

THE JOURNAL  
The  
OF ENGLISH  
English Language  
LANGUAGE  
Teachers' Association  
TEACHING  
of India

ISSN 0973-5208

(A Peer-Reviewed Journal)

Alternative assessment in the ESL classroom – Integrating English language, communication and soft skills for job placements – Learning grammar and vocabulary from user manuals – Grammar songs – Teaching English in rural and semi-urban areas – Role of error analysis in developing effective ESL pedagogy – Speaking activity

Vol. 57/2 Mar. - Apr. 2015  
Rs. 15/-

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# *The Journal of English Language Teaching (India)*

*Recommended by the Director of School Education ( Proceedings D Dis No. 75301/76 dt 21 March 1979 ) and the Director of Collegiate Education ( RC No. 11059 / J3 / 2000 dt 28 February 2000 )*

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.

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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.

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- 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.

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# Editorial

*In this number of the journal, you will find five articles, one of them fairly long, on a variety of topics and issues that are relevant to the teaching and learning of English. All the contributors have tried their best to highlight the issues and offer ways of addressing those issues as well. You will also find the regular feature on speaking activity, this time showing how to exploit reports of bizarre events that one has experienced or read about for promoting authentic speaking in class. There is also a surprise inclusion on grammar songs, one you will all enjoy reading.*

*The first article is on 'alternative assessment' by Sengupta. The author has tried to establish why we need to go in for alternative assessment and explore the various possibilities of carrying out such assessment, which, in his view, would ensure that the knowledge acquired by students is not merely reproduced from rote learning but applied, synthesized and evaluated. In this context, Sengupta emphasizes the need to move away from 'assessment of learning' towards 'assessment for learning'; that is, using assessment as a tool for learning.*

*In the second article, the author, Madhavi, bemoans the lack of employability skills including communication skills in English and other soft skills among the majority of engineering graduates. They are thus not 'industry ready'. The author, therefore, emphasizes the need for developing in students of engineering communication skills in English as well as soft skills in an integrative way by encouraging collaborative learning among the students from their first year of study onwards so that they might get good job placements when they graduate.*

*The next article by Sangita Das explores the use of authentic texts for teaching grammar and vocabulary. She also demonstrates how grammar and vocabulary exercises may be set on user manuals for electronic gadgets by taking the user guide for a mobile phone as an example. She argues that texts such as user manuals are excellent language resources as the content is familiar and interesting to most students.*

*Here comes the surprise element. There are two rhyming songs – one on grammar and the other on parts of speech – both written by a scientist, and not by an English teacher or an English textbook writer. It seems that the mother and teacher in Krithika Gokulnath created these and a few other wonderful compositions while attempting to teach English grammar to her child. How true the saying 'Necessity is the mother of invention' is! I'm sure those who read the editorial first or go through the table of contents would straightaway read and appreciate those songs.*

*In the next article, Madhu Singh highlights the problems and challenges faced by students from rural and semi-urban areas as well as their English language teachers. Problems such as mother-tongue interference, lack of adequate infrastructure and teaching-learning tools and resources and the students' social milieu may be daunting, but the author argues that the teacher must try to find ways of overcoming these challenges and making their students acquire language skills. Many solutions are also suggested – for example, adopting a dialogic approach, encouraging and empowering the learners, giving them more time to respond, and contextualizing the content and style of the learning materials.*

*The last article by Harikrishna Rao on the role of error analysis in developing an effective pedagogy for ESL teaching is a fairly long theoretical article on the subject of error analysis. The author reviews extensive work done in this area and tries to highlight the key findings of research studies that may have a bearing on ESL pedagogy.*

**P. N. Ramani**  
Editor

# Alternative Assessment in the ESL Classroom: Why and How?



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## **ABSTRACT**

*The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) makes a clear distinction between knowledge that is fluid and that which is reproduced. The former can never be transferred and must be reconstructed by the learner. For this to happen, learning can no longer be the memorization and reproduction of facts. Unfortunately, in most of the cases in India, academic courses use closed book, memory-based examinations as part of summative assessment, which has focused on the assessment of learning. But there is the necessity to shift the focus from 'assessment of learning' to 'assessment for learning'. In order to make assessment 'a tool for learning', the existing assessment system must be rejuvenated by incorporating alternative assessment techniques. With this aim, the present paper will discuss the possibilities of alternative assessment in the context of the ESL classroom. The aim of the paper is also to justify the relevance of alternative assessment in the language classroom in order to ensure that knowledge is not merely reproduced but applied, synthesized and evaluated.*

## **The Purpose of Assessment - A Generic Review**

One of the primary purposes of assessment is to be *summative*. In its summative role, the purpose of assessment is to judge the quality and characteristics of the student and summarize these in a clear and widely acceptable format. Traditionally, the principal mechanism for summative assessment is the end-of-module examination. Students care most about the results of summative assessment, as this has an impact on their employability and prospective earnings.

Assessment also has a *formative* function. In this role, assessment is intimately linked

with students' learning processes, helping to guide them in their studies, motivating them, providing feedback on areas of learning requiring further work, and generally promoting the desired learning outcomes. While most assessment is both summative and formative, it is argued that the summative function increasingly predominates in a way that adversely affects student learning.

## **A Contrastive View on Alternative and Traditional Assessment**

Two opposing forces are influencing educational assessment today. On the one hand are the proponents of more and more standardized testing. This view sees the

curriculum as only consisting of a body of knowledge and facts that can easily be transferred from teachers to students. The primary instrument of assessment for this paradigm is the standardized test. Standardized tests attempt to measure the amount of knowledge acquired by a student over a period of time. This view implies that knowledge exists separately from the learner. Therefore, students work to accumulate knowledge rather than to construct it. This belief is grounded in a traditional approach to the educational endeavour based on behaviorist theories. While standardized tests may be easy to administer, easy to score and easy to interpret, they do not provide teachers with all the information they need to make decisions about their students' instructional needs or progress. Additionally, viewing content as the only component of the curriculum is an incomplete and shortsighted position.

The curriculum is made up of four parts: content, process, product, and environment. This view indicates that how students learn, how they demonstrate what they have learned and the circumstances in which they learn are as important as what they learn. This paradigm, based on the constructivist theory, therefore, requires alternative testing to assess student learning. Alternative assessment is a way for 'Assessment *for Learning*', which is a process by which teachers gather information that they will use to make instructional decisions. In this regard, assessment *for learning* is a modality of

constant assessment that enables teachers to adjust their practice so that every student succeeds. On the other hand, assessment *of learning* is a unidirectional process with little room for retrofitting.

### **Alternative Assessment: Why?**

The concept of alternative assessment was coined to define all those possible activities which are not formal tests but which can be used for assessing learning performance, as alternatives to the conventional methods of evaluating linguistic progress and performance. Concepts such as alternative assessment, authentic assessment, portfolio-based assessment, holistic assessment and integrative assessment are used with the same value as alternative testing.

Alternative assessment started being used as a means of educational reform due to the increasing awareness of the influence of testing on curriculum and instruction. According to Bailey (1998), traditional assessments are indirect and inauthentic. She also adds that traditional assessment is standardized and for that reason, they are one-shot, speed-based, and norm-referenced. Such an assessment procedure is decontextualized and they mostly assess only the lower-order thinking skills of the learner. Traditional assessment often focuses on learner's ability to memorize and recall, which are lower-level cognition skills.

Alternative assessments, on the other hand, assess higher-order thinking skills. Students have the opportunity to

demonstrate what they have learned. This type of assessment tools focus on the growth and the performance of the student. That is, if a learner fails to perform a given task at a particular time, s/he still has the opportunity to demonstrate his/her ability at a different time and different situation. Since alternative assessment is developed in context and over time, the teacher has a chance to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the student in a variety of areas and situations.

Language education and assessment should prepare students not just to succeed, but to positively contribute to the world outside the classroom. Do the traditional standardized assessments really prepare students in this direction or do they only assess what is being tested? In language assessment, the employment of traditional standardized tests can hardly measure the student holistically. Consequently, standardized testing often benefits students who perform well in a certain area of language (for example, vocabulary memorization and grammar translation), as well as those who can perform well under time pressure. Therefore, even though this type of testing is usually viewed as objective, the results can be misleading in terms of communicative language competence. Consequently, students with good communicative competence might perform poorly on standardized tests if they lack the memorization skills that these require.

Furthermore, traditional assessment

practices often rely on competition as the main motivator, and use a grading system. According to this system, students' grades are assigned based on relative performance in comparison to their classmates' performance. This type of grading puts students in direct competition with their peers. There will always be at least one student who has a lower score than all others, even if that score is quite high when measured against specific performance criteria or standards.

Therefore, it is necessary to re-evaluate traditional assessment practices that rely on individual competition between students as the only motivator. Assessment practices should recognize students as individuals who will grow and learn in different ways, at different times, and evaluate them holistically.

#### **Alternative Assessment: A Few Characteristics**

- Proximity to actual language use and performance: Alternative assessment procedures are based on activities that have authentic communicative function rather than ones with little or no intrinsic communicative value. Because these procedures strive for a more direct representation of language use and language behaviour, they tend to be based on actual performance in authentic situations which the learner is likely to encounter in his or her daily life.

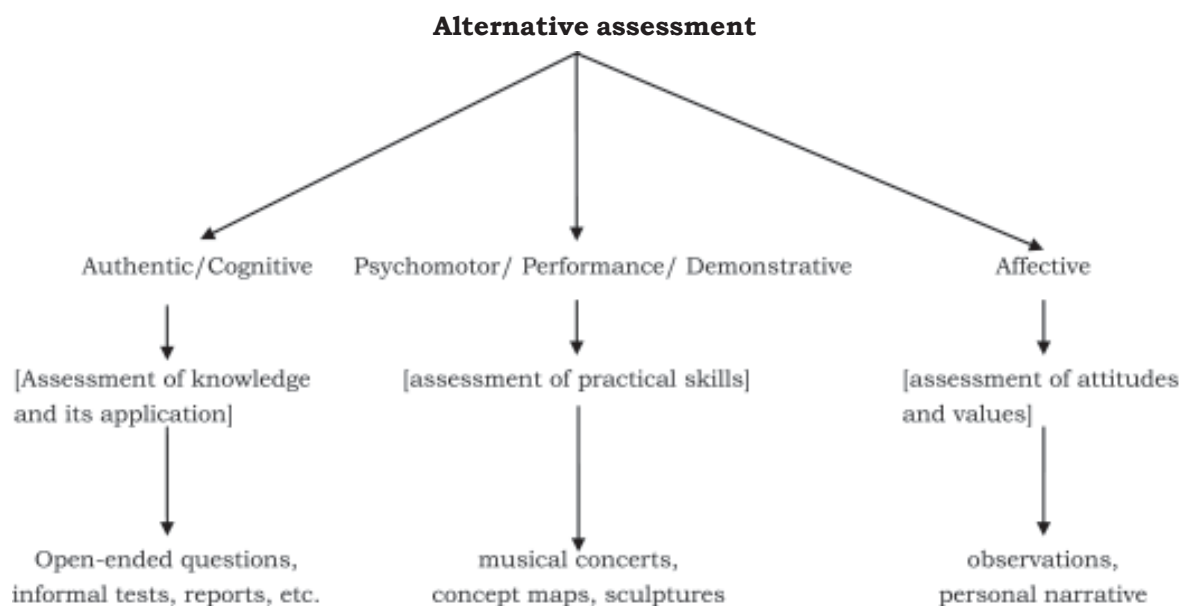


- ***A holistic view of language:*** Alternative assessment procedures are based on the notion that the interrelationships among the various aspects of language, such as phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, cannot be ignored. Also, the four skills of language — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — are seen to be parts of a structurally integrated whole. Through alternative assessment approaches, language can be assessed not so much as structure but rather as a tool for communication and self-expression. Alternative assessment also takes into account the whole learner and his or her social, academic, and physical context.
- ***An integrative view of learning:*** Alternative assessments attempt to capture the learner's total array of skills and abilities. They are based on the idea that various aspects of a learner's life, both academic (and professional) and personal, are integral to the development of language proficiency and cannot be ignored. Alternative assessment also allows for the integration of various dimensions of learning as they relate to the development of language proficiency. These dimensions include not only processes such as acquiring and integrating knowledge, extending and refining knowledge, and using knowledge meaningfully, but also issues such as varying student attitudes towards learning.
- ***Developmental appropriateness:*** Alternative assessment procedures set expectations that are appropriate within the cognitive, social, and academic development of the learner. Because it is possible to design assessment that meets individual learners' needs, alternative assessment reveals information about a learner's proficiency in the context of what is relevant to that learner's life and experiences. It also allows for a more valid interpretation of information than that obtained from more traditional standardized tests.

#### **Purposes and Uses of Alternative Assessment**

Alternative assessment bears tremendous benefits for all the possible clients of assessment. For students, alternative assessment allows them to see their own accomplishments in terms that they can understand and, consequently, it allows them to assume responsibility for their learning. For teachers, the primary advantage of alternative assessment is that it provides data on their students and their classroom for educational decision-making. In addition, it chronicles the success of the curriculum and provides teachers with a framework for organizing students' work. Traditionally, testing and assessment have been used primarily for the purposes of evaluating the learner. It is only recently that a second purpose is being called for, evaluating instruction. Alternative assessment lends itself well to both





**Figure 1: Alternative Assessment**

purposes, especially the latter. Moreover, it addresses the cognitive, affective and psychomotor strands of assessment tasks.

**Alternative Assessment: How?**

According to Simonson et al (2000), there are three approaches in alternative assessment: Authentic assessment, performance-based assessment, and constructivist assessment. Researchers and educators use the term performance-based, alternative, and authentic assessment interchangeably. Alternative assessment strategies include open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on execution of experiments, portfolios, etc. Some such strategies are briefly discussed below:

- **Oral Examination**

Many student activities that are traditionally

examined through written reports or essays may alternatively be examined orally in the form of a *viva voce* examination. Potentially, this approach can give a much clearer idea of the depth of students' understanding. There is no scope for plagiarism, and little scope for regurgitation of material, at least in carefully managed interviews. These are also helpful in terms of development of interpersonal skills and interview techniques.

- **Portfolios**

The definition of a portfolio indicates that it is merely a container for carrying documents, but in educational circles it refers to a collection of samples of a student's work used to give evidence of progress in learning. Portfolios are an opportunity for students to provide

documentation of their learning activities, ideas and reflections. Portfolios help students take more responsibility for their own learning. By making decisions about what to include in their portfolios, students become knowledge producers rather than knowledge receivers. Thus, portfolios help students construct their own knowledge base (*constructivism*) as opposed to reacting to a teaching stimulus provided by the teacher (*behaviorism*).

- **Conferences**

A peer conference is composed of a group of five to six students who meet together to assess the written work of the group members. Students are to provide help, feedback and ideas to each other in a non-threatening atmosphere, before work is turned in to the teacher for grading.

- **Projects**

With projects, students are often free to choose the topic, title and methodology to be studied. Projects are useful in developing independence, organizational skills, resourcefulness and a sense of ownership over work, and may induce a deeper level of learning.

- **Literature/article review**

This develops a number of research-type skills, encouraging students to source material, use search engines and be able to assimilate large amounts of material and select the most important.

- **Self- and peer assessment**

The basic idea behind self- and peer assessment is to provide mechanisms that help students to evaluate themselves and their work more critically. An ability to assess one's own strengths and weaknesses is an essential life-skill that facilitates personal development whether in study or in the workplace.

- **Testing skills and not simply knowledge**

One of the problems with the traditional type of examination is that questions are so closely related to the material covered in the course and in the textbook that students tend to memorize and reproduce without any deep understanding. An alternative approach involves testing students with questions relating to issues or materials that are not familiar, but which does require the kind of approach to problem solving that is developed in the module.

- **Diaries, Journals, and Writing Folders**

Students should be encouraged to write across the curriculum. Student writings may take several forms. Students may be encouraged to make daily entries summarizing their progress in a particular study in a diary. Many teachers require students to compile a journal that is also known as a learning log. The purpose of writing in learning logs is to have students reflect on what they are learning. Writing folders show the different styles of writing

that students accomplish such as first drafts, current writing, finished drafts, new writing ideas and student reflections on material being studied.

#### ▪ **Poster Sessions**

A poster session advertises the student's work/research. It combines text and graphics to make a visually pleasing presentation.

#### ▪ **Open-Book Examinations**

The most immediate result of open-book examinations on students will be that they will stop "mugging" or rote learning. Such examinations focus on a set of intellectual skills, rather than on the information content.

#### **Conclusion**

Alternative assessment has incontestable advantages over traditional testing methods, as it takes into consideration the learning of each student, as well as each student's cultural background and level of knowledge. The focus is definitely placed on what the students know and can do and not on what they do not know.

Nevertheless, alternative assessment approaches have yet to come of age. As long as they are referred to as "alternative" or "informal," they maintain their status as non-mainstream in spite of having their effectiveness and value. In this regard, Worthen (1993) identifies a number of major issues for the future of alternative

assessment. First, conceptual clarity is needed to ensure consistency in the applications of alternative assessment. Second, until a mechanism for evaluation and self-criticism is established, alternative assessment cannot become a viable force in education. Third, the users of alternative assessment, whether they are teachers or administrators, need to become well versed in issues of assessment and measurement. Fourth, although one of the most significant advantages of alternative assessment is its flexibility and its allowance for diversity, unless some standardization is introduced, the future of alternative assessment for high-stakes decisions is questionable. As he suggests, unless these issues are resolved, alternative assessment cannot reach its full potential in education.

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# Collaborative Learning: Integrating English Language, Communication Skills and Soft Skills for Job Placements at Engineering Level

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## ABSTRACT

*Today's engineer should be a combination of adequate technical competence, verbal proficiency, emotional intelligence, and communicative ability before he/she opts for campus placements. In this era of globalization, engineering graduates lack the required qualities either in terms of technical expertise, communication or English language skills. English language and communication skills, in particular, have resulted as barriers in the personal as well as professional development of an engineering graduate. English is cited as the major language of international business, diplomacy, science and the professions. However, most of the graduates fail to impress the employers. According to NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Company) President Karnik, only 25 percent of technical graduates are suitable for employment in the outsourcing industry because of their lack of abilities to speak or write well in English. (Karnik, 2007 as cited in P'Rayan 2008:1). Most students are not 'industry ready' because they lack communication skills. (Infosys, 2008). This paper focuses on the orientation and collaborative learning required from the first year of engineering course for improving English language and communication skills apart from the prescribed syllabus to prepare the students specifically for campus placements.*

**Key words:** Collaborative learning, Communication skills, Job placements, Integrating English language, Soft skills.

## Introduction

To be successful in any interview process, different MNC's adopt a basic procedure to filter the aspiring students from recruitment. Aptitude skills are basically tested through a written test that covers quantitative ability, logical analysis, reasoning, and verbal ability. After clearing the written test, the student faces the

technical round that emphasizes technical competency. The HR round focuses on the candidate's communication skills, soft skills, personality development and emotional intelligence.

This paper concentrates on the importance of acquiring English language skills, communication skills and soft skills for graduates to be successful in job

recruitments. The main focus is on the orientation and collaborative learning required from the first year of engineering course for improving English language and communication skills apart from the prescribed syllabus to prepare the students specifically for campus placements.

The English language, once considered as a subject to increase percentage of marks, has now become an essential skill to be victorious in career and professional development. Jensen (2000) states that employers want a number of new competencies, with an emphasis on an increased ability to communicate.

There is a tremendous change in the recruitment procedure over the last decade. The association between the corporate world and educational institutions has resulted in on- and off-campus placements. The trend of companies coming to institutions and vice versa, and conducting campus drives is a welcome trend to establish firm academia-industry relations. Students ought to utilize this opportunity and face the recruitment process with great competitive spirit. However, most of the graduates fail to impress the employers. The major reason for their failure to impress the recruiters is the lack of good verbal and communication skills in spite of excellent aptitude and technical skills. English language and communication skills, in particular, have become barriers in the personal as well as professional development of an engineering graduate.

The attempt to make the students ready for placements is encouraging as most of the institutions have set up a separate Training and Placement wing. In Andhra Pradesh, almost all the engineering colleges and many universities have established a T&P wing to cater to the students' needs. The students are trained in all the required skills. However, an attempt should be made to inculcate and integrate such training programs from the first year engineering course.

The situation in Andhra Pradesh specifically requires attention where English as a subject is taught just before the commencement of final exams. During these two years, a student may be exposed to English language for two or three months. The student passes the exam or scores good marks for increasing the percentage at this level. No exposure to individual assessment in LSRW skills is noticed. The student fails completely in acquiring effective English language and communication skills at this stage. At the engineering level, the student is exposed to industry requirements at the end of the third year or in the final year, and within the stipulated time, he/she fails to meet the expectations. Hence an integrated approach should be planned from the first year onwards along with the prescribed syllabus to make the student industry-ready.

### **The integrated programme**

The integrated programme should be designed keeping in view all the required



inputs for facing the campus drives successfully. The programme should concentrate on verbal ability, communication skills and soft skills. A rigorous training with experts from in-house faculty and industry should be planned so that the students can be exposed to industry expectations, extend a good rapport as well as develop excellent communicative ability.

### **Verbal ability**

The major components that are focused during the written test while testing verbal ability are:

**a. Error correction:** The student ought to identify the grammatically correct sentence, choosing the best alternative, identifying incorrect sentences, inappropriate usage, etc.

**b. Antonyms:** Identifying parts of speech – verb, noun, adjective of a specific word, identifying the root of the word and meaning and knowledge of prefixes and suffixes is tested.

**c. Synonyms:** Identifying words with identical or similar meaning.

**d. Fill in the blanks:** Paragraph filling or sentence filling with correct article, preposition, verb, suitable word, etc.

**e. Sentence re-arrangement:** A set of three to five sentences should be arranged meaningfully.

**f. Analogies:** Ability to recognize relationships between words or ideas and

identifying if the relationships are parallel or not.

**g. Idioms and Phrases:** Certain social traits, habits, human experiences or traditions are reflected in idioms and phrases.

### **Reading comprehension**

The student is given short or long passages. The following strategies are observed while doing reading comprehension:

- Understanding the vocabulary using contextual clues
- Identifying the main ideas and supporting details
- Understanding the structure and organization of a passage
- Identifying the author's purpose and tone
- Identifying facts, opinions and inferences
- Evaluating the arguments/ideas of the author

### **Communication Skills**

**a. Group Discussion:** GD's are conducted to identify:

- Leadership skills
- Logical thinking
- Team spirit
- Ability to initiate
- Keeping abreast of current affairs

**b. Debate:** Debates are conducted to identify the ability to:

- Show emotional balance and stability
- Maintain poise in a given situation
- Cope with arguments and disagreements



**c. JAM:** The parameters that are tested during JAM are:

- Organizing and sequencing information
- Using general knowledge
- Thinking on one's feet
- Listening and speaking accurately
- Sharpening vocabulary
- Extempore speaking skills

**d. Personal Interview Skills:**

- Body language
- Confidence level
- Dress code
- Eye contact
- Positive attitude
- Personal grooming, etc.

**Soft skills:**

- Basic and conversational English
- Character building
- Communication etiquette
- Goal setting
- Human values
- Motivation
- Positive thinking
- Time management

**The Big Question???**

In the present decade there is a lot of talk about technology-enhanced teaching and learning, synchronous and asynchronous communication, web-based curriculum, learning through iPads, iPods, etc. The big question is whether the students and faculty miss the minimum prerequisites in the medley of learning and teaching innovative

methods of improving English language, communication and soft skills. The best example is the horrifying results at the recruitment drives with more than 75% of candidates being unsuccessful. The topics seem to be simple and easy and are part of the curriculum from the lower level. Nevertheless, only 25% of the aspiring students are being grabbed by the industry for job placements.

**Conclusion**

Students should be aware of the need to acquire the English language, communication and soft skills for better career prospects. Educational institutions should also recognize the importance of teaching all the above skills effectively at the initial stages to improve the success rate of placing engineering graduates.

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# Learning Grammar and Vocabulary from User Manuals



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## **ABSTRACT**

*We come across many English words and expressions in our daily life that we unconsciously learn from. Ironically, we ignore their significance. A language teacher can make use of the content as resource for the classroom. The user manual of a cell phone is one such resource, rich in language potential to guide our learners in schools and colleges in acquiring grammar and vocabulary (synonyms and spelling). The teacher can use the instruction manual for locating the learning content and impart it among the learners. The students would definitely appreciate learning from the user guide as it is mostly gadget-friendly. The teacher chalks out activities and selects some sample literature to be used in the classroom.*

**Key words:** Language learning resources; Teaching grammar and vocabulary; User manual as ESL resource.

## **Introduction**

The role of authentic English texts to improve language skills cannot be underestimated. The language teacher can use texts from everyday life to enable the learners identify and understand the functions of language. It offers learners a chance to learn language from the practical use of language in our life. There are lots of such texts available to us in the form of instruction manuals for refrigerators, television sets, mobile phones, air conditioners, etc. All these materials can be made use of as a **resource** for imparting language lessons in the classrooms. The lessons will not only be interesting but also

motivating for the learners across all levels, especially, intermediate and advanced. The teacher can use this resource for improving grammar as well as vocabulary in the learners. I have used the **user guide of Nokia3220** as sample text for the current study.

**1. Activity for Learning Grammar:** The students are provided with a selected extract from the User Manual for finding the type of structure used. The teacher underlines or highlights beforehand the specific structures to be identified. They can do it through mutual discussion. If they fail to do it, the teacher guides them through question prompts.

**Extract-A:**

Your device is powered by a rechargeable battery. The full performance of a new battery is achieved only after two or three complete charge and discharge cycles. The battery can be charged and discharged hundreds of times but it will eventually wear out. When the talk and standby times are noticeably shorter than normal, **replace** the battery. **Use** only Nokia approved batteries, and **recharge** your battery only with Nokia approved chargers designated for this device. (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).

**Learning grammar:**

What are the underlined expressions? These are: **“is powered, is achieved, can be charged and discharged”**. What do the underlined expressions signify in grammar? All these are passive constructions. Why is the passive voice used here? Which of the words are in bold? These are **“Replace, Use, Recharge”** What are these in grammar? What is their usage in grammar called? These are verbs. These are used in imperative structures.

**Find out other sentences in the imperative:**

- Use the battery only for its intended purpose.
- Never use any charger or battery that is damaged.
- Do not short-circuit the battery
- Always try to keep the battery between 15°C and 25°C (59°F and 77°F).

**Extract-B:** The following text has been numbered for the purpose of language study.

**Navigate the menus:** The phone offers you an extensive range of functions that are grouped into menus.

1. To access the menu, select **Menu**.
2. Use the navigation key to scroll through the menu and select a submenu (for example, Settings). To change the menu view, see Menu view in Display p. 74.
3. If the menu contains submenus, select the one that you want (for example Call settings).
4. If the selected menu contains further submenus, select the one that you want (for example, Any key answer).
5. Select the setting of your choice.
6. To return to the previous menu level, select **Back**. To exit the menu, select **Exit**. (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).

**Learning Grammar:** The teacher may ask the following questions to elicit responses from the learners:

- i. What type of sentence is the sentence in 1? (**Ans.** To + Infinitive structure)
- ii. What type of sentence is the sentence in 2? (**Ans.** Imperative structure)
- iii. What type of sentence are the sentences in 3 and 4? (**Ans.** Conditional sentence)
- iv. What type of sentence is the sentence in 5? (**Ans.** Imperative structure)

- v. What type of sentences are the sentences in 6? (**Ans.** It begins with To + Infinitive structure)

**Extract-C:** The following text has been taken from “Message” of the manual and has been numbered for our study.

### **Messages**

1. *The message services can only be used if they are supported by your network or your service provider.*
2. **Note:** *When sending messages, your phone may display the words Message sent.*
3. *This is an indication that the message has been sent by your device to the message centre number programmed into your device.*
4. *This is not an indication that the message has been received at the intended destination.*
5. *For more details about messaging services, check with your service provider.*
6. **Important:** *Exercise caution when opening messages.*
7. *Messages may contain malicious software or otherwise be harmful to your device or PC.*
8. **Note:** *Only devices that have compatible features can receive and display messages.*
9. *The appearance of a message may vary depending on the receiving device. (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).*

**Learning Grammar:** The teacher may use the following question prompts to elicit learners’ responses:

- i. What type of sentence is the sentence in 1? (**Ans.** Conditional sentence. “Only” is used here to emphasize.)
- ii. What type of sentence is the sentence in 2? (**Ans.** It begins with the Conjunction “when”. It is a Conditional sentence. Use of “May” sound formal.)
- iii. What type of structure is in the sentences in 3 and 4? (**Ans.** “that” is a Conjunction in both the sentences joining two sentences.)
- iv. What type of sentence is in the sentence in 5? (**Ans.** Use of “for” at the beginning of the sentence makes it sound formal. The Conjunction “for” helps the narrative move further.)
- v. What type of sentence is in the sentence in 6? (**Ans.** Imperative structure)
- vi. What type of sentence is in the sentence in 6? (**Ans.** Modal May means Possibility)
- vii. What type of sentence is the sentence in 7? (**Ans.** “only” at the beginning of the sentence means to stress on the particular type of devices)
- viii. What type of sentence is the sentence in 8? (**Ans.** Modal “may” here means probability)

**2. Activity for learning synonyms:** The teacher selects extracts from the user manual and provides them to the students

for study. The students are asked to focus on the underlined words and predict their synonyms through mutual discussion. Then they are provided with the list of synonyms by the teacher for checking and comparison.

**Extract-A:**

**SWITCH ON SAFELY**

*Do not switch the phone on when wireless phone use is prohibited or when it may cause interference or danger.*

**ROAD SAFETY COMES FIRST**

*Obey all local laws. Always keep your hands free to operate the vehicle while driving. Your first consideration while driving should be road safety.*

**INTERFERENCE**

*All wireless phones may be susceptible to interference, which could affect performance.*

**SWITCH OFF IN HOSPITALS**

*Follow any restrictions. Switch the phone off near medical equipment.*

**SWITCH OFF IN AIRCRAFT**

*Follow any restrictions. Wireless devices can cause interference in aircraft.*

**SWITCH OFF WHEN REFUELLING**

*Do not use the phone at a refuelling point. Do not use near fuel or chemicals.*

**SWITCH OFF NEAR BLASTING**

*Follow any restrictions. Do not use the phone*

*where blasting is in progress.* (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).

**What are the synonyms of the underlined words?** Let the students first prepare a list which may later on be tallied with the teacher's list of synonyms.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Synonyms</u>
prohibited	banned, barred, proscribed, restricted, refused
interference	conflict, intrusion, intervention, tampering
danger	peril, pitfall, menace, jeopardy
operate	act, do, conduct, run, work, accomplish
consideration	thinking, deliberation, contemplation, debate, examination
safety	security, immunity, asylum, safeness, defense
susceptible	receptive, responsive, sensitive, liable, vulnerable
affect	influence, alter, change, upset, modify
restrictions	check, condition, constraint, control, restraint
equipment	apparatus, furniture, accessories, appliances

devices	gadget, machine, appliance, equipment	Extensive	vast, broad, comprehensive, expanded
refueling	refilling	Range	area, dimension, field, length, space
blasting	blow up, damage, destroy, demolish, annihilate	Access	approach, connection, entry, avenues, introduction

**Extract-B:**

**Navigate the menus:** *The phone offers you an extensive range of functions that are grouped into menus.*

1. To access the menu, select **Menu**.
2. Use the navigation key to scroll through the menu and select a submenu (for example, Settings). To change the menu view, see Menu view in Display p. 74.
3. If the menu contains submenus, select the one that you want (for example Call settings).
4. If the selected menu contains further submenus, select the one that you want (for example, Anykey answer).
5. Select the setting of your choice.
6. To return to the previous menu level, select **Back**. To exit the menu, select **Exit**. (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).

**Prepare a list of synonyms for the underlined words:** Let the students first prepare a list which may later on be tallied with the teacher's list of synonyms.

**Words                      Synonyms**

Navigation      exploration, sailing, flying, journey, voyage

Scroll	list, document, roll
Menu	card, cuisine, list of items
Display	array, example, demonstration, exhibition, unfolding
Exit	door, outlet, gate, opening, passage out
View	glimpse, look, outlook, picture, scene

**Extract-C:**

**Messages:**

1. The message services can only be used if they are supported by your network or your service provider.
2. **Note:** When sending messages, your phone may display the words Message sent.
3. This is an indication that the message has been sent by your device to the message centre number programmed into your device.
4. This is not an indication that the message has been received at the intended destination. For more details about

messaging services, check with your service provider.

**5. Important:** *Exercise caution* when opening messages.

6. Messages *may* contain *malicious software* or otherwise be *harmful* to your device or PC.

**7. Note:** Only devices that have *compatible features* can receive and display messages. 8. The *appearance* of a message may vary depending on the receiving device. (Nokia 3220 UserGuide).

**Find out Synonyms for the following words:** Let the students first prepare a list which may later on be tallied with the teacher's list of synonyms.

<b>Words</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>
Services	assistance, benefit, use, utility
Network	grid, organization, system, arrangement
Indication	gesture, hint, implication, expression, sign
Device	apparatus, machine, gadget
Programmed	set up, design, compile, book, list
Destination	target, aim, purpose, terminal
Exercise	act, task, discharge, drill

Caution	care, discretion, heed, watchfulness, foresight
Malicious	vicious, wicked, awful, evil
Software	operating system, programme, application, system
Harmful	adverse, bad, risky, damaging, destructive
Compatible	adaptable, consistent, suitable, congruent
Feature	trait, aspect, character, ingredient
Appearance	display, exhibition, presence, manifestation

**Further Activity:**

The learners can henceforth remain alert to the English words and structures used in the instruction manual independently when they come across the manuals of other electronic gadgets or appliances.

**Relevance:** The language teacher can use this material to design more activities for their language classes to add freshness and motivation among the learners.

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# Grammar Songs

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### 1. Parts of Speech

Nouns are naming words.

Adjectives describe them.

Verbs are action words.

Adverbs add more meaning to them.

Repetitive nouns are replaced by pronouns.

Prepositions are positioning words.

Conjunctions are joining words.

Interjections are expressing words you see.

These are the parts of speech.

These are the parts of speech.

### 2. Grammar song

Have been thinking all along,

This is called the grammar song.

Nouns and verbs and adjectives,

Adverbs let us learn along.

Nouns are what come first to mind,

They are heroes of a kind.

A sentence talks about them, friend,

A sentence without noun is hard to find.

Proper nouns are names you see.

Common nouns talk about you and me.

Abstract nouns are imaginary.

Collective nouns talk about groups we see.

Let us move to verbs, my friends,

Verbs describe the action trends.

Verbs tell us the tenses too;

They are most important, too.

It's now time for adjective;

They are very descriptive.

So are adverbs, which together

Make a sentence beautiful.

***\*The author is also a creative writer of songs for children.***

# Problems of Teaching English in Rural and Semi-urban Areas

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Differentiated Instruction has become the norm of the day. Teachers and learners today are looking beyond the traditional approaches of language teaching and learning. The methods adopted by language teachers should be continuously revised according to the requirements or needs of the learners. While the resources available to the language teacher to enhance language skills are in abundance, it has become difficult for them to select and create apt, focused and innovative materials for the required purpose. The teachers' knowledge, experience and expertise also help them to choose the relevant materials. In this context, an attempt has been made to look at the ways in which language skills can be promoted in students by the use of brochures. Brochures play a significant role in language development, as they contain catchy sentences, phrases and technical vocabulary. Students come to know about the subtle nuances involved in the creation of brochures and how information can be disseminated through them. This paper focuses on the various activities that can be designed through brochures. It also provides some criteria for designing the activities.*

## **Introduction**

In our country with a population of more than 1.25 billion and with 18 official regional languages, English enjoys the status of associate official language at the national level. Moreover, with the advent of globalization, there has been a big increase in ELT in colleges, universities and other institutes all over the country. Today, proficiency in English is being increasingly seen as a sine qua non for upward social mobility and lucrative job prospects. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the number of students aspiring to attain proficiency in

English is growing exponentially. But whether our colleges and institutes are really well equipped to teach English to such teeming millions, specially to those hailing from semi-urban and rural backgrounds and whether appropriate methodologies have been developed by our pedagogues in this regard, is a moot question.

## **Problems and Challenges**

In such a scenario, teaching English as a second language to non-native speakers poses a peculiar set of challenges to the teacher of English because these students

come from diverse backgrounds, they have different levels of comprehension, different levels of attention span, different psychological needs and different economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. This challenge acquires an added dimension when we take into account the teaching of English to students hailing from rural and semi-urban areas. Teaching English to these students is quite a daunting task for the teacher, as most of these students are first generation English language learners; their socio-cultural milieu is totally different; they face the impediment of L1 interference which acts as a barrier to their attaining fluency in English. The rural students particularly suffer from 'experiential deficiencies' (Cope et al., 2014) which gradually results in what is known as 'involvement gap': gap between what a rural student perceives as his life experiences and what is taught in the class room. This paper, while discussing all these problems, would also suggest some strategies, tools and methodologies useful for teaching English in rural and semi-urban areas.

One of the biggest hurdles in teaching English as a second language to non-native speakers, as stated above, is what is known as L1 interference, that is, the interference of the learner's mother tongue. We all know that when a child learns his mother tongue, his mind is a clean slate. He learns his mother tongue in a very natural, spontaneous way. But when he has to learn a second language in school or college, the influence of his mother

tongue is so deeply embedded in his consciousness that he cannot shake it off. So far as learning English as a second language is concerned, the problem is further complicated for the learner because the English language is very different from most of the Indian languages in sentence pattern. In English, the sentence pattern is SVO 'that is, subject-verb objects, whereas in most of Indian languages, it is SOV, that is, subject-object-verb. Moreover, the Indian languages are phonetic, that is, the words are pronounced as they are spelt but in English there is no one to one correspondence between written and spoken words, such as in words like *budget, psychology, listen* etc. In Indian languages, the verb changes according to gender/ number but in English it is not so. In Indian languages, the adjective is modified according to gender but in English it is not so. Since almost all rural students learn English (as compared to their urban counterparts) at a comparatively late stage in their schooling, they find it more difficult to adapt to the different pattern of English language.

Another major problem faced by English teachers in teaching English to students coming from semi urban and rural backgrounds is that their socio-cultural milieu is totally different from the one they find in the class room and the college. They feel alienated in this different environment. So far they have not had any opportunity to interact with individuals fluent in English language; their verbal interaction has been in their

regional/ native language only. They are familiar with their regional ethos and culture. Hence when they are exposed to English culture through their reading of English text books wherein 80% content is that of non- Indian authors, they feel that these texts do not reflect their own experiences, hence they are unable to connect with the same. This disconnect is caused by their 'experiential deficiency.' Moreover, a vast majority of these students come from poor families. Due to poverty they have not had access to good schooling; they are by and large unaware of the value and significance of a good English education as a gateway to a bright future. This factor also adds to their general apathy in trying to acquire mastery of English language. These students are also saddled with one more handicap, that is, their psychological inhibition in speaking English. It has been generally observed that a good number of such students are quite good in comprehending the meaning of an English text but when it comes to speaking English, they are tongue-tied. They are afraid that if they speak wrong English, they would be jeered at. This fear of a possible failure inhibits them so much that they usually talk in monosyllables. Such students suffer from low self esteem. Naturally they pose a big challenge to the teacher who has to cover an extra mile in raising the confidence and motivation level of such students.

Most of the schools located in the rural and semi urban areas have quite poor

infrastructure in terms of school building, class rooms, library, reading room, auditorium etc. Many schools don't even have class rooms: classes are held under open sky. Students who receive education in schools having such poor infrastructure naturally fail to come up with the level of those students who have had access to a very good school education in urban areas. A student studying in a very good public school having latest ICT gadgets is naturally at a higher level when he enters college than a rural student with no exposure to these learning tools. Teaching English to such 'disadvantaged' students is really an uphill task for a teacher.

Another challenge before a teacher of English is lack of proper teaching aids such as computers, LCD, OHP, smart boards, well equipped language lab where students can hone their listening and speaking skills. Language labs have different modules where students can practice context based conversation, such as how to answer a telephone call, how to greet one's friends/ seniors, how to apologize for any inconvenience caused to others, how to make enquiries in a bank, post office or railway station, how to make a request, so on and so forth. In the absence of such useful teaching aids, the teacher is left with only the traditional method of teaching, i. e. lecture method. Naturally, such a methodology fails to enthuse or motivate the learner. Moreover, in English language teaching in our country, there is more emphasis on conceptual content as compared to stylistic

content which is another reason for students' poor command over English. "English language teaching in India... has suffered a lot, so much so that our students who pass intermediate or degree examinations with English...can neither speak nor write correct English, may be because the emphasis in our schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and the stylistic content has been neglected so far" (Sharma 1999, p. 91). As regards the issue whether English should be taught through emphasis on language only, or literature is a better medium to teach English: no clear cut approach has been finalized by the pedagogues. The result is that it is each teacher is to his/her own.

It is evident from the above analysis that there are problems galore in teaching English to students in rural and semi-urban areas, or to students hailing from semi-urban or rural areas. There is no denying the fact that identifying the problems is always easier than providing the solutions: still the fact remains that these problems can be reduced, if not eliminated altogether, if the following methodologies and strategies are adopted by the teachers of English.

## **Solutions**

### ***Adopting the dialogic approach***

Instead of using only the lecture method wherein the teacher does all the talking and the students are merely passive listeners, if a teacher adopts a dialogic

approach, it will generate more interest among students and they would feel more involved, more eager to learn.

### ***Encouraging students***

In response to the teacher's question, if a student ventures an answer, even if it is in wrong English, such a student should be encouraged, so that he feels motivated. Negative comments by the teacher like "Don't you know even this?", "Your English pronunciation is horrible!" etc could be the biggest demotivators for such disadvantaged learners who already suffer from a very low self esteem due to their poor background.

### ***Giving them more time to answer***

Generally, it is seen that the teachers do not give sufficient time to slow learners to reply. As they start framing their answer in slow, incoherent English, the teacher's patience is exhausted and he moves on, either supplying the answer himself or okaying the answer provided by the smarter students. The teacher too is hard pressed to complete the syllabus, hence such fine psychological points are usually missed.

### ***Giving primacy to oral work in the classroom***

A teacher should act more as a facilitator, rather than as a stern teacher, an omniscient authority. He should facilitate a substantial amount of co operative work, including peer editing among students.

### **Empowering students**

If the teacher sits down with the students and encourages them to speak, the students would feel empowered, they would consider themselves to be a part of the decision making process. Making students speak among themselves maximizes student's participation in the learning process and minimizes the teacher's role.

### **Contextualizing and localizing the content and style**

Contextualizing and localizing the content as well as style of ELT is very important for a teacher of English. Teaching is a very dynamic activity wherein the teacher has to constantly adapt his approach to the specific requirements of the students. If the teacher can create local contexts while teaching English, the students would feel the texts as alive, as part of their daily experiences.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, teaching English in semi-urban and rural areas or to students of rural background is undoubtedly a daunting task for the teacher. The real

challenge for him/ her is to bring such students from a state of alienation, frustration and resignation to that of involvement and motivation. For this a teacher has to be really full of perseverance and patience. Moreover, instead of adopting the run of the mill, clichéd approach to teaching, a teacher should adopt a dynamic approach; he should innovate and improvise, make teaching a collaborative activity in which students are equal partners in the teaching-learning process. Coupled with this shift in teaching methodology, if the teacher can effectively use the other resources such as multimedia and CALL, teaching English as a second language would certainly yield rich dividends, both to the teacher and to the student.

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### **ELTAI ESP SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)**

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# The instrumental role of error analysis in developing an effective ESL pedagogy: A review

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## **ABSTRACT**

*With the advent of cognitive psychology, the validity of behavioral psychology, which is the prime-philosophical realization of contrastive analysis, has been mitigated in Second Language Acquisition Research. Cognitive psychology prognosticates that language learning is a rule-governed or creative structure acquisition rather than habit formation, and perceives the rule governed system-acquisition as to be cognitively processed through ‘the hypotheses-formation and testing’ rather than through ‘stimulus and reinforcement’. This revolutionary perspective intensely changes SLA process and practice from the external to internal, in other words, from sociological to biological process of learning. As a consequence, Error Analysis has been evolved as a different applied linguistics method to look into the ESL learner errors and their potential sources. The paper focuses on the different insights and methods of Error Analysis and their predictability to verify and remediate ESL errors.*

**Key Words: Error Analysis; SLA; Interlanguage; Errors; LAD**

## **Background to Error Analysis (EA)**

Chomsky’s review of Skinner’s “Verbal Behavior (1957)” upset the speculations of behavioral psychology about the theory of learning. In his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky (1965) proposed a theory of language acquisition in terms of “Language Acquisition Device”, which is supposed to facilitate the learning of abstract grammatical rules. This theory supposes that children are little linguists and they constantly form and test hypotheses. The Theory is profoundly interesting to the contemporaneous linguists, especially to Corder, who applies

the very theory to the second language acquisition context. With this cognitive approach, the perception of learning-process and the parameters of learner’s errors are greatly altered. The learner’s errors are no more considered “habits” but “significant of internal systems” and are become central to the studies of SLA, and are caused to dawn a new research tool, generally known as EA, which mainly concentrates on intralingual errors along with interlingual ones. (Flynn 1988:37-38)

Corder is considered the founding father of EA He diagnoses the significance of learner’s errors, and views them as the reflection of



the learner's mental knowledge about the target language at different levels; the learner frames different strategies to learn the target language. They, the strategies and errors, are systematic in themselves. "The learner's errors are evidence of the system" assumes Corder (1967:166). This working assumption encourages an investigation into the learner's internal strategies of learning. Further, Richards integrates the paradigm of EA to interlanguage studies and posits that "EA basically dealing with the differences between the way people learning a language speak, and the way adult native speakers of the language use the language" (Richards 1971:12) and recommends that the application of such strategies to SLA is required to solve the problems.

1.1. *Salient notations of EA*: Smith points out that Corder, as pioneer of EA, has introduced several key notions current in second language learning. Some of them are;

*A. Inbuilt syllabus*: it is an idea that learners will not learn what they are not ready to learn. This idea explains psycholinguistic constraint on learning, and suggests that learners are hardwired in such a way that they will learn linguistic items in an internally determined order as opposed to one determined externally by a syllabus or a teacher.

*B. Input and intake*: input is supposed to be what the learner is exposed to and intake is what the learner actually takes in.

*C. Transitional competence*: it is supposed

to be the knowledge of the language to date. (Corder 1981, p.10)

*D. Errors and Mistakes*: Errors are seen as representative of the learner's present transitional system and Mistakes seen as a product of performance and hence unsystematic.

*E. Idiolect*: Corder saw the learner's interlanguage system as a variant somewhere between the first language and the target language, which, in contrast to a dialect shared by many individuals, is possessed by the individual and the individual only.

### 1.2 *Some basic assumptions*:

Nemser (1971) and Selinker (1972) exposed the same idea in different manner as reference to Corder's "Transitional systems". Nemser coined the term "Approximative systems" and Selinker "Interlanguage" to mean the same as Corder's Transitional systems. This trinity took the research on three basic assumptions, (derivable from salient notations referred above) which are founding-driven of SLA. They are:

A. That language learners are in possession of a complex and creative learning device.

B. That the learner's language competence at any given time is internally coherent and systematic.

C. That the learner's transitional competence or interlanguage is an idiolect, held by the individual in a unique way. (Block: 2003:17-18)

**2. THE RESEARCH MODEL FOR EA:** The goal of EA as that of contrastive analysis is ultimately pedagogical remediation through a pragmatic research. S. Pit. Corder, for the purpose, identifies a model for EA It consists of three steps:

- a. Data collection: reception of idiosyncrasy.
- b. Description: accounting for idiosyncratic dialect.
- c. Explanation: (the ultimate object of EA) (Husain 2010, p.467)

In this regard, Gass and Selinker (1994, p.67) suggest a more detailed and sophisticated model for EA; the model consists of the following research procedure.

1. Data needs to be collected. This is typically done with written data.
2. Identifying errors: (into word class etc.)
3. Classifying errors: (over generalization, tense etc.)
4. Quantifying errors: (how many overgeneralization errors occur? How many tense errors occur?)
5. Analyzing source of errors: (interlingual, intralingual, due to a certain method)
6. Remediation for errors: (pedagogical intervention) (Husain 2010, p.467)

Like Gass and Selinker, Muriel (2006) provides the same model that with more explanation critically examines the errors. The model can be very useful to a researcher. It consists of the following steps:

- a. Collection of data or learner' errors: most of the samples of EA are collected from the sources that respond to the same task or test. Some samples are collected over terms in order to assess the changing patterns in error occurrence with the shift exposure and proficiency of the target language.
- b. Identification of errors: the errors will be identified in the samples collected in order to determine the different categories or sub- categories in which deviations from the target language norms are found. In this context, Corder (1967) differentiates systematic errors (deviations due to learner's incompetence of target language knowledge) and mistakes (deviations caused by the failure of processing the target language). Mistakes he exempts from analysis.
- c. Description of errors: usually, the learner's errors that identified will be classified into the different linguistic levels like phonological, syntactic, morphological, or lexical etc., general linguistic categories like passive construction, auxiliaries etc. or more specific/sub-categories like articles, prepositions, verb-forms etc.
- d. Explanation of errors: it is a most crucial attempt of EA to account for why an error is made. Usually, EA refers to two chief sources of errors. 1. Interlingual error sources 2. Intralingual error sources. The factors like negative transfer of the first language patters,

elements etc are referred to interlingual sources and the factors like non-cross linguistic interference or developmental in character are referred to be intralingual sources. Frequently, the distinction is built upon contrastive analysis procedures since it involves comparative knowledge or analogy between the first and the target language systems.

- e. The evaluation of errors: It incorporates the assessment of the effect and intensity of error on something or someone addressed. It explains how serious or to what extent the error affects intelligibility or social acceptability. (Muriel 2006: 37-39)

This is the chief procedure EA approach adopts to analyze the learner's errors.

**3. INTERLANGUAGE:** EA is evolved into Interlanguage hypothesis (Connor 1996: 12-14). It is Nemser (1971) and Briere (1964/1968) that have first harboured the concept of Interlanguage but this concept is well associated with Larry Selinker. The notion of Interlanguage is the resultant of the observation that the second language learner often models the linguistic structures on a peculiar linguistic system which is different from the source language system as well as from the target language system. This unique language system is known as Interlanguage.

*3.1. The fundamental characteristics of interlanguage system:* the concept of Interlanguage forms some assumptions about SLA. Some of the salient ones are:

A. Learner builds a system of abstract linguistic norms that exist with the production and comprehension of second language. This system of norms is viewed to be the 'mental grammar' of the learner and is generally referred to as Interlanguage.

B. The system of the learner or 'mental grammar' is permeable. That is to say, the mental grammar of the learner is susceptible to the external (through the input like teaching or methods or transfer of training etc) and internal (learner's strategies of target language like omission, simplification, transfer or overgeneralization etc) influences that constitute the evidence of the internal processing of the learner.

C. The mental grammar of the learner is in a constant state of flux and so is transitional. The learner alters the mental grammar cumulatively by modifying the target language norms and reconstructing the whole system. This procedure leads to Interlanguage continuum. (Ellis 1997: 33)

D. Interlanguage system consummates in three different competences; namely 1. Fossilized competence 2. Functional competence 3. Transitional competence. The concept of fossilized competence was taken from Corder (Selinker: 1996:98). It states that many second language learners seem to reach a stable proficiency level of the target language and cease to advance any further. On their way to reach that stable level, they pass through different stages, characteristically transitional. Some learners achieve competence in specific domains only. They are competent in using

the new language mainly for specific purposes and this mode of competence is referred to as functional competence.

*3.2. Interlanguage hypothesis development:* the following are the prominent studies that have precipitated to develop Interlanguage Hypothesis.

*3.2.1 Studies of the first language transfer:* After Selinker's postulation of Interlanguage hypothesis (1972), Krashen (1981) proposed Monitor Model Theory. At its initial phrase, it greatly relied on the creative construction theory, which assumes that "language learning is a creative process in which the learner makes unconscious hypotheses on the basis of input. The process of input in turn is controlled by innate mechanisms, the same ones that operate in the first language". This assumption is the crux for the monitor model theory. It negates the principle of the first language transfer, which is axiomatic to contrastive analysis. Monitor model suggests that when learner acquires a second language unconsciously, the first language transfer is not evident, but it is evident when the acquisition is conscious. Monitor model does not assign a role to the first language transfer but Interlanguage hypothesis accords a central role to it. The notion of the first language transfer in the case of Interlanguage hypothesis is what Selinker (1996) asserts on the firm evidence that the preferred learning strategy of the second language learner is the search for interlingual identification, a notion derived from Weinreich (1953/68). It means to say that interlingual identification/transfer is

interwoven with interlanguage hypothesis. (Malmkjan: 2004:83)

*3.2.2. The studies of universal grammar or LAD (language acquisition device):* the study of the role of universal grammar in the process of SLA also helps to explain the insignificant role of the first language transfer. Berns (2010) states that one of the contributions of Interlanguage hypothesis to the field of SLA in early 1990s, is historically established, research based and theoretically motivated frame work for the study of SLA, which can easily account for both the role of native language transfer and universal grammar in shaping Interlanguage.

*3.3. The revised interlanguage hypothesis:* In 1993, even though the basic claims of Interlanguage hypothesis remained unaltered and further reinforced by research findings in the intervening years, the hypothesis undergoes substantial modifications and expansions since its inception in 1972.

The application of the Interlanguage hypothesis is formerly limited to the adult acquisition of second language, but later, owing to the findings in Immersion Program, like the French Immersion Program in Canada, its application is extended to the case of children acquiring a language. It is evidenced in the programs the children producing interlanguages, in which apparently fossilized linguistic systems have been observed. These valuable findings have prompted to query whether those children are using their LADs to internalize the target

language or they are using the psycholinguistic processes that are more characteristic with adult SLA. A great deal of research is needful to determine, how, if at all, they differ from the adult learners.

The Interlanguage hypothesis is further expanded with the studies of the influence of universal grammar on the progress of Interlanguage. Since universal grammar is assumed to be central to the development of natural languages, the crucial enquiry is that, is interlanguage a natural language? This question receives two responses. One is from Selinker's initial hypothesis, which logically concludes that:

- A. natural languages are produced by LADs.
- B. language universals exist in human languages by virtue of the way in which LAD is structured.
- C. but interlanguages, unlike native language, fossilize and evidence native language transfer.
- D. interlanguages therefore are a product of latent psychological structures, not LAD's.
- E. So, interlanguages do not have to obey language universals. On contrary, Adjemian (1976) and some others hold a differed position and claim that interlanguages are natural languages (although, unlike other natural languages, interlanguage rule systems are 'permeable'). As natural languages, interlanguages do have to obey language

universals. In a nutshell, interlanguages are the products of the same LAD that produces natural languages. So they too have to obey language universals. In this view, interlanguages fossilize because of complex changes in cases where parameters have already been set for one language and a second language must be learned. For this issue, a likely debate is certainly ongoing.

The third factor for the modification of interlanguage hypothesis is the interlanguage process development concerned. Increasing evidence affirm that interlanguage development seems to be vary in accord with social set up and discourse domain. It is observed that learners can produce a significantly more fluent, grammatical and transfer-free interlanguage in some social context than in others. And the important processes like fossilization may be more prominent for a given learner in one context than in other. This variedness in interlanguage production has been reviewed in Tarone (1988) is likely to be the problem of data-elicitation, a complex problem of SLA, which must be carefully accounted for.

Fossilization Phenomena itself, which broadened the scope of interlanguage hypothesis, is another crucial factor required serious investigation. Many important queries are posed. Is fossilization inevitable? Is it inevitable or temporary? Some answers are that the inevitability or temporariness relies on sociolinguistic forces, like the learner's identity with native

speaker group or target language speaker group. Regarding psycholinguistic processes shaping interlanguage, there has been a modified idea. As is the case with transfer principle in 1990, so are enquiries about interlanguage; that can we predict in advance what native language characteristics will influence an interlanguage? Which ones will not? When native language transfer combines with the psycholinguistic influences like learner strategies, transfers of training and markedness factors etc, the high probability of fossilization is observed. Still, the research on interlanguage has a multiple problems to solve in the intervening years. (Berns: 2010: 137-139)

**4. ERRORS:** the perception of errors in learning has been drastically changed with the Corder's "significance of the learner's errors" (1967), which observes that learner's errors predict the inner strategies and processes of the learner at a particular point of time in course of target language development and they are windows through which one can assess the learner's mind. In EA approach, learner language is considered to be independent of both the first language and the target language and the state of learner's mind signifies the learner's transitional competence of the target language system. Further, Corder claims that "The making of errors is significant because it is a part of learning process itself; a way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. This process is inclusive of testing whether the aspects of

existing first language knowledge can be used in the target language". Errors are, thus, a sign of the learner's exploration rather than simply 'transferring' the old habits.

*4.1. Error sources:* Selinker (1972) proposes five processes involved in the problem of errors:

1. Language transfer: Some, but certainly not all, items, rules and subsystems of a learner's interlanguage may be transferred from the first language.
2. Transfer of training: Some interlanguage elements may derive from the way in which the learners were taught.
3. Strategies of second language learning: Selinker talks about an 'identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned'.
4. Strategies of second language communication: An 'identifiable approach by the learner to communication with the native speakers of the TL'.
5. Overgeneralization of target language linguistic material: Some interlanguage elements are the results of a 'clear overgeneralization' of the target language rules and semantic features) (Ellis 1994: 351).

In 1974, Richards and Simpson identified seven sources of errors:

1. Language transfer;
2. Intralingual interference;



3. Sociolinguistic situation;
4. Modality of exposure to target language and production;
5. Age;
6. Succession of approximative systems; and
7. Universal hierarchy of difficulty.

According to Dulay & Burt (1974), learning is not possible without goofing (error). They have diagnosed four types of “Goofs”:

1. Interference-like goofs: those errors that reflect native language structures and are not found in first (English) language acquisition data.
2. L1 Developmental goofs: those errors that do not reflect native language structure but are found in first (English) language structure.
3. Ambiguous goofs (either interference-like or L1 developmental goofs): those errors that cannot be categorized as either interference-like or developmental.
4. Unique goofs (neither interference-like nor L1 developmental goofs): those errors that do not reflect first language structure and also are not found first (English) language acquisition data (Ellis 1986: 28; Gass 2001: 84).

James (1998), on the other hand, believes in three main sources of errors:

1. Interlingual: Errors caused by negative transfer from learners source language

2. Intralingual: Errors caused by the complexities of the target language system
3. Induced: Errors caused by improper transfer of training, improper method of teaching, etc. (Dodigovic 2005: 178).

**5. CRITIQUE OF EA:** EA is an effective research instrument for the studies of SLA. Yet, as is the case with many other methods and tools of research, it is also subjected to criticism. Critics point out the following inadequacies of the EA approach.

1. Ambiguity in classification: the first and foremost shortcoming with EA is the classification of errors from the target language point of view.
2. Schachter (1974) points out that it is difficult to ascertain what type of error a second language learner is making or why the learner makes it. One and the same error can frequently be classified to be either interlingual or intralingual, and sometimes this may not be the case of ‘either or’ proposition. It is evident that some errors are resulted from the interaction of the dual factors. (Andersen 1978)
3. Lack of positive data: EA exclusively interests in learner’s errors alone and ignores learner’ competence. It does not account for what the learner is able to or has acquired at a given stage of development. Sometimes, non-error phenomena provide useful information about learning and learner.



4. Potential for avoidance: Absence of errors may happen from the learners' avoidance of difficult structures, which is not explained by EA. Schachter (1974) makes the point that Chinese and Japanese L1 speakers make few errors in English L2 relative clauses because they avoid them (Muriel 2006: 40; Virginia 1995: 4-5; McLaughlin 1987: 129).

## CONCLUSION

The inadequacies referred to EA suggest the researcher the precautions that should be taken up as analyzing the learner corpus or data. While ascertaining the source of an error the researcher should be more pragmatic and should come up with a more probable rationale so that they can be addressed in syllabic or material designing.

Moreover, at least from the pedagogically advantageous point of view, which the ultimate task for any teaching or learning method, EA has more efficacies rather than inadequacies, A second language teacher heuristically benefits a lot from the individual or integrated approach of contrastive and EA. Schachter and Murcia (1990: 281-82) opine that "the combination of C.A and E.A may constitute a useful approach". Valdman (2002: 20) suggests that "EA could be a highly fruitful source of language data on which pedagogical norms could be based". Bhatia (1991: 190) advocates that "without sufficient understanding of the nature and cause of errors, remedial work can and indeed often

does take the form of re-teaching or re-drilling the problematic features without improvement as a result. To combat an error, the teacher should be aware of its cause. And since most errors are a natural result of learning processes, the theoretical function of EA, the investigation of these processes, is of direct relevance to the improvement of teaching".

Stubbs (2001) believes that a second language researcher can analyze learner performance data to infer the inaccessible mental process of SLA. Meunier (2002) advocates the use of learner data in class room, and suggests that "exercises such as comparing learner and native speaker data and analyzing errors in learner-language will help students to notice gaps between their interlanguage and the language they are learning". Keck (2004: 99) states that "in language pedagogy, the implications of learner corpora (data) have been explored for curriculum design, materials development, and teaching methodology".

Therefore, one can deduce from these valuable statements that E.A can be an effective scientific instrument to verify ESL learner-errors and to infer their strategies about the second language learning. The corpora that these instruments yield may serve the pedagogical purposes of ESL or EFL.

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## **10th International & 46th National Annual ELTAI Conference**

### **Learning and Teaching English in India: Setting Standards**

**09-11 July 2015**

**organized by**

**English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)**

**(An Associate of the International Association**

**of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, IATEFL, UK)**

**at Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women**

**Supported by RELO & British Council**

**[www.rkgitw.edu.in/international\\_annual\\_conference.html](http://www.rkgitw.edu.in/international_annual_conference.html)**

#### **The Conference**

For over four decades now, we have been discussing the achievement of standards in English in the midst of problems like large classes, teachers' lack of preparation and teaching effectiveness, lack of infrastructure, centrally prepared textbooks/course books, divergences and variations in the levels of English proficiency among urban and rural learners and so on. This conference aims to focus on various issues and concerns that need to be addressed immediately. The broad areas covered could include the following:

1. Setting learning outcome standards for English as a language of communication
2. Standards-driven approach to teaching and learning of English
3. Assessment of English standards at various levels
4. Quality provision in English education
5. Charting and tracking an academic revolution in respect of English education
6. Quantity versus quality in teaching English
7. Strategic directions for teaching and learning of English
8. Views of Stakeholders on the quality of teaching and learning of English
9. Trends in teaching and learning of English
10. Transnational experiences in setting standards
11. Benchmarking and ranking
12. Status and preparation of English teachers
13. The role of ICTs in achieving learning outcome standards
14. Teaching English language through literature

#### **Highlights of the conference**

1. Founder Padamshri S Natarajan Endowment Lecture

2. ELT@I Professional Leadership Award
3. Best Chapter Award
4. Best Paper Presenter Award
5. Round table discussion
6. Live presentations
7. Panel discussion

### **Paper Submission:**

Each submission should include the following:

(a) An abstract of 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 Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

(b) Submissions should be made electronically in MS Word 97-03 to

eltaianualconference@gmail.com with copy to

sanjayarorajaipur@yahoo.com, gagshyam@gmail.com, ramanipn@gmail.com.

### **Important Deadlines**

Submission of abstracts: 5th June 2015

Submission of Full length Paper: 15th June 2015

### **Souvenir and Proceedings with ISBN**

A souvenir will be released during the inaugural which will contain the conference details, messages from dignitaries, abstracts of contributors. In addition to the Souvenir, Conference Proceedings of selected papers will be published with ISBN.

### **Registration**

It is compulsory for all joint authors of each accepted paper to register for the conference in case they intend to be included in the Technical Programme and want their name in the Conference Proceedings.

### **Registration Fee**

Participants are expected to register themselves and pay the registration fee in advance as per the following details, by sending a demand draft drawn in favour of "ELTAI, Chennai", by 15 June 2015 to:

The Secretary, D-54 Third Floor,

Anandham Apartments,

156, SIDCO Nagar Main Road,

Villivakkam

Chennai-600 049.

<p><b>Early Bird</b>  Rs 1100/ ELTAI Members  Rs 1400/ Non-ELTAI Members  Rs 700/ School Teachers (with a letter from Principal)</p>	<p><b>On-the-spot Registration Fee:</b>  Rs 1400/ ELTAI Members  Rs 1700/ Non-ELTAI Members  USD 50 Overseas Participants</p>
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**Sightseeing:**

On the 3rd day of the Conference after the Valedictory Function a sightseeing trip to Agra is planned for those interested. Registration for sightseeing needs to be done in advance by sending a DD for Rs.1500/ in advance in favour of “ELTAI-NCR, Greater Noida Chapter” by 15 June 2015 to: Dr Harleen Kaur, Organizing Secretary, Department of Humanities, Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women, Ghaziabad-201017.

**On-the- spot Registration for Sightseeing: Rs 2500/-**

**NOTE:**

- (1) Two light Snacks will be provided along with water bottle during the journey.
- (2) The amount (Rs 1500) only includes transport (to & fro) and entry fee.

**Accommodation**

To avail accommodation you need to send a DD in advance in favour of “ELTAI-NCR, Greater Noida Chapter” by 15 June 2015 to:

Mr. Lokesh Kumar, Department of Humanities, Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women, Ghaziabad-201017.

Hostel (Non-AC): Rs600/ per day with Breakfast and Dinner on twin sharing basis per head

Hotel AC Room (Clarks INN & Fortune INN):

Rs. 1700 per day with Breakfast and Dinner on Triple sharing basis per head

On-the-Spot Registration for Accommodation: (Subject to availability):

Hostel (Non AC) Rs 700 per day per head on twin sharing basis per head

Hotel (Clarks INN & Fortune INN): Rs 2200 per day on Triple sharing basis per head

**\* Registration forms submitted online or by post will not be considered without DD.**

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**Conference website:**

[www.rkgitw.edu.in/international\\_annual\\_conference.html](http://www.rkgitw.edu.in/international_annual_conference.html)

Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women

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E-Mail: [info@rkgitw.edu.in](mailto:info@rkgitw.edu.in), [director@rkgitw.edu.in](mailto:director@rkgitw.edu.in).

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

Members of ELTAI are requested to send their email address along with their current postal address (including the PIN code), quoting their membership number, to [indiaeltai@gmail.com](mailto:indiaeltai@gmail.com), the new mail ID created for our new Google group. This venture is part of our continued efforts to improve our services to the members. Your cooperation in this regard will be appreciated.

## ***The Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT) – ISSN-0973-5208***

[A publication of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)]

### **Submissions**

*The JELT* is an international, **peer-reviewed journal** published by the English Language Teachers' Association of India based at Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, but with over 55 chapters in different parts of India. **Please see the front inner cover for details of the establishment and objectives of the association.**

*The JELT* is published **six times a year** – February, April, June, August, October and December. The overall aim of the journal is to promote the professional development of its readers, namely English teachers teaching at all levels, researchers and teacher trainers around the world. The journal, therefore, accepts submissions on all aspects and issues relating to the teaching and learning of English in ESL settings.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Submissions**

Each submission will be evaluated for its suitability for publication in terms of the following criteria.

The article should:

- ★ Reflect current theories and practices in English language teaching.
- ★ Be relevant and appeal to the wide readership of the journal.
- ★ Be well written and organized, with sufficient explanation and examples to enable readers to apply the ideas and insights in their own classes.
- ★ Discuss the topic in the context of other work related to the topic.
- ★ Be written in clear and concise language, making it easy to read.

### **Guidelines for Submissions**

Each issue of the journal addresses a specific theme. Authors should send submissions related to the theme before the deadline indicated for the issue. *See the ELTAI website and the journal for the themes (if any) and deadlines for the subsequent issues.*

Authors should follow these guidelines while preparing their articles for submission:

1. The article should not have been published previously in any form (print or online).
2. The maximum length of the article should be 2000 words (excluding an abstract in 150 words).
3. All pages should be double-spaced with a clear margin of 1 inch on all sides.

4. The title should be brief and focused, not broad or vague.
5. The article should carry only the title, abstract and the main paper.
6. The title, author(s)' name(s) [the last name first], affiliation [i.e., the name of institution(s) the author(s) belong(s) to; city, country] and email address should be provided on a separate cover sheet for the article, along with author(s)' photo(s) [.jpg].
7. Only sources cited in the article should be listed as references at the end of the article.
8. The article should use the author-date format for citations and references (e.g., Anderson 1997; Anderson 1997, p.17). *See the Chicago Manual of Style (15<sup>th</sup> edn.) for more details and examples.*
9. A list of all the references cited in the text should be given at the end of the article. In each reference, only the author's last name and initials are to be provided. The year is placed after the author's name. Only the first word of the title and the sub-title (after a colon) are capitalized along with proper nouns. Titles of books and journals should be in *italics*. Quotation marks are not to be used in the title. ***For electronic sources such as websites, the date of accessing the source should be given in brackets after the URL.***
10. ***The filename of the article (in MS Word format) sent as an email attachment should contain key words from the title and the author(s)' names.***

### **Consultancy Services by ELTAI**

ELTAI is happy to announce the starting of its consultancy services for providing in-service training in general to teachers of English as well as training them specifically in the use of Internet tools and resources for the teaching and learning of communication skills in English. As regards the latter type of programme it will help educational institutions in conducting teacher training workshops on virtual learning, covering primarily the use of the following tools in the teaching and learning of English.

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| ● Virtual Classroom       | ● Blogging          |
| ● Wiki                    | ● Social Networking |
| ● Google Drive            | ● Mobile Learning   |
| ● Google and Yahoo Groups | ● Flipped Classroom |

Interested institutions may contact <[eltai\\_india@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eltai_india@yahoo.co.in)>

## SPEAKING ACTIVITY

### **BIZZARE EVENTS** (very strange and unusual events)

**Dr. K. Elango**, Head, Dept. of English, Anna University,  
Chennai & ELTAI-National Secretary  
Email: [elangoela@rediffmail.com](mailto:elangoela@rediffmail.com)

**Objective** : To enable learners to spice up their communication by bringing in bizarre events that happened in their lives, or those they have read or heard about.

**Preparation** : Focused reading on bizarre events from sources, such as books / newspapers / magazines / web sites to store them to recall at the appropriate moments of communication; and chewing the cud of some such events that had happened to them.

**Participation** : In small groups

**Duration** : About 3 minutes

#### **Procedure :**

- The teacher shares with the class one or a few bizarre events he had come across in his/her own life or heard/read about from some source.
- The teacher gets a couple of articulate volunteers to share a few bizarre events from their own experiences.
- The teacher sets up small groups of four students each and instructs them to share some bizarre events one after the other.
- When sharing gets over, they are asked to provide feedback about their ability to express themselves.
- The best performing group is asked to re-enact their sharing to the whole class and feedback is given to them.

#### **Learning outcomes:**

1. Learners recognize that sharing such things as bizarre incidents can make their interactions interesting.
2. Learners understand that communications when interspersed with something of this sort (but suitable to the context) can make them become effective communicators.

**Further Activities** : Learners should try to employ interesting bizarre incidents (but relevant to the contexts) in their communications as often as possible.

#### **Examples of bizarre events (From the archives of *Times of India*):**

- *Man picks trash too early, jailed*
- *Crows bring gifts to girl who feeds them*
- *Weasel 'hitches ride' with woodpecker*



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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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THE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING [India] is registered under the Press and registration Act 1887; RN 84685

*The Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT)* is the official organ of the English Language Teachers' Association of India. It is a bimonthly which offers a forum for teachers and researchers to voice their views on the teaching of English language and literature.

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*The JELT is published by **Dr. K. Elango** for the English Language Teachers' Association of India, printed by N.V. Narayanan, Udhaya Printers, 63 (New No.15), Thambiah Road, West Mambalam, Chennai - 600 033 and edited by **Dr. P. N. Ramani**.*

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