interview with the five teachers whose classes were observed reveals that they all use L1 basically in translating English words and in explaining abstract concepts. They say tribal students use their own tribal dialect at home, but because the medium of instruction at school is Assamese these rural students face difficulties in English comprehension and need L1 support. Since we use a number of English words in daily conversation in the Assamese language, so code switching and code mixing in the English classroom should not deter SLA.

Students with low proficiency cannot follow all instructions in English and need the aid of Assamese in the classroom. Students communicate with each other in their dialect or in Assamese so the use of L1 cannot be eliminated altogether from the classroom. Not using the L1 in the classroom may make students think that their own language is in jeopardy; some of these students may stop coming to school. Not using the L1 could lead to incomprehension, demotivation and drop out. By translating elements of the lessons into L1 students are supported in their learning.

9. Recommendations

The following suggestions derived from the study in question are put forward for consideration by researchers and practitioners of ELT.

- L1 should be used at appropriate times in the lesson. Even when the support of L1 is needed, the teacher should mix it with as much comprehensible English vocabulary as possible. The students should also be encouraged to use Assamese vocabulary in English sentences.
- L1 should be used judiciously by the teachers keeping in mind:
 - the cognitive level of the learner
 - teaching objectives

- the age of the learner
- the content.
- L1 should be used in the English classroom as a teaching tool for supported learning.
- Since we cannot altogether eliminate the use of L1 in the classroom, some standard guidelines, based on research in different learning situations ought to be framed to 'legalise' its use. This will definitely lead to a systematic 'front-door use' of the L1, rather than the present 'back-door use' practised by many teachers.

10. Conclusion

This paper is based on field work on the study of using Assamese (L1) in the English classroom in secondary schools in Assam. From the study it can be concluded that both teachers and students favour the use of Assamese in English classrooms since they have seen its usefulness. The study also shows that the use of Assamese has not affected the academic performance of the majority of the learners. So it can be concluded that, carefully used, Assamese (L1) can play a facilitative and supportive role in the English classroom.

Cook (2001) presents criteria for the judicious use of the mother tongue: efficiency, learning, naturalness and external relevance. *Efficiency* relates to doing something more effectively through the L1. *Learning* concerns whether foreign-language learning is enhanced by the use of the students' L1. *Naturalness* relates to whether students prefer the use of their L1 rather than the L2 regarding certain topics. Finally, *external relevance* is whether the L1 helps students with uses of the L2 they may need beyond the classroom. The last criterion may be associated with the use of English for communication purposes: it may refer to everyday topics, life skills and pragmatic language such as conversing or participating in online chats in English.

There is no hard and fast rule that L1 should never be used in English learning, nor is there any excuse for using it in the entire class time.

We should finally free ourselves of a fundamental misconception and re-establish the more than two-thousand-year-old productive alliance between the mother tongue and foreign languages – without repeating the mistakes that were made that first time round. Butzkamm (2003:38).

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Identifying and Educating Learners with Language Learning Disabilities: Advocating Inclusion through Teacher Education

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Abstract

An integrated and inclusive approach to the education of children with special needs is yet to become a reality in India as evident from a review of the relevant policies. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) mentions integrated education for such children, though there is nothing concrete stated about how this purpose will be achieved. However, the report of the National Focus Group on Education of Children with Special Needs (2006) emphasises the education of teachers. Moreover, the report cites a study by Julka (2004) to highlight that the current teacher education system in the country does not support the theory of inclusive education. In the light of this background, this paper tries to advocate inclusion through pre- and in-service education/training of English teachers in Language-Based Learning Disabilities (LBLD) so that English teachers working in schools can identify and educate children with language-based learning disabilities in general English classrooms. Divided into three major sections, first the paper reviews the special-education scenario in India, then it draws attention towards LBLD, and finally, the issue is discussed in relation to English language teacher education in India.

1. Special needs education in India

Special-needs education in India has a history stretching over around 130 years. The first attempt in this direction is believed to be the establishment of a school for the deaf in Bombay in 1883. In 1887, a special school for the blind was founded in Amritsar. Those schools and a few others that followed in later years were established by educational charities and were meant for the disabled. This charity approach to the education of children with special needs continued until the 1970s. The charity approach to provision has been gradually replaced a human-rights model (NCERT 2006) in recent years. Children with learning disabilities were given the right to education but sadly they have been kept aside and treated differently from others who do not have such difficulties. Today, around 10 per cent of children in India have learning disabilities of some kind (*The Times of India*, 27 January 2012) but still inclusive education is far from being realised. Very few government-run schools are adequately equipped to impart inclusive education. Policy changes reflect the lack of interest from the perspective

of government. In 1999, special provisions were granted to such learners in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) schools: in 2000, classes from I to XII were covered under the same policy, and in 2003, all college courses including professional courses were covered. However, little effort has been made to train the schoolteachers so that they can meet the requirements of learners with special needs along with other children in regular classrooms.

2. Language learning disabilities as special needs

Language Learning Disabilities (LLD) or Language-Based Learning Disabilities (LBLD) are a certain kind of learning disability and may refer to 'a spectrum of difficulties related to the understanding and use of spoken and written language' (Newhall 2012). Usually, children affected by LBLD face problems with reading, writing, spelling, speaking and processing language. These problems are manifested in different ways in language classrooms, especially those dealing with second language. Some of the most frequent ones are listed here:

- reading and understanding written texts
- acquiring words presented through visual or auditory medium
- writing the spelling of words correctly
- use of direction in reading and writing
- searching for words while speaking
- following teachers' instructions.

Learners' difficulties in performing the above-mentioned functions with language may not be apparent when they use their L1. However, in second- or foreign-language learning situations, these difficulties may negatively affect the process of learning (Root, 1994). Inconsistency in classroom performance and slow rate of progress are two of the most common characteristics of second-language learners suffering from LD (Abrams, Ferguson, and Laud 2001). Thus, the kind of special attention required for helping children with LBLD depends on the severity of the disabilities. A language teacher can help a child with minor symptoms but the child may need the attention of an expert such as a speech-language therapist if he/she faces tremendous problems in handling language. The reasons behind these disabilities can be both neurobiological and environmental. Whatever the level of disability, if the teacher is aware of how to identify and help such students, they can have a normal life, even in the language classroom.

Symptoms of LBLD in children

The term dyslexia, i.e., a specific learning disability related to reading, is quite familiar to most English teachers. But LBLD is considered a better term because it can accommodate disabilities related to not only reading but also speaking (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association). Again, quite a few children having problems with reading also face difficulties with speaking. Symptoms of LBLD in children may include, but not be confined to, the following:

- responding late to questions and prompts
- difficulty with pronunciation
- problems with learning alphabet and colours
- poor handwriting
- confusion between letters like 'p' and 'd', 'g' and 'q', etc

- difficulty with maintaining the size, order and direction of letters
- inability with understanding and expressing abstract concepts
- problems with remembering narratives, rules of grammar, etc.
- adopting awkward postures while reading and writing
- slowness in completing tasks
- inability to carry out dictation-related tasks
- high level of anxiety
- great variation in performances across tasks.

Some examples that illustrate some of the symptoms of LBLD were obtained by one of the authors of the paper from her students. They are presented below:

Figure 1: Problems with reading

| The text | The text as visible to a dyslexic |
|--|---|
| Two college boys were climbing trees. | Two co ge ys wer cli ng trees. |
| One said, "I can see the engineering college girls from here. wow!" | lle bo wer e mbl trees. |
| The other said, "let go of the tree and you will see the medical college girls too!" | one "I can e engl |
| (in the hospital!) | e sa th nee |
| | leg id see ring |
| | col girls from here! 'wow' |
| | the other said " let go of the tree and |
| | yuo iwl i see med a college rs tool" |
| | (in the hospital!) |
| | icl gli |

Figure 2: Confusion with letters and perceptions of space

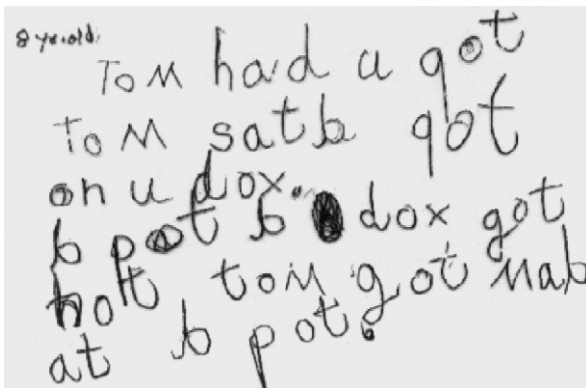


Figure 3: Problems with concept formation

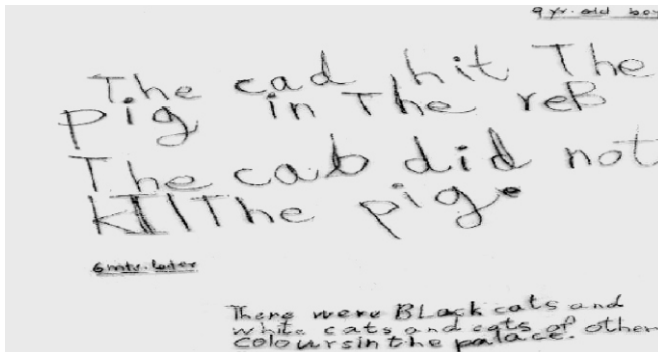
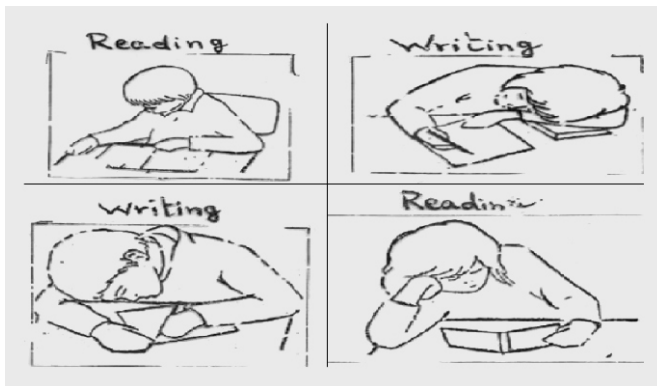


Figure 4: Awkward posture



Apart from the above symptoms, LBLD-affected children often exhibit a high level of affective filter and low self-esteem. Their grades often do not reflect their actual language proficiency, and they are frequently not identified and assessed properly by the teacher. So the responsibility and role of the second-language teacher in making classrooms inclusive for children with LBLD cannot be over-emphasised.

3. Responsibility of the second-language teacher

Identifying L2 learners with LBLD is a challenging task. According to Holt (1995), observing students closely is essential. Some details about students such as how they hold their pens/pencils while writing, how they write, how they hold books, how they listen to classroom interaction, etc. should be observed. The teacher should look for oddities that may be related to LBLD. But the LBLD may seem similar to normal L2 learning problems. Kusuma-Powell and Powell (2001) suggest the differences between them can be found out by observing students' writing closely.

There are a few tools that have been suggested for identification of LBLD in ESL learners. Block Design and Picture Completion subtests of Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Revised

have been suggested by Schwarz and Burt (1995) for assessing non-verbal intelligence, and a slightly modified version of Rosner's Auditory Analysis Test (Rosner and Simon 1971) can be used for measuring phonological awareness. Ganschow and Myer (1988) and Goulandris (2003) have offered solutions for addressing the language needs of ESL learners. Other possibilities are the Whole Language approaches (McInnis and Hemming, 1995); Total Physical Response (Asher 1982); Cognitive Strategies Training (Chamot and O'Malley 1987); Work-related Language Training (Friedenberg and Bradley 1984), and so on. These approaches can be applied in inclusive classrooms. There are many such tools and research-based strategies that teachers can use for handling children suffering from LBLD. However, teachers can be equipped with all these only through proper and systematic pre- and in-service training.

4. Training of ESL teachers in schools

Considering the number of children suffering from LBLD (or LD), it may be wise to look for immediate solutions. First and foremost among them is the training of English teachers. There should be efforts to bring together experts in the areas of English language teaching, speech-language pathology, textbook writing, curriculum design, etc. to chalk out comprehensive modules that can be imparted as pre- and in-service training. So far, no compulsory pre-service training in special education is offered to schoolteachers, so expecting a subject-specific approach to training is a distant possibility, if not an impossibility. Training courses offered by the Rehabilitation Council of India and TATA are some of the currently available options, but only for interested and self-motivated teachers. It was mentioned earlier that perhaps 10 per cent of India school children have learning disabilities. This is likely to be a very conservative estimate, meaning several million children are not getting the specialist assistance they require.

5. Conclusion

Inclusiveness has to do with being democratic and fair. It is not an over-the-top or unrealistic demand. If we cannot be inclusive in our approach to the education of children with special needs, we are indirectly denying them their right to education. This paper is an honest attempt to draw the attention of all the stakeholders in the field of education in India towards a problem that could spoil the lives of millions of children and their families. Instead of bracketing and segregating them as special, we need to accept them as one among us. Educating teachers is likely to be the best possible step towards achieving this goal.

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Parent Participation in Language Education

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Abstract

Children have a reputation for being natural learners, for a very good reason. That is made meaningful because of the context and because of the way parents speak to them. They are given time to sort out the language that they hear and understand, until they are ready to begin to use it for their own expressive purposes. For Krashen, the children are acquiring language, while the parents are learning it. The amount of language to which the student has already been exposed is a critical element in his or her current and future levels of language acquisition. In his discussion of the affective filter Krashen highlights the importance of emotions in the language-learning process and the fact that children are known to resist learning when learning is unpleasant, painful or being attempted in a punitive environment. Time is the great ally in the development of language proficiency. Paying attention to input focuses on the importance of listening skills and on the potential benefits that can come from increased listening opportunities for all children within an environment where they are surrounded by messages in the target language that communicate interesting, relevant information in language they are able to understand – language that is comprehensible to them. The best input can also fail a child if it does not take into account the attributes of the individual learner. Every learner has a unique array of abilities and capacities, of intelligences and of learning styles and strategies. All of these dimensions affect the types of experiences that will best facilitate language acquisition for a specific learner, no matter what the learner's age.

1. Introduction

Many people believe that children learn to read and write in kindergarten or first grade; however, the foundation for literacy skills is laid years before children enter school. The earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects (Edwards and McMillon 2010:99). Emergent literacy, much like any other cognitive skill, begins at home. The importance of maintaining a child's home language is now well recognised by parents and educators alike. Providing your children with exposure to other languages and cultures at an early age is one of the greatest gifts parents can give.

Children need to develop strong foundations in the language that is dominant in the home environment, where most children spend most of their time. Home-language skills are generally transferable to new languages and strengthen children's understanding of language use. Parents who cannot share thoughts and ideas with their children will inevitably lose the ability to shape, guide and influence their lives. Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Children learn at different rates, in different ways and vary in their home and family background experiences; great care should be taken not to make any assumptions about them due to their particular linguistic, cultural, social or ethnic background. The more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level – in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers – the better for student achievement.

2. The role of parents, practitioners and guardians

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators (Pugh and Duffy 2002: 179). When parents and practitioners work together in Early Years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. Parents should model the value of learning, self-discipline and hard work for their children by, for example, promoting a culture of asking questions and through demonstrating that achievement comes from engaging in warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults.

Teachers and guardians have special responsibilities when working with children, providing reassurance and a safe environment, and helping them to build relationships with their parents. From the moment a baby or young child becomes your responsibility you begin to notice their individuality and personality. If you do not share a common language with a baby your speech sounds may be strange initially but babies are able to tune in quickly to other languages (Swim and Watson 2010: 205). Your gestures, expressions and tone of voice will reassure and comfort. Likewise, with toddlers and older children who may already have well-developed skills in their home languages, body language, gesture, expressions and tone of voice will convey important messages and be a key part of your shared communications. Where languages other than English are dominant in a child's home it is important to find out about the language experiences of the child and talk to parents about how you can mutually support the child to develop their language skills at home and in your care.

Parents' views must be respected and their decisions made in light of sound information about language development. Very young children, especially babies, may be comforted, particularly at rest or sleep times, by songs or stories recorded in their home language by their main carer. It may also be helpful to be able to tune in to the home language at other times during a long day of unfamiliar speech sounds. Children sharing the same first language should not be discouraged from sharing that language together in play; rather, this should be facilitated where possible, perhaps with the help of parents.

Children's development and progress ultimately works towards the outcomes of Every Child Matters: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being (Office for Standards in Education 2011: 72). Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

Parents need to encourage reading, writing and discussions among family members, including listening to children read and talking about what is being read (Boyle 2012: 46). When schools encourage children to practise reading at home with parents, the children make significant gains in reading achievement compared to those who only practise at school. Notice if a child either does not use he or she, him or her, or mixes them up; this is common for children whose home language contains no personal pronouns. So you could help them by inventing a game or tell a story with puppets in a small group which involve perhaps a Mr and Mrs, or boy and girl. The story could involve a repetitive refrain such as 'She said "yes" but he said "no"' to a list of suggestions or possibilities you or the children put to them. Later you might want to consolidate the idea by sometimes saying 'he said' and sometimes saying 'Yusef said', so the child understands 'he' and 'Yusef' are interchangeable in this context.

Repetition is important, not only in stories, songs and finger plays, etc., but repeating and confirming children's own attempts at speech. By showing your interest in this way you will encourage children to continue in their attempts to speak. By repeating and adding to the child's spoken language you will be scaffolding their language learning, consolidating and adding to their knowledge of language structure.

First-hand experiences provide the most effective context for learning language (Crosse 2007: 25). A cooking activity or a trip outside the setting, whether a full-scale excursion or a visit to a local shop, will provide excellent opportunities to introduce or confirm language that children can recreate and rehearse in role play with a supportive adult. Although most parents do not know how to help their children with their education, with guidance and support, they may become increasingly involved in home-learning activities and find themselves with opportunities to teach, to be models for and to guide their children. Illustrated time lines of daily routines and sequences of everyday activities can be used very effectively to support language learning alongside concept development.

Opportunities to take copies of school materials home to share with families can support language learning and promote a link between the home and the school. Parents can extend home language learning by supplying verbal or written captions to pictures that have been supplied. Photographs are particularly effective. Planned stories can be an excellent medium for language learning. Choose tales with a clear story line, written or told in simple direct language. Those with repetitive texts are particularly useful as they give children the opportunity to hear language sequences they can tune into and rehearse.

3. The classroom setting

Classrooms are powerful settings (Kwo 2010: 320). Students' interactions and relationships with teachers can either produce or inhibit achievement as well as behavioural and emotional health. Teachers' interactions with students stimulate critical thinking and convey new knowledge, organise attention and student effort, and motivate, engage and support. It is not surprising that teacher-child interactions account for much of teachers' impacts on educational outcomes. A cluster of experimental and well-designed descriptive studies show that teacher-child interactions account for gains of up to a year's progress on standardised tests, with even greater effects accruing to more disadvantaged children. In fact, findings are almost uniform in demonstrating significant and meaningful benefits to children when teacher-child interactions are supportive, organised and cognitively stimulating.

Teacher-child interactions are most developmentally appropriate when the teacher responds quickly, directly and warmly to children, provides a variety of opportunities to engage in two-way communication, and identifies and elaborates on the feelings, interests and activities of children. Teachers who engage in sensitive and responsive interactions with children are more likely to develop nurturing relationships key to children's security, increasing the likelihood that children will explore their environment, giving them more opportunities to learn.

Standards for teacher performance are required but they in themselves are not sufficient. States, districts and teacher preparation programmes should be required to use direct assessments of teacher knowledge and skill that have demonstrated empirical links to objective indicators of student learning, development and achievement. Requiring that teachers demonstrate valid knowledge and skill in order to receive certification will drive preparation programmes to produce those skills. In the absence of performance measures linked to certification, not even the best or most rigorous list of standards will produce change.

4. Conclusions

Parental involvement is one of the most important factors in a child's education, and leads to higher overall grades and higher graduation rates of high-school seniors. Parents who set high expectations for their child's educational achievements and monitor their child's learning process inspire their children they get excited about education. Children who are motivated to learn behave better in school and have higher attendance rates, which inevitably enables the teachers to spend more time on classroom instruction rather than dealing with disruptive student behaviours. Parents should remain involved in every level of their child's education to stay informed of their child's academic progress and process. There are several ways to monitor a student's academic process in school to ensure that the student is learning at an effective pace. Teachers should encourage parents to set daily routines at home and enforce these routines. For instance, parents should allocate time for homework, chores, playtime and dinner.

Parents can provide more structured out-of-school activities for children than unstructured activities. Open communication between parents and children helps to increase each child's self-esteem and confidence, which helps to improve school behaviour and grades. For example, parents can ask questions about their child's experience at school and have open conversations each day about school. Maintaining a positive home environment helps to increase the morale of children. Parents should maintain a positive and supportive home environment for their children on a regular basis. When parents show lack of enthusiasm for their child's academic achievements, it teaches children to have low expectations about learning. This can ultimately lead to more high school drop-out rates, school suspensions and lower grades. Parents should be encouraged to provide on-going support for their children's academic success and reinforce positive behaviours at home. You should have balance in your love and strictness to your children (Vidyashankar 2009: 209). Show love while advising your children on studying; show authoritative behaviour while prohibiting them from some things. Never beat them but clearly prohibit them from wasting time or unnecessary activities so that take you seriously and follow your advice. Advise your children about how to develop study habits. Make your children go to bed on time and get up early in the morning. Make them sit for study if they do not, so that they develop the study habit. Show them the tips for good study and preparation for examinations.

To conclude, give children space and time: your patience and support, thoughtful provision and acknowledgement of their skills in their home language will give them the confidence to achieve in any language.

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The Right to Education and Overcoming the Language Barrier through Community Outreach: A Case Study (in progress)

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Abstract

English language proficiency serves as a vital key to educationally challenged students in accessing equal opportunities and exercising their right to education in India. However, the development of English proficiency cannot be left to school classrooms alone. The family and the neighbourhood are key players in providing the scaffolding for these children to stand on and reach for what otherwise would be beyond their reach. This paper is based on an on-going case study of one such child from an economically and educationally challenged background who is managing to beat the odds with a little bit of help from well-wishers in the neighbourhood and on whom he and his family rely. The basic contention is that the additional support in the form of an extended curriculum (EC) that the child receives through various inputs from the neighbourhood props him up to a level in which he can progress and succeed comfortably in his educational endeavour.

1. Introduction

The Right to Education (RTE) Act passed by the Indian parliament in 2009 came into effect on 1 April 2010. The Act protects the rights of children from economically disadvantaged sections in India to avail of education in private and government schools. It is indeed a very welcome move, opening the gateway for a large number of children who do not otherwise have the means to enter the portals of good private schools and quality education (cf. Kurrien 2012). However, reality bites once the child crosses the gateway and faces constraints.

What follows is a report in the form of narratives and reflective analysis based on informal participant observation (Jacob 1988: 21–23) over a period of two years of a child's progress through out-of-school support from an extended family.

2. The case of Sohan

Six year old Sohan (not his real name) set his little feet on the grounds of a prestigious private English medium boy's school in Pune despite the fact that he understood little or no English. All he had to his

credit was a dream to board a yellow school bus along with other kids in his neighbourhood and head for school. Sohan's father asked me to go with him to meet the school manager to pursue his son's admission since the boy had not been admitted in the first round in the regular open category. Sohan had performed dismally in the entrance exam. What the school manager had to tell me that day was rather sobering. He told me it was one thing to admit the child but quite another to ensure that the child was stable and progressing. I could definitely tell him – in support of Sohan – that he was a bright and cheerful child and could surprise us all. Sohan was given the chance and I was spirited enough to cheer him on his journey and found myself infected with a fair share of his parents' optimism that things would fall into place.

I knew there were many fronts to guard: financial, educational and of course social and psychological. Financially, the parents needed some additional support and there was more than one well-wisher to help them. From my interaction with Sohan, I knew he was intelligent and well adjusted. His only problem initially was that he understood very little English. That was almost two years ago and he has come a long way since. He has maintained a B average on the whole and his present teacher tells me that he is above average. Moreover, he has excelled in art and sports and even won prizes. Recently he won the Athlete of the Year award for Standard 2 and thus enjoys some good publicity in the school and among parents. The manager is all smiles when I talk to him about Sohan. This is just a glimpse of his social standing in the school. I can see it does mean a lot to the boy and to his confidence, which did take a beating in the first year when he could not speak in English at all. His friends' circle includes children from the upper classes and he can now walk tall with his successes in the extra-curricular areas, even though he is still struggling with English.

The rest of this paper takes a closer look at the functions of the formal school curriculum (SC) and aspects of the extended curriculum (EC) that I perceive are being realised through the inputs at school and out of school. My analysis is based on out-of-school observations. The data include notes from observations, audio recordings, stills photographs and interviews with the school manager and class teachers.

3. Lessons and their functions (macro-micro)

The classroom lessons are at the heart of the curricular process (Barnes 1976). From my observations, the school syllabus and the classroom processes undertaken serve mainly two major (macro) communicative functions related to language skills, i.e. reading and writing. The other language skills are incidental. The functions of listening and speaking were mainly confined to the teacher's oral instructions for tasks, reading aloud lessons from the textbooks or instructions for maintaining order in the class and general instructions.

Sohan's parents can neither read nor write, so they bring Sohan with his school diary to me every day with jottings for his homework or sometimes instructions for the parents and even remarks on Sohan's behaviour in class. The parents have identified a tutor (a former primary-school teacher) in the neighbourhood for daily tuition. This tutor takes care of Sohan's daily homework in a class of about five other children. I set aside time on weekends for EC input, which includes reading, speaking and writing English. I perceive my role in providing an extended exposure to English that he would not otherwise get in the school or from his tutor. Very often I even help him prepare for class tests and term-end exams.

Sometimes I turn on the TV for him to watch the Cartoon Network or Animal Planet in English or simply chat with him. He loves to draw and paint and I have my own supply of colouring and drawing books and crayons. Recently (about two or three months ago) he asked me if he could use my computer to practise drawing. I was a bit taken aback. He gave me instructions (in English). This is what he told me

very confidently in English, “Go to All Programmes ... then Accessories, then Paint”. I hardly use this programme and watched with awe as he drew shapes and painted them. I soon realised that he came to my EC programme voluntarily (with his EC Reader tucked under his arm) whenever he was on his own and did not have his buddies around to play football with. I had to make sure I provided an enjoyable experience if I wanted to keep Sohan on the EC. It simply could not be totally bookish, as he was getting a full dose of that between the school and the tutor. However, he is always ready and enthusiastic to read aloud from his textbook or from unseen reading texts that I place before him. The following sections run through the macro-micro functions of both the lessons in school and the supplementary lessons he was receiving from me or the tutor.

4. The skills

Reading

Oral reading/reading aloud, sight reading words, phonics, extensive reading

Sohan reads aloud the lessons from his school textbooks as part of his homework after his class teacher has already read it aloud in class, so quite a bit of it is second-hand reading. He seems to enjoy this process, though he has to stop to recognise words he does not remember from memory. These words are of course listed and tested in his spelling/dictation tests from time to time.

In addition to the prescribed texts he has four storybooks that friends and family have gifted him and he is happy to read a page or two from these unseen texts. He recognises the dialogues/direct speech in the stories and switches his tone, trying to read with expression. I assume he learnt to do that from listening to his teacher in class. He loves the illustrations and refers to them as he reads aloud. I have been trying to teach him phonic reading during summer and Diwali breaks, but I notice that he would rather sight read using the context (i.e. whole language) to guess the word. In fact he has been resisting phonic reading as an additional task. When asked to read the word out of context using phonics, he is still unable to recognise the sounds that correspond to letters. Here is a recent attempt to read a story form *Panchatantra*:

Script – 8 March 2013

G: O.K. Which story did you choose?

S: The Mouse and the Buffalo.

G: Wah! What's a mouse?

S: A Chua (Hindi) and Buffalo is Gai.

G: Gai? ... Bhens

S: We show in *lal rang*? (looking at the picture of the buffalo stamping the tail of the mouse).

G: *Lal rang*? Red colour? Why? Can you draw this? You should ... It's a beautiful buffalo!

S: I don't have paints.

G: We'll get some. O.K., read. How long is it?

S: Aye (excited) ... short story! (prefers shorter stories for single reading sessions) ... Once a black buffalo (pauses when he realises that he did not read the title). The Mouse and the Buffalo. Once a black buffalo was walking towards a river to drink water... On the way he stamp - ed (looks to me for appreciation for getting his -ed ending right).

G: Very good.

S: ...on the tail of a mouse ... (points to the picture and we laugh together). The mouse ... *cad* (unable to read the word – cried).

G: Cr ... Give me one word with cr ... (calling attention to phonics).

S: Cat.

G: Cat is spelt with a cr?

S: Carrying?

G: Cr ... give me a word with cr.

S: Cat (repeats).
 G: Cat? ... cr? Give me one word with cr.
 S: Carrying?
 G That is c-a-r ...
 S: Aye (oops!) ... crow?
 G: Correct! So this word is?. .cr as in crow ... So this is ...?
 S: Eh (unable to transfer spelling and sound sequence to the word cried).
 G: cry ... You understood? crow... cry ... cried.
 S: Cried ... (proceeds) ... cried in plain.
 G Hmm?
 S ... in pl...ai...n.
 G: Is there an l in the word? Look at the letters s (phonics).
 S: pa ... in... (gets it right).
 G: pain means?
 S: Dikhna ... (reads on). But the buffalo did not hear the crying. The mouse cried (reads with expression) the big black buffalo stamped on my tail and I am feeling ... an ...
 (We complete the story quite successfully and I supply some of the words he cannot read).

Overall, there has been considerable progress in Sohan's reading ability. He can fairly easily follow a whole story despite his problems with vocabulary. It is obvious that Sohan's reading ability is improving though he is not a fluent reader yet. Between second-hand reading and first-hand reading in the EC, his reading ability is growing.

Writing

Copying, reproducing from memory, composing

Sohan came home with regular entries in his class workbook pertaining to the lessons in his textbooks. They were mostly answers to a given set of questions or a list of words to learn for spelling tests. He would copy well from the blackboard in exceptionally neat handwriting. He picked up cursive writing well and took pride in getting his letters right in the early months of standard 1. He is excellent at rote learning the answers and reproducing them (in writing and speech) fairly accurately. I am often quite amazed that he manages to master the spellings of what I think are some extremely difficult words. He has had to write compositions of five sentences each on 'My father', 'My mother', 'My friend'. He memorised each composition fairly well. He is beginning to try and compose sentences on his own though he has little control of grammar. I try to encourage him with this process.

Speaking

Most of my conversations with Sohan were initially in Hindi. However, in a couple of months he had begun to attempt to speak in English and by the end of the year he was trying fearlessly to construct sentences in English. On the days that we met for lessons I would simply chat with him before we began. I can see that he is fairly fluent now as we can see in the excerpt below:

13 March 2013

G: So you were not well today?

S: Ya.

G: What was the matter?

S: Eh ... Eh ... In the morning is well ... then after when the short break started ... then the stomach is pain.

G: So what did you do?

S: I tell teacher ... one child take me to the office.

G: What happened?

S: He (the manager) tried two times ... twice (rephrases) ... but my father's mobile was switch off

... then he phoned to you ... you also not pick up ... then other time you pick up.

G: So you feel better now?

S: Yes.

G: What did you eat for lunch?

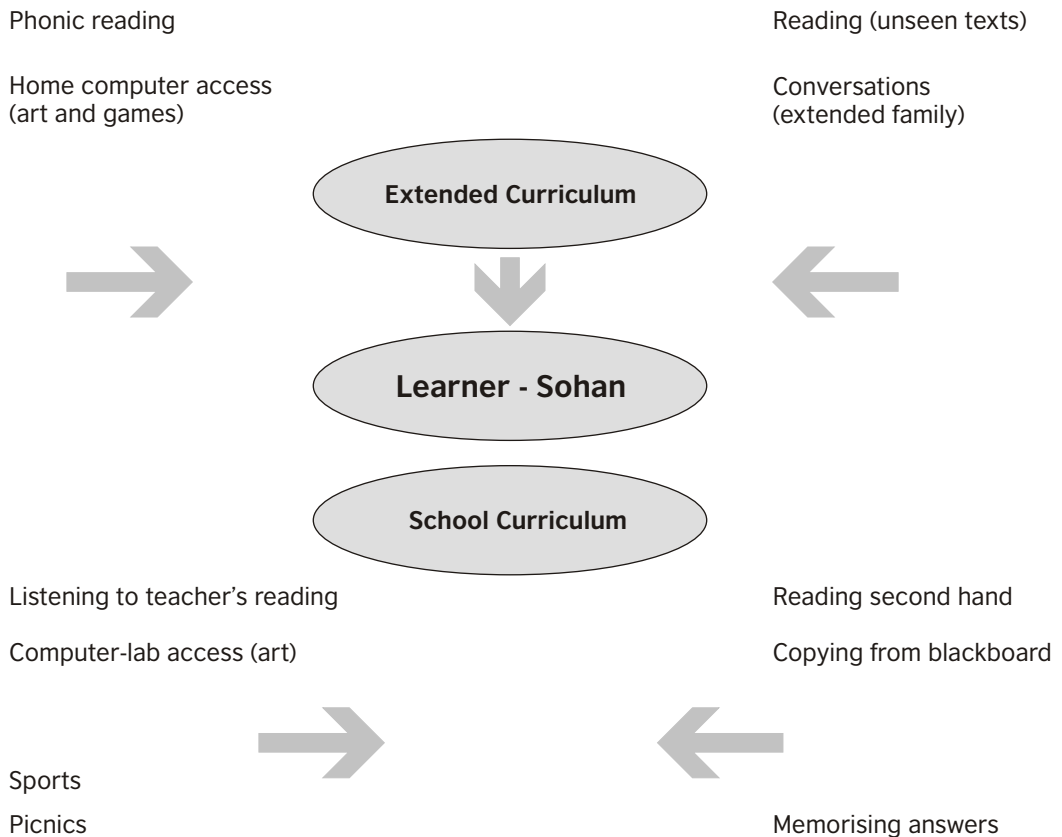
S: I had dal (lentils) and rice ... in the night I have dahi bhaath (curd rice) ... with sugar. I love dahi (curds) with sugar ...

(Sohan's attempts to rephrase are positive signs of self-monitoring).

5. Triggers outside English lessons

Sohan's interest and ability in art and sport is supported by his school. He enjoys drawing colourful pictures in his story book (as evidenced in the audio script). As mentioned earlier, he is already a prize winner in art and sports. In the EC he gets to work on my computer drawing pictures or playing computer games (chess, pinball, etc). He has a computer laboratory at school, but his access is limited to only one visit per week. So in the EC he spends time when he can on weekends and holidays working and playing on the computer. A schematic overview of the inputs and processes detailed above may be represented as in the figure below:

Figure 1: EC and SC inputs



6. Conclusions

We might consider advantaged and disadvantaged learning environments as idealised constructs in contrast or at two ends of a continuum in relation to the child. Hence we can say that no child is completely advantaged or disadvantaged. In a relatively disadvantaged situation the child does not have ready access to the necessary economic, social, educational or psychological support. Classroom routines pronounce success or failure, day by day, week by week or by term. As educationally challenged learners struggle to keep up with the momentum of the curriculum, scaffolding in the form of an extended curriculum which includes input from extended families enables them to claim their right to education in the full sense of the term.

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Access and Diversity: Why English Language Teachers Need to Embrace Both

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Abstract

English language educators have tended to function with a monolingual consciousness that impels them to teach English in ways that marginalise the diverse indigenous languages of their learners. This has led to a subtractive approach to language teaching and learning in which the hegemony of the dominant languages of post-colonial societies is maintained while the indigenous languages languish. This paper examines the relationship between diversity and access, two concepts developed by the South African Critical Language specialist, Janks, to articulate the tension between acknowledging and promoting diversity while at the same time facilitating access to dominant discourses. Our paper explores the role of ELT specialists in promoting curricula based on these concepts. We argue that we need to use an epistemic route (for diversity) to empower historically marginalised students whose mother tongue is not English. The epistemic route is theoretically grounded in the ideas of Vygotsky, and Cummins. We use examples of pedagogic practice from South Africa, including advocacy films such as Sink or Swim, produced by the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa and the undergraduate dual-medium degree (BA in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies, University of Limpopo) to make the epistemic route pedagogically visible.

1. Introduction

In this paper we draw upon Janks' (2010) concepts of access, dominance, diversity and design as a useful framework for English language teachers to reconcile the tensions between access and diversity. By access is meant the right of marginalised students to dominant forms (languages like English, discourses like academic literacies, cognition like scientific reasoning, and knowledge embodied in abstract scientific concepts). By diversity is meant the recognition of the resources marginalised students bring with them from their everyday community contexts; these include their mother tongue/s, everyday speech genres, reasoning practices and local knowledge (which is usually tacit and unsystematic, relative to scientific knowledge). Current educational practice continues the colonial tendency of privileging an English-only (or -mainly) education for students whose mother tongue is not English, denying them access to scientific knowledge. Ironically, these students are denied access also to English, because even if it is the medium of instruction and assessment, the methods used to teach it are impoverished and ineffective. What this means educationally, as the cartoon below shows, is that while students desire English as cultural capital (Bourdieu 1991), they very

rarely reach the levels of competence needed to carry out cognitively demanding academic work in English.

This is the point that the late Neville Alexander, a leading advocate of bilingual education in South Africa, makes in the title of one of his papers, *English Unassailable but Unattainable*, (1999). Alexander brings out the hopelessness that African students experience while studying in an alien language, yet one they uphold through a life-long desire for English. To stop home-language loss, Alexander campaigned for the intellectualisation of African languages and their use as media of instruction. What is tragic about this situation is that English makes students reject their own languages, thus denying themselves of a powerful means of epistemic access.

Challenging the view that English alone can facilitate epistemic access, our paper seeks to show how diversity can be harnessed in order to give students access to dominant forms. We critically review two different positions on diversity, one broadly grouped under the banner of the celebration of diversity on the one hand, and Janks' view on diversity on the other. We will argue that only the use of diversity as a means to epistemic access that we endorse is empowering for marginalised students. To illustrate this argument, we briefly discuss the video *Sink or Swim*, produced by the Project for Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA, Cape Town) and present a case study of a dual-medium undergraduate BA degree that we have developed at the University of Limpopo in South Africa.



2. The right of access

Language is a powerful means of maintaining and reproducing relations of domination. In South Africa, the official medium of instruction in school education beyond grade 3 and throughout university is English. Students whose mother tongue is an African language are therefore disadvantaged. However, as pointed out, they aspire to English as a form of cultural capital that they believe gives status and social mobility. In her book *Literacy and Power*, Janks (2010) argues persuasively that African students will only accept their own languages if they are guaranteed access to English. However, guaranteeing access to English will further entrench its hegemony. But not to do so – that is to emphasise African-language medium instruction, at the expense of access to English – will ghetto-ise students. This dilemma is termed by Lodge (1994) and Janks (op. cit.) as the access paradox.

The argument for the right of access to dominant forms (languages like English, academic literacies and modern knowledge) advanced by critical language specialists on the one hand, and the argument for diversity (African languages, everyday orate reasoning and indigenous knowledge) of Alexander on the other, form a strong theoretical basis to frame the debates around access and diversity. Janks (2010 *ibid.*) summarised these debates and added three conditions for the right of access not degenerating into an assimilationist model (of surrender to English). These are:

- students need to be exposed to a theory of dominance – that is how English came to get historically constructed as a hegemonic language
- recognition of the diversity that students bring with them, which is a resource
- the design of materials and activities in African languages in school and university education.

Janks showed how if any of these conditions is omitted, negative consequences would arise. We examine only a few of these consequences that have proved significant for the development of the practice of bilingual education.

The main body of writing in favour of multilingualism comes from the celebration-of-diversity scholars. These studies are largely from the critical ethnographic paradigm that takes naturalistic and ecological models as axiomatic for preserving all languages. The 'critical' in this paradigm positions diversity as a challenge to the hegemonic role of English (and to monolingualism, upon which it is based). The ecological approach to diversity has recently found full expression in the work of Hornberger, in which multilingualism is celebrated. The problem from our perspective is that the ecological approach only focuses on the challenge to English, neglecting the right of access to it. This dichotomising of diversity from access results in diversity not being a route of access to dominant forms. Instead, diversity is seen as an end in itself, affirming only cultural and linguistic identity.

The new literacies approach of Street (1999), the biliteracies approach of Hornberger (2003), the reinvention of Africa by Pennycook and Makoni (2006) and Edelsky's critique (2006) of Cummins are all approaches that, though differentiated from each other, in one way or another favour the celebration of diversity. Their shortcoming is that they do not see diversity as a route to epistemic access. Bilingual education de facto means two languages for two different goals: English for access to dominant forms of knowledge, and diversity for identity (in the case of South Africa, an African identity).

The celebration of an African identity is also part of the ethos at the University of Limpopo. At this university, where we have developed South Africa's first and as yet only bilingual degree, the ideal of an African renaissance, and indigenous knowledge systems, are offered as the key argument for African identity against Western epistemology. However, there is little articulated support from the Africanists for African languages; what emerges in the Africanist discourse is an African identity through the medium of English!

3. PRAESA's *Sink or Swim*

Due to constraints of space, we cannot describe in detail the video *Sink or Swim*, of which we showed excerpts at the TEC 13 Conference. The film makes a powerful case for the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning for African students. Using a constructed lesson in which white learners are taught a science lesson in isiXhosa (which for these students is a third language, following English and Afrikaans), the video shows how these students struggle to comprehend and express ideas in this language. Going a step further, the students are shown reflecting on this experience and asserting that if they were to be taught in isiXhosa, they would stop going to school altogether or even migrate to another country. The white students also empathetically identify with the struggles of African-language speaking children forced to learn in a third or fourth language, and affirm their admiration for those who manage to pass despite this huge disadvantage. The video also shows Neville Alexander reiterating that only English-speaking children and Afrikaans-speaking children have the privilege of being educated through their mother tongues, and therefore 'those who were privileged before apartheid are also privileged after the fall of apartheid'.

4. The dual-medium undergraduate degree: BA CEMS

We now describe the small step we have taken at the University of Limpopo to deploy an African language, Sesotho sa Leboa, for epistemic access while at the same time guaranteeing the right of students to English (Ramani and Joseph 2008). Sesotho sa Leboa is used for instruction, classroom communication, reading materials and assessment in the Multilingual Studies programme of the undergraduate qualification: the BA degree in Contemporary English Language Studies (CELS) and Multilingual Studies (MUST) referred to as BA CEMS. The degree aims to develop students into bilingual specialists who will be enabled to compete effectively for careers and jobs in South Africa's multilingual society.

The BA CEMS qualification, approved by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in September 2001, was implemented for the first time in January 2003. The principles upon which the degree is based are:

- African languages must be used as media of instruction (MOI or, as currently referred to, as languages of learning and teaching – LOLTs) if they are to develop. In other words, using Cummins' well-known terms (1996), African languages must not be confined to Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) but be extended to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).
- African languages as media of instruction must be coupled with guaranteed access to English, otherwise they will be rejected on the suspicion of re-imposing the past language legacies when African language-speaking people were denied access to English. In other words, African languages cannot be developed as languages of high-level cognition without excellent access to English, widely seen as the language of power, opportunity and social mobility.

To enable high-level cognitive work in both English and Sesotho sa Leboa, the BA CEMS degree offers two majors on a par with each other, one taught and assessed in English and the other in Sesotho sa Leboa.

Figure 1: BA CEMS modules

| CELS modules taught and assessed in English | MUST modules taught and assessed in Sesotho sa Leboa |
|---|--|
| CELS 101: English in context | MUST 101: Matsentšhagae a bomalementši [Introduction to multilingualism] |
| CELS 102: The structure of English | MUST 102: Dikgokagano ka go bolela setšhabeng bolementši [Spoken communication in a multilingual society] |
| CELS 201: Critical language awareness | MUST 201: Mokgwa wa bolementši wa go ruta dingwalwa le mehuta ya dingwalwa [Multilingual approach to text and genre] |
| CELS 202: Language and literacy learning in multilingual contexts | Must 202: Bokgoni bja go bala le ngwalwa mešomong ka tsela ya bolementši [Workplace literacies] |
| CELS 301: Bilingual and multilingual education | MUST 301: Ditirelo tša bolementši ka Afrika Borwa [Multilingual services in South Africa] |
| CELS 302: Language and cognition | MUST 302: Go nyakišiša bomalementši [Researching multilingualism] |

5. Recruitment and enrolment into BA CEMS

Understandably, students are cautious when they hear about the BA CEMS degree on entering university. In the early years, new students needed much persuading about the value of learning in two

languages. We have found that the best form of recruitment is through peer campaigning. Students already registered for BA CEMS enthusiastically volunteer to recruit new students and explain what the advantages of doing BA CEMS are. The counselling is aimed at students who have performed well in Sesotho sa Leboa in their matric exams and reasonably well in English, and who aspire towards a career related to the use of their mother tongue and English. Though many African staff claim that African students are ashamed of their own languages, the enrolment figures from 2003 to 2013 tell a different story.

Figure 2: Enrolment figures for BA CEMS 2003–2013

| Modules | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| CELS 101 | 12 | 15 | 21 | 39 | 32 | 27 | 30 | 27 | 31 | 44 | 37 |
| CELS 102 | 12 | 10 | 19 | 39 | 30 | 24 | 30 | 23 | 37 | 44 | 37 |
| MUST 101 | 7 | 7 | 25 | 33 | 28 | 17 | 40 | 27 | 33 | 37 | 37 |
| MUST 102 | 7 | 7 | 24 | 33 | 27 | 19 | 40 | 28 | 33 | 39 | 37 |
| CELS 201 | – | 11 | 7 | 12 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 18 | 11 | 32 |
| CELS 202 | – | 11 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 20 | 11 | 32 |
| MUST 201 | – | 6 | 10 | 14 | 28 | 17 | 9 | 19 | 15 | 18 | 24 |
| MUST 202 | – | 6 | 9 | 14 | 25 | 19 | 9 | 19 | 14 | 18 | 24 |
| CELS 301 | – | – | 6 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 15 | 14 |
| CELS 302 | – | – | 6 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 14 |
| MUST 301 | – | – | 4 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| MUST 302 | – | – | 4 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| Total | 38 | 83 | 141 | 230 | 214 | 154 | 203 | 193 | 245 | 278 | 316 |

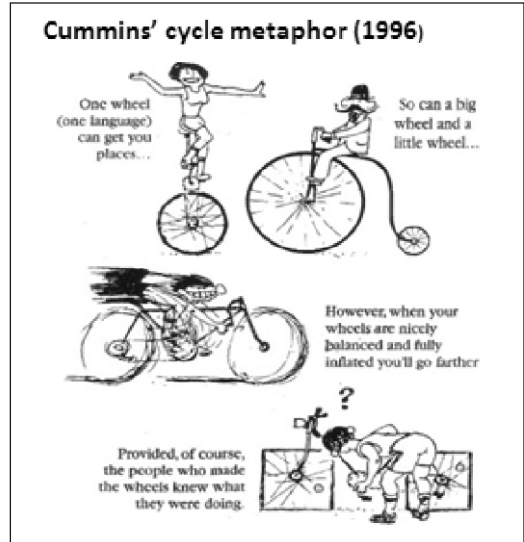
The steady increase in enrolment indicates to us that when students see a real possibility for dual-medium education, they will opt for it. Students realise that their chances of success are good when they use their own languages for epistemic access and at the same time are improving their competence in English. External examiners too have been impressed with the performance of the students in both academic Sesotho sa Leboa and English and have commended their ability to write with engagement and passion.

6. Cummins' cycle metaphor

Teaching and learning on the BA CEMS degree is best captured by the diagram reproduced below to explain the principles underlying dual-medium education. This visual is often used by BA CEMS lecturers as a metaphor to help students grasp concepts that may be too difficult to explain verbally. The cycle metaphor is a crystallisation of the Canadian bilingual specialist Jim Cummins' ideas on dual-medium education (1996).

Figure 3: The cycle metaphor

The metaphor is self-explanatory, and students are able to easily see that their school education is best captured by the two unequal-wheeled cycle, where their mother tongue is the medium up to grade 3 and English only a subject; and the reversal of the status of the two languages from grade 4 onwards. They also use the diagram to characterise elite or private-school education as monolingual, English-only medium of instruction. The last diagram is puzzling but is meant to show that not any kind of bilingual education is successful: what if the cycle has flat tyres? In educational terms the use of two languages either as subjects only, or through rote learning, surface skills and lower-level factual learning is inadequate according to Cummins, as the deep learning skills necessary for mastering content is missing. Students see the BA CEMS degree that they are doing as reflecting a two equal-wheeled cycle, where both languages are used, with the gear wheel being their mother tongue.

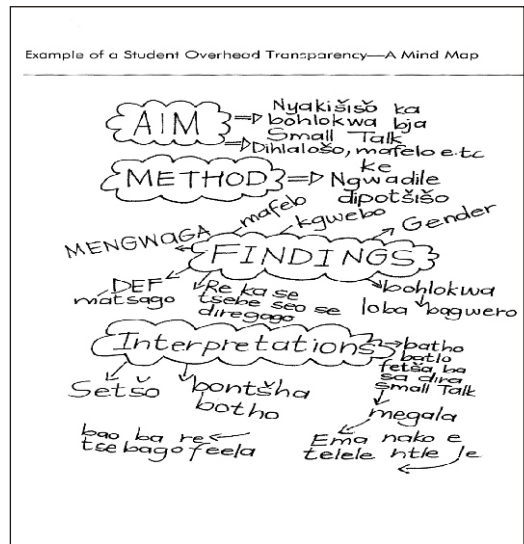


7. Student research: epistemic access in two languages

We will now give only two examples of student research in which they deploy two languages, Sesotho sa Leboa and English, using both resources to gain epistemic access and to develop both languages to high levels of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). In the first example, a student uses a mind-map format (which she learnt in an English module in the CELS strand) to present her research results in a Sesotho sa Leboa presentation in the MUST strand.

Figure 4: Mind map

As can be seen, she uses English for her main headings, showing clearly the structure of a research report, and then presents her points in Sesotho sa Leboa. The relation between the macrostructure in English and her ideas in her own language brings out her creative and powerful use of her two languages for epistemic purposes. In so doing, she affirms Cummins (1996) postulate of a common underlying proficiency (CUP) of bilingual proficiency. According to Cummins when deep knowledge and skills (such as higher-order thinking) are acquired in one language, they transfer to the other language and become part of the overall cognitive structure of an individual, so that knowledge can be both accessed and disseminated in both languages.



The second example of student research is a project on private speech, which according to Vygotsky

(1986), develops self-regulation and problem-solving in the child. He sees the emergence of private speech as a key developmental stage. Students doing CELS 302 set up experimental conditions using block building and other activities to investigate whether children speaking Sesotho sa Leboa use private speech to complete their block-building task (Joseph and Ramani 2011). The students set up three building-block patterns and classified them according to their cognitive complexity, in the process also showing an understanding of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), another key concept in Vygotsky's work on mediation.

8. Conclusion

The BA CEMS degree has shown that when students' use of their own language is formalised and legitimised via an institutional curriculum, which represents the design aspect of Janks concepts, they excel beyond expectation. If such a bi/multilingual approach to ELT is adopted, we have no doubt that students will not only develop their own languages to high levels but also acquire excellent English. Only such initiatives will be able to support Skutnabb-Kangas' belief that 'Monolingualism (*in ELT*) is curable!' (2012: our italics).

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Contributors

Foreword

Alison Barrett is Assistant Director of English Partnerships for the British Council in India. She has 15 years of experience working in South Asia as well as Japan, London and South Korea. Alison has an MA in TESOL from the Institute of Education, University of London and is a CELTA tutor and a local Distance DELTA tutor.

Introduction

Paul Gunashekar is Dean, School of English Language Education, at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. He is an experienced materials developer, course designer and teacher educator. Among many other interests he edits the EFLU research journal *Languaging*, and is the Indian English consultant to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

Preface

Philip Powell-Davies is an educationist and social development specialist. He has a PhD in international education policy as well as masters in social development management, economics and education. He has research interests in language policy, the socio-economics of language and development and the political economy of education reform. He has held senior advisory positions with governments and as programme director of national development strategies. He is a senior consultant with international donors, advising on education reform in South Asia and is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Bristol.

Overview

Adrian Holliday is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Canterbury Christ Church University, where he supervises doctoral research in the critical sociology of language education and intercultural communication, and is also the Head of the Graduate School. He is author of *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*, *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, *The Struggle to Teach English as an International Language*, and co-author of *Intercultural Communication*. His forthcoming book, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*, provides a detailed exploration of the grammar of culture, which has been recently explored with teachers and curriculum developers in Jordan, Palestine, Mexico, Nepal and China.

R. Amritavalli is Professor of Linguistics at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her research interests are theoretical linguistics and first- and second-language acquisition. She has worked to teach English using print, audio and video media. She was Chair of the Focus Group on English (a part of the National Curriculum Framework 2005, NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training), served as Chief Advisor to the NCERT's English textbooks, and was an invited member of the National Knowledge Commission's Working Group on Languages.

Martin Wedell spent 20 years working as a teacher, teacher educator, trainer, and materials and test writer in Kenya, Saudi Arabia, China and Hungary before returning to work in the UK. Since 1998 he has been Head of International Education at the School of Education, University of Leeds. His research focuses on understanding both the challenges that national English language curriculum reforms pose for change implementers at local level, and how those affected can best be supported. He is the author of several books on teacher education and educational change, and his most recent book (co-written with Angi Malderez, and published in April 2013) is *Understanding Language Classroom Contexts: The Starting Point for Change*.

Theme one

Geetha Durairajan is Professor and heads the Department of Testing and Evaluation at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. She has worked for nearly 25 years at CIEFL/EFLU. Her doctoral thesis explored non-prescriptive evaluation in the field of English language teaching. Her research interests include language evaluation and the teaching of languages in plurilingual contexts.

Ravindra Tasildar specialises in ELT and has 16 years' teaching experience at tertiary levels. He has presented papers at national and international seminars and conferences. He is a member of ELTAI and Life Member, Linguistic Society of India (LSI). He has completed two Minor Research Projects on reading skills and reference skills and presently working on the syllabi of MA (English) in the Indian universities. He submitted his PhD thesis, *A Critical Evaluation of the Special English Papers Offered at UG Level in Select Universities of Maharashtra State*, to the University of Pune in July 2012.

Penny Ur OBE has 30 years' experience as an English teacher in elementary, middle and high schools in Israel. She has taught MA courses at Oranim Academic College of Education and Haifa University. She has presented papers at TESOL, IATEFL and many other English teachers' conferences worldwide. She has published a number of articles, and was for ten years the editor of the *Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series*. Her books include *Discussions that Work*, *Five Minute Activities* (co-authored with Andrew Wright), *A Course in Language Teaching*, *Grammar Practice Activities*, *Vocabulary Activities* and *A Course in English Language Teaching*, all published by Cambridge University Press.

Neha Aggarwal is a research scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University pursuing her doctorate in the psychology of education. She graduated from Delhi University and went on to do postgraduate work in clinical psychology. Her job experiences with children in schools encouraged her to pursue her MPhil in Educational Studies. Her interest area is language teaching.

Nivedita Bedadur is an English language teacher and teacher educator. Her research interests are m-learning and teacher-capacity development. She is presently working in the University Resource Centre of Azim Premji University as Specialist, Academics and Pedagogy. She has many years of teaching in school and planning, designing and facilitating the development of teachers as a Vice Principal and Principal in Kendriya Vidyalayas. She was a recipient of the Incentive Award for Teachers given by the Human Resource Ministry for 2004–05.

Martin Lamb is the Co-ordinator of the MA TESOL Studies at the University of Leeds and teaches a number of different Masters modules on L2 speaking, assessing language learning, and developing practical teaching skills. He also teaches undergraduate modules on Education in a Multilingual World, and Globalisation, Identity and English Language Education. He is a personal and academic tutor to international MA students at the University of Leeds.

Geeta Sharma has been working in the development sector for over 30 years and has worked with several organisations involved in teacher training. She has been engaged in training teachers and development trainers on communication, participatory methodologies, child rights, gender and disability. She has co-ordinated the satellite-based programme for English language teaching in Gujarat and designed and facilitated the orientation and support initiatives for teachers from the schools that participated in it.

Ranganayaki Srinivas has been working as a teacher educator and materials producer for the past 27 years. She holds a PhD. At present she is the Chairperson, Academic Council of Acharya Teacher Academy. She is also associated with non-profit organisations and educational institutions, including Unnati Organisation for Development Education.

Wisdom Inibehe Jude is a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education Afaha Nsit, Nigeria. Her BEd in Special Education and English was from University of Calabar, Nigeria, and her MEd was on Curriculum Studies and Language Education. Her PhD programme is in Benue State University Makurdi. She is a member of many professional organisations including the (ERNWACA). She has published several articles in journals inside and outside Nigeria.

Hitesh Chandra Bhakat is associated with Regional Institute of English, (RIESI), Bangalore, which trains teachers of English at the primary and secondary level for the five south Indian states. In the training programme, he teaches Teacher Professional Development and Trainer Skills. He has an MA in English, and a postgraduate diploma in teaching of English. Apart from teacher training, he is involved in the preparation of training modules, textbooks for different states and other related materials.

Lina Mukhopadhyay teaches in the Department of Testing and Evaluation at the EFL University, Hyderabad. She has also taught at two German universities for two semesters under the DAAD teacher exchange programme. Her research interests are SLA, academic writing, literacy acquisition, language assessment and testing, and bi- and multilingual education.

Kirti Kapur is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education in Languages, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. In addition to her 12 years of experience in NCERT, she also has many years of classroom experience at school and university levels across India. At NCERT she works in the areas of curriculum, syllabus and textbook development, teacher training, research and consultancy. Dr Kapur represented NCERT at the Higher Education Advisory Council for India held at University of Cambridge in 2008.

Richard Rossner is a consultant and trainer in language education and educational management. Until 2011 he was Executive Director of EAQUALS. He now represents EAQUALS on various EU projects, and is an EAQUALS inspector. Richard's career in ELT has included teacher training, editing *ELT Journal* (1980s) and various management roles, notably with Bell International, of which he was Chief Executive from 1998 to 2005. He is a member of a Council of Europe co-ordinating group on the linguistic integration of adult migrants, and represents the UK on the ISO technical committee, which is currently preparing a standard for language-learning services.

Richard Kiely is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Education Programme Leader, CILTE Masters and Doctoral programmes at the University of St Mark and St John, UK. He has a PhD in language programme evaluation. His research interests include language programme evaluation, language teaching and teacher development, and language learning explored from language socialisation and identity perspectives. He has extensive experience as a teacher, teacher-trainer and curriculum developer in ESL contexts.

Theme two

Priyali Ghosh has recently returned to India after completing a doctorate in English at the University of Kent in 2010. She read English at the University of Cambridge and the University of Calcutta and has taught at the universities of Leicester, Kent and Canterbury Christ Church. She seeks to bring together her literary and linguistic interests in her teaching practice, as well as her background in performance and theatre. She is based in Kolkata where she is both English as a second language teacher for professionals and young learners, and a teacher trainer.

Manique Gunsekera is the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, and Chair Professor of English at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, business communication, grammar, and language change. She is actively involved in teacher training through the Sri Lanka English Language Teachers' Association (SLELTA), and was its Chair. Manique is a member of the Presidential Task Force for a Trilingual Sri Lanka, and for Education Reforms in English. She is a committee member of Section F of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS). In addition to teaching in the Department of English, she is a Visiting Lecturer in the Master's in Linguistics programme, and the MBA offered by the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies.

Rama Gautam holds an MA, MEd, PhD (Pune University) and an MPhil (CIE). She has authored three books on language and literature and has presented papers at various conferences. She has 20 years of teaching and training experience at the corporate and postgraduate levels. Currently she is Professor at (IASE), Pune.

Nikhil Bhatt holds an MS in Telecom and Networking (International Institute of Information Technology, Pune). He also holds a Bachelor's degree (Bangalore Institute of Technology). Currently he is working as a R & D engineer at Nokia Siemens Networks and also conducts public speaking and soft-skills training at various corporate levels.

Raees Unnisa is an Assistant Professor in English Language and Literature and has been associated with the Bhopal School of Social Sciences for the last three years. She has attended many national and international seminars and conferences and has several papers published in peer-reviewed journals. She has interests in research and new methodologies in making ELT classrooms interesting and impactful.

Anjana Tiwari has been training and teaching communication skills, soft skills, English language and literature in India and abroad for 18 years. She has experience in universities, engineering colleges and professional institutes. She has published and presented several papers at international conferences and in journals. She has a PhD in English literature and a Masters in Mass Communication.

Padmini Shankar Kankata is an Associate Professor in the Department of ESL Studies in the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. She teaches on the MPhil (ELE) programme and offers research guidance to MPhil and PhD students. She acts as a resource person for teacher-training programmes conducted at the university. Her research interests include classroom-based research,

teacher training and development, teaching of skills, issues of teaching English in rural contexts, teaching English to young learners, and the psychology of language learning.

Rajashree Pande is currently working with an NGO, the Centre for Learning Resources (CLR), as Programme Manager of an English course developed by the organisation for post-secondary youth. She is also working as Language B (Hindi) Teacher at the Mercedes Benz International School, Pune. She has been a master trainer for various English programmes developed by CLR. She has teaching experience of over 15 years, having taught English, Hindi and Social Studies across various CBSE schools in India.

Moiz Raja Shaikh has eight years of work experience. He has worked as an engineer in a technology firm, as a territory account manager in a multinational organisation and as an educator in NGOs. He was part of the first cohort of Teach For India, where he taught grade 3 students of a municipal school. After completing the fellowship, Moiz joined the Centre for Learning Resources as a project manager. He is currently working on a project to improve the English language skills of the students and teachers of Pune Municipal Corporation schools.

Debasish Mohapatra has been working as an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Tezpur University, Assam for the past 15 years. He has a PhD and his areas of interest include curriculum development, syllabus design and language policy. He has done extensive work on language education. Presently, he is involved in a University Grants Commission-sponsored - Special Assistance Programme (DRS-SAP) project on *Tale of the Tribe: Tracing Oral History from the Tea Garden*.

Jagtar Kaur Chawla has been teaching English language and literature at the Bhopal School of Social Sciences since 1976. She is presently Head of English Department, Chairperson Board of Studies English at the Barkatullah University and Chairperson Central Board of Studies, Higher Education, Madhya Pradesh. She is an active resource person, curriculum designer and materials writer. She is a core member of an on-going Leonardo da Vinci ICT-based virtual-learning project on cross-cultural business communication since 2000. She has also authored and co-authored books and published several research papers.

Nidhi Nema has a PhD in the field of Indian English Literature. Her areas of interest are ELT, exploring innovative ICT techniques in the field of teaching learning, Indian English Literature, British literature and literary criticism. She has a major research project in English and a number of publications in journals/books to her credit. She has been involved in teaching language and literature for seven years. She is presently working with the Department of English, the Bhopal School of Social Sciences, Bhopal.

Rekibuddin Ahmed is a postgraduate in English with a specialisation in ELT from Tezpur University. He graduated in 2010. Currently, he is serving as a temporary lecturer in English at Kaliabor Junior College in Assam, and pursuing a BED degree.

Uday Kumar Mishra has been working as Associate Professor of English at University Department of English, T. M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar, for the past 30 years, teaching English literature and language to undergraduate and post-graduate students. He completed his MA (English) in 1981 and PhD in 1987 from Bhagalpur University. He has published research articles and supervised PhD dissertations in the areas of literature and linguistics. Besides research and teaching, he has been engaged in writing teaching materials and devising courses in Business English, Translation Studies and Spoken English for the students of University Department of English. He has worked at different universities in Yemen, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Libya.

Theme three

Pamela Mackenzie worked for several years as a primary teacher in the UK and in the Yemen Arab Republic. She has also worked in adult literacy. The focus of her MA was children's literature, while her PhD focused on the difficulties faced by minority groups within an education system with the values of the dominant culture. The main focus for her teaching, training and research is children's language development, currently within multilingual, multicultural contexts. She has supported the development of multilingual education (MLE) programmes together with government, academic institutions, NGOs and international agencies in India and Bangladesh since 1994. She presents widely on the issues of MLE and is involved in international multi-agency advocacy to ensure quality education for children from ethno-linguistic minority communities.

Sadananda Meher completed his BEd (English), and MPhil (ELE) from EFL University, Hyderabad. He is currently a PhD student. His areas of interest include multilingual education, teacher education, and action research.

Vinita Singh Chawdhry is Professor in Government at Hamidia Arts and Commerce College, Bhopal. She is guiding research students in British literature, Indian literature, feminism, pluralism, multiculturalism, narrative traditions and bilingualism. She has presented and published over 30 papers at national and international seminars and conferences. She has written one book on feminism and co-edited three books on the English language.

Neeraj Agnihotri is currently Professor and Head, Department of English Studies, Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal. With over 30 years' teaching experience, he has been actively engaged in research in comparative literature and linguistics for the past 15 years. Under his supervision, 30 scholars have been awarded PhDs in Literature and Linguistics. His publications include 20 research papers presented at various national and international seminars and conferences. His current research interests focus on cultural studies, comparative studies, the role of communication, cross-cultural transitions, and pedagogical issues in teaching intercultural communication.

Ataur Rahman is an Associate Professor in English. He completed a Minor Research Project on Factors Affecting Achievement in English by Tribal Students of Secondary Assamese Medium Schools of Assam, sponsored by the University Grants Commission in 2009–2010. Presently he is working on his PhD on Teaching-learning of English as Second Language in the Secondary Schools of Dhemaji District of Assam at Dibrugarh University. He is also involved with teacher-training programmes/workshops with Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and other institutions at the district level.

Farida Raj has been working for more than 25 years as a special-needs educator. She has worked at CIEFL (EFLU), Hyderabad, and been involved with SCERT (Andhra Pradesh), and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan as a teacher trainer and trainer trainer respectively.

Santosh Mahapatra is a PhD (Language Testing) student in the Department of English at University of Hyderabad. His research interests include language testing, teacher education, ESP and special-needs education.

Priscilla Yelamanchi is working in Sri Venkateswara Institute of Technology, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. She completed her MA in English and Postgraduate Diploma in Communicative English from University of Hyderabad. She also has an MPhil. She has been working for the past ten years as an Assistant Professor of English and is pursuing her PhD on The Image of Women in the novels of Shashi Deshpande in Rayalaseema University, Kurnool.

Grace Jacob was Professor at the Department of English at the University of Pune, Maharashtra and she continues to teach in the department. As a Team Leader on the University of Pune-ODA-British Council ELT Project (1992–1997), she was engaged in the production and publication of a set of materials for the undergraduate level at Pune University. She has been a consultant for the Centre for Learning Resources, Pune in the production of resources for teacher education during 2005–2008. Grace completed her doctoral studies at the EFL University Hyderabad (CIEFL) in 1985 and was a senior Fulbright scholar at the Language in Education Division University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia in 1990–91. She has an interest in ethnographic investigations of language learning with special reference to disadvantaged learners.

Esther Ramani is Professor, School of Languages and Communication Studies, University of Limpopo, South Africa and Michael Joseph is Associate Professor, Department of Education, Rhodes University, South Africa. Together they worked on the introduction of the first multilingual degree at the University of Limpopo. In 2003 they founded a BA in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies at the University of Limpopo's School of Languages and Communication Studies. It is the first dual-medium BA programme using an African language (in this case Northern Sotho) at any South African university.

English Language Teacher Education in a Diverse Environment examines the many contexts in which English teaching and learning takes place around the world. The book explores a broad range of issues from the challenges of teaching and learning languages in large, diverse classrooms to the implications this raises for the training and continuing professional development of teachers. Multilingualism is also addressed together with an examination of the importance of mother-tongue education. This is examined against the cultural context in which education operates and the enormous opportunities and challenges this poses. The inter-dependence of national and local identity, language policy, the use of languages in education systems, the socio-economic pressures to learn English, and the interests and concerns of parents and communities is clearly delineated in this publication. The cognitive, linguistic and cultural impacts of learning English on the individual and the community are immense, as several of the papers in this collection make clear. The rise of English and its place in the school curriculum does not easily encourage consensus about its potential benefits and this book does not shy away from exploring these.

English Language Teacher Education in a Diverse Environment is a collection of papers derived from the Third International Teacher Educators Conference held in Hyderabad, India, from 16–18 March 2013.

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