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Identifying and Treating Mispronounced Front Vowel Sounds Through Pronunciation Activities: A Case Study of Students with Gujarati Mother Tongue – Words, Actions and Truth: Philosophy of Language in Shakespeare's Plays – Collaborative Writing as a Means of Making Students Aware of the Process of Writing – Prezi as an Effective Tool to Teach Poetry - An Empirical Study – Inaugural Speech Delivered by Dr. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamilanadu in 'Shakespeare lives-2016' – ELT: Status and Challenges at Under Graduate Level in rural North Karnataka – Appropriate Knowledge and Curriculum in Higher Education Institutions in India: Need for Reform

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The English Language Teachers' Association of India was founded on August 7, 1974 by the late Padmashri S. Natarajan, a noted educationist of our country.

Periodicity

The Journal of English Language Teaching (The JELT) is published six times a year: in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Contributions

Articles on ELT are welcome. Share your ideas, innovations, experiences, teaching tips, material reviews and resources on the net with your fellow professionals.

Length : About 1500 words for theoretical articles and for others about 450 words.

There should be an abstract in about 100 words at the beginning and all the necessary information about all the references quoted.

The JELT carries a brief note on professional details about each contributor. Please send a short note about yourself. You may give your name as you want it to appear in the Journal.

Articles should be sent only as an email attachment – **AS A WORD DOCUMENT** to

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CDs and hard copies will not be accepted.

A photo of the author should also be sent in the jpg file format as an email attachment along with the article.

It will be assumed that your article has not been published already and that it is not being considered by any other Journal.

The views expressed in the articles published in The JELT are the contributors' own, and not necessarily those of the Journal.

Objectives of the Association

- To provide a forum for teachers of English to meet periodically and discuss problems relating to the teaching of English in India.
- To help teachers interact with educational administrators on matters relating to the teaching of English.
- To disseminate information in the ELT field among teachers of English.
- To undertake innovative projects aimed at the improvement of learners' proficiency in English.
- To promote professional solidarity among teachers of English at primary, secondary and university levels and
- To promote professional excellence among its members in all possible ways.

We bring out "The Journal of English Language Teaching", a bi-monthly, and it is given free to all the members of the Association. Our Literature Special Interest Group brings out a free online quarterly journal-Journal of Teaching and Research in English Literature.

Our consultancy services offer Teacher training packages and organize bi-monthly meetings on current ELT themes relevant to the Indian context.

We host annual conferences and regional conferences on specific areas relevant to the ELT scenario today. Delegates from all over the country as well as the world outside participate in them, present papers and conduct workshops.



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Editorial

ELTAI is happy to publish its fourth edition of 2016. I feel very delighted to meet you through this editorial. I hope this edition would uplift the English language learners. As we, the Language teachers, are aware of the mystic complexities in content delivery. ELT practitioners have been wondering how they can remain enthusiastic about their turbulent work in the globalized context. Only curious, passionate and creative teachers can experiment and implement new ideas in their classroom. They will also remain energized and enjoy their work. Optimistic Teachers thought about their assignments and their students' linguistic competence would be able to benefit the society. The articles in this issue focus on the innovative practices in teaching and learning English.

Mamta Pillai, in her research paper 'Identifying and Treating Mispronounced Front vowel sounds Through Activities: A Case Study with Gujarati Mother Tongue' about the impact of pronunciation activities that yielded positive result. It aims at finding whether the Gujarati students feel difficulties in using front vowels. Her paper shows the results of experimental procedure.

The article by N.S. Gundur in 'Words, Actions and Truth: Philosophy of Language in Shakespeare' has made a deeper insight about the role of language in Shakespeare's writings. The paper focuses on Shakespeare's understanding of human language.

Nivedita Malina Barua's research paper titled Collaborative Writing as a Means of making Students Aware of the Process of Writing, shares the experience of implementing collaborative writing among her post graduate students. It has helped to enhance their grammatical skill, vocabulary and overall writing skill. Exercises on Collaborative writing have helped the students to focus on language and also made them to enhance their techniques of academic writing.

Madhavi and Dr G.Suvarna Lakshmi's research paper Prezi as an effective Tool to Teach Poetry – An Empirical Study explored the effectiveness of blended learning. The use of Prezi helps the language teachers to teach functional aspect of language through poetry. Prezi helps in teaching the vocabulary, figures of speech, the accent and pronunciation of the poem. It makes the students to enjoy the aesthetic beauty and the theme of a poem.

In the paper titled ELT: Status and Challenges at undergraduate Level in Rural North Karnataka, author Shivakumar, U Ganachari throws light on the factors that has lead to lack of proficiency and competency of students in spite of it being a compulsory subject in school and under graduate level. He stresses that the right ambience in the classroom. Enough moving space and freedom in the classroom would help the students to become competent communicators.

At the other end of the spectrum K.Unnikrishanan's article titled Appropriate Knowledge and Curriculum in Higher Education Institutions in India: Need for Reform' is an exploration on the need of revamping of the syllabus in higher education. This is the need of the hour as it would be a great deal of work in the advancement of learning. He also envisages the content that has been taught should be more relevant to the needs of learner and the need of the humanity.

As we all know 2016 being the 400th Death Anniversary of Shakespeare ELTAI is also commemorating it holding various activities in six different cities in our country: Delhi, Jaipur, Bilaspur, Thiruvananthapuram, Thoothukudi and Chennai. The inauguration was held on 16th June 2016. The inaugural address by

Shri. Dr. Rosaiah, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been presented in this issue.

A regular column 'One-on-One' which will feature interviews by Dr. Albert P'Rayan with globally known ELT experts is being included from this issue. In this issue the ELT expert interviewed is Nicholas Peachey, a well known learning technology consultant, trainer and writer. Besides this the ELTAI - Annual Report 2015 – 2016 presented by Dr. K. Elango, National Secretary, at the Annual conference held at Hyderabad held in July last.

We envisage that the journal would help the ELT practitioners at different levels. It develops deep insight into the recent paradigms in language that would help in imparting strategies. We welcome your insight and valuable constructive suggestions on the holistic aspects of the journal. We hope that we will have more contributors to our journal who would share their successful classroom practices to enlighten their fraternity.

Let your suggestions light ELTAI into the brightest and noblest research path as well.

Dr.Rita Rani Mandal, Editor

Identifying and Treating Mispronounced Front Vowel Sounds Through Pronunciation Activities: A Case Study of Students with Gujarati Mother Tongue



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ABSTRACT

The present research aims to detect the front vowels which are wrongly pronounced by students with Gujarati as their L1. It also takes into account the replacements made by these students while speaking English and proposes an activity based teaching of pronunciation to correct the mispronounced front vowels. The results of this experimental procedure are presented in this research paper wherein special efforts have been made to dwell into the nature of phonetic learning or their neglect.

Introduction

There are twenty distinctive vowel sounds in English made up of twelve Pure Vowels (Monophthongs) and eight Vowel Glides (Diphthongs). However in Gujarati language, there are no corresponding similar vowel sounds that are present in English language. Therefore, students with their Gujarati mother tongue or those learning through Gujarati medium face difficulties in pronunciation of certain English vowel sounds while speaking the language.

This research aims at finding whether students who have Gujarati as their L1 have difficulties in the use of front vowels. The research would also extend to identifying which front vowels are commonly replaced by which vowels and would also test the practicality of using exercise-module of phonetics to teach English pronunciation

of vowel sounds. The effectiveness of this experiment will also be analyzed.

Rationale

Gujarat lacks in proficient speakers of English. Gujarat has experimented with vivid methods of language teaching; regrettably none of them have been able to address the real need and problem of the Gujarati speaking English aspirant. A normal student either from Gujarati or English medium educated from Gujarat lacks pronunciation inputs right from school to Higher education.

“English in India is used to integrate culturally and linguistically pluralistic societies. Integration with the British or American culture is not the primary aim.” (Kachru, 1976) The notion that there is or should be a Standard English does not match the reality of language acquisition.

The emphasis now is on “intelligibility” of speech when considering what should be taught and yet the question remains which standard model to follow. “*‘Intelligibility’ could serve as a practical guideline to set up limits beyond which no concession would be allowed.*” (Prator, 1986)

Here in this research, the researcher has taken British RP(Received Pronunciation) as a reference point, which would not be an end in itself but the means for the students with Gujarati as their L1 to overcome certain difficulties they face in communication of English pronunciation. Students for Master of Arts (English) were selected as part of this research. Their educational & social (Gujarati mother tongue) was not a barrier for them to take up a masters in English. Most of these students have gone through more than three years of undergraduate learning in English.

The rationale behind conducting this research was to elicit the problems related to the use of front vowels and discern the nature of the problem. Once the identification was carried out, an interactive activity based module for teaching phonetics was to be conducted in order to remedy the problem, if any.

Literature Review

In any kind of Language Teaching aspect of pronunciation is of prime concern. Educating students in the use of proper pronunciation will lead them to use language in an exemplary manner. Teaching & learning of pronunciation determines clarity of expression. Students’

wrong pronunciation at times distorts and twists the meaning; it is the fulcrum on which the meaning adjusts itself. The end product would be a jargon defined by Bloomfield (1933-473) “*A nobody’s language but only a compromise between a foreign speaker’s version and so on, in which each party imperfectly reproduces the others reproduction.*” We live in a multi-cultural-lingual society and to overcome all the hurdles in speech is a tricky situation to deal. Therefore, one has to eliminate all those learned sound units and acquire new sound units with considerable patience, practice and determination to overcome habits. The importance of learning pronunciation cannot be emphasized enough for any student at any stage of academic & personal growth. In the background of proven research about the importance of pronunciation development, it becomes imperative that it calls for immense creativity & personal effort from a teachers’ side. Curriculum, teaching material, teachers’ training & teaching methodologies have to be reviewed frequently to evade stagnancy, deterioration and poor performance in ELT.

“It is essential to understand us amongst ourselves well than to understand outsiders. When the variety of English you speak serves the purpose, the ramifications of the doctrine lose its importance.”(Prator, 1986)

Pronunciation teaching does not find a place in our traditional language teaching class. This stands true for the current state of English teaching in schools and colleges where the student is usually not aware of

the existence of Phonetics. The teacher of foreign languages, on the other hand, is very well aware of the existence of Phonetics; though s/he often may not like it. Some teachers will protest that it is not in their power for various reasons to become phoneticians; others will deny, often with heat, that it is necessary. These feelings may spring from the fact that knowledge of the existence of Phonetics is not always accompanied by knowledge of its importance in the arena of language teaching. Therefore the question arises *if it is necessary for a language teacher to be a phonetician?* The answer would be all language teachers in some respect are phoneticians. It is not possible of the practical purposes to teach a foreign language to any kind of learner without paying some attention to pronunciation; and any attention to pronunciation is phonetics. The language teacher will always find himself/herself handling questions of pronunciation. Since the questions of pronunciation cannot be avoided, the simpler it is made for both, teacher and student, the better. It is not proper to ask whether phonetics is necessary for language teachers the proper question to ask is *how good their phonetics is to be?* "Pronunciation development should be dealt as a skill which is independent to reading & writing skills." Language skills development should include scope for teaching of pronunciation as a separate skill as it is 'one of the major aspects of fluency in a language.' Hence pronunciation should be taught as a separate skill at all stages of education. Though the importance of teaching

pronunciation is an ascertained field of study, its absence in the language classroom fails to build the students' interest in the teaching practice. The sample group in this study was with Gujarati mother tongue. The group of students as expected grappled with unknown sound units from a language which is primarily not their own, thus the intrinsic motivation is to gain momentum in order to make the learning more interactive and the retaining more plausible. Many researchers in the field of pronunciation teaching have stated low interest level among students which has been due to complete negligence on teaching of pronunciation.

Research Methodology

Objectives

1. To identify whether students have problems in front vowels usage while speaking English.
2. To identify which front vowels are commonly mispronounced.
3. To identify which vowel glides are employed to replace front vowels while speaking.
4. To treat the afore mentioned replacement with an aim of correcting the errors made in the use of front vowels through activities.
5. To verify whether the teaching of phonetics through activities has yielded positive results.

Research Design

This is an experimental study hence the data collection and analysis is quantitative in nature. However, when students are involved – the study cannot be carried out wholly in a controlled environment. There are certain aspects that affect the results/ outcome of the study. Hence, in order to include qualitative aspect, the researcher included interviews as the data-analysis technique.

Thus, the research design included :

- Pre-recording
- Teaching phonetic variations in the classroom through exercises
- Post-recording

Sample

Sample Size 30 students

Educational background: Bachelors of English, Masters of English (Pursuing)

Activities

The following games (exercise module) were selected & adapted according to the problematic vowel sound found in pre-recording and modules were developed for the same.

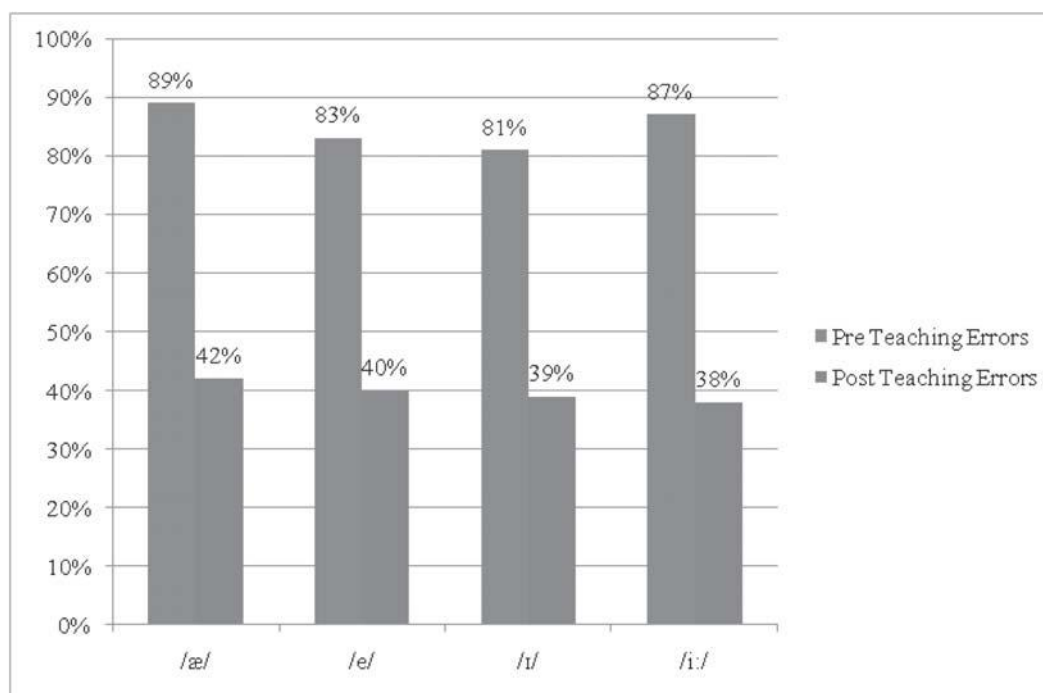
- I. Vowel Puzzle
- II. Odd one out
- III. Identify Figures

Through the trial and error sessions of the research, the investigator kept a close watch on the students and their levels of interest during the activities. The researcher also conducted informal interviews through few unstructured set of questions to examine students' perception on the practice of using activities for the teaching of pronunciation & observe the pronunciation of sounds in a natural environment. A post-recording test was conducted to verify whether the students were able to pronounce the sounds they learnt in the class correctly. The results are described further.

Before the experiment began a pre-teaching recording was conducted in order to detect gaps in students' pronunciation of front vowels, then the students were taught different aspects of phonetic variations in vowel sounds of English through specific exercises, eventually at the end of classroom activities a post-teaching recording was conducted with the same sample group. Thus the results are compared to reassess the performance and measure the effectiveness of the exercises used to improve their pronunciation skills.

Data Analysis

The sample consisted of 30 students pursuing their post graduate program (M.A) in English; majority of these students had completed their bachelors in English hence it can be recorded that these students have had minimum of three years of language exposure.



As shown in the Pre-recording score students were not able to pronounce the front vowel sounds. For example – bad, breath, bid, feel, fresh. The average performance was very low as can be seen from the table and most of the students (90%) pronounced the sounds erroneously. After the pre-recording, phonetics games (exercise module) were introduced in the language classroom. The results, after the use of activities showed a clearly reduction in the number of students making the same error.

Findings

The detailed comparative chart present above proves that there was a 50% improvement in the pronunciation capacity of the students. The comparative analysis of the two tables (Annexure I and II) is as

such:

1. Pre-treatment there were 89% students who were pronouncing the sound /æ/ wrong. This was reduced to only 42% post the treatment.
2. 83% students were erroneously articulating the sound /e/ which was reduced to only 40% post the treatment.
3. The percentage of students pronouncing the sound /j/ wrong was at around 81% which dropped to only 39% in the post-teaching.
4. /i:/ was wrongly pronounced by 87% in the pre-teaching stage, however, the number reduced to only 38% post the experiment.
5. It was also found that /æ/ and /e/ are

replaced by /ei/ by most of the students which results in wrong pronunciation.

6. From the experiment it was deciphered that /j/ and /i:/ are interchanged leading to wrong pronunciation.
7. The use of activity based teaching of pronunciation has yielded positive results.

Conclusion

From the research it is evident that in the post-test students showed awareness of different phonetic sounds. The result amounted to 50% success in achieving the desired phonetic learning. Those who

succeeded to maintain sustained efforts in speaking drills were found to be phonetically correct in the interviews conducted to notice the phonetic learning and thereby a change in their otherwise phonetically incorrect spoken language.

From the experiment it was evident that adults will not necessarily be able to learn an intelligible pronunciation in English without consistent, focused support & instruction. It is unreasonable to expect rapid change. Both students and teachers must guard against unrealistic expectations of how long it takes for improvements to be made in pronunciation. This implies that pronunciation learning must be continued outside the classroom.

Table-1 Consolidated data of Pre-teaching findings - Annexure I

| Pre-teaching | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sr.No. | Vowel Sound | Words | No. of students pronouncing it wrong (out of 30) | Percentage (out of 30) | Consolidated % |
| 1 | /æ/ | average | 27 | 90% | 89% |
| | | activity | 28 | 93% | |
| | | understand | 23 | 77% | |
| | | standard | 29 | 97% | |
| 2 | /e/ | textbooks | 26 | 87% | 83% |
| | | instead | 26 | 87% | |
| | | emphasis | 23 | 77% | |
| | | technique | 24 | 80% | |
| 3 | /i/ | college | 30 | 100% | 81% |
| | | filled | 24 | 80% | |
| | | willingness | 16 | 53% | |
| | | finish | 27 | 90% | |
| 4 | /i:/ | need | 25 | 83% | 87% |
| | | lead | 27 | 90% | |
| | | feed | 26 | 87% | |

Table-2 Consolidated data of Post-recording findings - Annexure I

| <u>Post-teaching</u> | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sr.No. | Vowel Sound | Words | No. of students pronouncing it wrong (out of 30) | Percentage (out of 30) | Consolidated % |
| 1 | /æ/ | Average | 12 | 40% | 42% |
| | | Activity | 13 | 43% | |
| | | Understand | 11 | 37% | |
| | | Standard | 14 | 47% | |
| 2 | /e/ | Textbooks | 13 | 43% | 40% |
| | | Instead | 12 | 40% | |
| | | Emphasis | 11 | 37% | |
| | | Technique | 12 | 40% | |
| 3 | /i/ | College | 13 | 43% | 39% |
| | | Filled | 12 | 40% | |
| | | Willingness | 10 | 33% | |
| | | Finish | 12 | 40% | |
| 4 | /i:/ | Need | 13 | 43% | 38% |
| | | Lead | 11 | 37% | |
| | | Feed | 10 | 33% | |

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Words, Actions and Truth: Philosophy of Language in Shakespeare's Plays

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In life people are guided by words, not by deeds. It's not so much that they love the possibility of doing or not doing something as it is the possibility of speaking with words, agreed on among themselves. (Quoted from *Kholstomer: The Story of a Horse* by Leo Tolstoy)

A certain kind of critical enquiry into Shakespeare's plays, from Johnsonian criticism to the recent David Crystal's linguistic criticism, hails the way Shakespeare handles language in his plays as his unique artistic achievement. However, in the celebration of Shakespeare's linguistic-artistic triumph what has generally been overlooked is his deeper insights about the role of language plays in human affairs. While making a sharp distinction between Shakespeare's use of language and Shakespeare's understanding of human language, the present paper focuses on the latter; it tries to argue that one can reconstruct Shakespeare's philosophy of language through the reading of some of his plays— *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, among others. Although these plays can be read at various levels, one cannot miss the element of 'verbal tragedy' in these plays, especially in *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. In this sense, these plays are meant for their protagonists coming to terms with their

understanding of human speech-acts. At the very obvious level, Lear does not know how to receive the speech-act of Cordelia, Macbeth lacks, what Speech-Act theorists call, 'pragmatic competence', and the problem of Hamlet (Oh my God! Oedipus complex in *Hamlet* is too big a thing to be understood) is the problem of how to 'read' the words of the ghost. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock fails to comprehend the mischief language plays in legal affairs. However, this paper confines itself to the analysis of *King Lear*.

John Searle in his *Making the Social World* (2009) demonstrates that how our social reality is constituted by linguistic consciousness. Language is not only a means of communication but also it is an agent of creating social reality. According to Searle, we are 'speech-act' performing beings. What is significant in his argument is that we are rational beings because we possess the linguistic consciousness. What is the role of this linguistic consciousness? This is not merely an ability to perform speech-acts but it is also an ability to make rational assessment of speech-acts. According to him these speech-acts play an important role in our life. They can be hurtful to other people also. So we have as much right to regulate these speech-acts as other physical acts. What has it to do with

our rationality? Our rationality involves how to judge these speech-acts in certain ways.

As identified in the 'Philosophy of Ordinary Language Use' or Pragmatics, speech-acts function at three levels. The first level is known as 'Locutionary Act', which involve sentence-level linguistic utterances. The second level is called as Illocutionary Act, which perform certain acts like promising, proposing, expressing, encouraging, predicting, etc. The third level is Perlocutionary Act in which there are intentional acts in the sense that they try to make a certain impact on the receiver. They persuade, deceive, irritate and get the receiver to do something.

Overall what the Speech-Act theory explains is the way language use takes place in our life. But beyond this, the theory does not say anything about how human beings negotiate with speech- acts. It does not explain why and how we, sometimes, fail to assess speech-acts. First of all, we need to understand that we are not born readily to make sense of speech-acts in life. We gradually learn how to use them and how to receive them. This involves our cognitive capacity. Speech-acts are not as simple as we think, and they behave in an extremely strange way in certain circumstances. Always there is some risk involved in dealing with them. Sometimes they even cost the fall of a kingdom. In one way, most of our learning involves learning to judge speech-acts. I think this aspect of speech-acts gets articulated in some crucial moments in Shakespeare's plays. If the Speech-Act Theory demonstrates how ordinary

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language-use works, Shakespeare's plays artistically bring forth the tragedy associated with, what we generally take for granted, the failure of his protagonists to comprehend certain speech-acts. Let us examine *King Lear* from this perspective.

King Lear

It has already been observed although *King Lear* can be read at various levels; it is too obvious to miss the 'verbal tragedy' in it. If we read the play from this point of view, what we can easily identify is that Lear is obsessed with speech; all the time he says, 'speak'. He is a certain type of man who loves words (verbal assurance) more than actions. Such people constantly require some sort of linguistic consolation. They find comfort in it. He is the one who is accustomed to flattery; plain speech does not please him. Lear's problem lies in his firm belief that linguistic utterances correspond to truth. If Macbeth lacks judgment in distinguishing between referential proposition and rhetorical proposition, Lear lacks the ability to distinguish between plain speech and flattery. What Lear asks his daughters is not 'which of you doth love most', but asks, "Which of you shall we **say** doth love us most". Mark the word 'say' here and we will come to know the difference between 'saying' and 'loving'. When Goneril says, "I love you more than words' A love that makes breath poor and speech unable", she seems to know the power of words. The play resonates the basic problem of language in human life when Cordelia says, "What shall Cordelia do? Love and be silent, and my love more ponderous than tongue". Let us

contrast Goneril's assertion of action over speech and Cordelia's plain speech.

Although the former asserts the power of action over speech at sentence level, its deeper implications are altogether opposite. It is this understanding of human speech which is crucial for us in the play. Here, the play interfaces words and deeds. When Lear asks Cordelia, "What you 'say'", (again mark the word, 'say' because Lear is always obsessed with 'saying') for which she replies, "Nothing", and Lear says, "Nothing will come of nothing, Speak....." Lear is a king, and it is obvious that he is used to flattery. The difference between a good king and a bad king is that the former knows that he is being flattered although he does not resist the opportunity of listening to soothing words, but the latter is ignorant of this. However, Cordelia also does not know the power of speech. She should have described something grand in speech for her father. She fails to understand her father's speech-loving habit; instead, she tries to argue her case, plain speech.

Like Macbeth, coming to terms with his error in judgment, Lear too eventually realizes his problem with speech-acts. At the end of the play, he says:

"Ha Goneril, with a white beard, they flattered me like dog...When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt them out. Go to, they are not men o' their **words**: they told me I was everything; it is a lie, I am not agu-proof.

Finally, the tragedy of Lear achieves its completeness with Lear coming to terms with this problem.

Thus, *King Lear* emphasizes the importance of linguistic consciousness. At the end of the play what Edger says, "Speak what you feel, not what you ought to say" seems to be the point of Shakespeare is trying to make. In this sense, the play can be read as a morality play on the value of linguistic consciousness.

If we read *Macbeth* from this perspective, we can easily locate a similar element of 'verbal tragedy' in it. Macbeth's tragedy involves as much his failure to assess the speech-acts of the three witches as his ambition. As a Christian, the problem of Hamlet is how to take the 'words' of the ghost. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare weaves the plot of the tragic-comedy on the idea of linguistic manipulation. On the whole, what the philosophers of ordinary language cannot achieve in their theories Shakespeare achieves in his art— the linguistic predicament in which we trap ourselves when we are ambitious or prone to being deceived by flattery.

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Collaborative Writing as a means of Making Students Aware of the Process of Writing

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Writing is usually considered as an individual exercise. However, when it carried out as a group activity with a common goal of producing a text, it can result in increased levels of motivation and greater awareness about the techniques and the organizational patterns of writing. This paper discusses the findings of a classroom research done by the researcher in the Department of English Language Teaching of Gauhati University, Assam. It discusses how the author, an ELT practitioner, obtained positive results when she carried out the technique of collaborative writing with her students who were struggling to incorporate the writing techniques they were practicing in the academic writing class to writing for other papers in the course. The paper also shares the experiences of the problems faced by the author in trying to teach writing in this new manner.

Writing in an effective and coherent manner is a skill that does not come easy to most people. This can be attributed to inadequate or lack of training in writing. With this 'lack' in mind, the 'Academic Writing Paper' was introduced by the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of Gauhati University to develop the writing skills of the postgraduate students. The Academic Writing paper is concerned with the teaching the techniques of writing along with different aspects of grammar and vocabulary.

But, it was soon realized that though the students practiced the techniques in the academic writing class, they failed to transfer them to any other kind of writing, viz., writing in examinations, assignments etc. As such, the purpose for which the Academic Writing paper was introduced was not fulfilled. Moreover, the students started losing their motivation as they were not able to relate what they were doing in the writing class to any kind of writing done outside the academic writing class.

In one of the feedback sessions, the students shared with the teacher that the inability to 'transfer' the skills taught in the academic writing class to other types of writing was discouraging them from really practicing those skills. The researcher who teaches in the Department of ELT recognized this aspect of the writing problem and decided to use **collaborative writing** as one of the means of tackling this serious problem. According to Wajnryb (1990), in collaborative writing, students sit together in groups or pairs to produce a piece of writing through decisions taken together after intensive discussions. Research has revealed that collaborative writing can bring about significant developments in the writing skills of students.

The Academic Writing book that is used to teach writing to the post graduate students in the Department of ELT deal with general

topics viz. *Introducing Myself, A Person Who Has Made a Difference, Earthquake, Why I Don't Have A Credit Card* and so on. Since the students write on such general topics in the academic writing class, when faced with the task of writing on topics specific to their coursework, they tend to draw a blank. The researcher felt that if the students could be made to consciously 'think' of the writing strategies and 'apply' them to their writing, it might result in making them more 'aware' of those strategies.

The researcher also became aware that if the students were made to sit in groups and plan and organize their writing on topics selected from other papers, it would enable them to 'transfer' what they learn in the writing class to the rest of their academic work and be more 'aware' of the transfer. According to Neomy Storch (2013), the emphasis is more on the organizing a written text if the objective of collaboration is to produce a well organized piece of writing.

This argument finds further support from Christopher Mulligan and Russell Garofalo (2011), according to whom this kind of collaborative exercise might be useful in making students aware of the pattern and sentence structure of what they write which otherwise they may not give much importance to.

This paper will describe the collaborative strategy used by the researcher and will also discuss the extent of success it achieved. It should be borne in mind that more than focusing on the **final product** of the students' writing, the main objective of this study was to encourage the students to consider the **process** of writing and be aware

of the different aspects of writing.

Methodology

Choosing partners

For this study, students were made to sit in groups of three and were allowed to select their group members. It was seen that the students chose their friends as their group members. The researcher felt that since she was trying a new and unfamiliar way of making them work, confidence in each other and comfort level would play a major part in the exercise. This decision was further encouraged by Cote's (2006) argument that for students to benefit from collaborative writing tasks, the teacher must first establish an environment of mutual trust and respect among the members of the class. Christopher Mulligan and Russell Garofalo (2011) agree with Cote (2006) when they state that enabling students to choose their partners in the initial stages could facilitate collaborative learning.

Instructions by the teacher

It was assumed that the students had practiced the following aspects of writing in the academic writing class.

- Write an introductory paragraph with an appropriate thesis statement
- Write body paragraphs using appropriate transition signals and topic sentences
- Write a proper concluding paragraph
- Use adequate grammar and vocabulary

Also, the following processes were assumed to be familiar to the students.

- Brainstorming Session (or read the text)

- Make notes
- Write an outline of the essay (introduction with the thesis statement, topic sentences of the body paragraph along with the transition signals, concluding paragraph)
- Complete the outline of the essay
- Check the first draft for repetition, redundancy, unity, coherence, grammatical accuracy
- Redraft (if necessary)

Based on the assumption that the students knew how to perform the above functions in writing, the teacher asked them to write an essay (paraphrase) after reading the text on '*Why we should have a syllabus*' (*English for Specific Purposes* by Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) in which the reasons for having a syllabus are listed.

The steps that were followed are mentioned below.

- Read the text on their own
- Make notes (branch notes or list notes) after reading the text
- Share their notes with their group members, discuss and make changes if necessary
- Make an outline of the essay based on the notes with a proper introduction, topic sentences for the body paragraphs and a conclusion
- 'Flesh out' the essay
- Revise as a group and make necessary changes
- Discuss with the teacher

Results

The students were engaged in the following activities during the exercise.

1. They were discussing the techniques of writing that they had practiced in the academic writing class.
2. They were checking the essay for unity and coherence, for appropriate transition signals, for a proper introduction and conclusion
3. They were choosing the appropriate vocabulary, arguing and debating as to the use of certain structures, correcting one another
4. They were taking decisions together and helping each other in taking those decisions. For example, the text that they were required to paraphrase talked about the advantages of using a syllabus and the dangers that underlie the use of a syllabus. They took decisions as to whether they should write all the points together in one paragraph or each point would be written as a separate body paragraph. They also discussed the thesis statement, took decisions on the transition signals they would use, whether they should summarize the main points in the conclusion or give an opinion or add something extra.
5. They also discussed the final outcome of the collaborative effort, whether it was too casual or too stiff or 'academic'.

Barring one group, the rest were able to write well organized essays on the given topic. Though there were grammatical mistakes and problems in the use of vocabulary, a

remarkable improvement was noticed in the way they wrote in groups as opposed to how they wrote individually. Though it helped in making the text clearer to the students, this exercise also helped in focusing on the language and techniques of academic writing.

Feedback received

The students informed the teacher that in the collaborative activity on writing they were performing the activities mentioned above that made them think about the different aspects of writing. They said that since they were working with their friends, they were not stressed about the final outcome and were more focused on 'how' to write. The focus was more on the 'how' rather than on the 'what'. They claimed that they had gained in confidence and would be able to write more confidently as they discovered things which only they knew in the group and some things that they learnt from their friends. Discussing how to write made them aware of the different aspects of writing which they said they would not ignore in future. However, as in any kind of group endeavor, the collaborative writing exercise was not without its demerits.

Problems faced

As in any kind of group activity, there were instances of one student trying to dominate the proceedings, thereby influencing the style of the essay. Also, in some cases, one group member was seen to be doing most of the work. Lastly, this kind of work may tend to become disruptive and chaotic if

proper instructions are not given. However, Trimbur (1989) has called this difference in opinions and debates as 'cognitive conflict', a process of intellectual negotiation and collective decision making.

Conclusion

The collaborative writing activity is a conscious process in which learners discuss, argue, justify, negotiate and finalise a written product. They do it as a group and in doing so, they become more conscious of the different aspects of writing. However, the teachers need to be on their toes and make frequent rounds in the classroom in order to ensure that the students are following the instructions and everyone in the group is contributing to the process of writing. In the words of Speck (2002), the teacher acts as an 'expert mentor' who enables students to take the responsibility of their own learning.

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Prezi as an Effective Tool to Teach Poetry-An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

In this digital age a language teacher has to assimilate new ideas and design classes to cater to a large number of learners with diverse learning styles to make teaching optimally effective. Inviting technology into language classroom has enabled erasing the impossibilities of blending functional language and literature texts possible. This is proved in an experimental study conducted using one of the online free learning tools. The empirical study emphasizes on blended learning and the use of Prezi as an effective tool to teach functional language aspects through poetry. Prezi as an online tool is used for this empirical study on blended learning for a complete and comprehensive focus on honing language skills through one literary genre, poetry. For this study, a couple of poems were taught to two groups, one using Prezi and the other by traditional method. A questionnaire and a checklist were prepared to evaluate student attitude and Data with written answers was collected. Informal discussions were held after the sessions. The findings of this blended learning are discussed at length where the data and responses from both teachers and learners are recorded.

Keywords: Prezi, blended learning, functional language skills

Learning poetry is critical for every learner of English language for not just the aesthetic beauty but also be able to understand the true meaning, reflect on the true value of English literature. Poetry enables students to learn different meanings of a word in different contexts and different words in a similar context - thereby enhancing their ability to appreciate the language, articulate their thoughts succinctly and unambiguously. Such an articulation of

students' thoughts and ideas into meaningful and clearly understandable language unambiguously is what we call as effective communication. Effective communication requires not only mastery with words but being able to communicate through a clear storyline that the listener can relate and resonate to what is being communicated.

Charles R. Duke (1984) has noted, "English
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teachers have given some attention to aesthetic reading, usually terming it development of literary appreciation, but many of the classroom practices used to foster that appreciation have been counter-productive.” Instruction on comprehending and appreciating poetry has been especially been regarded as ineffective. He also opined that the teaching of poetry was ineffective because many teachers have tried to teach poetry by providing meanings of different words and explaining interpretations of what the poet intended to infer or the context in which such interpretations were made.

The charm of teaching and learning poetry has lost amidst the race to reach academic goals and standard syllabus which requires updating, for diverse backgrounds and cognitive levels of learners. Traditional methods like the grammar translation and audio-lingual method of teaching still being followed in most of the schools and colleges is another reason for slower progress in language learning. Though government policies and Boards of education insist on the use of technical devices in educational institutions, poor communication skills is still a hindrance after 15-16 years of English as medium of education.

An English teacher not only finds her class large in number, but also a variety of minds’ with different schemas, individual differences, personalities, mixed abilities and learning styles. In this digital age, a language teacher has to assimilate new ideas and design classes to cater to a large

number of learners with diverse learning styles to make teaching and learning optimally effective. Teachers’ role changes from a content/subject teacher to a facilitator as they not only aim for good academic results but also help learner’s acquire language skills to meet the learners’ career needs and goals. With the latest technological advances and globalization, students have turned tech savvy and therefore, the dire need is to integrate blended teaching and learning in education. As a teacher for around 10 years in a UG and PG college we found it very difficult, with the time constraints adding on, to impart the meaning of the content and giving them the essence of the second/foreign language and cultural background.

As we move into the next century and more technologically sophisticated industry and service sectors, work becomes more abstract, depending on understanding and manipulating information rather than merely acquiring it. (Mezirow, J. (1997),)

Today the dire need is to blend traditional and advanced methods (use of technology) of teaching and also the right and apt teaching content to produce efficient and skilled workforce. Hence, at this juncture, the technology walking into our classrooms and traditional concepts and methods not having turned completely obsolete, there is a need to review the existing models of content based teaching to blend them with the need of the hour model. There are three models of *content based instruction* (Oxford, 2001), first is the *Theme based Model* which

integrates the language skills into a study of a theme. Second is the *adjunct model* which requires separation of content and language skills. Third model is the *sheltered model* where language is taught in simplified English tailored to the learners' proficiency.

The context in which this study is carried out required some model that can include traditional content teaching i.e. make use of authentic literary genres and enhance communicative competence of the learners to meet their career requirements. It is decided to try and execute *blended learning model*.

Blended learning is a new trend in ELT. Poetry which is involving, motivating and memorable gives an ample scope to genre transfer activities and exercises to develop language skills. A prezi, thought to be apt and based on content based language instruction was designed to cover various aspects of language primarily to render the text as it is for its aesthetic beauty, about the writer and the theme. And additionally to discuss other aspects such as vocabulary, figures of speech, and audio visual included giving the learners a chance to listen to the native accent and pronunciation.

A brief description of Prezi as an effective and collaborative technological internet tool.

Prezi, launched in 2009, is an online presentation tool allowing users to create a large concept map (Schiller, 2011). *Prezi* has specific capabilities. By using Prezi with these capabilities in mind, teachers can

retain a higher level of student engagement (Settle, Abrams & Baker, 2011). Power point presentations have slides and follow a linear path. Slides have textual information, images, animations and hyperlinks. A Prezi has pathway points instead of slides and professionally designed templates which can be zoomed in and out. Another special feature of Prezi is the easy insertion of videos from YouTube. Since it is a cloud based service it can be stored online, changes saved almost instantly. Prezis can be saved as pdf files and printed for further use. Prezi is collaborative, students and faculty can work and share simultaneously.

In that context, this study will emphasize on the use of technology tools like Prezi, as an effective tool for language instruction fostering different ways of communication and articulation in both written and oral skill sets in the student's toolkit. Such a toolkit in our assumption is complete and comprehensive with focus on honing such skills by poetry and learning through the use of similar tools like Prezi even in the teaching poetry. This is an empirical study and is based on the data collected from students and teachers from a high school in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

The study was carried out in a school in Kakinada. It is an attempt to observe the use of Prezi and its impact on students and teachers. The main instruments used in the study are a prior prepared Prezi, a follow-up questionnaire, a checklist and informal interview with students and teachers. A

couple of poems were selected and taught to two groups. The first poem was taught using traditional method and the second poem was taught using Prezi. The study required the use of an LCD projector, and a computer with internet facility. A copy of the selected poem was distributed and taught in the traditional way. Questionnaire was given and data was collected. To another group a poem using prezi was taught and students were later asked to fill the questionnaire and an informal discussion with the teachers was held. Students and the teachers enquired about the procedure to prepare a Prezi and expressed that it would be convenient for them to use it in class.

Both the groups of students were asked to respond to two different communicative tasks:

1 speaking task

2 writing task

The speaking task included was group discussion on Tagore's poem *where the mind is without fear*. The topic given was "Discuss the theme of the poem *where the mind is without fear*". The writing task was to describe scenery in Indian context that is similar to what Wordsworth described in *Daffodils*. The students are expected to respond to these tasks applying their understanding of the poem. Tasks are general and specific; general because they do not need any particular skill or knowledge to respond to the task and specific because their complete understanding of the poem is a pre requisite to respond appropriately

to the task.

Findings

The analysis, (presented in appendix C), shows that 81% of the students felt that Prezi gave them a new learning experience. 58% of the students found that prezi was more appealing than the traditional method of teaching and the rest of the students expressed that there is less scope to interrupt and ask questions in the middle of the session in tech based teaching. 88% students found that the video helped them to get a better picture of the poem and the context. 92% students agreed that they could remember the poem well and that the audio had given them a chance to listen to the native accent and observe the reading style of the poem.

- The interest generated by the use of technology in class through *prezi* in the learners increased their involvement in the language learning process. As their motivational levels boosted up teaching learning environment is created. The learner started using vocabulary and expressions they learnt in the poem.
- As a context in which they need to respond to speaking and writing tasks is created and meaningful input is given to the students they do not hesitate to participate in the speaking activity that followed the *prezi* teaching session.

The responses to the writing tasks reflected their complete comprehension of the poem and also the use of certain expressions related to scenery that is described in the

poem. The other group that are in the traditional method failed to use the expressions in the poem daffodils and also respond to the speaking task appropriately. The reason they gave while interviewed was that they do not have enough understanding of the poem.

Conclusions

The attempt to assess the learner attitude towards the use of Prezi in this empirical study provided considerable evidence for learner's skill development, motivation and enthusiasm. The speaking and writing tasks proves that blended teaching helps in effectively enhancing knowledge and language skills in learners. *Prezi* as a tool can promote innovative ideas in teachers and design something **extraordinary** from an **ordinary** available material making the teaching and learning optimally effective.

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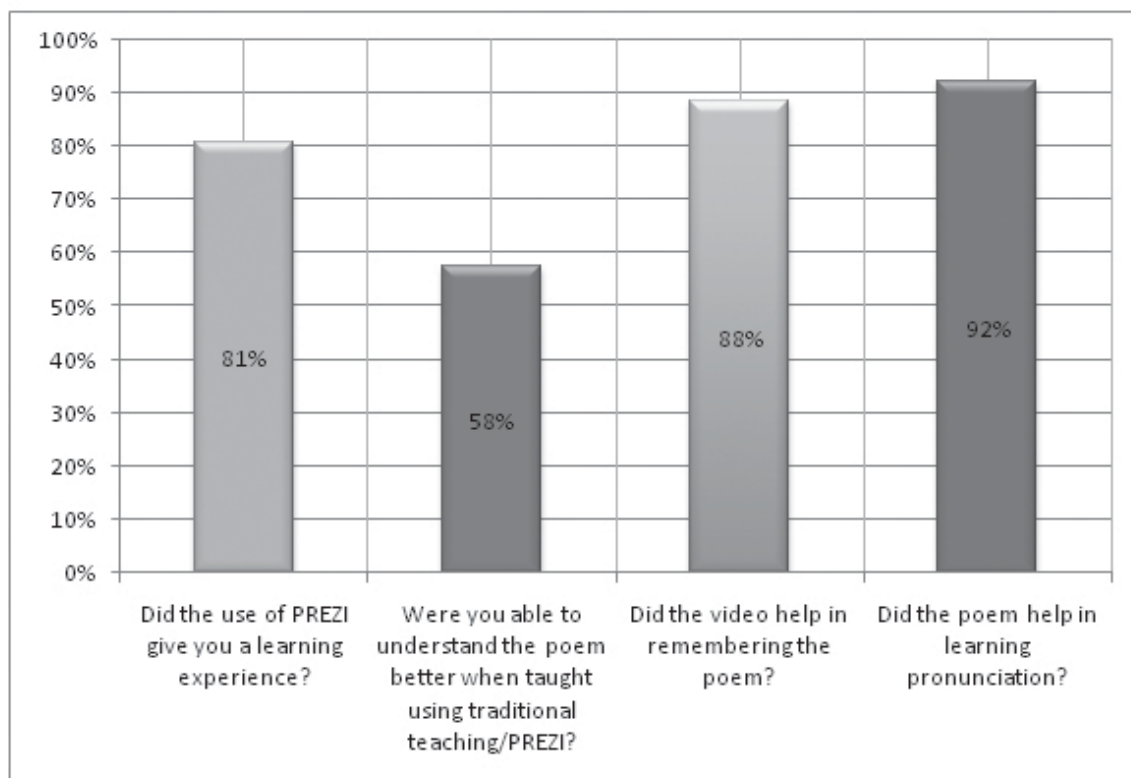
Appendix

A) https://prezi.com/-pannxdh6nyu/edit/#1_24309637

B) Questionnaire for students
Questions for the students

1. Did the use of PREZI give you a new learning experience?
2. Were you able to understand the poem better when taught using traditional teaching/ prezi?
3. Did the video help in remembering the poem? If yes how?
4. Did the poem help in learning pronunciation?

C)



‘Shakespeare lives-2016’

—A Program of events and activities organized by the English Language Teachers’ Association of India (ELTAI)

In collaboration with the British Council and SBOIA Educational Trust, Chennai.

**Inaugural speech delivered by Dr. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamilnadu at
S.I.E.T. College for Women, Teynampet. Chennai on 18-6-2016**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate the Shakespeare festival organized by the English Language Teachers’ Association of India, familiarly known as ELTAI, this morning. I am glad to learn that ELTAI is the oldest and largest professional organization of teachers of English in our country and the festival includes a number of events and activities all relating to Shakespeare in commemoration of his 400th Death Anniversary. There are going to be competitions conducted for students and seminars for teachers conducted in six different cities in our country. These activities will surely contribute to their acquiring greater knowledge about this great poet and playwright among them.

One may wonder why should we celebrate Shakespeare’s 400th Death Anniversary at all? Ever since the British came to our country and promoted English education among our people, one or more of his plays have been included in our school and college curriculum. Every one of us would have surely read at least one, if not more, of his plays— The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Julie, Julius Caesar and A Mid-summer Night’s Dream. In fact we are told Shakespeare is read more in our country than Britain itself. Not surprising at all, I should say. We love Shakespeare and enjoy watching his films and stage productions. We are told the immortal poet of Avon didn’t write his plays to be studied in

our classrooms but he wrote them only for the stage and what is more he himself acted in some of them.

We all know Shakespeare in the greatest poet and dramatist in the English language and one of the greatest dramatists of the world. What makes him great? His works cover or deal with not just one or two but almost every aspect of the life we lead in this world. He should have been a keen observer of life around him and no wonder his characters are drawn from different walks of life and hence are all real. Among his characters are kings and clowns, heroes and villains, philosophers and idiots, criminals and victims, generals and soldiers, grave-diggers, barmen clowns—all types of men and women we meet in real life also. We could easily recognize among the men around us, miserly Shylocks, love-lorn Romeos and Juliets, enigmatic Hamlets, suspicious Othellos and blood-thirsty Macbeths. The greatness of Shakespeare lies, not only in the creation of real characters in life but also depicting different situations in life.

Shakespeare belonged to a different age. He lived and wrote his plays during the end of seventeenth century in England. He belonged to a different culture and age. Still we read him and adore him. Why you may ask. The answer is simple. He is a man of all ages, countries and all cultures. For he speaks the language of humanity. His characters may be

found in life everywhere around us wherever we may live and whatever culture we may belong to. No wonder his plays have an universal appeal. He is as relevant today as he was 400 years ago. He is rightly considered as one of the greatest playwrights of the world.

It is not surprising that his plays are the most-performed ones in the English language. He is one of the dramatists whose works have been translated in a large number of languages in the world. He continues to enthral us, instruct and inspire us and give us profound enjoyment.

There have been two predominant attitudes towards Shakespeare among both teachers and students: a reluctance to engage with his texts because they are seen as boring and outdated, or a reverence that treats them almost like sacred texts that cannot be touched or questioned. Both attitudes are unhealthy and unhelpful. As teachers, we should try to find ways of bringing Shakespeare to our learners that help them engage and enjoy his plays and poetry as much as readers and audiences have been doing for over 400 years.

Our students may find it difficult to read his plays. But we should remember here that he didn't write them for people to read but he wrote them for the stage. Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed. So you should bring drama into your classroom and not just teach the text. Dramatization is a great way to get students collaborating, communicating, speaking and listening – not to mention building up their self-confidence too. If we teach Shakespeare this way, they would surely appreciate and enjoy their study of his plays.

The contribution of Shakespeare has been

most significant not only in the field of English literature but also in the growth of the English language. He has enriched it with a number of beautiful and unforgettable expressions by them. Scholars tell us he has coined about 3000 new expressions and most of them are even now in common use such as 'Bated breath', 'All that glitters is not gold', 'Bag and baggage', 'All's well that ends well', 'Best foot forward', and 'Be all and end all'.

We find in Shakespeare's plays many memorable proverbs too which are quite common now. For example, 'Better three hours too soon than a minute too late'

'Tis the mind that makes the body rich.

I may also remind you of a few famous quotes from Shakespeare too.

"All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players:

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them

One may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Shakespeare is a world celebrity. His reputation as a playwright has been growing since the seventeenth century. Generations of theatre-goers, poets, prose writers, artists, journalists and scholars have contributed greatly to increase the admiration for his plays. And I congratulate the English Teachers' Association of India in organizing this 'Shakespeare lives! Program. Though the great dramatist and poet is no more, truly he lives for ever in his plays and sonnets. He lives for so long as English is spoken in our world.

ELTAI - Annual Report 2015 – 2016

(Presented by Dr. K. Elango, National Secretary,
at the Annual conference held at Hyderabad held in July last)

*In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate
and improvise most effectively have prevailed.*

-Charles Darwin

The report has a dual focus: looking backward and looking forward. Let me start with looking backward to recall and place before you some of the significant activities of the year. The last year's conference, i.e. 10th International cum 46th Annual Conference, was held in Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women at Ghaziabad in UP from 9th to 11th July 2015 on the theme of *Learning and Teaching of English: Setting Standards*, which was ably led by our Joint Secretary, Dr. Shravan Kumar. We would like to place on record our appreciation to the management of the college and the department of English for organizing the conference par excellence.

The flagship of our association, *The Journal of English Language Teaching*, has reached the milestone of 50 years and we brought out the Golden Jubilee issue in August 2015 to celebrate the achievement. We are proud of the fact that ours is one of the oldest journals globally in the field of ELT and we are marching ahead with a renewed energy for the centenary celebration. With its print, we also have the e-version of the journal accessible only to the members of the association and three other open e-journals, Viz. *The Journal of Teaching and Research in English Literature*, *The Journal of Technology for ELT* and *The English Practitioner*. We are now in the process of getting the impact factor for the *Journal English Language Teaching* with Cosmos for the greater acceptance of the journal by the academia.

As we all know 2016 being the 400th Death

Anniversary of Shakespeare we are also commemorating it holding various activities in six different cities in our country: Delhi, Jaipur, Bilaspur, Thiruvananthapuram, Thoothukudi and Chennai. On 16th June we had the inaugural at JBAS College for Women, Chennai, and an array of activities was flagged off by the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri. Dr. Rosaiah. The planned activities include competitions such as quiz, staging scenes from the plays, conversion of characters and exhibitions on the plays of Shakespeare for students and regional and national seminars for teachers. The awards are to be presented to the best performers at the valedictory function to be held in December in Chennai.

This year we received grants from two sources: the IATEFL grant, we were one of the two associates given the grant, enabled us to conduct 15 workshops in various parts of our country – from Tuticorin to Trupathi in the south to Bilaspur in the north and Shillong in the north-east. Besides, six workshops for cluster institutions of Kendriya Vidyalayas in the Chennai region were also conducted. A similar initiative has been undertaken with other groups of schools that are privately managed across the state. Needless to point out that among teachers there is an overwhelming demand for such workshops from many educational institutions. We find this as an ongoing project even after utilizing the IATEFL grant.

Another source of funding was from the Hornby Trust, which helped us to conduct workshops

for training teachers in the use of mobile technologies for enhancing the teaching and learning of English in the Indian context. These workshops drew teachers from various parts of the country and the use of podcast, padlet, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google groups, Google Drive, blogs and mobile phones were dealt with and the participants unanimously felt that the workshops broadened their approach to teach English and make their classes engaging and motivating.

Peter Drucker has rightly said “Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.” In terms of the association membership it seems we have plateaued, unable to cross even 5000 when we have set our eyes on 10, 000 a couple of years ago. And, the chapters after reaching 63 we have brought them down to 46 after deleting some of the dysfunctional partners. However, this did not discourage us from launching new ones – this year has seen the birth of two chapters one at Namakkal in Tamil Nadu and the other at Gauhati in Assam. Let me take this opportunity to appeal to the chapter convenors to reach out to all the teachers in your regions to professionalize them, which was the prime objective behind establishing chapters.

Looking Forward:

Let me look at ELTAI Vis-a-Vis other associations of English language teachers, possibly for future directions.

While ELTAI is typically confining itself to teaching and learning of English language there are associations which have transcended these boundaries and moved on to carry out several socially relevant activities. ETAS, i.e. English

Teachers Association in Switzerland, with just about 700+ members has many projects, one among them is called Teacher-to-Teacher project, in countries such as Romania, India and Zimbabwe. Their project in Zimbabwe is known as the Matopo project, which is supported by the Roger Federer Foundation, has built 6 primary schools and one secondary school, constructed a dormitory for girls to pursue their education, given scholarship to 30 girls for 3 years to complete their secondary education as they believe in the principle of “Educate a woman, you educate a nation” and through Spend a Penny Project they built a number of girls’ toilets.

The request, hence, to the ELTAI members is, as Albert Einstein mentions, “Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them”, to suggest new pathways to the association to become relevant and meaningful to the society at large. And, to increase the membership of our association I appeal to the ELTAI members to seek library membership as libraries are expected to subscribe to journals and have earmarked funding for it. While the subscription for foreign journals runs into thousands of rupees annually, paying rupees 3000/- for ten years is a pittance for them but for us it is the survival.

Let me end with a personal thought: Dr. Verghese Kurien brought about the white revolution; Dr. M.S. Swaminathan heralded a green revolution; Dr. Sam Pitroda launched a telecom revolution but English language teaching is still awaiting a messiah who can launch a revolution for effective teaching learning processes of English in our country. Do you find yourself in the vanguard?

Dr. K. Elango, National Secretary, ELTAI

Interview with Nik Peachey

Dr. Albert P'Rayan

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Google the name “Nik Peachey” and you will over 68,500 results. Nicholas Peachey, known as Nik Peachey, is a well known learning technology consultant, trainer and writer. Nik, who won British Council ELTon Award for Innovation in Teacher Resources in 2016 and ELTon Award for Excellence in Course Innovation in 2012, has been a leading learning technology resource person at various educational technology conferences and learning technology trainer across the globe. The author of *10 Lessons in Digital Literacy* and *Web 2.0 tools for teachers* and co-editor of *Creativity in the English language classroom* answered questions related to learning technology, its impact on learning teaching and learning, types of training English language teachers need, etc. in an interview with **Dr Albert P'Rayan**. Here is an extract from the interview:

Nik, first let me congratulate you on winning the ELTons 2016 award for Innovation in Teacher Resources for your ‘Digital Video – A Manual for Language Teachers’. This is the second time you have won an ELTons award for Innovation. In 2012 you won the award for the blended learning course you developed. How important are these awards to you?



Thank you Albert. Firstly I think the awards themselves are very important. They set a standard for us to aspire to and they also give us an opportunity to celebrate achievement within our profession. I think we need to do more of that.

For me as a freelance trainer, writer and consultant, winning the awards is very important. They help me to get work and boost my credibility in what's becoming a very competitive space. The most recent award for my ebook *Digital Video - A Manual for Language Teachers* is especially important because it's the first publication from my own company <http://peacheypublications.com/> and because it is so hard to convince teachers to buy ebooks, even though they are much cheaper. I hope that having the award will give teachers the

confidence to buy. It's also really important because I crowd sourced the funding to produce the book. More than 140 people donated their time and money to help me create the book and so I feel that winning the award vindicates the trust they placed in me.

You have been in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) for over a quarter century and you have been a teacher trainer and learning technology consultant for over two decades. Can you share with us one or two of your major success stories?

It's difficult to define success in language teaching or in teaching generally. It seems like the work is huge and never will be done. There's a quote from the Irish writer Samuel Beckett that I often think of "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better." For me personally there are some milestones, like winning the two innovations awards or co-editing Creativity in the English language classroom with Alan Maley that I can look back on as times when I failed a bit better, but probably the real achievements happen at times that I'm not aware of. My blogs have now been read more than 3.5 million times and every now and then someone comes up to me at a conference and says that they read them and learned a lot from them. That's probably my biggest success, the small changes - the small change that I've enabled someone to make in their teaching and thinking.

In the age of information and mobile technology, do you think technology has

changed the way learners learn English and teachers teach the language? In other words, have language teaching and learning become easier because of technological innovations and tools such as mobile apps, podcasts, vodcasts, etc.?

I don't think it's become easier. We've become resource rich, but in some ways our job has become harder. Technology has changed the way people communicate and interact with and through language. My children now experience language through technology in a much more diverse range of forms and contexts than I did when I was growing up and that's challenging for teachers because we need to help them mediate and use those communication genre effectively in their first language and in English. That has broadened the scope of what we need to do and the range of skills we need to enable that process. For me that's quite an exciting change, but for many teachers, that's not easy at all.

Based on your experience and interactions with teachers of English across the globe, can you state that teachers are showing interest in integrating technology into language teaching?

Yes. For sure. Wherever I go I meet lots of teachers who are really keen to understand and exploit new technologies. I also meet teachers who are doing really great things with their students and are so enthusiastic about what they do. Of course I also meet teachers who are very resistant and dismissive of technology, but they are

becoming increasingly few and their arguments are also becoming increasingly weak.

As a technology trainer you must have conducted numerous workshops and training programs on Web 2.0 technology and tools for English language teachers in different parts of the world. Do you think teachers utilize the tools effectively and have made an impact on English language learners?

I think it varies enormously, but what's important is that as a profession we are making progress in this area and our understanding is growing. Where teachers are basing their use of technology on sound pedagogy and where they are able to put the technology into the hands of their students and enable them to use it to interact with language there has been a lot of success. I think where teachers struggle most is when they are using technology as a form of gimmick to increase motivation. The novelty soon wears off and students lose interest.

I remember that in one of your blogs you have mentioned two types of training: i) technologically-focused and ii) pedagogically focused. How important is technology training for ELTs to integrate technology into language teaching? What should be the focus while training ELTs to get interested in integrating technology into ELT?

Ideally, I think we need to combine both. Many teachers need help to feel confident

with the technological side of things, but this has to be delivered within the context of creating learning for students. A lot of technology training fails because it is devoid of context. It focuses on how to use elements of the interface, etc. without really putting the application to a sound pedagogical use. Too much training is also theoretical and hypothetical when it needs to be practical and hands on. Training that involves teachers just listening and making notes is going to have very little impact. Teachers need to use the technology to create materials or learning opportunities for their students during the actual training.

Is it difficult to motivate ELTs who think they cannot use technology in the classroom?

I haven't found this to be the case. If the training is practical and they can see how easy it is to create something with a genuine use for their students then most teachers get motivated pretty quickly. Many older teachers are afraid of technology. They think it's difficult and complex to use, but the reality is that whilst becoming more powerful, technology is also becoming much simpler to use. Nowadays you can create some amazing things just by pointing the mouse and clicking. These kinds of things took hours or days of complex coding ten years ago. Nowadays you can create and edit a video on your phone using a free app in just a few minutes. That's really amazing.

Can technology be more effective than inspiring teachers who are not tech-savvy in making learners master a language?

Technology without inspiring teachers or inspired learners is incapable of achieving anything. Technology in the hands of motivated learners and inspiring teachers can achieve amazing things.

Do you think technology has the potential to replace English language teachers in the near future?

No. Not in the near future. It can augment good teaching and make good teaching more diverse and powerful. It can enable a change in the role of the teacher too, but I don't see it replacing a teacher.

In what ways can technology promote learner autonomy?

Technology is a huge enabler of learner autonomy because it can give students access to such a large range of materials, sources of information and useful applications and as teachers if we focus on helping our students to understand how to use technology to become more autonomous learners, then we could really start to realise the full potential that technology offers us.

Can web technologies (social networking tools,) be used effectively to promote the 21st century skills: communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking?

The ability to be literate in the 21st century resides in our ability to effectively use those kinds of tools and especially to use them for collaboration and creativity, so my answer is a categorical yes. Critical thinking is different however, but still vitally important and always has been, but I think

it's something we need to constantly encourage and foster regardless of the medium.

According to the research by Professor Patricia Greenfield of UCLA, as technology has played a bigger role in our lives, our skills in critical thinking have declined. As a technology trainer, do you agree with her? Is it possible for technology to foster critical thinking among learners?

No. I don't agree that technology has created a decline in our critical thinking skills, rather that it has highlighted a greater necessity for them. In the past we have been too quick to assume that something written in a book has authority and is correct or true. We've built an educational culture around this kind of indoctrination, but now that students have much greater access to a wider range of opinion it's become much harder for educational establishments to maintain a specific bias in terms of what is or isn't fact. The reality is that most of what we know is opinion rather than fact and what we know changes as our understanding grows. Within the world we inhabit there is a vast diversity of opinion and interpretation of knowledge. What we need to do is help students to understand that and rather than teaching them to look online for what has genuine authority and then dismiss all other sources, we need to help them to question the validity of authority and understand why different perspectives may have emerged. We need to help them to look at different opinions, evaluate their credibility, not based on the

authority of the source but the rationality and sincerity of the logic of their ideas. If we can do this we may be able raise a generation of students who are much more intelligent open minded, independent and tolerant in their thoughts.

In spite of rapid development of information and multimedia technology, ESL and EFL learners find it difficult to master the language according to various reports and studies. Does it imply that technology has not been effective as expected?

No. It implies two things. The first is that our original expectations may not have been correct. Learning anything is always going to take hard work and thought. Technology won't take that away.

Secondly it implies that we haven't applied effective methodologies to our use of technology. Technology is a tool and as such is inert. In order for it to have positive impact we need to be pushing it in a direction which will help us to achieve our goals. Our understanding of how to push it needs to be based on a thorough understanding of the kinds of pedagogy and methodology that will make it impactful and as a profession we haven't reached that place yet. There are a lot of reasons for this. I wrote an article about this some time ago with the title '11 Reasons Why Teachers Don't Use Technology': <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/11-reasons-why-teachers-dont-use-technology-nik-peachey> but at the heart of the problem is that our mindset hasn't yet shifted significantly from the ways we were

taught. I think we are still embedded in the educational past where we are trying to get students to follow a prescribed path that we can measure and evaluate and we are grafting technology on to that as a form of support. We are still measuring students' abilities to give the answers we want to the questions we have created. Instead we need to get to a point where we are helping students to use technology to create and answer their own questions and explore and discover learning for themselves.

Do you envisage that technology will play a very important role in education? What will it be?

For sure. Above all I think technology gives people access to a huge range of information and learning opportunities. It can also give people a voice to share what they know and learn from each other.

A lot has been written about helping guide students to choose the 'right' materials that have 'authority' when they access the online world, but I think that's a mistake. There are no wrong or right sources of information, there is only information. We need to help students to think critically about that information understand the arguments within it, the rationale behind it, the bias that influenced it and above all how they, as individuals, personally respond to that information and apply it to their lives. There is a wonderful line from a poem by Walt Whitman "re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a

great poem and have the richest fluency". This was written in 1855, but in the world we now live in, this above all is what our children need to learn.

I've tried to base my recent book '10 Lessons in Digital Literacy' around these principles. The ebook is a collection of lesson plans. The materials are designed around authentic online information, but they help students to think about their own understanding of the issues within the information and to respond to the information on a personal level. They also guide students to use technology to create research to find out more about the topic

and to re-evaluate their views based on what they have discovered. The lesson plans are based on some of the principles of connectivism - a theory of learning that has been promoted by Stephen Downes and George Siemens.

Personally I believe this is an amazingly exciting time to be involved in education. Technology offers us huge potential to transform education on a global scale, but we need to ensure that this is done in a way that will empower people and open their minds to new possibilities rather than prescribe and control what and how they think.

ELT: Status and Challenges at Under Graduate Level in Rural North Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Face of English language teaching has changed dramatically after globalization. Indeed, it is not only changed the perspectives of the language teaching but also focused both English for academic purpose and English for specific purpose. This is the reason why techniques of teaching and classroom delivery has shifted from teacher centred to learner centred. This philosophy of learner centeredness has strong links with experimental learning and also encourages for task based language teaching English is playing a pivotal role in Indian system of Education since its inception. Gradually sea change has taken place both in teaching and learning even; it is observed people's mindset that without English there is no bright future in the fast changing world. This is the reason why importance of English language has increased ever than before. At present English is being taught in India as a compulsory subject at under graduate level. In spite of this having learnt English as compulsory subject, students are not competent to communicate and interactive with people, paradoxically majority of students show good performance in the examination by scoring distinction in English.

Key terms: Competent, experimental, effective strategies, Planning and preparation

Face of English language teaching has changed dramatically after globalization. Indeed, it is not only changed the perspectives of the language teaching but also focused both English for academic purpose and English for specific purpose. This is the reason why techniques of teaching and classroom delivery has shifted from teacher centred to learner centred. This philosophy of learner centeredness has strong links with experimental learning and also encourages for task based language teaching. In the fast changing world English language is standing in the forefront

in providing employment opportunities and helps to explore knowledge in a globalized world. This panorama has directly or indirectly enhanced the importance of English language in the changing scenario. It is the language which provides an ample opportunity in every stream because; it is considered as an official language in globalized world.

Education is foremost foundation in moulding career of students. To achieve these objectives it has to restructure itself in terms of updating the curriculum from

time to time to gain momentum in both pedagogy and students in general. Indeed, in the fast changing world English language has become one of the significant tools in enhancing and enriching skills of students. Indeed, transition is truly encouraging them for effective and meaningful training of students in English classroom; technology is motivating and directing the teachers for their role in educating the students in learning English Language with expertise. At the same time the language teacher has to encourage students to interact and raise questions during classroom sessions. This kind of congenial classroom atmosphere will motivate and guide the students to communicate in English with the teacher. This initiation will certainly become a launching pad for learners to overcome from fear and mistakes while speaking in the English classroom. As **Kahlil Gibran** rightly pointed out that if a teacher is indeed wise he doesn't bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind, in addition to this meticulous planning, preparation and effective strategies of teacher plays vital role in developing intelligible skills among students. This could be achieved through lesson plan and teaching plan, which leads to enrichment of academic learning ambience. As Tricia Hedge has aptly pointed out that the design of classroom procedures for effective development of language skills, the respective roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners the relationship between the content of teaching and the context of learning; the development of critical pedagogy; the successful

management of interactive learning, and the development of innovative teaching materials will help to provide insights into the relevance of ELT classroom practice.

Status of English Language Teaching in National Scenario

English is playing a pivotal role in Indian system of Education since its inception. Gradually sea change has taken place both in teaching and learning even; it is observed people's mindset that without English there is no bright future in the fast changing world. This is the reason why importance of English language has increased ever than before. At present English is being taught in India as a compulsory subject at under graduate level. In spite of this having learnt English as compulsory subject, students are not competent to communicate and interactive with people, paradoxically majority of students show good performance in the examination by scoring distinction in English. The main reason behind that students are preparing English subject only examination point of view rather than acquiring skills and proficiency in English, it is a matter of great concern for the academia. In other sense, it is observed that present English language teaching in India doesn't focus about approach and preparation while teaching, majority of the teaching fraternity reliable on prescribe text and who don't go beyond the given content. Often teachers are interested to complete the syllabus rather than making students to acquire language skills. Because of this the proficiency and competency of students in English language has not been observed

in the expected level. It is a known fact that present scenario is expecting language proficiency in every field. To fulfil this task teacher has to play an exceptional role in building language competency of students. But it is a matter of great concern that in most of rural colleges in India English is being taught in the mother tongue and students and teachers have adjusted with this atmosphere of the classroom; it is not a matter of exaggeration but fact of the matter.

It is observed that many teachers in the days of globalization still feel that the learners are dependents and they are doing favour by teaching them. Completion of topics and preparing the learners to pass the examination is their first priority. The curriculum, the pedagogy, and different evaluation are rarely questioned and changed by the faculty at the grass root level. Ignorance of objectives of education in general and functional English in particular is rampant among the majority of the faculty.

“The fact of the matter is in India teachers’ battle for completing the syllabus for the learners even not possessing the texts. They are hijacked by the private classes promising the Queen’s English and sure passing marks in the written tests. The committed faculty is handicapped by the poor vocabulary, unclear concepts of grammar, Anglophobia of the learner. The faculty teaching the language of opportunities in their mother tongue is the popular teacher. As a result teacher follows the easy and examination oriented teaching methodology to maintain

the results rather than language competency”

As matter of fact crowded classroom in India may not give enough space and freedom for the language teachers to experiment innovative ideas in the classroom, at the same time language teacher has to complete the syllabus within the time bound. This compels the teachers to fulfil the task rather than improving the language skills of the students. “Sometimes teachers of English are more interested in completing the syllabus than making the students acquire good language skills”

Thus, the need of English to the Indians in the globalized world is two ways namely ESP, English for specific Purpose and EAP, English for Academic Purpose. To achieve this task effectively and successfully, teachers of English has to keep abreast in their respective arena in order to create learning ambience and language competency among students.

Status of English Language Teaching in Karnataka

The status of English language teaching in Karnataka is not different from national scenario. Majority of teachers focus in traditional teaching method and a few teachers who would like to explore with innovative teaching approaches and methods to develop language skills among learners with the help of modern gadgets. This kind of atmosphere can observed in metropolitan colleges but, the overall panorama of the English language teaching is given importance to complete the subject

for the examination point of view rather than focusing language skills of the learners, main reason for such kind of development in the present circumstance in English language teaching due to lack of extra care by the English language teachers and ineffective learning ambience in the classroom. This atmosphere has created stumbling blocks among students in developing competency in English. "It is observed that the present English language teaching in Karnataka at the college level doesn't talk about any kind of methodology. This indifference to methodology leaves the English teacher in a chaotic condition but also encourages the teacher to follow what appears good to him/her like vernacular language teaching, English language teaching requires more of practical approach. This emphasises the need for reorientation to the teachers of English to deal with an average general English classroom" Even it is an open secret that majority of teachers of English are more interested in completing the syllabus than making the students to develop language proficiency. "In the post independence era English language teaching in Karnataka has seen many changes. However despite the recommendations of various committees and commissions it has not been possible to attain the anticipated standards in the use of the language by our learners. Many undergraduate and post graduate still find it difficult to speak in English due to huge gap between the needs of the learners and teaching objects and disproportionate importance given to the prescribed textbooks"

Status of English Language Teaching in Rural Karnataka

After over viewing the status of English at national level the investigator doesn't find major differences in teaching and learning of English in rural part of Karnataka. Indeed, English language teachers focus to complete the prescribed text rather than improving the skills of students. The only difference is observed that at national level students are exposed to the modern world which has directly or indirectly compelled the students to develop language skills marginally. The status of English language learning and teaching at rural is similar in entire country and Karnataka is no exception. Most of the rural colleges are unable to cope with changing trends in English Language teaching which is also one of the reasons for mediocre and incompetency in English language teaching and learning in general. Most of the rural colleges in the state are unable to enjoy the facilities of modern gadgets sometimes teachers are unaware of the facts, knowledge about the technology. In other sense the condition of English language teaching in rural parts of Karnataka is not encouraging. Motivation problems of the learners, ineffective classroom strategies, and substandard infrastructural facilities are some of the reasons for the decline in standards of language.

By all accounts change is the constant and natural process in every stream and teaching is no exception. Every now and then things are changing at the rate of knots in a globalized world and one has to

rejuvenate the skills and perspectives to explore innovative ideas in the respective arena. Indeed, English has become the guiding force in the fast changing world and situation is demanding effective communicative skills in every walk of life and has become the root of shaping one's career in a better way. Developing language competency is gaining momentum in the present circumstance, in other sense enhancement of language competency of students' lies on the shoulder of language teachers. To achieve this task effective classroom delivery plays an important role in improving language skills and learning ambience of English language. Teachers' methods and approaches in the classroom help to develop effective communicative skills among students. Majority/ most of the experts and researchers opine that the condition of English language in rural colleges is not effective and sub Standard, English language teaching is handicapped with a number of active problems in India such as crowded classrooms, lack of adequate qualifications on the part of teachers, deficiency of good training facilities to teachers, dearth of instructional materials and supplementary, both for teachers themselves. In addition, a large number of teachers of English confine themselves mainly to prescribed text books and methods of teaching that are out dated and ineffective at this juncture. Considering the problems and conditions that exist in the classrooms, English teachers professionalism in India needs to be examined carefully and hence the need for this study.

As matter of fact the learning condition of English language is hardly observed in rural colleges, due to various reasons and challenges are faced by the both English teachers and students in general. It is common observations of teachers that students are not comfortable with the basic skills in English particularly in grammar and proper sentence formation; focussing these aspects at college is always challenging one, due to time constrain in the semester system. At the same time most of the teachers engage English class without structure and planned that has further widen the gap of learning atmosphere in the rural colleges.

Teachers' impression on Status of English Language among Rural Students

During my interaction with the respective faculty members to gain information and status of English language in rural parts of north Karnataka and their experiences, the discussion was cordial and friendly; the faculty members shared their experiences and grave concerns with open arms.

- ❖ Majority of students don't have basic foundation in English grammar. They expect translation method to teach English and force the teachers to explain entire theme in mother tongue. After this they are reluctant to listen in English because of, these teachers are unable to focus for development of language skills and innovative practice.
- ❖ Students are unable to write simple sentence and it is quite challenging to handle such of kind of students at under graduate level

- ❖ Some of the teachers are willing to walk an extra mile but sub standard of infrastructure pushed their potentialities into back foot and succumb their aspirations and initiations.
- ❖ Handful of students in rural colleges is aware of the importance of English and communicative skills but due to time constraint teachers focus to complete the syllabus within the academic calendar.
- ❖ Large classroom hardly motivates language teachers to walk an extra mile and improve the language skills of students.
- ❖ In few colleges two guest faculty each one visit thrice in a week and no scope for enhancing the language skills of students. But they focus to complete the given portion.
- ❖ In one of the colleges' guest faculty who visit thrice in a week shared his experiences that more than 90% of students are from Marathi medium, who don't understand simple sentence and teaching English for such students are challenging and daunting task to make them to write and understand English. At the same time students appeal to the teachers to focus English only on examination point of view.
- ❖ Students would like to focus English language only on examination point of view rather than acquiring competency in English language. Even though teachers show interest to develop language skills by conducting extra classes but handful of students turn at the beginning and due course remaining students stay away from the classes.
- ❖ Teaching English language at under graduate level is not possible even if we do, teachers are unable to complete the portion within the time bound
- ❖ Creating learning English ambience at rural college is challenging because the base of rural college students in English is not effective and encouraging one.
- ❖ Even astonishingly, at under graduate level students are unable to write accurate alphabetic it is not matter of exaggeration but reflect in the classroom!!
- ❖ Students expect at the outset to explain the entire theme in mother tongue rather than in English.
- ❖ None of the faculty is expressed positive impressions about students learning and English classroom.
- ❖ Majority of the teachers visit classroom without approaches and proper strategies, but they blame the previous teachers for the poor English of the students. They neither prepare the classes nor focus to improve language competency of the students.
- ❖ Some of the teachers shared their innovative measures to develop language proficiency of students, like conducting group discussion, debate, and paper presentation. At the same time teacher

also revealed that only handful of students turn for such activities.

- ❖ A few faculties have taken steps to conduct add-on courses in English and they have partially succeeded in improving the language skills of learners. Sometime they may not able access the modern technologies like internet facilities, and overall infrastructure facilities.
- ❖ In rural colleges teachers hardly focus grammar in detail, which is one of the reasons for ineffective English of the students. Teachers are often covers the grammar part in the English classroom.
- ❖ Majority of the teachers are unaware about the term- **English for Specific Purpose**.
- ❖ Teachers don't find much difference in the syllabus of Arts and commerce.
- ❖ Normally students expect from teachers of English to help them to pass English in the examination without any difficulties. Beyond who don't expect anything from teachers of English. They also appeal to teach English through translation methods.
- ❖ It is observed that majority of the faculty members squarely pointed out their fingers towards students/ learners but, they never revealed their classroom planning, preparation and strategies for effective classroom deliver and approaches for improvement of language competency of students. Indeed, their

observations were unstructured and dearth of ideas for classroom preparation.

- ❖ Handful of teachers walk an extra mile to develop language skills among students by conducting extra classes but, only a few students attend at beginning and after few classes they also become irregular to the class. The reason behind is that students would like to pass exam rather than improving their skills, which has enhanced the grave concerns of the teachers.
- ❖ Majority of the students don't have strong basic foundation in English. Meanwhile students are not comfortable with direct method of teaching (English to English) and switching on to different methods in one class is always challenging to the teachers particular to teach in mother tongue. Indeed, teachers are putting their efforts but unable to get concrete results.
- ❖ Teachers are not happy with availability of resource and infrastructure in college premises.

Mentor needs to walk an Extra Miles in the Classroom:

- ❖ Teacher has to asses language status of students through diagnostic test where he would be able to understand language competency of learners. Through this he can prepare strategies to improve language skills
- ❖ Diagnostic test will help to identify slow

learners and advance learners that will assist to develop peer learning atmosphere in the classroom

- ❖ Provide enough space and freedom for learners to communicate in English and encourage them to ask questions during interaction that will guide students to overcome from stage fear and inferior complex
- ❖ Execute L.S.R.W skills effectively in the classroom which is the base and root of developing language proficiency among learners
- ❖ Teach English through activities and interaction methods which will help students to open up and to share their impressions on the given topic
- ❖ Conduct sessions of book review and presentation skills every fortnight which will guide to improve language skills and vocabulary
- ❖ Creative write up should be encouraged and the same should be highlighted in the classroom which motivates others to perform and write
- ❖ At the outset simple and common topic should assign for creative write up like **Mobile, and its features** etc gradually learners feel comfortable with language learning. This approach will guide for advance level of learning
- ❖ Effective use of modern gadgets will help to develop language competency among learners

- ❖ Make learning fun and focus involvement of learners

Conclusion

Indeed, mentor plays a pivotal role in effective classroom delivery. He needs to prepare strategies and planning for effective classroom. This methods and approaches become a guiding force for mentor in enhancing and enriching language proficiency of learners. to achieve this task mentor has to walk an extra mile to develop academic learning ambience in the classroom, it is the strong conviction of the writer that academic learning ambience will motivate the learners to develop articulator skills in English language. As matter of fact English has gaining momentum in a globalized world hence, it is the need of the hour to focus on building language competency among learners irrespective of rural and urban.

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Appropriate Knowledge and Curriculum in Higher Education Institutions in India: Need for Reform



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ABSTRACT

A paradigm shift towards a culturally appropriate knowledge base will help to reestablish the lost link between curriculum and the learner's identity. The change in the curriculum for language teaching being introduced in the HEI help only to meet the demands from the market forces in the globalized context. But 'saleability' of the content should not be the sole criterion upon which the significance of the curriculum relies on. Through language studies, the learner must be able to gain clarity regarding the ideas which shape his/her behavior in society. Therefore the term appropriate knowledge refers to knowledge that generates the culture of the individual and the community. Language education whether it be English or an Indian language should guide the learner to ask questions about the meaning of one's own institutions, rituals of behavior and patterns of values.

Schumacher in his world famous book **Small is Beautiful** declares categorically that "All history as well as all current experience – points to the fact that it is man, not nature, who provides the primary resource: that the key factor of all economic development comes out of the mind of man....In a very real sense, therefore, we can say that education is the most vital of all resources" (64). So a proper and efficient management of resources in Higher Educational Institutions could very well start with the fundamental principles governing the creation and transmission of knowledge through educational institutions. Two kinds of innovations are possible for a qualitative change – One is the innovations within the existing structure in colleges/ Universities and the other is innovations in

the very re-definition of knowledge that could be formed appropriate. I am here trying to question the validity of the existing knowledge systems dominating the higher education sector and an alternative structure is being presented for a more efficient total quality management in colleges/Universities.

Higher Education institutions in India have been under the influence of two epistemologies – 'a colonial epistemology and an anti – colonial epistemology partially anchored in the indigenous sense of collective identity. One is a dominating framework and the other is based on the integration of knowledge with culture. One is neo-colonial, carrying with it imperialist paradigms rather than Indian Paradigms.

The curriculum is generally influenced by approaches which are insensitive to the cultural contexts. Any kind of knowledge is conditioned by a process of interpretation that occurs in a context.

The colonial policy denied indigenous knowledge and skills a place in the curriculum in higher education institutions and the same policy continued in HEI due to the resistance to change and inertia displayed by the policy makers. Macaulay and Travehyn introduced English literary education on the principles of moral ideas and religious basis represented in it. The missionaries had taken a major part in the text book writing and production through bodies like the Calcutta School Book Society. A textbook centered curriculum in colleges denied opportunities to access the true worth of the Indian learner, his values or skills. The external evaluation system was introduced which indicated a lack of trust in the system. Krishnakumar in Political Agenda of Education comments, "The hiatus between the curriculum and the milieu is part of the colonial and pre-colonial legacies of our education system (50)

The conservation and transmission of knowledge in to a formal system emerged in India a thousand years before Christ followed by the colonial educational system. The ancient system of educational arrived at liberation through adherence to Dharma. Buddhist Viharas prospered later and the Muslim system of modern higher education started with the Calcutta, Bombay and Madras University which neglected the Indian intellectual tradition resulting in the following:

1. Indian intellectuals distanced

themselves from Indian knowledge system

2. Neglect of the vernaculars
3. The link between the requirements of the masses and the educational system got severed.
4. Cultural amnesia
5. Indian paradigms in education got subjugated in the learning process.

The British model in HEI distanced the educated elite from the masses, from the skills in arts, crafts and in health management practices. In 1948, the University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr.S.Radhakrishnan struck the right note when he stated - "Our ancient teachers tried to teach subjects and impart wisdom. Their ideal was wisdom along with knowledge. No amount of factual information would make ordinary men into educated or virtuous men unless something is awakened in them, an innate ability to live the life of the soul". The latest attempt for change is the Knowledge Commission Report after the New Policy of Education documents.

The National Knowledge Commission seeks to develop a framework that provides access to knowledge, knowledge concepts, knowledge creation, Knowledge application and development of better knowledge services. One common feature of all the reports on reform is the elitist, undemocratic functioning of the commissions, without defining knowledge against an anticolonial discursive framework. Knowledge that has to be imparted in HEI must be validated in familiar situations and contexts." Knowledge is contextual as what is right in one context

need not be so in another cultural context.

Raymond.A.Horn in “Knowledge in a Reconceptualized Educational Environment” argues that a reconceptualised view of knowledge which is diverse, egalitarian and critical is the need of the age as against an empirically generated knowledge which supports the dominant culture. Teachers have to use a Pedagogy that imparts critical thinking and creativity by incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in the curriculum... includes beliefs, perceptions, concepts, and experiences of local environments both natural and social.”(505 George J Etal). The myths, legends, cultural practices all have a profound instructional effect in a learning environment. The spiritual knowledge systems help the learner to understand his own self, for developing his emotional/ spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual insight is also a valid body of indigenous knowledge, establishing the connections of the self to others in the community. A counter hegemonic paradigm shift in curriculum is possible by drawing on the multiple knowledge forms available in the community in which the learner lives. It is not a static system, It is fluid and collaborative .In the Indian context, Spiritual traditions can help men to resist inappropriate education. When Spirituality is occluded in classrooms ... the result could be destructive for the development of self and identity (66,George J)

The hegemonic knowledge structure in Indian Universities started with the idea that knowledge was natural and political .The Standardised tests for identifying merit was based on this ideology of meritocracy.

The standard of test used all over India measures only fixed notions of intelligence and ways of knowing. Intelligent candidates fail to gain the power of psychological validation just because they are outside the space of set neutral norms .Tests by recruitment agencies define what is excellence and what is knowledge in a limited rigid and neo-colonial space.

The standardized valid knowledge tested by agencies reflects the practices and ambitions of the new elite, inadvertently taking the position of the colonies. The common man's children are forced into forgetting their provincial and national history as well as his spontaneous skills and knowledge .For building up a democratic curriculum frame work a new definition of excellence in education has to be evolved taking into account the significance of inherited knowledge or cultural intelligence within each learner. Excellence should never be defined in terms of the unquestioned acceptance of elitist conceptualization of knowledge.

Innovative Practices Based on the four Pillars of Education

UNESCO in an exhaustive report on the status of education all over the world refers to the four pillars of education – Learning to know (acquiring the instruments of understanding), Learning to do (developing competency to act creatively in society), Learning to live together (competence to deal effectively with human beings) and Learning to be (Developing a human being to act with autonomy, to understand himself properly). Let us have a brief analysis of the possibilities of innovation and resource management in the background of these

four seminal goals in relation to Higher Education Institutions.

Learning to Know

Acquisition of knowledge is possible through instruments of knowledge, like the language, the methodology, the standards of evaluation and so on. The models available in the Madras University did not encourage exchange between traditional Indian Knowledge and modern European knowledge. All Indian sources of knowledge were scaled off in a separate label called Indology so that a comparative study was rendered irrelevant. Thus a one sided dependence on colonial academia imparted a negative impact on the quality of academic transactions. As G.N. Devy in **After Amnesia** comments – “The continued acceptance of ideas from the West cannot be fully attributed to the intrinsic worth of those ideas Indians ... they started studying western ideas because they had already accepted the opportunity of the British culture. (21)

The coloniser’s language, accepted all over India as a convenient instrument of knowing, according to the African writer Ngugi “is the most powerful vehicle through which ... European power fascinated and held the soul prisoners: - English language served as the means of spiritual subjugation”

The English language should be adapted to absorb the Indian ethos and the characteristic Indian rhythm of life. The English Language, as Raja Rao says, should be the Indian variety reflecting the meaning of Indian life as powerfully as possible.

Learning to Do

Undergraduate education is supposed to

fulfill both the functions of general education and training for indepth enquiry into an academic discipline/professional career. Developing a competency to act creatively has to be developed in every student who comes out of a college. But the system of evaluation gives no scope for divergent thinking as the ‘right’ answer converging into a uniform pattern. An original creative response or in other words an impulse for creation of knowledge is not sufficiently rewarded in the evaluation system. There is a failure of imagination in the organization and structure of the curriculum. The curriculum fails to provide impetus to students to play a proactive role in fulfilling civic duties like maintenance of public health and hygiene, conflict resolution, internal security and so on. Academic achievement of students from the marginalised sections of society should be considered as an indicator of the principle of equity and justice being practiced in the curriculum.

Excellence or achievement should no longer be determined in terms of text centered, memory based learning. The self esteem and self image of the student in a college classroom determines the quality of service that could emanate from him. The ethnic identity, family history, economic class all have to be included in his personal database kept in the college for developing an individualized assessment scale. Such an inclusive curriculum can motivate the learner to do it for society. For example, the resources available in language education courses can be utilized with optimum benefit to the society at large. The learning of history, civics, culture, critical reasoning, and general awareness all can be addressed through a language education course or

courses. Even a grammar book can be made interesting by introducing culture specific examples and humorous situations. The prescribed texts should be rich in cultural details and should present cultural issues in depth so that the learners can critically analyze them. The best option for language teaching may be to include significant content from translated texts in Indian languages. The purpose of cultural understanding, learning historical consciousness, cultural assertions leading to improved self concept etc. will be fulfilled through appropriate selection of content in language education, both in English and in Indian languages. But while selecting content for text books, care must be taken to see that there is no perpetuation of a single, narrow notion regarding that particular culture.

The conflict between the linguistic identities of the Indian student with the English language used in classrooms must be carefully resolved by a sensitive teacher who could provide culture specific concepts to ease the tension. Translated knowledge from different states in India can be an appropriate knowledge base, for fostering cultural identity and appreciation. Gail. E. Tompkins in **Language Arts: Content Teaching Strategies** argues that culturally conscious literature affirms the cultural identity of students of diverse places.

Learning to live Together

The class room culture can be made enriching with group activities, peer teaching to allow a chance for the student to learn to live in a society. Extension programmes and action research are to be made a compulsory component of undergraduate curriculum for language

teaching. For instance, the documentation of the traditional social-religious practices of a locality, uploading it in the internet, collection of rare out of print books in an Indian languages, arranging a digitalized library or establishing a museum of Indian knowledge systems and numerous other programmes can be arranged by students and credits given to them appropriately. Development of interpersonal intelligence and life skills like courage, honesty, patriotism, and respect for the environment will all help a learner to learn to live together.

Learning to Be

Learning is essentially an experience that enriches one's sense of values. Learning ultimately develops a person who understands himself. Learning to be is a summation of all the above three concepts. The classroom can rise up to this noble end when there is (1) relationship building (2) fostering critical thinking (3) fostering creative thinking. The learner must be able to select what he wants to learn, and he must be given freedom so that he could be the center of the educational activity.

Unless and until we adopt appropriate knowledge which could be of use to the learners overall development of the curriculum will remain rigid and inappropriate to the social context. Emotional ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education. The cultural values available through the curriculum are significant as all learning is mediated through culture and its products.

The hegemony and ideological control of the Euro-American academic establishment

with the help of a western publishing industry can no longer be validated. Innovation in educational practices can be fruitfully initiated by strengthening and including the contents of indigenous knowledge systems in the curriculum. To understand the cultural and civilizational specificities of knowledge, a new epistemology which is a force against the 'epistemic fascism' prevailing in HEI, must be accepted for the future of the Eastern nations. All kinds of knowledge can directly function in the non-urban locale, including Indian Knowledge Systems which can be utilized to construct a new challenging curriculum in HEI.

Conclusion

A paradigm shift towards a culturally appropriate knowledge base will help to reestablish the lost link between curriculum and the learner's identity. The change in the curriculum for language teaching being introduced in the HEI help only to meet the demands from the market forces in the globalized context. But 'saleability' of the content should not be the sole criterion upon which the significance of the curriculum relies on. Through language studies, the learner must be able to gain clarity regarding the ideas which shape his/her behavior in society. Therefore the term appropriate knowledge refers to knowledge that generates the culture of the individual and the community. Language education whether it be English or an Indian language should guide the learner to ask questions about the meaning of one's own institutions, rituals of behavior and patterns of values. Education in HEI, if it has to fulfill the goal of development, must critique India's own culture and ideas about development,

the people's preferences, capabilities, values and assumptions. The self-reflexivity can be achieved through the framing of language content for both English and regional languages. The District Primary Education Program at the school level which commenced in the early 90's addressed these issues in a very effective manner and the same kind of change in context and methodology will help HEI to go a long way in the direction of an appropriate advancement of learning with a minimum of rote learning. The quality of education in colleges must be judged in terms of its relevance to the context of the learner and also to his needs and the needs of humanity. The recent initiatives of the Government of India for a total revamping of education, it is hoped, will address critically the appropriateness of knowledge created and imparted for the Nation.

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READING ACTIVITY

READING NEWSPAPERS* (An effective strategy)

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- Objective** : Reading a maximum number of news stories (articles) with a minimum amount of time by being familiar with the journalistic practices such as the inverted pyramid style and the page layout.
- Participation** : Individual.
- Material** : Any daily. (The Hindu, The Times of India, The New Indian Express, Deccan Chronicle)
- Preparation** : Reading primarily the headline, the lead and one or two paragraphs of a news story and trying to read the entire line in a column in a single glance.
- Procedure** : One should read the columns in a newspaper vertically, instead of the usual practice of moving the eyes from right to left.

*(Every page in a newspaper, unlike other texts, is divided into 5/6/7/8 columns with approximately 7/6/5/4 words respectively in each line. A single eye span should be able to absorb all the words in a line. Although the number of columns varies in different pages of a newspaper most pages have 8 columns with 4 words in a line and reading 4 words in single glance wouldn't pose a serious challenge. Even if it does, with **eye training** one could overcome it and transfer this skill to other columns with more number of words.)*

One could cease to read a news story after quickly glancing through the headline and the first two or three paragraphs.

*(Newspapers universally follow the **inverted pyramid style** – organizing the details/any data according to their order of importance. Headlines announce all the key details of the news and the first paragraph generally answers the 5W's and the H (who, what, where, when, why and how) and the next one or two paragraphs give all the other significant details about the happening. Hence, a reader can get all the necessary details without reading any further.)*

In case a news story is of importance and interest to a reader he could go through it in its entirety but they are not many in number on any given day.

(Several research studies have established that most of the adults daily spend just about 10 minutes on an average reading a newspaper. So readers mostly glance

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