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A forum for professional development



THE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Content or Skills? : An analysis of the TN State Board Draft syllabus in English
– One-on-One: Interview with Richard Smith – Idioms and Phrasal Verbs for
Vocabulary Development – Theme Centred Interaction - Towards a
Democratic Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom – Video Clippings:
A Source to Enhance Communicative Competence

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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

eltai_india@yahoo.co.in

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.

**Padmasree S. Natarajan**

Founder Editor and Publisher

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Dear Reader

“Utilizing best practices in my classroom positively impacts students by providing motivation to learn and promoting success in a global world.” (NC Teacher, 2006)

Is it fair to expect teachers overburdened with preparation for classes, teaching, correcting student work, marking scripts and other curriculum requirements and administrative work to be engaged in teacher research? I have heard my fellow teachers ask a similar question on numerous occasions. Any teacher who is interested in making teaching/learning better and asks questions about their own classroom practice and tries to use the best practices in the classroom is a reflective teacher and takes a teacher-research stance. As teacher-research helps a teacher become a better teacher and contributes to their professional development, it cannot be an option.

Richard Smith, known for his interest and active involvement in teacher research projects in India and many other countries, in an interview with Albert P’Rayan, answers questions related to various aspects of ELT including professional development and teacher-research. Do teachers show interest in teacher-research? Richard says that he tries to ‘demystify’ research because a problem that he has found is that “teachers often have an idea of research being for academics and not really for them, whereas we *know* it can be useful for teachers to engage in small-scale research into the problems and puzzles facing them” and adds that he has found, “firstly, of presenting teacher-research in a way which makes it seem feasible and useful and, secondly, of adapting conventional ‘action research’ to make it more exploratory and gradual”.

In the paper “Content or Skills? : An analysis of the Tamilnadu State Board Draft syllabus in English”, S Vincent presents a review of the syllabus by analysing the Preamble to the syllabus, bringing out the merits and demerits of the draft syllabus and offering suggestions for reframing it.

Joby Cyriac and Lal CA in their article “Theme Centred Interaction (TCI) posits TCS”, a group process originated by Ruth C Cohn, as a democratic pedagogy appropriate for ELT in the Indian context.

The articles “Idioms and Phrasal Verbs for Vocabulary Development: A Practical Approach” by Reddi Sekhar Reddy and “Video Clippings: A Source to Enhance Communicative Competence” by V Srilatha offer tips to enable learners to develop their English language skills.

Robert Bellarmine presents a detailed review of the book *Integrating Global Issues In The Creative English Language Classroom: With Reference To The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* edited by Alan Maley and Nik Peachey. Robert states that the book is “an excellent source of ideas and classroom activities” and recommends the book “to the teachers and trainers who have been persuaded by Activity-Based Language Teaching”.

As usual, we have the features “Key Concepts” by P N Ramani and “Reading Activity” by K Elango. We have introduced another interesting column “Mind Your Language” by P N Ramani. I am sure the readers will find the column useful.

Dear readers, it is your journal. As always, I welcome your feedback and comments. You can contact me at jeltindia@gmail.com

Dr Albert P’Rayan

Content or Skills?: An analysis of the Tamilnadu State Board Draft syllabus in English

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ABSTRACT

The Tamil Nadu Government has recently published the Draft Curriculum for English to be implemented soon. This paper attempts a review of the syllabus. It outlines the theoretical background of curriculum designing in English and analyses the Preamble to the syllabus. It then brings out the merits and demerits of the draft syllabus and offers suggestions for reframing it.

Key words: curriculum, CLT, evaluation

The curriculum design for second language learning will specify the objectives, the content, the sequential arrangement of material, methodology and evaluation. The objectives will be derived from the goals / aims of the particular course, which are competences in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. As Brumfit points out, “.... A syllabus must specify a starting point, which should be related to realistic assessment of the levels of beginning students and ultimate goals which may or may not be realized depending on the abilities of learners and their purpose in a particular course” (75). Assuming that the starting point of our learners is at the zero level which will be the case in most of the rural and many of the urban schools, realistic goals must be set for each year, reaching the ultimate level at the end of a ten or twelve year course. J.B.B Allen’s suggestion, though not explicit, may be relevant here. He recommends that “the

ultimate aim is to encourage the students to use all the sources available to them to meet the demands of a particular target situation.” (68). In our case, the target situation is fluency in oral expression, discourse competence and to some extent socio-linguistic competence. However, as the English course in Tamil Nadu has a ten-year / twelve-year duration, the target level for each year must be clearly specified, which will be the starting point for the subsequent year.

A syllabus design usually consists of conceptual framework, the syllabus, materials, classroom activities and evaluation. Once the objectives are spelt out, the conceptual framework suitable to them is made, followed by the content (what) materials (with what), classroom activities (how) and evaluation procedures explicitly stated. The conceptual framework or the principle is based on “the theories of

language and of second language acquisition, learning.” (Janice, 16)

With this brief outline of the concepts behind the curriculum designing let us examine the *Draft Syllabus Tamil Nadu 2017*. It is appropriate to begin with the “Draft position paper on Teaching of English,” which after setting out the aims of English Language Education, reviews the present scene in Tamil Nadu. This, in fact, is an indirect way of doing ‘needs analysis’. The preamble clearly states that the focus should be on understanding and speaking rather than grammar or syntax. (emphasis as in the original document) . It also points out “knowing a linguistic or grammar rule does not result in the ability to use language effectively. We experience language when we use it to comprehend by listening and reading or to express ourselves by speaking or writing. In this process of making meaning we develop vocabulary and internalize the grammar of the Language.” This statement, one can conclude, is drawn from the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. The interactive learning experiences suggested also reflect the CLT approaches /methodology. The preamble further emphasizes the need for clearly articulating “learning outcomes, learning experiences and processes that develop the necessary competences for each stage of school- Primary, Upper primary, Secondary and Higher secondary. It emphatically states that English is best learnt not when taught as subject but as skill. Finally, the position regarding evaluation is refreshingly sensitive to

language learning outcome. Evaluation or assessment should ideally measure competence and should be use/performance based. In other words, the focus is on use of language rather than the content of lessons and grammar knowledge.

The reason for such a detailed discussion of the preamble is to point out how the focus gets dissipated in the actual syllabus and to show where the stated purpose gets fulfilled.

For example, the preamble emphasizes the need for clearly articulating the learning outcomes and so on for each stage, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. But in the syllabus the outcomes for Class 1 to Class 5 are given for each class, and not for a five-year course. They are not also stated with clarity. Further all the four skills are given equal importance along with ‘listening for phonemic awareness’, vocabulary building and grammar, in clear violation of the stated principle. Greater importance should be given to listening and speaking in the primary classes. And especially it should occupy a major part of first year instruction. It is suggested that the objectives can be stated on the model given below:

The pupil

1. listens to instructions and responds physically. Examples are: *go to the blackboard, show your book, go out, come in,..*
2. listens to questions and answers in a single word. Examples are: *Where is*

your book? Answer: *Here. Who is your friend?* Answer: *Dinesh.*

This can be followed by Total Physical Response exercises. For example: *touch your nose*

Children can practise them in small groups and in pairs. The classroom can be turned into a physical Education Training ground. Children learn listening and speaking simultaneously.

This activity alone may take more than a month for **all children** to master it. In the meanwhile, language functions for socializing such as greetings and apologizing can be introduced.

Command words like *go, come*, and names of the organs of the body, *ear, nose*, may be written on cards and children can be trained to read them and then copy them. This can be done through games.

The dispute between fluency and accuracy has long since been resolved and fluency takes precedence over accuracy. So teaching of grammar can be postponed to a later stage, as also the phonic drills. Grammar games and activities (see references for materials) can be employed after 3rd or 4th standard for teaching grammar covertly without using any terminology.

Pronunciation practice, stress, rhythm and intonation are introduced in class 6. Many questions arise as many eye brows are raised. Is it necessary to teach the segmental and supra-segmental features of the sound system to the young learners? Is

it possible for our teachers to master them and teach them? How many fluent speakers of English in general in our state can speak with correct pronunciation and intonation?

Yet another dictum prescribed by the preamble is that content must not be given importance. Ironically, literary appreciation is introduced in class 2 itself. Literary appreciation involves understanding the content material. It is an established fact that most of the class 5 students cannot read and understand class 3 textbook even in Tamil. Granting that in the revised curriculum children will have mastered reading skill and can read and understand the text prescribed, is it possible for them to appreciate literature?

This leads us to the question how reading skill has to be taught. In the draft syllabus there is a mention of silent reading only in the seventh standard. It can be started even from the fourth standard provided, this transferable skill is taught in L1 in the third standard. As for the writing skill, the objectives and the learning experiences for the primary are quite adequate for teaching the mechanics of writing.

The most important omission in the draft syllabus is the mode of evaluation. In the preamble it is mentioned that competences in skills will be tested and the modalities are being worked out.

Listening Test has been included in the syllabus in use now. But the questions to test comprehension are not of the objective type. It is better to have true or false and

multiple choice questions to test listening comprehension as well as reading comprehension. As for speaking skill, a battery of tests for each stage can be prepared and it can be used in oral interviews. For example, the teacher asks the learner five questions general in nature and the correct answers can be marked. The students can be asked to put five questions, and the correct questions will be scored. At the next level the learner can be asked to describe a picture in about five sentences and the correct sentences (not necessarily grammatically correct) can be awarded marks.

The syllabus, it is understood, is based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach. Though there are many varieties in CLT all of which centre advocate games and activities. An extension of it is Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). In the lower classes the strong variety of CLT, that is, communication without explicit explanation can be practised. In the later stage, the intervention of the teacher through explaining the elements of the language including explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary can be allowed.

It is difficult to arrange the activities and games in the CLT approach in the sequential manner, unlike in the grammar oriented syllabus. This difficulty can be overcome by organizing the activities with a focus on grammatical categories. Further, though repetitive practice has been discontinued in English teaching along with the behavioural approach, repetition is inevitable in actual classroom practice. A number of activities

are available for teaching a particular item and in a spiral or cyclic arrangement of the items there will be a need for repetition. So the teacher is expected to have a repertoire of activities and games.

In spite of the shortcomings in the choice, ordering and sequencing of the learning materials and the overload in the syllabus (perhaps because of the over enthusiasm of the curriculum framers), the primary objective of imparting language skills, it must be admitted, is not lost sight of. It must be appreciated that skill based syllabus has replaced the content based approach of the previous (that is the present) curriculum. The communicative competence of the learner is in the centre of the design. Syllabus designing in the communicative language teaching approach has always been a difficult process. Activities cannot be graded and sequenced as in the case of the structural or grammar based syllabus. And in the draft curriculum there is a sincere attempt to select the activities. There is a logical progression of the expected learning outcomes and as the learner moves from one class to the next, she is exposed to a variety of experiences especially in oral/aural skills. The objectives given for reading skill specify the mastery of literal and inferential comprehension for higher classes. However the success of this exercise will depend on the level, length and interest of the passage chosen for teaching reading skill. The syllabus for the eleventh standard is indeed a very ideal model to teach higher order skills of reading and writing. As for writing skill there are exercises in

summarizing. One can think of introducing paragraph writing even from the third standard. Writing the topic sentence for a paragraph and preparing an outline before writing short essays will help the learners structure their paragraphs and essays effectively.

If the curriculum framers fine-tune the present draft syllabus pruning certain items in line with the stated principles in the preamble and if they are less ambitious the English programme will be a great success in the State and there will be a remarkable improvement in the standard of English of our young boys and girls.

However, it all depends on three major factors: the evaluation system, textbooks and the training of teachers. Most importantly it is the teacher who has to make language learning simple, enjoyable and effective. She has to play the role of a facilitator, advisor and co-communicator.

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Call for Project proposals

One of our Patrons, Dr. S.S.Rajagopalan, has come forward to provide financial assistance, not exceeding ten thousand rupees, for every selected project with a view to encouraging teachers to take up projects for the improvement of standards in school and higher education.

Proposals are now invited from ELTAI members for undertaking Action research projects. The proposal should clearly state, apart from personal details, the class or classes and the number of students to be involved, duration of the project, expected outcomes, procedures to be followed, mode of evaluation and an estimate of the expenditure involved with break-up details.

S. Rajagopalan

One-on-One: Interview with Richard Smith

Albert P'Rayan

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Dr Richard Smith, Reader in ELT and Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, UK, is well known for his achievements in putting ELT history 'on the map', as founder and curator of the Warwick ELT Archive (http://www.warwick.ac.uk/elt_archive), as the author of groundbreaking articles including 'Building Applied Linguistic Historiography' (Applied Linguistics 37/1), editor of a three-volume History of Language Learning and Teaching and founder / co-convenor of the AILA Research network on History of Language Learning and Teaching (<http://holt.net>). In this interview, Dr Smith shares his experience of how he became involved with ELT researchers and teachers in India, discusses the importance of action research, the need for continuing professional development, the relevance of Harold Palmer, and speaks about his passion for "developing the research field of History of ELT".

Richard, thank you for accepting my request to be interviewed for The Journal of English Language Teaching (India). You have already been introduced to the readers of the journal. You are well known in the ELT circles in India thanks to your work promoting ELT research, including teacher-research. Would you mind sharing how you first became



involved with teachers in India and outlining the kinds of things you've been involved in here?

Firstly, thank you very much for inviting me to be interviewed. I'm sure there are plenty of readers who haven't heard of me in fact, though you were kind enough to print my article about 'scientific' language teaching and Harold E. Palmer in the last issue of the journal. I've been really happy to visit India and become more involved with colleagues here over the last few years. My desire to do that began more than a decade ago when I was developing my interest in the history of global ELT and becoming more and more aware of the importance of India in that history. In fact, I now recall, it was closer to *two* decades ago that I invited Dr N.S. Prabhu to Tokyo to take part in some

ELT history-related events, including an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of Palmer's death which was organized by the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (IRLT). This interest in India began to be realized in a more concrete way when, around 2012, the British Council asked me to collaborate with Paul Gunashekar and Lina Mukhopadhyay at EFL-University on quite a large project surveying ELT research in India, and it's from then onwards, too, that I began to collaborate more with Rama Mathew at Delhi University, whom I'd already got to know through a research network I set up on Teaching English in Large Classes (bit.ly/telcnet-home). Happily, I was later able to bring Rama together with my colleague Annamaria Pinter in a very interesting project on teachers and children as co-researchers in Indian primary schools, and we also hosted one of Rama's PhD students at my university for a year.

My initial hope of collaborating specifically in the area of ELT historical research has also been developing slowly – colleagues at the University of Hyderabad (Sailaja Pingali and Sunita Mishra) have been active in this area and, again, we hosted a PhD student from there recently – Vennela Rayavarapu – whose research into 19th century textbooks in Madras Presidency has proved to be fascinating. Amol Padwad, Krishna Dixit and Atanu Bhattacharya are three more Indian scholars I've been developing ideas with in this area and I hope there'll be some kind of joint research project emerging from all this, since there's so much still to learn about the colonial as well as

post-Independence history of English teaching in India. Finally, I've been involved – with Amol – in getting the new British Council Aptis Action Research Mentoring Scheme off the ground in its first year, and that's kept me in contact with the practical concerns of Indian teachers and teacher educators. Last year, too, Gauhati University in Assam invited us to give a four-day workshop on Exploratory Action Research for teachers there, organized by Padmini Boruah. So, all in all, I can see that my heart keeps bringing me back to India and I hope I'll keep on coming back!

I am glad to hear that you love visiting India and working with ELT researchers in India. Richard, you are a well-known applied linguist, researcher and prolific writer. You have carried out numerous research projects in different parts of the world including India. What do you think is your major contribution to the field of English Language Teaching?

In practical terms, I'd like to think that I've acted as a kind of catalyst, helping to bring teachers and researchers together in various ways and helping teachers in some developing countries, specifically, to be more aware of what they *can* do to address their sometimes very difficult circumstances, develop themselves and feel more empowered. I hope this may have a lasting positive legacy in those teachers' lives – and, more and more, this gives me fulfillment in itself – but I think I've perhaps been working quite a lot 'behind the scenes' and not actually in a very 'well-known' way. Back in

the 1990s and 2000s I did get a little bit known for some contributions in the area of learner autonomy (and the idea that we should focus on teachers' autonomy as learners: 'teacher-learner autonomy', in other words teachers' ability to take control of their own development in cooperation with others), but that was something I was more involved with writing about some years ago, and not so much now. In the projects I've been involved with more recently, I think I've been putting this idea of teacher-learner autonomy into practice, and I'd like it to be thought that I at least helped in a general 'decentring' of ELT away from colonially inspired UK arrogance in the field – and this is a decolonising process I will continue working on! –via initiatives like 'teacher-research for difficult circumstances' (warwick.ac.uk/trdc), involving teachers researching their own practice and building appropriate solutions from the bottom up. However, I'll probably need to write a book about this for more people to benefit and know about it – I'd certainly like to do that when I can find the time! Oh, and I think I will be known for developing the research field of History of ELT, which I'm proud of.

You have worked as an English language teacher in France and Japan and as a teacher educator you have been involved in various projects in different parts of the world. How have these international experiences helped you in your career?

I did spend a long time in Japan – thirteen years – at the outset of my career, and that experience is really what 'formed' me as a teacher, as a teacher educator and as

someone contributing to the field of ELT more generally. I'd already developed a strong interest in other languages and cultures – the relatively short time I spent in France was connected with my first degree studies in the field of French language and literature – and it was primarily my interest in Japanese culture that took me to Japan straight after I graduated. But while I was there I developed an intrinsic interest in ELT methodology and applied linguistics, came back to do my MA in Applied Linguistics at the University of Reading and later started and eventually completed a PhD in that field, focusing on historical research, at Edinburgh. In 2000 I moved back to the UK, to take up my current post at the University of Warwick, where I mainly teach postgraduate students – teachers and prospective teachers coming from all over the world, many from Asia, East Asia in particular. I think my interest in other cultures and languages and my experience in Japan have been vital to the kind of teacher educator and researcher I am today in many ways. I became quite well-integrated with Japanese culture and society, learning the language – the spoken language at least! – and working very closely with Japanese colleagues. The sometimes quite difficult, long-term experience of managing to adjust to Japanese society has helped me, I think, to understand and generally get on quite well with people from other Asian countries as well as to understand what it feels like to be an 'outsider'. I also started off my career as a teacher in secondary schools (in both France and Japan) and later was a teacher educator

for Japanese students preparing to teach in public schools. That meant I had to throw away some preconceptions about communicative language teaching being the only possible method and I had to recognise the constraints that mainstream teachers face around the world – so I’ve always, since then, been most interested in the issues facing bilingual (aka ‘non-native speaker’) teachers in public education systems, in large classes, in quite ‘difficult circumstances’ according to Michael West’s formulation, and my experience made me sceptical about the validity of ready-made, pre-packaged solutions coming from ‘inner circle’ (e.g., UK and US) contexts.

As you said earlier, ‘Teacher-Research’ is an area of interest you’ve been putting a lot of energy into recently. You have worked on projects in this area in Chile, Peru, India and Nepal and you have just brought out the book A Handbook for Exploratory Action Research(available online via the British Council) as well as, last year, the co-edited books Teacher-Researchers in Action and Teaching in Low-resource Classrooms: Voices of Experience. What are you hoping to achieve with these projects, and why do you feel “teacher-research” is so important?

The projects you mention have been supported by the British Council, and I’ve been involved in advising about how they can be structured and how the mentoring can go on (because I think most teachers really do need a mentor to support them during a teacher-research project). This

most recent book (*A Handbook for Exploratory Action Research*) is one I’m really proud of because it puts all the experience Paula Rebolledo (my co-author) and I have gained about how to support teachers to research issues that concern them, for professional development, into what we think – and teachers have told us – is a very reader-friendly, colourful, down-to-earth format. We wanted to ‘demystify’ research because a problem we’ve found is that teachers often have an idea of research being for academics and not really for them, whereas we *know* it can be useful for teachers to engage in small-scale research into the problems and puzzles facing them. During five years of experience in the Chilean Champion Teachers programme, in particular, we’ve found ways, firstly, of presenting teacher-research in a way which makes it seem feasible and useful and, secondly, of adapting conventional ‘action research’ to make it more exploratory and gradual. In my own career, at different times, I’ve found it useful to gather feedback and other data from students to explore an issue and develop my teaching on that basis, and I’ve encouraged student-teachers to engage in small-scale research studies while they’re doing teaching practice because I think it’s an autonomy-oriented way of doing teacher education (developing their capacity to learn for themselves as teachers into the future). It’s only over the last five or so years, with these British Council projects, that I’ve been able to take these ideas to in-service teachers and modify them on that basis, and it has proven useful and, in some ways very transformative for the teachers involved. I

think this comes through strongly in another collection, called *Champion Teachers: Stories of Exploratory Action Research*, which I edited with Paula and with Deborah Bullock. Again, this is available for free download from the British Council TeachingEnglish website.

What challenges do you face as a facilitator of such teacher research projects?

The main challenge for me has been finding the time to devote myself adequately to these projects as well as my more academic interest in history of language teaching and my teaching at Warwick, administrative involvements, and of course my family! I think I'm just about managing but sometimes it's tough, and tiring! Two things are worth saying here, though. As I said near the beginning of our interview, I do genuinely find it fulfilling to experience the change in mindset – towards a more empowered state – which you can often see in teachers researching their practice for the first time and sometimes seeing things from a completely new point of view, more from students' side, for example. I think teachers often start to acquire new energy from this, and that's what's happening to me, too, through my own involvement. And, secondly, there's a big time effort at the beginning of mentoring teacher-research, or doing mentor-mentoring as I've been doing, because there are a lot of unfamiliar things for participants to learn and try out – but as participants get more engaged they take on more and more of the responsibility themselves, motivation becomes more

intrinsic, and extra time-burden is compensated for by the benefits accruing. Again, this happens to me as much as it does to the mentors and to the teachers they're mentoring. The whole area of mentoring teacher-research is one that has come to fascinate me more and more these days – there are certainly challenges but they can be overcome through experience. I recommend the British Council's AARMS (Aptis Action Research Mentoring Scheme) opportunity in India for people who feel they would like to take the plunge and try to mentor a group of teachers to do teacher-research.

Let's move on to professional development more broadly. You have been coordinator or co-convenor of various professional groups including IATEFL Research SIG, the AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics) Research Network on Learner Autonomy, and AILA Research Network on History of Language Learning and Teaching. Why have you devoted so much time to such professional associations?

I was very involved in such groups from very early in my career and have remained involved throughout it, I think basically because they meet my interest in bringing people together to learn from one another in a relatively democratic kind of way; but, also, because I've benefitted a lot personally and professionally from being so involved in them. Before all of those you've mentioned, during my 'formative years' in Japan I was a founder-member of the JALT-

Gunma committee, programme chair of JALT-Tokyo when I moved to Tokyo; and I founded JALT's Learner Development SIG with a focus on learner autonomy in 1993. I also participated in various groups of Japanese secondary school teachers, including IRLT – the association founded originally by Harold E. Palmer in 1923. Then after I got back to England I was newsletter editor for IATEFL Learner Autonomy SIG before those you've mentioned. As I've said, teacher associations (TAs) and more specific interest groupings of teachers have been important to me as a support in my own career and I believe they're worth supporting in turn, and celebrating. I'm turning more attention to this idea of celebration more recently, via things like writing a history of IATEFL for its 50th anniversary in 2016, and promoting the idea of teacher associations as bodies which can promote relevant ELT research.

How important is professional development for teachers of English? In what ways can teachers develop themselves professionally?

I would say they can do so by joining and participating actively in a TA or teacher club – or setting one of these up if there isn't one locally – somewhere they can share problems and issues outside their own institution, though sometimes it is possible to set up a discussion group for like-minded colleagues within an institution. I've found it's important to find some kind of way to step outside your own teaching, your own problems, and see them from a different perspective. Otherwise they can become too

much of a burden. Some teachers may find they can get this kind of perspective on their own – or they may develop that capacity, finding ways to be reflective or to research what's going on. But for many people – perhaps most people – that capacity doesn't come naturally; it develops through interaction with others. For me that's professional development – not necessarily learning specific new things all the time but developing a capacity (maybe we could even call it 'teacher-learner autonomy'!) to step back and feel in control, instead of becoming burned-out!

It is said that in some countries professional development is not the felt need of the English language teachers. It is forced on them. When you deal with such teachers how do you motivate them to give importance to their professional development?

You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink! If it's thirsty, though, it will drink. If teachers aren't thirsty for what's on offer it might be that what's offered is the wrong kind of drink, or doesn't look like the right kind of drink, so they're suspicious of it. Best to find out what they want to drink – and try to provide that! Showing people that there is relative advantage in something new, relative to what they have now, is the only way to 'make' them change. But 'making' people change isn't possible. It has to be something they want themselves. And it's my job as a teacher educator to find out what that is – it's not their fault if they don't see value in things I bring from the outside. And they might be right to be suspicious!

Many teachers of English find teaching interesting but research intimidating or at least not very relevant. Do you think it is important for all teachers to be involved in some sort of action research?

I think teachers are right to find that academic research is not very relevant to them – I agree that a lot of the research that goes on is not done for teachers but for the benefit of the academic community. I actually think we need to shift the research landscape towards ELT research which not only addresses teachers' real concerns but also *involves* them as agents in some way, for example in setting the research agenda or engaging in data analysis. Of course, this includes forms of teacher-research like Exploratory Action Research but also something else I've been trying to promote, which is teacher associations taking on research into their members' concerns as a collective project ('TA-research' as Harry Kuchah and I have been calling this). In short, I think we need a radical reappraisal of the purposes of research. From this perspective, professional researchers need to find ways of engaging teachers more in research, and perhaps this will go some way towards overcoming the intimidation teachers can feel. To answer the second part of your question, though, no, I don't think all teachers should engage in action research, but I hope they will have the opportunity to see what it can be like in practice. If they're forced to do it or told what to research it's not teacher-initiated any more, it doesn't engage teacher-learner autonomy, and it's no longer 'teacher-

research' but, instead, something imposed.

You are known as an authority on Harold E. Palmer (1877–1949) and on the history of ELT more generally. In the foreword to your book *The Writings of Harold E. Palmer An Overview* (1999), A. P. R. Howatt, who I understand was your PhD supervisor at the University of Edinburgh, states that “Harold E. Palmer did more than any other single individual to establish English language teaching (ELT) as an autonomous branch of language education in the first half of the twentieth century and to give it the ‘applied linguistic’ direction to which it has remained loyal ever since.” How relevant are Palmer and other pioneers like him in the 21st century ELT world?

It's a good question because history can so easily be seen as irrelevant in a forward-moving, dynamic field like ELT, when new problems are continuously presenting themselves. Times change, and new problems require new solutions – I don't want to be one of these people who say 'there's nothing new under the sun' or 'what goes around comes around' as if nothing changes – it does, of course! Having said that, I do think keeping what I call 'historical sense' alive is important as a basis for development of language teaching theory (H.H. Stern in his (1983) *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (OUP, 1983) said the same thing) – we need to know what's been tried in the past in order to at least try not to repeat the same mistakes but also to build on the good things that

have gone before. I think the main thing we gain, though, is a sense of perspective and an ability not to be deceived by the latest academic or commercial fashion – having a knowledge of the past helps build ‘teacher-learner autonomy’, in other words. I first saw that among teachers associated with IRLT in Japan.

What impact did your rediscovery of Palmer’s work have on you as a teacher educator and applied linguist?

It was quite profound. I was looking for ways to make my teacher education work in Japan suitable to the context – not simply imposing a weak version of the communicative approach, for example, but seeing what would work in the context of Japanese lower and upper secondary schools. And I started to come across the work of Harold Palmer, introduced to him by Japanese colleagues, and I learnt more and more about the extent of his contributions in Japan and the way he had adapted his assumptions in collaboration with Japanese teachers. So, my study of his work gave me a model of someone increasingly committed to issues of importance in teachers’ experience and at the same time someone who was always developing his thinking and thereby making more global contributions. Palmer was really an ‘action researcher’ himself, continually searching for new solutions. At the same time, as I wrote in my piece that you published in the last issue of this journal, he worked very much within a modernist, ‘scientific paradigm’, and studying his work and that of his contemporaries and

successors in the immediate post-war period enabled me to see that as a paradigm and to see its limitations and that we are now moving beyond it into something new and more context-sensitive.

You have been an active researcher, prolific writer and passionate teacher educator. What do you do when you are not involved in any activities related to ELT, applied linguistics and professional development? Do you pursue any specific non-academic hobbies?

I think I spend quite a lot of time with and for my family, though of course they might disagree! These days it’s possible for a university teacher in the UK to do quite a lot of work at home – not teaching work but administrative and writing work – so that’s what I tend to do. I’m glad to have that flexibility to be with family in a home environment though it can be difficult to concentrate sometimes! Over the last few years I’ve been developing my musical interests and enjoy playing in a rock band with colleagues in the Centre for Applied Linguistics at Warwick. I’m on bass guitar!

Nice to hear that you are a guitarist. Last question. What is your message to the ELT community in India?

There are many pressing concerns in ELT in India and it’s not for me say how to address or resolve them – someone coming from outside like me can have no magic solutions (remember Prabhu’s article in *ELT Journal*, ‘There is no best method – why?’). However, I have found in my own career

that certain things can help – including active collaboration and discussion of issues with like-minded colleagues in a teacher association; engagement in not only reflecting and discussing but also researching one's practice, that is, gathering some data (e.g. student reflections) and answering questions on that basis; and, finally, gaining a sense of history has proven its worth to me in giving a sense of perspective. Your autonomy and sense of self-worth as a teacher are very important – autonomy not in the sense of freedom alone but *ability* to plan and teach and develop oneself ('teacher-learner autonomy') according to students' and your own needs. Finally, I suppose the main thing I've been suggesting in different ways

in this interview is that the best ideas on how to teach appropriately come from teachers themselves, and that we need to find ways to share more, and find ways to resist inappropriate impositions, for example by developing a better appreciation of history!

Thank you, Richard, for sharing your experience and ideas.

Thank you, Albert, for giving me this opportunity to share my thinking – it's been an interesting experience to try to bring my thoughts together!

For further details of Richard Smith's publications you can access his home page at: <http://warwick.ac.uk/richardcsmith>

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Idioms and Phrasal Verbs for Vocabulary Development: A Practical Approach

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate aim of English language teaching is to equip the students with effective communication skills and make them successful in their life. Modern education system strives to make the students employable and make them successful in getting right placement. But the recent surveys show clearly the bitter truth that only less than 19% graduates is employable, remaining students are lagging behind particularly because of their poor communicative skills. Effective communication skills certainly help for the success and everyone desires to acquire effective communication skills and speak eloquent. It is crystal clear that vocabulary plays a vital role in effective communication skills. But most of the students have a phobia that it is difficult to develop vocabulary, it is because they don't know how to master vocabulary. So this article highlights the easiest strategies and practical approaches to develop vocabulary.

Introduction

To communicate effectively it is essential that one should possess the best and ample vocabulary. What is vocabulary? The treasure of words is vocabulary. Words and their meanings; synonyms, antonyms, one word substitutes or idioms and phrasal verbs are regarded as vocabulary. Without mindful of words and their meanings it is not possible to express intended views effectively. If a person doesn't know sufficient words and their meanings, he/she can't speak eloquently and there may be some pauses while he/she speaks. On the other hand, if he/she knows sufficient words and their meanings he/she can speak

fluently and eloquently.

Rote-Learning method is ineffective

All students want to develop their vocabulary but they don't know how to do it, moreover some students think vocabulary can be learned by heart as they did in the case of essays and short answers. But vocabulary can't be improved through rote-learning method and vocabulary development is not possible over night or within a month and the like. Some students try to read or study the dictionary; but it is not right, dictionary should be consulted contextually but not to be read. While reading the dictionary one feels all the words

seem to be familiar but later one realizes that one does not remember even a single word.

Contextual Learning for Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary can be developed gradually with a determined practice. While practicing various language skills one can find many difficult or new words, immediately it is needed to consult a standard dictionary to know the meanings of those words. But while reading something, there may be a lot of words which are difficult or new, so it is not possible to remember all those words at a single instance, so at least some important words to understand the concept to be selected and get the meanings of those words. By doing like this they can understand the concept and the vocabulary can also be developed. It is difficult to learn and remember many words at once so it is better to try to learn at least three or four words a day; those are also according to the context. Contextual learning is very effective in the matter of vocabulary development.

Practical Usage helps for Vocabulary Development

It is very important that each learned word should be used in the day to day life. Practical application of learned words is very essential for vocabulary development. While consulting a dictionary for the meaning of a word it is necessary to learn its different forms, different meanings and their contextual usages. Use of idioms and phrasal verbs and one word substitutes is special asset for vocabulary enrichment.

Appropriate use of idioms and phrasal verbs while communicating gives an excellent impression which attracts the audience. Similarly they can speak effectively and attract audience with apt and effective use of one word substitutes. It is advisable to learn sufficient effective idioms and phrasal verbs for effective communication. Knowing is not enough, doing is very imperative, which means known idioms and phrasal verbs should be used contextually to make the conversation effective and impressive.

Idioms and Phrasal Verbs are Ornaments to Communication

Conversations with idiomatic expressions are always effective and impressive. It is difficult to converse in the modern world without idioms and phrasal verbs. An idiom or phrasal verb is a term or phrase whose meaning is different from the dictionary definitions and the arrangement of its elements; it refers to a figurative meaning that is known only through conventional use. Idioms are manners of communication which are natural to native speakers of particular language. Appropriate use of idioms and phrasal verbs makes conversations effective and impressive. It has become necessary to use them in the modern conversations. Effective use of them mirrors the in-depth command of a person over English language and makes him an excellent orator.

Fun-Learning

While learning idioms and phrasal verbs from the articles in the newspapers learners experience fun as they can have funny

examples with newly learnt idioms and phrasal verbs such as;

- ✓ Shake a leg with [Dance with someone]

Ex: She dreamt to *shake a leg with* Prabhas.

- ✓ Grab the eyeball [Attractive / impressive]

Ex: The charming girl tried to *grab the eyeball* of her fiancé.

Impressive Expressions

Learners can learn certain impressive idioms and phrasal verbs from the articles in the newspapers such as;

- ✓ All in all. [An efficient in all fields]

Rabindranath Tagore is an *all in all* in literature.

- ✓ A turncoat. [A person who always changing his ideas]

Ex: We should not depend upon him because he is *a turncoat*.

- ✓ A red letter day [A holiday]

Ex: We shall go on a picnic on *a red-letter day*.

- ✓ Foot the bill. [Ready to pay the bill]

The two friends compete to *foot the bill*.

An Experiment to learn and use Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

During the spoken English courses as an initial strategy students were advised to cultivate the habit of reading an English newspaper. They were asked to identify the

use of idioms and phrasal verbs in the news articles. Undoubtedly they found them effective in communicating so the learners were encouraged to identify and learn the idioms and phrasal verbs in the news article while reading the newspaper. The students were encouraged to explain the identified and learnt idioms and phrasal verbs to the fellow learners in the class, it created an effective contextual learning environment. The learners enthusiastically came forward to explain with new idioms and phrasal verbs and the peers were also motivated to learn and explain the new idioms and phrasal verbs brought from the articles in the newspapers. After a few days the learners felt overjoyed to see the improvement in their vocabulary. Further to their surprise they conquered their stage fear and hesitation to communicate in English with others.

Conclusion

As the above experiment showed fruitful results in spoken English classes, it was tried with engineering students. During the first year and third year engineering in the English language communication skills laboratory and advanced English communication skills laboratory students were asked to cultivate the habit of reading English newspapers and to spot the idioms and phrasal verbs, learn them and try to explain them to the fellow students with contextual references and appropriate examples. This innovative activity proved successful to attract many students to participate in the activity as explaining ensured effective learning. Gradually, all the

students came forward with lot of new expressions with idioms and phrasal verbs. There was remarkable enrichment in the vocabulary and improvement in their communication skills.

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Theme Centred Interaction - Towards a Democratic Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This article posits Theme Centred Interaction (TCI), a group process originated by Ruth C Cohn, as a democratic pedagogy appropriate for ELT in the Indian context. Initially, the concept of democracy in education, its relevance and purposes are discussed briefly. The values associated with a democratic approach and the roles of the different constituents of the democratic classroom are described. Next, an analysis of the humanistic value base of TCI is done with a view to assess how it can practically support democratic attitude and behaviour in the language classroom. Finally, the structural and methodical elements of a TCI based language session are elucidated showing how the centrality of the student and the dynamic process of learning are held in the fore, not allowing the dominance of the teacher figure, the prescriptions of the syllabus or the demands of the context to subsume them.

Introduction

Extensive research and analysis has gone into the practice of English language teaching and resultant changes in perspectives have influenced its theory and practice over the years. This is true with regard to the approaches to ELT in India too. The paradigm of the teacher as giver and the students as simply takers has become outdated with the modern values of humanism and the introduction of student centred pedagogy. Attempts to restructure the classroom processes into a democratic, student-centred mode are increasingly found in the ELT scene but the language classroom remains predominantly

teacher- centred in approach and lopsided in academic interactions. More from the teacher and less from the students is how teaching – learning happens in the English classrooms at large.

On a closer look, the undemocratic character of the traditional classroom dynamics gets revealed. On the one hand there is the straitjacket of the prescribed syllabus, the teacher's stature as the custodian of knowledge and the uneven sharing of power, space and time in communication. On the other side, the classroom arrangements - from the architecture to the classroom setting, the ergonomics of the classroom furniture and

its formation, to the physical positioning of the teachers and learners – become reflective of the narrow leeway given to the learner compared to that enjoyed by the teacher. An exploration into the extent to which the learners are perceived as whole persons—with body, mind and spirit, into the relative importance assigned to the affective facet of the learners and teachers, and to the reckoning of the differences in the pace and style of learning would throw more light on the restrictive nature of the traditional English language classroom.

Attempts to implement Communicative Language Teaching in the Indian classrooms targeting the development of the communicative competence in the language learners, initiated a shift in perspective, though much of it remains at the conceptual level and less in praxis. Some changes in the pedagogy evinced by the introduction of teaching methods like group work, discussions and student presentations aim better engagement and interaction among the learners. However, the underlying lopsided paradigm of teacher- student relationship remains, with some cosmetic changes at the level of activities and tools.

As envisaged in CLT, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is not often lived in practice and as a result the classroom processes inadvertently promote teacher centrism, competition and related impersonal values: It pays to be smart and those who are slow or search run the risk of being left behind. Authentic interaction and genuine cooperation tend to be suppressed by demands for outdoing and winning. To add,

the teacher looms large in the classroom scene as the superior authority and commandant of the teaching –learning processes.

Democracy and Education

The term ‘democracy’, originally from the Greek *dēmokratia* (*dēmos* ‘the people’ + *-kratia* ‘power’ ‘rule’), indicates that in a democratic system, power rests with the members of the system. In a democratic process power remains with the participants of the process. It operates based on the principle that all members are entitled to a fair and equal treatment in the system and possess the right to take part in making decisions. Democracy means the belief that humanistic culture should prevail. In John Dewey’s words, “Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature. . . . This faith may be enacted in statutes, but it is only on paper unless it is put in force in the attitudes which human beings display to one another in all the incidents and relations of daily life. (Dewey, *The Later Works*. 226)

John Dewey’s conceptualisation of the link between education and democracy is significant in that it offers a rationale for a democratic pedagogy in a democracy like India. He speaks about a symbiotic relation between democracy and education. Democracy is seen as a way of life and education is seen as a continuous expansive reconstruction of human experience. (Hansen 11) It is “a mode of conjoint, communicated experience” which can exist only if practice is reconstructed

so that all persons can, in principle, realize their potential as human beings. Conversely, Dewey argues that the very idea of democracy is implied in the core understanding of education as reconstruction, as the continuous growth of all persons. If that process is taking place, democracy itself emerges all the more substantively.

“Democratic life” constitutes another name for a life of inquiring, communicating, and learning’. “The goal of education is to enable individuals to continue their education. “Democracy as a mode of associated living makes possible this very process of interactive learning and understanding. Education is not a preparation for such a life; education constitutes such a life. According to Dewey, education, democratic life, and human flourishing are all one. (Dewey, *Democracy and Education* 99)

In his reflections on the goal of education, Bertrand Russell speaks about the values embedded in democracy. As Russell puts it, the aim of education is ‘to give a sense of the value of things other than domination’, to help create ‘wise citizens of a free community’ in which both liberty and ‘individual creativeness ‘will flourish.(251) Thinking on the lines of Dewey and Russell, Noam Chomsky also endorses the democratic idea of education which leads to “... free development of human beings whose values are not accumulation and domination, but independence of mind and action, free association on terms of equality, and cooperation to achieve common goals.” (99)

Democracy in the ELT classroom

The English language classrooms also can be democratic in the sense that the teaching learning processes are underpinned by a value system of democracy and along with the achievement of language specific skills as the primary objective, instilling democratic attitudes and behaviour is also deemed as natural corollary. It is a situation where developing language skillsets becomes inextricably interwoven with the full flowering of the individual. The dignity of the individual, his capacity to think and feel, his freedom to take decisions, the involvement in making decisions about what and how things are done – all these aspects are accounted in the teaching –learning process to ensure the blossoming of human thought, imagination, creativity, and individuality. Language learning is the objective which is accomplished through the enhancement of these qualities, enabling the learner to own his learning. The learner, in principle, becomes self- empowered, self-directed and autonomous and becomes the agent of his own learning. In a democratic classroom, we meet learners who get opportunities to make decisions and therefore become skilled in the decision making process, eventually becoming citizens required for a democratic society.

In recent ELT approaches like Communicative Language Teaching the trend is to move away from a teacher dominated paradigm to student centred and interactive learning approaches. The role of the teacher in this changed perspective is

that of a facilitator and as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. The learner has to take on the role of an interdependent, interactive negotiator in the process of learning. The learner is not a passive recipient but is expected to actively share the responsibility to achieve the objectives of the learning session. This is a perspective which strengthens personal responsibility for judgment and action, helping to create the attitudes that welcome and support a democratic worldview. However, when the teachers try to adopt this perspective in their classrooms tensions arising from the transformation from teacher-centred learning to learner centred mode are inevitable. A pedagogy based on TCI which is democratic in its outlook and implementation gathers relevance in such an academic context.

Over and above the linguistic aims of the ELT classroom, a democratic pedagogy equips the learner with skills necessary to function as a citizen of a democracy. Given the changes at the global level, toning down hierarchies in to level-playing flat organisational structures in fields like management, a democratic pedagogy for ELT will also help the learners to pick up skills like collaboration and teamwork, negotiation and dialogue which are needed for their career in a multicultural world.

The democratic approach in classroom has its rewards. It creates inclusive learning environments where students feel valued. It strengthens student- teacher relationships and builds an environment of trust. A democratic classroom offers the

possibility involving the learners for collaboratively constructing the curriculum(Brough 358). The classrooms become miniature democratic communities where learning is situated within relevant contexts. The learning needs of the students are elicited through discussion and are integrated into the curriculum. The more involved students are in planning, the more engaged they become in their learning. Sharing decision-making and responsibilities by the teachers form a central ingredient in establishing such a collaborative learning environment.

The role of the teacher in the democratic classroom is one of collaboration and negotiation in the spirit of equality and freedom. The authority of the teacher must not steer the classroom relationships into a situation of domination or permissiveness. “Just as authority cannot exist without freedom, and vice versa, authoritarianism cannot exist without denying freedom, nor license without denying authority” (Freire P.). The authority of the teacher is as the facilitator and guardian of the process of teaching and learning. In the student centred democratic paradigm, collaborative action is fundamental to classroom authority. Authoritarianism and permissiveness only negate its democratic essence (Brubaker 15).

TCI – A democratic Pedagogy for ELT

Theme Centred Interaction (TCI) can be described as a system and a methodology for leading groups. It espouses a democratic approach to group process and

interpersonal communication... As a system TCI has a world-view which is based on humanistic psychology, group dynamics and group therapy. It is also a methodology for promoting human development and for facilitating experiential learning in the spirit of equality and freedom. TCI as an approach to teaching and learning has a value system which promotes democratic attitude and behaviour. It upholds democratic values, fosters democratic behaviour in teachers and students, and offers an experience of democratic living in the classroom. TCI as a pedagogy is quite suited to the Indian situation which is a democracy gradually emerging from its fledgling status and is moving towards ensuring the informed involvement of all its citizens.

The TCI was developed in the 1960s by Ruth Cohn. She was born in 1912 in Berlin and had to immigrate in 1933 to the USA. She was part of the humanistic psychology wave and was associated with representatives of the movement like Fritz Perls (gestalt therapy) and Carl Rogers (client-centred psychotherapy). The leading idea of this movement was to strengthen and develop the positive resources of everybody and to promote human respect, joint responsibility, creativity and cooperation. This idea became the guideline for the TCI model. Besides group therapy, she worked in the pedagogical field too.

Humanism, Democracy and TCI

Democracy upholds a belief in the humanistic culture and values. TCI shares

this humanistic outlook, which is expressed in the three axioms. The value – base of TCI is derived largely from humanistic psychology which recognizes that every human being has the potential for life enhancement. This potential is not for the enhancement of his/her life alone, but also for enhancement of other people's and other beings' lives. This process of life – enhancement will happen if the environment is conducive. TCI also recognizes the uniqueness of each individual, which calls for accepting others as they are.

The axioms are established fundamental assumptions which are basic for Theme – Centred Interaction. The value – system of TCI is built on these axioms. In Ruth's conceptualisation, the axioms are holistic in nature and they "form the irreducible prerequisites of TCI as an applicable system and method". They form both the basis and direction for the daily challenges involved in responsible actions.

The first axiom is the anthropological axiom: The human being is a psycho-biological unity and a part of the universe. For this reason he is autonomous and interdependent at the same time. An individual's sense of autonomy becomes more and more refined when his consciousness of everyone's interdependence expands. The concern in this axiom is "a personal and social identity and competence which is not exhausted within the realm of the personal and social, but transcends both spiritually and existentially"(Cohn 63).

Reverence is due to everything living, and to its growth. Respect for growth necessitates value judgments in decisions. The humane is valuable, the inhumane is threatening to values. Development, growth, and maturity are important goals for all human beings. Any threat to these goals must be stopped. Respect for life and growth, according to this ethical axiom, necessarily demands evaluations and decisions on our part. According to Ruth, if people are not using their ability to love and the capacity to make ethical decisions (which is part of their autonomous and interdependent self), there are no limits to the rule of might, the oppression by few of many, and the exploitation of humans and nature.

The third axiom, which is the pragmatic political axiom, concerns with the innate human freedom and capacity to decide and develop oneself. Free will occurs within conditional internal and outer boundaries; expansion of these boundaries is possible. Our exercise of free will is larger if we are healthy, intelligent, materially secure and spiritually mature, as opposed to our being sick, lacking in good sense or poor or if we are suffering under violence and immaturity (Kuebel 34).

TCI as a pedagogical approach helps the students perceive their inherent freedom and realises that a leeway for expanding this freedom exists. The classroom process gives the learners opportunity to test their boundaries and to experiment on new and different patterns of behaviour and relating. This strengthens their capacity to take

decisions and act. The underlying humanistic values support their efforts to expand freedom and to enhance their abilities as active learners. They take responsibility for their own actions. The classroom attitude and behaviour becomes imbued with the spirit of democracy when this pedagogy is put in to practice.

TCI and the Classroom Process

Two postulates are derived from the TCI axioms. They provide a basis for deciding on how to behave and act in the classroom situation. The first postulate "Be your own Chairperson" requires the learners to be aware of themselves, their internal realities and their environment. Each situation need to be seen as an opportunity for making decisions. The interaction in the classroom, the give and take in the process, has to be according to how they wish to be responsible for themselves and others. Being one's own chairperson expresses the essence of being an active member of a democratic classroom. It implies the exercise of freedom and self-regulation, being an active learner taking responsibility of learning, setting one's own learning goals, and doing reflective self-assessment for continued learning and the like.

The postulate 'disturbances and strong involvements have precedence' proceeds from the axiomatic stance that man is a 'psycho-biological unity' and that reverence is due one's own and other's growth. One must be aware of obstacles along the way, one's own and those of others. If they are not dealt with, growth will be more difficult,

if not impossible. This postulate practically helps in respecting the individual and his/her needs and challenges. Nobody's need is side-lined or discounted, instead is acknowledged as important in the process of learning. In short, based on the axioms, TCI based learning process takes shape through the postulates.

The ELT Session in the TCI way

TCI identifies four fundamental factors in the experience and development of individuals in a learning situation. Effectiveness occurs when these factors are properly balanced in the teaching learning process. The factors are the personal (or "I") factor, the group (or "We") factor, the task (or "It") factor and the environment (or globe) factor.

The TCI symbol is an equilateral triangle within the sphere. I, We and It are at the three corners and the sphere touches all of them. "I" represents the individual whose attention is directed towards herself/himself, towards the others in the group and to the task. "We" represents the participants in the group who become a group through their attention to the task and to the interaction in the group. The "task" is the focus of attention of all. The globe is the environment which influences the group and is influenced through the group, i.e. the environment in its immediate and farther consequences.

TCI maintains that the above four factors are essentially equal in value. The group will be a learning group ("effective"), only as long as the dynamic balance among these four

factors is established again and again. However there is never a static equilibrium in group work; balance is possible only as a dynamic process.

In a classroom setting, the individual learners and the teacher (T's) come together to form 'WE' the group which has an identity of its own. IT is the task at hand i.e., what is identified as the topic or learning goal. The topic or the task comes alive in a TCI classroom in the form of 'themes' centred on which interaction happens. The theme in TCI class room is the personalized and localized topic, which attracts the learner and teacher alike into a joint process of enquiry, understanding and discovery.

The Teacher as a TCI Leader

The theme is shaped by the leader and by the learner together in the spirit of a democratically fair process. In an ELT situation, the teacher /leader takes into account the language learning needs of the students/participants and formulates the theme for a session. This theme presented, however, could be modified during the interactive process that happens in the session. The TCI model assumes that the learners not only want to learn, but that they are capable of independent, self-directed action. It allows for all participants to contribute content and provide process materials,... to lead and supervise tasks, to learn and to lead learning" (Legutke 28).

TCI is a value based system which offers the possibility of applying any method or tool for the learning process. Activities like games, role plays, brief presentations, short

inputs, brainstorming, etc. and structures like formations of groups ranging from pair work, and buzz group to total plenary group interaction can be adopted according to the requirements of the session. The inclusive framework of TCI permits the flexible incorporation of techniques and tools taken from various approaches to English Language Teaching. The meaning focused interactions of Communicative Language Teaching and the drilling of structural aspects of language as in Audio-lingual method can likewise be employed within the TCI framework. It is the leader, as the guardian of the process, who proposes the use of relevant methods and tools. Flexibility, openness, spontaneity and prudence are characteristics at the heart of the TCI method. This allows integrations and adaptations from other approaches to be easily absorbed (Gordon 112).

A teacher who leads a class in a TCI manner will be using his chairpersonship; that is to say, he will be aware of his needs as well as the needs of the group. According to TCI, leading includes leading oneself as well as leading the group. A TCI leader is a participant leader. He cannot be a taskmaster. Instead he will reduce himself to the position of the guardian of the group process. In a democratic process the teacher must be the first climber; she is really the guide in that class, even if she does not dictate her authority (Gordon et al.) No one person is the leader all the time; everyone has a turn at learning how to be a leader.

Each person's dignity is respected and an awareness of autonomy and

interdependence is fostered. The TCI leader employs cooperative principles to include weaker and disturbed students into the WE-ness and activities of the class and to reduce anxiety and distrust.

TCI offers a mode of pedagogy which upholds democratic values of freedom and equality. Each person is important, his feelings, ideas and aspirations. He/she deserves respect and care regardless of status, good or bad deeds, religious affiliations, racial descend, gender, wealth of talent or material goods. TCI leader remains democratic in his/her approach and strives to ensure fairness and equity in the classroom processes. The TCI teacher attempts to make spaces for freedom- the structuring of which allows democracy and partnership to develop. The teacher reveals and invites the participants to make use of their own space for freedom. He doesn't enter that space even if the student wants it. But the teacher takes care that no one else enters it either. This is seen as the way to develop a small model of democracy in the classroom avoiding custodianship and fostering partnership (Modesto 55).

In a TCI classroom the teacher is a person responsible for himself as a growing person. Nobody has to have an ideal or perfect image. There is no indulgence in brain feeding or abstinence from giving with joy. There are attempts to outgrow early harmful influences, there is self-reflexivity, admission of failures, achievements, feelings, and vulnerabilities. The participants work towards choosing what to say with selective authenticity.

Conclusion

The educational value of TCI in a democratically orchestrated process is unmistakable. A method based on equality and freedom, independence and interdependence, holistic understanding of the individual, TCI can surpass problems of gender inequity, marginalization of minorities, and competitive relating. In TCI approach to ELT, the centrality of the student and the dynamic process of learning are upheld. The value base of TCI expressed in its axioms and its practical implementation through the postulates and methodological elements helps TCI based ELT classroom to steer away from the dominance of the teacher or the regimentation of the syllabus. Instead, TCI beckons the language teacher and the learner alike to a humanistic ambience of participatory planning, cooperative learning and learner directed process which is democratic in theory and praxis.

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Video Clippings: A Source to Enhance Communicative Competence

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ABSTRACT

When learners are asked to speak in English on a given topic, they try to speak, but they may not speak well, due to lack of ideas and exposure. Even to write a piece of composition they need to generate ideas. So, they either escape or postpone due to scarcity of ideas. Owing to this, they lose confidence; they hesitate to speak and show reluctance to write. It has become unavoidable to the learners of vernacular background to build up communicative competence in English. So, the author felt that using video clippings from Youtube would be a better idea to motivate the learners of heterogeneous group to enhance their communicative competence. The present article focuses on teaching speaking skills through group work.

Key words: *Speaking skills, Communicative competence, Youtube videos*

Introduction:

In today's world of technology, every learner is tech-savvy. So, the researcher felt it would be a good idea to make the learners learn English language in an easy and interesting way by using technology. When learners are asked to speak on a given topic, they may not show interest to speak, but they are attracted towards videos because of the visual effect. As M.J Benson says, learners' "interest, aptitude and motivation for learning English and the chances of success in foreign language [...] depend to a large extent on the favourable attitude towards English language" (202). The video clippings generate ideas to speak. With this, they gain confidence and will be persuaded to speak. "Motivation [...] plays an effective role on

academic achievement among students in general and English in particular" (Abdelrahim, I 2012). So, the researcher felt that video clippings from 'YouTube' will be better to motivate the learners to speak, particularly the learners of heterogeneous group to enhance their communicative competence. The present article focuses on teaching Speaking Skills in English by using video clippings from 'YouTube' and 'WhatsApp.'

Background of the study:

The learners of heterogeneous class who come from vernacular background have a little exposure to the target language. They are expected to speak or write on a given topic without giving proper training. The

learners hesitate to do due to fear and lack of ideas. "Ignorance coupled with fear and inhibition obstruct the students' thinking capacity" (Mary Lowrenica, 2011). Hence they fail to reach the target. So, the researcher felt that the better way to motivate the learners to speak in the target language is to generate ideas and persuade them by showing video clippings. As most of the learners use 'WhatsApp,' sharing selected video clippings from 'YouTube' through 'WhatsApp' to each group inculcates curiosity and they are encouraged to learn and will be persuaded to speak.

Objectives of the Study:

1. The first objective is to instill courage in the learners to speak in the second language.
2. The second objective is to build up their confidence level and make them fluent in the second language.
3. The third objective is to make them competent by getting rid of the influence of the mother tongue and improving their accuracy.

Participants and Duration:

A batch of thirty learners of two hours Lab is enough for this method to hone their speaking skills.

Methodology:

Methodology includes the research design, procedure, material used and the assessment procedure.

Research Design:

The present research has been designed to help the learners to improve their fluency by making them involve completely in the process of learning. During this activity each group gets a different and unique video clipping and the respective handouts related to the video clipping. The learners watch the video clippings, answer the questions and express their views in the handouts, interact with the members of the group, overcome stage fright and speak. They also build up their creativity and improve their confidence level.

Procedure:

Divide the learners into five groups of six learners each. Distribute the handouts to each member of the group. The mobile/ tab with the only video clipping should be given to each group. Learners are asked to watch the video and answer the questions given in the handouts. The members of the group discuss, share their views and complete writing individually. Once the groups are ready, the teacher has to play each video in the classroom, so that all the learners in the class watch the video clippings and then the learners from the group come onto the stage to express their ideas related to the video. The teacher plays the next video after appreciating the group with positive remarks and the procedure continues until the completion of all the groups. In the last five or ten minutes the teacher invites two or three learners to come and express their experience of the group activity and s/he finishes up the class with a suggestion or note.

Time Management:

Division of learners into groups and distribution of tab/ mobile and handouts and giving instructions should be done within ten minutes. Twenty minutes of time should be given to complete the task initially and five or ten minutes of time can be extended to motivate them for better performance. After playing video each group should be given eight to ten minutes of time to speak.

Material Used: Mobiles/tabs with video clippings, Handouts, computer with projector, speakers and internet connection.

Handouts:

The handouts are to be prepared based on the video clippings which include questions related to that video. The common questions are: What message did you get from the video? What did you learn and what do you want to do? Is the video useful or informative? Did you face any such incident in your life? If you did, do narrate. Comment on the aspects like style of the language; vocabulary and accent, action, characters, theme, suggestions, etc.

Role of Teacher:

- The teacher should give a tab or mobile with the only video clipping to each and every group and the corresponding handouts to each member of the group.
- The teacher should give instructions and facilitate the learners at various stages. S/he should monitor the learners and help them to comprehend the video.

- The teacher should motivate the learners by giving time limit to complete the task.

Evaluation:

Learners are evaluated by listening to their interpretation and critical analysis of the video clippings from their speech. Even their pronunciation can be analyzed.

Results:

- Each learner has spoken in a different style from his/her perspective.
- The interaction of the learners has helped them to analyze and understand the video clipping from various perspectives.
- The video clippings have generated ideas and even the learners from vernacular background have overcome stage fright and have spoken confidently.
- Their logical thinking and analytical skills are developed.
- Learners' communicative competence is enhanced.

Recommendations of the Study:

- a. The teacher should select motivational/ inspiring/ heart-touching/ sensible videos with different themes.
- b. S/he should watch the videos well in advance and prepare handouts according to them.
- c. S/he should also give numbering to the video and handouts to avoid confusion

- d. The teacher should see that there should be only the video clipping in the mobile or tab to avoid distraction
- e. The teacher should monitor and guide them in analyzing the video and encourage them in completing the task in given time.
- f. If the learners make mistakes/ mispronounce the words while speaking, they should not be corrected then, but later, corrections should be made in general.

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Dear member,

Have you used any of the following digital platforms (or any other also), for promoting online discussions among your students?

Course Management systems

Moodle, Edmodo, Collaborize classroom

Social networking/Discussion sites

Ning, Facebook, Google+, Google groups and Yahoo groups.

Online Discussion Apps.

Collaborize classroom and Subtext

If yes, please send your paper, giving an account of your experiences in using them . and also with what effect, to <eltai_india@yahoo.co.in> cc to

Dr. Xavier Pradeepsingh at pradheepxing@gmail.co

All selected papers will be given cash awards and also published in our E Journal— Journal of Technology for ELT (Impact factor:4.530

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S. Rajagopalan. www.eltai.in

Book Review

Integrating Global Issues In The Creative English Language Classroom: With Reference To The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Edited by Alan Maley and Nik Peachey

Published by British Council, London.
2017 ISBN 978-0-86355-855-9

Reviewed by Robert Bellarmine, Former English Studies Officer, British Council, Chennai

An Audacious Notion of the Language Teacher Underpinning the Book: Before you open the book, it is important to know that the notion of “language teacher” that informs the whole book is this. As Alan Maley says in an interesting though imaginary dialogue at the beginning of the book, she is not a teacher of mere grammar and vocabulary; she is a teacher of “how to think, and feel”; she shows people, not just pupils, “inspiration, aspiration, cooperation,... and helps them think about globalization, exploitation, confrontation, subjugation...” Otherwise, she would be “a cheater, not a teacher”.

Contents of the Book: The thought contents of the book are the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN, set out in the Resolution the General Assembly adopted in 2015. Thus, the first seventeen chapters deal with the seventeen SDGs such as poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender justice, water distribution, sanitation, energy, environment, and social justice. Thus, the thought contents are

morally ennobling, educationally useful, and intellectually stimulating.

Those who are familiar with textbooks devoted to Value Education, for example OUP’s ***Living in Harmony*** series, cannot but recall that the contents of those books include “universal human values of peace, love, truth and cooperation, so as to cultivate the knowledge, skill and attitude needed to achieve and sustain a global culture of peace” and sound very much like the thought contents of the book under review.

As language teachers would expect, the language contents are equally weighty and multifarious. They involve all the four skills (LSRW) and elements such as grammar and vocabulary. In fact, they go beyond the traditional list to include (a) more recently designed communication skills such as the ones involved in infographics, and (b) creativity skills such as ‘problem solving’, ‘making something new’, ‘perceiving old things in new ways’, ‘finding new connections’, ‘inventing and designing a game’, ‘interpreting a poem’ or ‘writing a story’. As the book is an integration of print and internet materials, it exploits a huge amount of materials in the world of the cyberspace.

As the age range of the target readers is as wide as 7 to 16 years, the difficulty levels of the vocabulary items and the readability levels of the texts to be studied or produced also vary widely. The activities are not similar to the problem-solving “tasks” of Prabhu’s Communicational Teaching Project

but activities in a general sense. They are of general interest. As such, they do not require the sophisticated knowledge of Prabu's technically fine-combed definitions of "tasks". Therefore, the activities in the book are readily comprehensible and easily implementable.

An Example of an Activity: This is the first activity in Chapter 2. Its Aim is to raise learners' awareness of global poverty. The Language Focus suggests vocabulary items dealing with values, possession, and poverty. The Creativity Focus specifies preparing collages to develop symbolic thinking. And the SDG Focus is to familiarise students with the first of the seventeen SDGs in the UN list.

One of the instructions under "Preparation" requires using the webliographic details for collecting pictures on the theme of poverty from the back numbers of **National Geographic**. The instructions under "Procedure", though many in number, are as simple, clear and specific as the first instruction: "Introduce the no poverty ... project by citing **Mahatma Gandhi**: 'Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed.'" Another instruction is to get the learners to think of questions such as "What does it mean to be rich?" and "Do you think you live in a poor or rich country? Why?" Another important instruction requires the teacher to discuss with students how to illustrate abstract nouns like "love" and "truth".

The outcome of all these detailed and sumptuous instructions is the following: illustrations of poverty; a world map showing where poverty exists; cut-outs and drawings; vocabulary items and pictures of objects

representative of poverty and wealth; and samples of language of co-operation and sharing. This is followed by "Follow Up", which requires the class to display the outcomes.

Unique Features of the Book: The book is edited by two ELT giants: (a) Alan Maley, the recipient of ELTons Lifetime Award and, in my estimate, the world's most prolific writer/editor of ELT books for classroom use; and (b) Nik Peachey, two time winner of British Council innovation award for developing internet technology for ELT materials and publications. This is the first book that I know of which incorporates so many materials in the internet. Its two editors and twenty odd contributors come from such a variety of cultures and contexts that the book is rare in its representativeness of the different ELT and Educational practices in the world, and therefore usable anywhere in the world.

It is also unique in that every one of the 103 activities includes a **Creativity Focus**, in addition to the Language Focus and the SDG focus. It is rare in another feature, too: making it easy for busy teachers, as mentioned above, all the chapters in the book follow the same structure, and all the activities follow identical structures.

Who is this book for: If you are already practising or planning to practise the principle of teaching English through an academic subject as the thought content, as are all the subject teachers in English medium schools and colleges all over the world, this is the book for you. Suppose you have the practice in your school or college of cobbling together your own **course book**. Then, this book can be an excellent **source book** for you. If you are following or going to follow the **TBLT (Task-**

Based Language Teaching), remember, this book presents **103 activities**. If you want to make your ELT practice richer, more novel and more modern by adding Creativity to it, this is the book for you.

By the way, if you want to sharpen your understanding of what is meant by creative teaching, download and study **“Creativity in the English Language Classroom”** edited, again, by Alan Maley and Nik Peachey and published by the British Council just two years ago.

This is a “complete” book: Each one of the 103 activities in this book has **three focuses: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) focus; language focus, and creativity focus**. The book covers all the four classic language skills: LSRW. It also covers all the language elements namely vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Interestingly, under the Writing Skills, several chapters include exercises in writing/designing infographics, after the models in the reading exercises. By the same token, it involves a huge number of exercises involving the search for reading and listening skills materials available only in the internet, making the book an internet-oriented rarity among ELT books.

Unlike many books, this book brings together both intensive and extensive reading, without ignoring texts that require skimming and scanning. Similarly, it has brought in reading and writing poetry, and writing short drama texts, which precede many of the role-play activities. While learners’ age groups range between 7 and 16 years, the proficiency levels range between A1 and C1 according to the Common European Framework (CEFR). As

for visuals in the book, at a cursory glance, they appear to be inadequate. But the exercises in internet search involve a huge number of visuals, including infographics. Happily, departing from the common practice of excluding references in student textbooks for updating the teacher and the teacher trainee, many of the twenty two chapters in the book include a small number of excellent references and “further resources”, many of which are to be searched out in the internet.

Teacher Friendly Features: A teacher can easily conduct the activities described in the book, as the instructions are simple to understand and easy to implement. One of the typical examples that come to my mind is this one from Chapter 4: “Write the word ‘beautiful’ on the board.” Mind you, I’m not suggesting that all the instructions in the book are so simple as to bring into play mindlessness.

Although I found a few rare words, such as “gordita”, “quesadilla” and “favela” in the target vocabulary in two units, overall, the words listed for learning in the activities are really useful. In this context, it is good to remember (a) that the profession has moved slightly but significantly away from Michael West’s ***General Service List*** of the 1950s, and (b) that in the context of a lesson topic-driven words, though outside lists of common words, are now considered essential vocab.

The internet version of the book incorporates the facilities the teacher can use to (a) highlight parts of the text; (b) add sticky notes even in a little space; (c) fit the text into one full page; (d) add reader’s annotations in the text; and (e) even do audio recording.

The Book Is “Free” And “Accessible”: The book has been made downloadable for free, presumably in view of the noble thought contents, and thanks to the generosity of the contributors and the publisher. Further, it is “accessible” in several senses: it’s totally jargon-free; it does not assume knowledge of the latest developments in ELT such as Dogme Effect; and it includes all the “webliographic” details of its internet references.

Is This A Perfect Book? Teachers in educational cultures such as India, where many institutions follow the Language Through Literature Approach, the users of this book will miss the texts – original or adapted or abridged – from canonical literature such as Wordsworth’s “Daffodils”, Mark Antony’s funeral oration, and Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. It is a pity that the best seller for children, *Battle for Big Tree Country*, recommended for Extensive Reading in Chapter 20 is available only in the hard copy format.

Another problem with the book is this: the age and language proficiency ranges are so wide that the book cannot be used as a text book in typical classrooms. Sometimes, paradoxically, what contributes to the strength of a book also contributes to its weakness. In the case in hand, the attempt to integrate the internet with the book is certainly a great strength of the book. But in countries where the computer and the internet are rarely available among the student populations, the book’s use is considerably limited. For example, in **India**, although many state governments claim to give away Personal Computers (PCs) for free

to the students who have finished their 10th or 12th Class, the accessibility of the internet to student population is limited to the professional college students. And PCs are possessed only by a small proportion of the tertiary level students and a still smaller proportion of the students in the top notch English medium schools. In such countries, the book’s “accessibility” is considerably limited.

A Must Read For...: As they are supposed to encourage experimental teaching and develop a venturesome attitude to teaching, every Teacher Development Group (TDG) should choose at least one of the units in the book for trial. For those who are historically inclined, this book is a must: for it is the first ELT book to combine Creativity Exercises and SDG-driven Exercises with the usual ELT exercises. As argued in the last chapter of the book, the book will be of considerable interest to those who follow the English for Academic Purposes approach. Considering the ease as well as adequacy of the instructions for activities and the high number of activities, I would strongly recommend the book to the teachers and trainers who have been persuaded by Activity-Based Language Teaching.

As implied in the summary of the book at the beginning of this review, for those who teach Value Education, this book is an excellent source of ideas and classroom activities. Finally, in the post-secondary institutions called UNESCO-UNEVOC Centres of Vocational Education spread all over the developing countries, this book should occupy, *prima facie*, a unique place in their ELT curricula.

Key Terms and Concepts in ELT

Accuracy and Appropriacy / Appropriateness

P.N. Ramani



Accuracy, which is usually measured in terms of grammatical accuracy, refers to how far a learner's use of the second (or foreign) language conforms to the rules of the target language, i.e. the language that is being learnt. We might also consider aspects of word choice and pronunciation under the term 'accuracy'. For example, utterances like "*After the shower he laid down on the bed*" (instead of "lay down") and "*The dog beat him*" ('bit' pronounced as 'beat') will be considered inaccurate. Once the rules of a language are clearly set out, as in a standard grammar book, it becomes easy to test a learner's language use for accuracy. Accuracy is, therefore, often used as a firm measure of a learner's progress in learning the language.

Drills and grammar exercises, often at the sentence level, are traditionally recommended classroom activities because they focus on language accuracy, be it grammar or pronunciation. Another concept related to these classroom practices is the notion of 'error' and methods of 'error correction'. It is worth mentioning here that the type and amount of error correction attempted by a teacher is influenced by the teacher's attitude towards errors. This, in turn, is guided by the teacher's views on language and language learning. We may have to deal with the notion of 'error' and possible ways of error correction separately in another piece.

What are the standards or norms for measuring a learner's accuracy in using the target language? Obviously, the norms will vary according to the mode, context, and purpose of language use. For learners of English as a first language, native-speaker standards might apply; for learners of English as a second language, we might expect a somewhat near-native proficiency level – we may not expect native-speaker standards to be met. Further, it will not be fair or realistic to apply native-speaker standards in respect of learners of English as an international language.

Accuracy can also vary depending on aspects of the task set or attempted. For instance, if a second language learner were given more time to plan his speaking task, his task performance could be more accurate. Given more time to practise and rehearse his speech, he might correct at least some of his pronunciation errors. Likewise, if the learner were allowed some time to go over his piece of writing, he might correct some of the mistakes and improve his composition. Furthermore, some types of errors may not be critical, while some others might affect what is called the 'intelligibility' of the piece of communication.

Sociolinguists would argue that using a language appropriately is equally, if not more, important than using it accurately. That is, the language use of learners of

English should not only to be accurate but also appropriate. The language used must be appropriate to the context of use (i.e., the context of time, place, social situation and culture). For example, it would be inappropriate for a student to write in a leave letter, "My tummy is upset, so give me leave for a day." It would be equally inappropriate for one of the married partners to say to the other, "Excuse me, my dear. Would it be too much of an

inconvenience to you if I were to plead with you to make me a cup of tea?"

The notion of 'accuracy' is often contrasted with that of 'fluency', but that will be discussed later in another article.

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National Workshop on Enhancing Professional Communication Skills

A 2-day workshop on Enhancing Professional Communication Skills was conducted by ELT@I Thoothukudi Chapter in association with ELT@I BESIG on 27th and 28th January, 2018 at Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi.

The workshop was attended by ESL teachers and research scholars. The inaugural address was given by entrepreneur Rtn.Mr.B.Ponsingh, Managing Director of Annai Gas Service. He emphasised on the multi-faceted business skills needed to excel in the competitive business world. The convener of this workshop Dr.A.Joycilin Shermila introduced the resource persons Mrs. Lalitha Murthy, Consultant – Business English, Bangalore and Brig R S Murthy, Accredited Management Trainer on Soft Skills, Bangalore.

The first day morning session was initiated by Mrs. Lalitha Murthy who spoke on language skills, Business English and also about professional communication skills.

The next session on "Soft Skills and Business Etiquettes" was by Brig R S Murthy. The focus of the session was on the various etiquettes to be followed in business meetings and in business telephonic calls. It was interactive with various role plays and mock meetings. The second session of the day was by Mrs. Lalitha Murthy on "Business Writing" with special reference to email writing.

On the second day, the workshop began with the session on "Presentation Skills." The final session was headed by Mrs. Lalitha Murthy on "Designing A Business English Course." The valedictory function marked the end of the workshop with the valedictory address given by the convener of the workshop Dr A.Joycilin Shermila.

The hospitality of the convener Dr A.Joycilin Shermila along with the support of the Management made the workshop a successful and cherishable one in the minds of all participants.

**N.Jothi, PhD Scholar,
VOC College, Thoothukudi**

STEP for Teaching Professionals

Dear Fellow Teachers,

As you are aware that our association aims towards helping teachers interact with educational administrators on matters relating to the teaching of English and strive to promote professional excellence among its members in all possible ways.

In line with the above goal, I'm writing to introduce you all to '**The Hindu STEP**'.

Standardized Test of English Proficiency (STEP) is an English language testing, training and certification program, launched by **The Hindu Group**. Their mission is to make high quality English language learning economical and accessible to all by using advanced technology and world-class training practices. STEP's tests and training programs help students, institutions and employers access and improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, help teachers interact with educational administrators on matters relating to the teaching of English

They have developed a teacher training program called '**STEP for Teaching Professionals**'. This is a comprehensive on-line learning programme for college instructors, school teachers, and anyone in the teaching line. This program is designed to promote English across all subjects and grade levels, and help an instructor teach in English more effectively. Regardless of whether it is high school maths, undergraduate Physics, or Masters-level finance, good teaching requires communication in a way that students not only understand but engage with. That's why STEP for Teaching Professionals focuses on core language skills as well as language and good practices for the classroom.

While the course is designed so that it can be completed at one's own pace, a good plan would be to spend about 2-3 hours per week on the course over 6 weeks. By the end of this course, teaching professionals will feel empowered and confident in English and a master of a suite of teaching and language strategies that help them effectively communicate in the classroom, and beyond.

The price for each license of the STEP for Teaching Professionals course is **₹ 2,999 plus taxes**. As a special offer to our members they have given us a discount of **₹ 500** making it available for **₹ 2,499 plus taxes**. Please use the following coupon to avail the discount.

Coupon code – ELTSTEP

To register for this program or any other queries, you can also contact STEP at [1800 3000 6063](tel:180030006063) or write to them at info@stepstest.in or saikat.sengupta@thehindu.co.in.

I encourage you to also be the ambassadors of The Hindu STEP towards their endeavour to assess and certify English proficiency level of students in your institutions with their recently launched '**English Olympiad**' in association with Cambridge English.

Letter to the editor

Dear editor,

Many thanks for the chance given to me to go through the interview, wherein Mr. Robert Bellarmine speaks not about English but 'the' English!

I started reading the interview as any student would, but completed it, as a learner. Here are my thoughts:

I remember having read that the best sentence in English is the shortest. As learners of English language, we struggle a lot to shorten a sentence. If we have a look at the laws of the country, gazette notifications, legal contracts and agreements, unsurprisingly, this struggle and the failure rate will be glaring. Mr. Robert's interview brings out that this struggle was so severe that "the English Studies policy of the British Council did not recognize Plain English experts in the UK as experts to be invited to host countries like India." However, that institutions like LIC and National Law School, Bangalore warmly embraced his workshops on Plain English must have had a refreshing effect for his later initiatives on Plain English.

In the private, Tamil Medium High School, where I studied English as one of the subjects, I was initiated to English literature. That touch gave me some courage to speak and write understandable /readable English, later in the college. I think, not only in English, in any language, inclusion of literature is of a great help for the learners to know the cultural background and to improve communicative skills. I do not know how seriously the present educational system addresses these needs. Drawing from his winning experience, Mr. Robert Bellarmine succinctly brings out his support for inclusion of literature in English Language Teaching.

Mr Bellarmine's acknowledgement of God's grace, the help and support received through association with the number of luminaries cited in the interview, remembrance of the sweat and sacrifices of his parents and his wife, and the modesty in attributing his splendid achievements to luck give a great reading pleasure.

Please convey my warm regards and sincere appreciation of this thought provoking interview, to Mr. Robert Bellarmine.

Thanks again for sharing such a memorable interview, with valuable messages to all those who read them.

M.S.Rajasekaran

Mind Your Language

P.N. Ramani

E-mail : ramanipn@gmail.com

Dear readers, welcome to this column!

The title of this column brings to my mind the BBC farcical but informative serial by that name, which I used to watch as a young man. The BBC serial highlighted, and even had a dig at, the genuine problems non-native speakers of English across the world have in understanding British English and in communicating in it.

What does the word 'Mind' in the title mean? According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, "Mind your language" actually means "Don't speak in a rude or offensive way." The word "mind" here suggests a spoken warning used to tell somebody to be careful about something or to warn somebody about a danger.

When a tall person enters a house with a short archway or entrance, we ask him to mind his head. Oh, some of you may wonder why I say 'him', not 'her', or 'him' or her'. Let me assure you that I am not a male chauvinist. I'm using the singular pronoun 'him' in a generic sense, to refer to *any* tall person.

If you are tall, you should also mind your head in a room with a low ceiling. Mind your head when you get up from your aisle seat in an aircraft – you might hit it on the overhead locker.

When someone lashes out at another verbally, using rude and abusive language,

we ask him to mind his tongue. If he doesn't, his outburst may land him in deep trouble. There are other examples of using the word in a similar sense. Mind that last step on the staircase – you may trip on it.

So much for the name! In this column, we shall see how we must be careful about the language we use, in speech and in writing. We will look at some of the problems our learners have in using English as a second or foreign language.

The other day, a friend of mine narrated what happened when an Arab speaker of English went to a new town in England. He had a car and couldn't find a parking place. He said to a bystander, "I want to bark" (pronouncing 'p' as 'b' – the influence of Arabic on his English pronunciation). The bystander looked at him curiously for a few seconds before he said. "This is a free country and you can do it anywhere you please as long as you don't disturb others."

You might have heard some of our Arabic-speaking students ask for a 'Beebsi' in a cafeteria or a shop. You know what they want – yes, a 'Pepsi'. Sometimes, the replacement of 'p' by 'b' leads to embarrassing moments. We should understand that the 'p' sound does not exist in Arabic.

Speakers of English as a second or foreign language also attempt to pronounce English

words using the same method they follow in their mother tongue. Some initial clusters or groups of consonants in English have no corresponding equivalents in their mother tongue. So, you will encounter pronunciation problems, such as “istobbid” for “stopped”, “forigen” for “foreign”, “perice” or “pirice” for “price”, “ispring” or “sipring” for “spring”, “monthiz” for “months”, and “nexist” for “next”. You will see that they have problems in pronouncing the groups of consonants at the beginning or end of the words. You will also see a tendency to insert short vowels to handle this challenge.

Teachers of English to students whose mother tongue is not English will often encounter examples of such pronunciations, which also may carry over into spelling.

Students also tend to read some English words differently. For instance, you will find some students read “biscuit” as “basket” or “biskut”, “hair” as “higher”, “stupid” as “stopped”, “blew” as “below”, “grill” as “girl” with the ‘r’ pronounced, “thorough” as “throw”, and “spade” as “speed”.

Students in another Arab country where I had taught for a few years used to ask me for the “table time” (instead of “timetable”) and “paper exam” (instead of “exam paper”). Once a student stopped me in the street and asked, “Teacher, did you learn Shakespeare in my class?” I was nonplussed for a few seconds and said, “No.” He wouldn’t leave me. He said, “No teacher, you learn for me Shakespeare, I know.” Then I realized what he meant – *teach*.

Don’t get me wrong. These examples go to show that non-native speakers of English may experience problems in speaking and writing English based on the influence of their respective mother tongues.

We will meet again soon to discuss such problems in using English. Till then, Goodbye!

[Note: An earlier version of this introductory piece was published in the *Campus* magazine of *Oman Tribune* as part of a series a few years ago.]

The ELT@I begins its journey in Raichur

Raichur is a district town in the state of Karnataka. It has the distinction of having a large number of government schools and schools run on grant-in-aid basis. These schools employ more than 250 teachers of English both at the primary and secondary levels. A few of these teachers who attended the 12th International and the 48th Annual Conference of ELT@I at Cochin in 2017, decided to come together, spread the message of ELT@I and form a chapter. With 25 members readily agreeing to come together the chapter was in place a few months ago.

The convener of the Chapter, Mr. Prakash R H and the team of teachers who sought help from the higher officials in the District Education Office, decided to organize a formal launch ceremony on the 10th of February 2018. Senior District Officials (the two Deputy Directors of Public Instruction), the Education Officers, six Subject Inspectors and the BEO Sindhanur were all present during the function. The chapter was formally declared open by the local MLA *Sri Hampanagouda Badalri*. In his talk, he encouraged the teachers by congratulating them for the initiative taken, and sincerely hoped the larger education scene in the district would improve with such platforms which help the teachers to come together. The Principal of DIET Yaramaras, Sri Mallikarjunaswamy who had earlier deputed the teachers to the ELT@I conference, had also ensured that there was maximum participation by teachers by issuing an

official order to attend the programme. Such moves are highly appreciated by the convener of the Chapter and all the teachers.

The presence of National President of ELT@I, Dr. G. A. Ghanshyam on the occasion was the highlight of the function. He took care to explain in detail the benefits of becoming members of ELT@I, especially in the area of Continuing Professional Development. His talk was supported with a very informative and pleasing power point presentation which helped the teachers to register themselves as members.

After the formal inauguration, the organizers had also arranged for two academic sessions. The first session was by Dr. Ghanshyam on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). He elaborated the various steps one can take to develop oneself by cooperating with each other and also being a little self-conscious of the surroundings. We cannot think of educating our learners independent of the society, and in order to achieve this, it is essential for the teacher to continue to grow all through his/her career and beyond. The entire session was interactive, and the participation was encouraging. Several teachers offered their points of view and this led to good discussion.

This session was followed by a session by Prof. S Mohanraj who spoke about the textbook analysis. In the course of his talk, he made the teachers understand the

importance of the textbooks and how they can be exploited maximally in the class for the benefit of the students. He also related some of the aspects of teaching to CPD thus providing a proper link to the two workshop sessions.

The last session of the launch programme was by Mr. S M Nadaf, Headmaster of a government high school from a neighbouring district of Bagalkot. He dealt with an analysis of the question papers at the tenth standard common examinations and helped the teachers to provide proper guidance to the students such that the overall results do not suffer.

The busy day concluded with a talk from

Mr. B K Nandanur, DDPI Raichur District. He expressed his happiness with the initiative taken by the teachers and also showed his concern for the larger number of students failing in English. He sincerely hoped this association of teachers will strive hard and will improve the situation.

More than 170 participants who attended the function appreciated the efforts put in by the dedicated team of teachers who had taken the initiative to organize this event.

Prakash R H
sldfprakash@gmail.com
Chapter Convener
ELT@I Raichur Chapter

Invitation to Contribute to a Discussion

How important is ‘teacher research’? Should all teachers be asked to conduct ‘teacher research’ / ‘action research’?

What is ‘teacher research’? Simon Borg, in his book Teacher Research in Language Teaching, uses the term “practitioner research” and defines it as “systematic inquiry by professionals in any discipline who are investigating their own practices”. How is it different from ‘action research’? Borg defines it as “a form of practitioner research which is characterized by particular procedures which broadly involve the introduction and evaluation of new practices [...]. Some definitions [...] stipulate that it should be collective or collaborative.”

What is your view on the topic? Send in your views (250-300 words) to jeltindia@gmail.com by 31 March 2018. Best two entries will be published in the next issue of the journal.

13th International and 49th Annual ELT@I Conference

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For details on accommodation please visit ELT@I Website.

13th International and 49th Annual ELT@I Conference

REGISTRATION FORM

Name : _____

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Address for Correspondence : _____

Contact Number : _____

e-mail : _____

Title of the Paper : _____
(Please provide details; Friction Reduced in about 150 words)

Registration Fee:
Participants are expected to register themselves and pay the registration fee in advance as per the following details, by sending a DD/Cheque in favour of "ELT@I Chennai".
Or payment made through bank transfer.

The account details:
SBI, Sanki Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai-600 040
A/C No. 30870397943, IFSC Code - SBIN0002198

Details to be sent to :
The Secretary, D 84, Third Floor, Arcadian Apartments,
.196, SIDCO Nagar Main Road, Villivakkam, Chennai - 600 049

Accommodation required : No of days _____
(If required) : Three-bedded/Four-bedded
Accommodation charges : Accommodation and registration amounts can be sent by the same DD/Cheque/money transfer.
Date of arrival: _____ Date of departure: _____
Accommodation details to be sent to: 2978ab@gmail.com

Certificates will be distributed after the Valedictory Function only to those who have attended all the three days.

13th International and 49th Annual ELT@I Conference

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THEME:

NextGen Learners: New Demands, New Responses

Sub-themes:

- The profile(s) of NextGen learners in K-12 and tertiary education
- The role of mobile technology and social networking sites for the NextGen learners
- Learning-centred and learner-centred approaches and methods to teaching/learning English
- New responses to NextGen needs, interests, and demands
- English in the as-yet-undefined work areas
- Next Generation language learning standards (similar to NextGen science standards)
- Revisiting ESP to meet the new demands
- Multidisciplinary approaches to the teaching and learning of English language and literature
- Language, literature, film and other media in the 21st century and 21st century education
- Gamifying English language education
- Alternative professional development programmes for teachers

Paper submissions

Each submission should include the following:

- ❖ An abstract about 150 words. Manuscripts must be prepared according to the format specified in the recent edition of MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers/APA Style Sheet for Writers of Research Papers.
- ❖ Submissions should be sent electronically in MS Word 97-03 at email: india@jethoo.co.in with a copy to: conference.la@jethoo.com

IMPORTANT DATES

Submission of abstracts : 15th May 2018Submission of full-length paper : 30th May 2018

Founder Pulmeswar S.Nalajaraj Endowment Lecture (instituted by D. S.S. Rajagopal) will be a special feature.

Registration:

It is compulsory for all the joint authors of each accepted paper to register for the conference in case they intend to be included in the programme and want their names in the conference proceedings.

Early Bird Registration : 30th April 2018 @ Rs. 1000/- (For all)From 1st May to 25th June:

Rs. 1200/- (ELT@I Members)

Rs. 1400/- (Non-ELT@I Members)

Rs. 1200/- School teachers (with a letter from Principal)

Rs. 1000/- Research Scholars and Students

USD 60 (Overseas Participants)

On the Spot Registration Fee for all Rs. 1500/-

Sponsor:

A souvenir will be released at the inauguration which will contain the conference details, message from dignitaries and abstracts of contributors.

Career Point World School, Bilaspur

A vision translated into reality, the Career Point World School is an English medium, co-educational, residential, CBSE affiliated school spread over a serene 10 acres campus on NH 200 at Diekha, on Masturi Road, Bilaspur. Functional since April 2013, the school boasts of smart classrooms, state-of-the-art laboratories, well-equipped library and sports grounds, a multi-functional auditorium and meditation hall, that ensure a stimulating atmosphere. Blending with the undulating natural landscape, the imposing school building with its cover of green and profusion of seasonal flowers, has won the school The Best Infrastructure & Green School Award from the hands of the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Dr. Raman Singh in 2016.

The visionary duo the Director Mr. Sumder Singh Chawla and the Chairman Mr. Krampa Singh Chawla envisaged a school 'a school with a difference' where 'focus would not be on just transfer of knowledge but on harnessing excellence. The school believes life is about being given chances, and so it 'walks the Talk', i.e., works at delivering what it promises. 'Together may we give our children roots to grow and wings to fly' is the driving force behind every endeavour.

Understanding the importance of English in daily lives and parents' desire to see, 'hear' their wards converse fluently in English, it has tried to do its bit from all possible means innovatively. It has hosted a two day English Language Teaching Workshop (organized by ELT@I Bilaspur chapter in collaboration with RELO), and participated in and hosted Shakespeare Alina 2016



School Director Mr. Sumder Singh Chawla and Chairman Mr. Krampa Singh Chawla receiving an award from the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Dr. Raman Singh recently.

possible means innovatively. It has hosted a two day English Language Teaching Workshop (organized by ELT@I Bilaspur chapter in collaboration with RELO), and participated in and hosted Shakespeare Alina 2016

Mission:

We strive to provide within a student-centred, safe, supportive, challenging environment, a well-planned instructional program that will empower children to reach their educational and personal potential while nurturing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Our mission, in plain terms, is to challenge and support students to be the best they can be.

English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELT@I)

ELT@I - A Pioneer in ELT

The English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELT@I) was founded on August 7, 1974 by the late P. Vasanth S. Narayan, a noted educationalist. ELT@I is a thirty-three year old voluntary non-profit organization established with the sole objective of professionalizing English language teaching starting from primary through secondary to tertiary levels. It has about 4000 members on its roll and 30 chapters in different parts of the country. The international conference conducted by ELT@I every year attracts over 800 delegates from various parts of the country and abroad.

Vision

- ELT@I envisions making India a hub of ELT-related activities and to conceptualize the experiences of English language teaching-learning and systematically share them with others.
- ELT@I shall develop into a movement spreading across the length and breadth of the country empowering teachers to make every learner of English globally competitive.
- ELT@I shall aim at becoming a recognized leader, catalyst, facilitator, and a trendsetter in spreading English literacy across the country.



The Hon'ble Governor of Kerala, Shri Justice T. Sadasukun inaugurating the 13th International & 49th Annual ELT@I Conference at Cochin, 2017.

Mission

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

READING ACTIVITY

Genre based/Themed Reading*

K. Elango, National Secretary, ELTAI & (Formerly) Professor of English, Anna University
elangoela@rediffmail.com

Objective : Enabling a reader to read as many books as possible belonging to a particular genre/theme (sci-fi, romantic novels, historical fiction, adventure novels, detective fiction, so on (genre based) or nature, war, conflicts, love, so on (theme based) to gain an in-depth understanding of it.

Participation : Individual.

Material : Reading some of the well-known writers of a genre or theme.

Preparation : Reading novels of this genre/theme often and attempting to understand all the significant features of it.

Procedure :

Identify one's passion through reading/discussing with friends or experts, to start with. Supposing the genre of detective fiction is one's interest they have to figure out a novelist of their choice and read some of his/her novels to comprehend the features of detective-story format: a) the crime, b) suspects, c) challenges in identifying the culprit, d) the detective and his strategies and e) unraveling the crime. Although there are variations, this format generally remained the same from the start of the genre.

Read a few novels of other detective writers to find out the similarities and dissimilarities, which would lead one to understand the genre deeply. Reading some of the established novelists and some of their popular novels is a must for a thorough grounding in the area. Without being familiar with the novelists of this genre and their popular works such as Edgar Allan Poe's **The Murders in the Rue Morgue**, Wilkie Collins' **The Moonstone**, Dorothy L. Sayers' **Gaudy Nights**, Arthur Conan Doyle's **A Study in Scarlet** and Agatha Christie's **Murder on the Orient Express** one cannot emerge as an authority.

Get a historical perspective of the genre such as the origin, the evolution, significant shifts, and major writers' contributions, popularity in different parts of the world and its current status. For instance, one should know about the legendary characters such as Sherlock Holmes, the subgenres such as whodunit, inverted detective story, serial killer mystery and legal thrillers and the role of pulp fiction magazines, without which one cannot be an enlightened reader of this genre.

Learning outcomes:

- 1) Learners realize that they have to identify their area of interest, which would act as a spring board to delve into the area.
- 2) Learners understand that reading different writers belonging to a particular genre/theme and familiarizing them with critical materials in the area and reflecting over them alone would make them gain expertise.

Further activity:

Reading detective novels of different writers and understanding their differing styles.

***Themed reading:** Reading based on a particular theme which interests a reader.

***Detective fiction** is a crime-related stories and it generally challenges readers to solve the crime by the clues provided even before the detective unravels it at the end of the novel. The suspense it builds throughout is one of the prime reasons for its success.

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We earnestly appeal to all teachers of English to become members of ELTAI and strengthen our hands in the cause of ELT.

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ELT@I

A forum for professional development

RNI No. 8469 dt. 5.1.2004

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