

THE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (INDIA)

(A Peer-Reviewed Journal)

ESL Teaching-Avenues and Challenges – The Art of Teaching Language through Literature – Reading habits of undergraduate students in Andhra Pradesh-Speaking the American and the British Tongues – Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Educational Technology (ET) and its Application to Facilitate Teaching / Learning in the 21st Century

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

Periodicity

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

Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

eltai_india@yahoo.co.in

CDs and hard copies will not be accepted.

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

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

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

Objectives of the Association

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

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

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

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

The Journal of English Language Teaching (India)

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Editorial

This issue of ELTAI in your hands brings to you, as its wont, quite an array of articles on an extensive range of topics based on field practices as well as on teacher insights gained over a substantial period of time in the English language classrooms. Such areas as the mother tongue (MT) influence on the teaching and learning of English as a second language (L2); the teaching of language through literature; motivation factors and reading skills; varieties of English and technology interventions in language learning/teaching constitute this issue, besides a book review and other regular features.

The influence of MT on L2 has been and still is a veritable cause for concern for the teachers of English. Decades of unrelenting discourses over it have not as yet yielded any solution of significance to write home about, and, overcoming it, in essence, proves to be next to impossible. But, is it worth an attempt, given the low-key enthusiasm over the so-called RP, emergence of World Englishes, etc.? Do think about it and then take a plunge into Aparna Bhanik's article, Teaching ESL – Avenues and Challenges, which eminently brings to the fore the difficulties involved in teaching English to students from the vernacular medium of instruction.

The article that follows dwells on the topic of teaching the language through literature. This may sound an oft-repeated theme in the ESL literature but it does merit repetition as more often than not the language classroom is willy-nilly reduced to, at best, a content subject classroom. It is time we reflected on the processes involved in the transaction of teaching/learning of English. One may be convinced of the school of thought that espouses the dictum of teaching literature for literature sake. Nonetheless, what is in it for the learners in a wider context? It is against this backdrop that Chodiganji Ravi's article could perhaps be seen which brings the concept of teaching the language through literature under new light.

Innyasamma Gade, through a random survey conducted, profiles the reading habits of 200 students representing various UG Colleges in Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh). Contrary to the popular notion, and quite refreshingly, the survey indicates that being economically poor does not in any measure diminish the interest of the students in reading books and journals that may have no direct connection to the curriculum. Though clichéd, that motivation is the key is the message of the article. Their own interest combined with the rich amount of motivation they received from the parents and teachers, it is claimed, helped in improving their reading skills.

Aptly quoting Shaw, who famously said that Britain and the USA are two nations divided by a single language, in her article entitled Speaking British American Tongue, Salonee Priya attempts to distinguish between the two varieties of English, namely, 'British' and 'American', by highlighting their semantic differences, punctuation, etc.

Viju's article, Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Educational Technology (ET) and its Application to Facilitate Teaching/ Learning in the 21st Century deals with advancements in educational technology vis-à-vis the concept of language learning as a process. Touching upon the dominant theories of learning under the behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist schools of thought, the article exhorts for a judicious mix of all the three to ensure effective learning among a mixed group of students of varied capabilities.

Besides these robust articles, this issue contains a compendious account of the recently concluded IATEFL conference and a book review by Pramod Kumar Das and Narayan Jena, which serves as an additional feature. Elango, as usual, provides an outline of a useful activity to be tried in your classrooms.

Do not miss out on the details about the upcoming ELTAI conference in the historic city of Hyderabad!

In closing, may I request you to enrich the journal with your contributions in the form of articles, book reviews, etc.! Do share your experiences...

Dr. S. Savithri, Editor

ESL Teaching - Avenues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Teaching the English language to a group of students who come from a regional medium of instruction has always been challenging. The affinity to their mother tongue creates obstacles in learning English. The main reason behind this problem is students' inclination to learn through translation. This is not an appropriate method for learning. Very often this leads to misinterpretation of words and their meaning, inheriting faulty pronunciations and accents. The present study explores the ways in which one can make the teaching of the English Language more effective and result oriented especially for students coming from a regional medium of instruction.

Introduction

English as a second language has been a part of the curricula right from the primary classes, or at least from middle school. Despite this, most of the students from the regional medium of instruction do not find themselves comfortable in English. The present study probes into its probable causes. Surprisingly, these are varied, pertaining to psychological, mental, and emotional aspects of the students and their cultural background as well.

Stumbling Blocks

The students from the regional medium of instruction often face difficulties while communicating in English. Their mindset plays a crucial role in this as the difficulty lies in the mind rather than in the task itself. The approach towards learning English needs to be positive. Inertia is another

stumbling block. The apprehension of failure and lack of confidence, prevent them from accepting new challenges.

As learning a language requires a closed loop system, the difficulties may lie at different levels as many organs are involved in the process.

- 1) Mind- Responsible for retention and partial syntax.
- 2) Tongue- Sound production, proprioceptive responses.
- 3) Ear- Auditory feed back

Unless all three are properly coordinated, errors can occur at different levels in language learning. Moreover, proprioceptive feedback works effectively only when the learner retains the memory of voice or specific words. Speaking aloud helps a student retain this memory of the sound.

In the Hindi dominated regions in India, English is often learnt through the Translation method. A study was carried out to analyze the difficulties that the students faced while learning English especially those whose mother tongue was Hindi. The students from the regional medium, in this case Hindi found it difficult to improve their spoken as well written skills for three reasons.

- 1) A natural inclination for the mother tongue (in this case Hindi).
- 2) The basic grammatical and phonetic differences
- 3) Indigenous faulty pronunciations(in some cases)

The greatest hindrance in the way of learning English as a second language is the student's affinity to Hindi. They learn English comparing it with the already set rules and standards of their mother tongue. This tendency compels them to translate words from their language into English. Translation is an inexact method to learn a language causing the following problems-

The subject verb orientation differs in both the languages.

In English the subject is immediately followed by the verb, where as in Hindi the subject comes first and the verb follows at the end of the sentence.

Each language has its own culture. In most of the Hindi speaking regions, the students learn it according to the already set standards of their indigenous language.

Faulty pronunciation is also carried forward from Hindi to English in some of the cases. Some of them are:

1. The inherent inability to discriminate between Pronunciation of 's' and 'sh'

This practice continues even when these students speak English

'Shirt' sounds as 'sirt'

'Shy' sounds as 'sie'

The faulty pronunciation in Hindi slowly creeps into their utterances in English too.

- 2) Students pronounce 'Lipstick' as 'Lipistick' and 'Station' as 'istation'
- 3) The Hindi letters 't' and 'd' letters are pronounced with greater emphasis. On the other hand these words are pronounced lightly in English. This makes a great difference in pronunciation. The same is the case with the letter 'r'.
- 4) Intonation- a rising intonation is generally observed in framing questions, in English. When students belonging to Hindi regions speak in English they use a falling intonation for framing questions.
- 5) Certain words like '-bag' 'tag' are not pronounced completely instead they are pronounced as 'beg' 'teg'. Their sound is contracted both in speech and writing.

An experiment was conducted on a group of twenty students to improve their

pronunciation and accents and also make them more proficient in English. They were provided a training program with a series of exercises meant to improve their grammar as well as pronunciation..

A tongue twister exercise including a series of words with 'sh' sound was designed for a group of students. After repeated sessions a remarkable positive shift was observed. The advanced exercises included sentences containing the noun+verb combinations of; sh; sounding words to clarify the difference between 'sh' and 's'.

Interactive games and puzzles including frequently mispronounced words also helped .

Other Effective Tools used were-

- 1) Puzzles and games
- 2) Vocabulary retention games
- 3) Tongue twister exercise
- 4) Self introduction
- 5) Framing short sentences
- 6) Defining a picture/scene
- 7) Situations posed
- 8) Emotive explosion
- 9) Extempore

Objectives of the study:- The study aimed at

1. A general assessment of pronunciation of regional medium students (especially from Hindi region).

2. To evaluate the effect of the technique used to improve pronunciation.
3. To examine whether the impact of indigenous language adversely affects their English pronunciation

Study Tools-An experiment was conducted on a group of twenty students. They were given an exercise that assessed their pronunciations prior to the test. The same group was trained for two weeks to improve their pronunciation through some chosen techniques.

Techniques Applied-

Various techniques were used to train the same group for two weeks. These include –

- Tongue Twister Exercises - to help them differentiate between -sh- and -s- sounding words.
 - Sentences like- See , how she shows her speech skills or She sells all the shells were included.
 - Pronunciation Check was implied through 'Linguaphone' exercises. (audio)
1. Students were taught to use dictionary for checking the right pronunciation and accent of words.
 2. Audio visual aids like language programmes were introduced

Statistical Analysis:-

The data collected was processed to get the values. 't' test was applied to analyze whether there was any remarkable difference between the results of the pre and

post training groups. Dependent and independent variables were identified in the study.

Hypothesis:- There was no significant difference in the English pronunciation of students in pre and post tests.

TABLE

Test	N	Mean	Difference of Mean	SD	t value	Remark
Pre Post	20	3.61 6.1	2.45	1.182183 1.071153	4.6561	Significant

It is evident that the results (mean scores) of the pre and post tests differ significantly. The value of t at .05 level of significance is found significant than the table value

Conclusion:

Pronunciation can be improved considerably after providing appropriate training to the students. Thus, ESL can be made more effective and target oriented if it is taught considering the educational background of the students. The basic tendency of the students to learn English through translation creates obstacles. Instead they should be motivated to learn English just as they have learnt their mother tongue

Suggestions

1. It requires practice in Reading, Speaking as well as Writing skills
2. An appropriate environment is required for learning English

3. Other than the syllabus the games, puzzles etc prove to be more effective.
4. Short stories can be made a part of the curricula.
5. Students can be asked to enact stories they are familiar with, from Hindi literature.

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The Art of Teaching English Language through Literature

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Literature is an art form dealing with the needs of the students. A literary piece is not an end in itself but the means of beginning a creative process in the minds and emotions of the students. For many students literature can be a key to motivate them to read in English. It encourages the students to exercise their sensitivity and imagination. So literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for introducing cultural assumptions.

In the literature-based classroom, literature can be the primary material of teaching the target language, providing authentic and real contexts of communicative situations which enhance the communicative competence of the students. It also provides the pleasure of learning a new language with and through interesting stories. Students can extend their knowledge and experience of the world by reading literature. The language teacher should encourage students to read literature for their own meanings and experiences instead of being forced to accept the teacher's perception of the text. Literature provided examples of effective and appropriate usage of the language for the students to learn. Literature also shows students new ways

to view the world around them by constructing meaning from the text.

Maley (1989) distinguishes the purpose of teaching literature into two. The first one focuses on the study of literature which emphasizes the "special" status of literature. On the other hand the second one is for the use of literature as a resource for language learning. Maley (1989) puts it:

(a) The first approach is the literary critical approach in which our primary concern is the "literariness" of the text we study. In this traditional approach we concentrate on aspects of the text such as plot, characterization, setting, point of view, motivation, value, psychology, etc. In order for this approach to be successful, students should both be competent enough in the language, and familiar with the literary conventions. However, disregarding very few exceptions, EFL/ESL students rarely are at the desirable level of competence for this purpose. The result is what is called a "pseudo-competence" in which students memorize technical critical terms without deep understanding and merely repeat the opinions they had been exposed to in exam by rote. Therefore, application of literature

in this manner needs a great amount of preparation and work both on students language and literary competence.

(b) The second approach is the stylistic approach in which we focus on literature as “text”. The starting point for this approach is the text itself and then we concentrate on textual discoveries leading to interpretations of the text. Because language is in priority in this approach, it is certainly more relevant to EFL/ESL contexts. Unlike the first approach, linguistic elucidation and description precedes interpretation. (10-11)

Maley points out if the second purpose is the focus of attention, literature can be considered as a source of teaching and learning language.

Arthur further says that using literature in language classes should be filled with the concept of literary experience. He also emphasizes that the special interaction that exists between the book and the reader. Arthur points out that “if literature is to provide a useful vehicle for the teaching of second language skills, it must first succeed as a literary experience. There are some factors which play crucial role in encouraging the students to experience literary experience while reading a piece of literature”.

Literature is inherently authentic and provides authentic input for language learning (Ghosn, 2002; Shrestha, 2008). So the teachers can exploit literature as authentic material through various genres like drama and novel. In drama one can find

conversations, expressions of feelings, functional phrases, and contextualized expressions. Novel is the readiest and most acceptable way of embodying experiences and ideas in the context of time. So novel is a vehicle for extensive reading purposes. The teacher can allow the students a week to go through a novel without referring to the dictionary. Such practice will improve reading speed and also encourage the students to understand the meaning guessing in reading. Subsequently learners are able to learn how to read a lot in a short period of time.

On the other hand, for intensive reading the best literary form is poetry which is good for close analysis. The teacher can assign a poem to read each stanza closely to analyze the poem through literary elements such as metaphor, simile, allegory, etc. So that it enables the students to develop interest to read between the lines and get the hidden meaning expressed through literary elements. This intensive reading can lead the learners to extract deep meanings embedded in texts. Poetry is not only useful for intensive reading but also a good source for practicing grammatical structures. The teachers can ask the students to change the complex structures in a poem to the Standard English structure. Literary texts are the major sources where complex structures such as structure, inversion, subjunctives, etc occur.

Quite in line with the principles of CLT (Van 2009), literature is rich with innumerable authentic tokens of language for the development of reading, writing, speaking

and listening skills. According to Alexander Baird, "Literature is the use of language effectively in suitable conditions." (Baird 1969, 203) To him literary texts can be used in language teaching, because the language used in literary text is suitable for the contexts of the events. These literary texts further enable the students not only to use English for genuine communication but pay more attention to the features of spoken language. For speaking purposes, the events in a poem, novel, or short story can be associated with the learners' own experience in real life. Such a practice paves the way for hot topics for discussion in language classes. Having the students freely reflect on the events and having them critically comment is also facilitative for advancing speaking proficiency.

For listening purposes, the learners can be exposed to the audio versions of the poems, short stories, or novels. Also the musical elements in poetry stimulate the learners' desire for approximating their speaking patterns to the native speaker norms by adhering to the principles of rhythm, rhyme, and intonation.

For reading purposes, as above-mentioned, novel and poetry can provide good opportunities for extensive and intensive reading. Also it is good for practicing reading sub-skills including skimming, scanning, and finding the main ideas. Reading literary texts foster emotional intelligence (Ghosn, 2002). Daniel Goleman is the pioneer in EQ which is specifically related to human ability to control and manage their emotions and feelings in difficult situations. Since

literature deals with affections, feelings and emotions, it is a good source for nurturing one's EQ. Reading in literature is a combination of reading for enjoyment and reading for information. Therefore, it bridges the lacks in non-literary texts. In fact, literature is not only facilitative for language learning purposes in general but it can also accelerate language learning in content-based instruction (Shang, 2006).

Oster mentions the benefits of literature to writing skill such as encouraging creativity, learning richer vocabulary and using them in students' writing and learning how to use figurative language to make the writing more affective. For writing purposes, literature shows to set a good ground for writing practice. Having the learners complete a poem or short story in cloze form is very encouraging. Also we can have the students write the end of a story in their own words or narrate a story from the point of view of another character in a short story, novella, or novel. Other similar creative activities can be developed for writing practice.

Arthur (1968) believes that syntactic knowledge and vocabulary enrichment can be accelerated through literary texts. In other words, literature involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose (Van 2009). Similarly in novels, descriptive writing along with other types of writing adds to the imaginative nature of human and hence language is easily etched on our mind. Maley says that literature deals with a potpourri of language types and varieties from slang to formal and various subject matters. Vocabulary knowledge can be

expanded through considerable exposure to literary texts which treat both formal and informal language. Reading short stories and novels is a good exercise for enlarging your vocabulary domain of knowledge. The authors' own experience of reading novels such as 'Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness' which is replete with so many new words was very beneficial and it can be prescribed for intermediate and upper-intermediate language learners.

In the era of globalization, there is a growing concern of universally shared needs and wants rather than individual needs. Since literature deals with universal concepts (Maley), there is an urge to grab on literature as an input source for flourishing language learners' competence. Globalization cries for joining hands not only in economy, politics, and sociology but also in language-related fields such as ELT. According to Maley, literature deals with universal concepts such as love, hatred, death, nature, etc that are common to all languages and cultures. The similarities and even differences between cultures and languages can further our understanding of the whole world.

Literary texts are resources for grammar teaching and developing language awareness. The teacher can use "pre-literary activities" such as cloze, multiple-choice, jig-saw reading and practical stylistics. The general consent is that the integration of language and literature has a positive effect on the teaching and learning of both components: Carter and Long (1991:101) suggest that the integration of literature and language studies can do "as much for the

language development of the student as for the development of capacities for literary understanding and appreciation".

Literature is indeed the most explicit record of the human spirit. It's a medium through which the essence of our living is made paramount by linking it to imaginative experience. So literature is useful for teachers to create motivation in students so that they interact with the text. By devising suitable activities the teachers can also improve the proficiency level of the students through language learning. Hadaway, Vardell and Young (2002) opine that there three advantages of using literature. The first advantage is the contextualization of language where learners are exposed to the use of language in different situations when they read different genre of literature. The second one is social in function in which learner are familiar with the different formats of literature embedded in literary texts such as such as picture books, news papers, short stories. So literature can be suitable for students with different styles and takes into account individual differences. The third advantage refers to the natural and meaningful use of language which is accomplished by illustrations and use of descriptive language in literature.

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IATEFL - Report

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IATEFL is the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language whose mission is to link, develop and support English Language Teaching Professionals worldwide. The 50th annual conference and exhibition of IATEFL was held in Birmingham, UK from April 12th to 16th 2016, with over two thousand delegates in attendance. The venue was the ICC which is a truly world-class venue and one of Europe's most high profile conference centres. It was an excellent venue and I was privileged to attend the 50th IATEFL conference as a winner of the **Gillian Porter Ladousse scholarship**.

PRE CONFERENCE EVENT

The conference began with the pre-conference event on 12th April and I was registered to attend the TTEd SIG by my sponsors. **Professor Donald Freeman of University of Michigan** organized a workshop on the topic ***Using a Design Theory to Explore how Teacher Learning works***. In this session, we explored a 'design theory' for teacher training and development with a set of simple principles that describe how language teacher education activities and programs work and what makes them more impactful for teacher learning. There are two aims in using this design theory: To *'describe'* what goes on as we do training and development and to *'organize'* those efforts more productively so that learners

realize our intended goals. The session introduces the elements of design theory - the parallel notions of *'communities of activity'* and *'of explanation'*, how they define and use certain *'social facts'* to *'articulate'* what they do, and how *'tensions'* in doing so can create opportunities for teachers to learn. There was presentation, discussion, and hands-on activity to meet and explore these ideas both conceptually and concretely.

INTERESTING SESSIONS IN THE CONFERENCE

The conference began on 13th April with the plenary of David Crystal on the topic ***Who would of thought it? The English language 1966-2066***. David Crystal is an honorary Professor of Linguistics at the University of Bangor, and works from his home in Holyhead, North Wales, as a writer, editor, lecturer, and broadcaster. His presentation illustrates the main changes in pronunciation, orthography, grammar, and vocabulary and he discusses the chief factors involved - social mobility, globalization, and the Internet and compares the changes that have taken place in the past fifty years with those that are likely to take place in the next fifty.

Followed by the plenary there were parallel sessions in ten halls and ten executive rooms. Though I would have loved to attend

all of them, I only managed to attend the following two presentations –

Developing thinking from story with young learners by Marion Williams

Story is a powerful medium for teaching language to young learners. She has presented activities that develop thinking skills. She has also discussed the importance of teaching thinking and how to develop this from stories. More activities were given to the participants to illustrate this.

Getting reluctant learners to speak by Oya Karabetca, UK

Everyone of us wants our students to use the language for communication effectively but it is very difficult to get them to speak. This maybe because they are too shy, they find the activities pointless or boring, or they just don't want to. She promised to give us a few examples and demonstrate how it was possible to motivate our teens or even our adult learners, to speak.

On the same day I had my presentation on the topic ***Radical Transformation: Instruction through Classroom Flipping for B.Ed Trainees***. As I was sponsored by the TTEd SIG the President and Vice-President of IATEFL TTEd SIG were present in the hall and introduced me to the delegates. The room had 100 seats and the hall was full for my presentation. With the help of some examples, I managed to demonstrate how the flipped approach could be successfully implemented by prospective teachers. After the presentation I had a

question answer session based on my presentation. The TTEd SIG presented me with books and diaries and congratulated me on my successful presentation.

In the evening a meeting for the scholarship winners was held in the foyer. The highlight of the conference was that all 52 of us from 30 countries had a meeting with the IATEFL president, Secretary and the conference coordinators. It was a small party to introduce us to one another. The past and present president of the scholarship working party addressed the winners for a few minutes. We were then given the scholarship money and IATEFL cup as a souvenir. Photographs were taken during this occasion.

On 14th April, Silvana Richardson from Bell Foundation in her plenary talk on ***The Native Factor – The Haves and the Have-Nots...And Why We Still Need to Talk About this in 2016*** spoke on various research studies with anecdotal evidence and personal experiences. She examined the state of equality and social justice in ELT with reference to the so-called 'non-native speaker teacher'. She talked about the impact of the native-speaker bias and its dominance on developments in English Language teaching methodology.

I also participated in the ELTJ Signature Event – a debate on the topic ***Does training really help-or is it just a waste of time and money?***. The debaters were Peter Grundy and Penny Ur. There was voting after the presentation of the debaters and half of the house believed that teacher training was a waste of time. Some felt that

it was not so as what we required was an experienced pilot and not just an educated pilot to operate the air craft.

Following are the other presentations which I managed to attend on that day –

Leading the change: changing approaches of teacher education in Nepal by Laxmi Prasad Ojha Tribhuvan University, Nepal

He focused on a pre-service teacher education programme in Nepal, which has gone through a complete overhaul by introducing a semester-based system replacing an age-old year long system. He spoke on how the pre-service teachers have benefitted because of the use of different ICT tools and internet based platforms to access resources which help develop their understanding and skills.

Rethinking reflection on the intensive TEFL course by Daniel Baines (British Council, Prague)

The presenter spoke on how post-lesson reflection has become an integral part of the initial teacher training courses all around the world. This session presented a case for the end of compulsory reflection on four-week initial teacher training courses and gave practical recommendations for course designers to maximize their trainees' potential.

Diane Larsen-Freeman gave a plenary on ***Shifting metaphors from computer input to ecological affordances*** on 15th April,

2016. Our students are not computers. We know that how we talk influences our speech and is reflected in the way we think. One problem with “input” is that it ascribes passivity to learners, robbing them of their ability to think and create. Another problem is that it suggests that there is a medium between input and output. It overlooks the meaning-making nature of language use. A third problem is that the use of “input” necessitates all sorts of terminological profusion, such as “intake” and “uptake.” At this point, there is a need to move beyond input-output metaphors to embrace a new way of understanding. Affordances are two-way relationships between the learner and the environment. Affordances afford opportunities for action on the part of learners, The presenter elaborated on affordances and discussed the implications of affordances for English language learning and teaching.

16th April was the final day of the conference. On that day there were some excellent sessions on ***How to submit a speaker proposal*** by Madeleine du Vivier, ***How to move into language school management*** by Andy Hockley and ***How to write successfully for IATEFL Conference Selections*** by Tania Pattison. There was also a plenary by Jan Blake the leading story teller on the topic ***Man, woman, life, love: stories from Africa, the Caribbean, and beyond***. Specializing in stories from Africa, the Caribbean, and Arabia, she has a well-earned reputation for dynamic and generous storytelling. Her session was awesome with stories and songs.

My impressions about the conference

I was delighted to attend the presentations, talks, symposia and panel discussions of the English teaching professionals around the world. Many presenters spoke about the paradigm shift from teacher centred to learner and learning centred education. Many of them were worried how to engage their learners all the time in the classroom. I found that all were interested in technology enhanced language teaching. The conference has provided a chance to meet teachers from all the corners to discuss the various classroom practices. I have also understood that teachers have stopped taking notes and instead they use their mobile devices to capture the presentations and when it is more interesting they video record the whole event.

Exhibition

A large resources exhibition involving around 70 ELT-related exhibitors was arranged in the conference venue. It gave us a chance to see the latest ELT publications and services in one place

Places I visited in the UK

I spent three days in London and visited Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, London Bridge, London Eye, Buckingham Palace, St. James Park, Cavalry museum, Hyde park, Windsor castle, Stonehenge, the Oxford University and the change of guard before the Buckingham Palace and even managed a Cruise on River Thames.

On 15th April after the plenary the

conference organizers arranged for a coach trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. 50 delegates were taken to the birth place of Shakespeare with a guide. It was a great opportunity given to me by IATEFL. Stratford-upon-Avon is a market town with more than 800 years of history. I visited the house where the world's most famous playwright was born and grew up. I saw Hall's Croft (home of Shakespeare's daughter), Nash's House and New Place (the last chapter in his life), Anne Hathaway's (His wife's) cottage in a romantic setting and his mother Mary Arden's Farm. I managed to see the Royal Shakespeare's theatre and his grave which is inside the campus of the Holy Trinity Church. We spent nearly 5 hours in this town and I walked around the streets with a sense of awe in the place where my favourite bard spent his life.

The famous city centre, Victoria square, war memorial, library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Cadbury world and National Sea life centre are some of the places I managed to see in Birmingham.

The IATEFL Conference is a massive event with a multitude of sessions from 8am until 6pm. Even the coffee breaks are moments for further discussion and exploration of ideas among the English teaching professionals around the globe. I thank the Almighty God for giving me such an opportunity to enjoy the conference and visit UK for the first time. ELT@I has given me a platform to know about IATEFL and I thank the patron of ELT@I Dr.S.Rajagopalan for his constant motivation.

Reading Habits Of Undergraduate Students in Different Colleges of Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh - A Study



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ABSTRACT

Reading is the most important skill to master while learning English as a second or foreign language. It is a tool which helps one acquire a language and it is also the vehicle for obtaining ideas that cannot be verbally transmitted. However, reading as a practice and an art has tended to diminish in recent times. The general expectation of the students' reading ability has not been met. This study examined the reading habits of undergraduates of various colleges in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. A total number of two hundred undergraduates were randomly selected. A questionnaire was administered to the selected students. This study revealed that many students spend little time reading any printed material due to the influence of advanced technology. A few recommendations for improved reading among the students have been made based on the findings.

Key words: reading skills, technology, learning

Introduction

Reading skills are important throughout one's lifespan, particularly as one responds to new demands and challenges in various jobs. Reading for pleasure or recreational purposes has been found to improve reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary and the development of grammar. Lack of literacy skills including reading, causes problems for living, working and survival in general.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on reading instruction in higher education. In an effort to improve the quality of instruction, quite a large amount of research has been conducted to break down

and understand the complex process of reading. The reading habit is an essential and important aspect for creating the literate society in this world. It shapes the personality of an individual. It also helps the person to think and create new ideas. At present, due to the influence of mass media, the habit of reading books, magazines and journals, etc., has come down drastically. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop the reading habit among the individuals in society.

The Significance of Reading

The ability to read is generally recognized as one of the most important skills that a person can have. Reading is a tool of the

inquisitive mind; it is the vehicle for obtaining ideas that cannot be verbally transmitted. Reading is an important activity in the process of learning. It has progressively been gaining importance in the history of human beings. Human beings are collectively involved in the regulation of society. Therefore, reading has become an essential aspect of its functioning. Knowledge explosion and revolution in communication and technology have led to the belief that the production and distribution of reading material is indispensable.

Today, an abundance of diversified reading material is available throughout the world. The reasons behind this are not difficult to comprehend. The process of material production, the modern way of life, the complexity of structural and functional aspects of present societies and various other changes are responsible for this. The present generation is exposed to an over abundance of reading material. But it is necessary to direct the youth to select the right kind of material thereby indirectly enhance their reading skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the reading habits of the undergraduate students in various colleges in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. This was done by analyzing the responses collected from two hundred students. These reveal the developing and expanding areas of reading habits. They also preview how students see themselves as readers. Further, it gave a snapshot of

the students' opinions concerning reading habits. It also gave them some practical suggestions to improve their reading habits.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- To investigate the reading habits of the students at the undergraduate level.
- To propose remedial measures to improve the reading habits of the students.

The present work was done to study the reading habits of the students who are studying in Arts and Science Colleges in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

Scope of the Study

- To find out whether the students have cultivated the habit of reading at the undergraduate level.
- To evaluate the level of reading by analyzing the different reading materials used by these students.

Review of Related Literature

Reading significantly contributes to the successful career development. It is also the ability to respond to change. The importance of reading has resulted in a large volume of research work carried out to understand the nature of the reading habits of individuals. With the growing amount of digital information available and the increasing amount of time that people spend reading electronic media, the digital environment has begun to affect people's reading habits.

Like other habits this too develops over a period of time. Motivation and the ability to read are only two aspects of a complex series of factors contributing to the habit of reading. "Reading is an effortful activity that often involves choice, motivation is crucial to reading engagement." (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks & Perencevich, 2004, 2009)

Research published by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) states, "The importance of reading as an avenue to improved reading has been stressed by theorists, researchers and practitioners alike, no matter what their perspectives." There are a few ideas more widely accepted than that "reading is learned through reading" (p.21).

Gessner (2003) states, "With today's rapid technological advances, the scientific information explosion, the need for critical thinking and the advent of evidence-based practice, the professional educator must promote lifelong learning" (p.20). He further points out, "A hallmark of professional behaviour is the personal commitment to the ongoing acquisition of new knowledge" (p.19). The ongoing way to acquire new knowledge is to develop the habit of reading, which "Develops a capacity for focused attention and growth" (National Endowment for Arts, 2004, p. 38).

Research findings in applied linguistics and reading research consistently show a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages, beginning right from the primary school all the way upto the university level.

Methodology

Reading helps overcome the inner conflicts of daily life. But the students in the modern society do not read enough. This in turn results in their inability to succeed in life. Therefore, a questionnaire was used to collect the responses from the students.

Analysis and Discussion

The reading habits of the students were analyzed by examining the type of materials used to enhance their knowledge.

A sound reading habit has its foundation in early training where the aspects of intelligence, linguistic competence, parents' educational back ground and motivation have all played an important part. Earlier studies have shown that parents and teachers influence the reading habits of their children. Some parents, in spite of being illiterate motivate their children to study. Many of the students understand the importance of reading and education and work hard to reach their goal. It was discovered that the reading material they liked best were newspapers, magazines, books on general knowledge, fiction, joke books etc. followed by some other reading materials found on the internet.

It was discovered that 49% of the students read the newspaper, 38% of the students read books on general knowledge, 24% read fiction, 17% read joke books and 12% read only magazines. The economic status of the students and the motivation of the parents has a direct bearing on their ability to read and write.

Students were questioned about the kind of magazines they preferred to read. The study shows that many of the students read three types of magazines. Out of 200 respondents, 24% (48) of the students read *India Today*, 24% (48) of them read *Cinema* and 24 % (47) of the students read any magazine available to them.

Another highlight of the study is giving importance to magazines like *Politics*, *Science*, *Technology* and other magazines. From the study it was found that many of the students, i.e. 50% (99) of them read books on general knowledge, 13% (26) read books on technology, 12 % (24) read books on science, 12% (23) read about sports, 8% (16) read about politics, 7% (14) read for information on business and 10% (20) of them read magazines on miscellaneous topics. These results reveal that many of the students are interested in improving their knowledge in different fields like sports, business and some do actually develop an interest in politics.

Students had to answer questions on what kind of books they read other than their subject books. The results showed that 33% of the students read all kinds of books, 41% read only short stories, 18% preferred novels and about 8% were interested only in short fiction. This implies that many students like to cultivate the habit of reading books for various purposes such as reading for pleasure, education or simply for relaxation.

It is interesting to note that the general attitude of the students towards reading habits was good; many of the students said

that, they gained knowledge through reading. As per the research, 95% (189) of the students felt that reading was a channel for gaining knowledge and for 92% (184) reading was an important activity. 81% (161) felt that it developed their imagination, for 80% (164) of the students, reading opened the doors of an unknown world. Some students, 76% (112) said that reading actually helped them understand their feelings and emotions better.

Findings

- Reading materials, especially books, should be a constant companion to all people, especially students. However, in this respect the findings of the survey were not very heartening, because only a small percentage of the students read books for more than two hours a day. The majority of the students read books only for one or two hours a day.
- Reading of newspapers requires less time and newspapers give news and information on current affairs. This is why a large majority of the respondents read newspapers regularly. Most of them read newspapers for one to two hours every day.
- The findings of the survey indicate that the library continues to be the place for students seeking information. Although many students favour the internet, or ask their teachers or friends when they need any information, many students visit the library for any information they require. This is indeed an encouraging trend.

- The internet and the television seem to be the two most popular alternatives to reading books, especially among young people. However, the internet, as this survey has shown, could be a good place to read books, magazines, blogs, etc.

Pedagogical Implications

Improving the reading habit of the students and turning them into lifelong learners is quite important before building a knowledge society. Reading is essential because it equips people with necessary knowledge and understanding, not only for building their own life but also for contributing positively to the socio-economic development of the nation.

- Visiting a library on a regular basis and people's reading habits are closely interlinked. That is why library facilities need to be developed to attract young people. At present, most libraries have internet facilities. If these could be strengthened even more, the younger generation will find another reason for visiting libraries. Besides, library collections should be easy to access so that people will not get frustrated or disheartened by not finding their required materials there.
- Academic institutions should regularly organize events like study circles, debate clubs, seminars, essay competitions, quiz competitions etc. to inspire students to gather knowledge and make their mark in these events. This is how the reading habits of students can improve.

- As students are more interested in the World Wide Web, blogging, social networking, etc., interesting and constructive reading materials should be made available online, too. Thus printed books, magazines and online books could complement each other to the readers' satisfaction.

Conclusion

Reading is inseparably linked to learning. And learning leads to an overall mental, professional, and human development. Reading not only gives people new ideas, information, and insight, it also helps them become more complete in every aspect. As Birkerts (2010) observed, "In a lifetime of reading we store impressions... according to private systems of distribution, keeping factual information on one plane, acquired psychological insight on another, ideas on a third, and so on." Therefore, reading is crucial for every human being as it benefits people in several ways. The reading habit has a great impact on every individual in the society.

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SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL-CELEBRATIONS

2016 commemorates the 400th Death Anniversary of Shakespeare. ELTAI, in collaboration with the British Council, has planned to celebrate it by organizing a 'Shakespeare Festival'. In various Indian cities. This includes a number of events and activities which will be held at Delhi, Jaipur, Bilaspur, Thiruvananthapuram, Thoothukudi and Chennai.

The program is as follows:

AN EXHIBITION

COMPETITIONS FOR STUDENTS

These will include events like Elocution, Quiz and enacting scenes from Shakespeare's plays. Prizes and Certificates will be awarded by ELTAI to the winners and runners-up in the various competitions.

SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS

Seminars in different cities on '*How relevant is the study of Shakespeare in our schools and colleges today?*' or any other topic relating to Shakespeare and his works.

National seminar at Chennai—Selected paper presenters from the different centres, mentioned below, will be invited to present the papers in the National seminar to be held at Chennai.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Teachers are requested to send their papers by the 15th June 2016 to the convenors as given below, in their regions with a copy to eltai_india@yahoo.co.in

CONVENORS

Delhi

kumar4shravan@gmail.com

Jaipur

Dr. Shailamahan at shailamhn@yahoo.co.in

Thiruvananthapuram

Dr. C. A. Lal at Thiruvananthapuram

Bilaspore

Dr. G.A. Ghanshyam at gagshyam@gmail.com

Thoothukudi

Dr. Joycilin Shermila at <ajshermila@gmail.com

Chennai

Dr. Mangai Wilson at jmbwilson97@gmail.com

Speaking the American and British Tongues¹

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ABSTRACT

Though English has become a global language with every nation having its own form and characteristic feature, British English and American English are still held with reverence. They often form a model for World Englishes to follow. The colonial rule of the British Empire spread British English to Commonwealth countries whereas it is through its vast economy and market reach that American English has given its flavor to the world. The article points out at the phonological, morphological, syntactic as well as semantic variations in these popular yet divergent forms of English.

English Giants

With globalization bringing in the world much closer, English has emerged as the global language. There are variant flavours and hues of global English spread across the world but the norms for reference are still British and American English. British colonial rule led to the spread of British English and non-native speakers of English still owe allegiance to British English. English from the Commonwealth nations has its own distinct varieties and flavors; yet most of them are based on the standard British English. American English has spread because of America's hold on business and market. World market is no longer defined by geographical boundaries and as globalization has also brought in business outsourcing, learning the tongues of the business giants has become inevitable. British colonies of the past, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Singapore and

Brunei follow the British English model. Though Britain did leave its colonial legacy in the Caribbean and also in Canada this competes with the economic, geographical and cultural relation that they share with America. As a result their English is a blend of the two.

Before World War II, there was a British dominance on the English language and most of the English teaching curriculum across the world followed the British English as their model. The gain of economic power by the USA since 1945 led to a shift and Britain no longer held the complete ownership of the English language. Many non-Commonwealth countries followed American English as their model.

Though the language of both America and Britain are English but there is a huge difference between the two. George Bernard Shaw commented, "two countries divided by a common language". Things are however

¹ At the very outset the author would like to state that throughout the article British spellings are used except for the portions where American English is denoted.

not the same today. Global communication has bridged much diversity and the two are mutually intelligible today.

British English: Standing Tall

British English has always been conceived as the pristine and pure form of English and has been looked upon as a benchmark which represents Standard English. English teaching curricula are often based on British English and spelling trends till recently i.e. before the advent of computers, strictly adhered to the British English conventions.

Though British English reflects a lot of diversity in its spoken form; it more or less runs a thread of uniformity in its written manifestation across different regions and provinces. The considerable degree of variation in the spoken English in Britain is because of its long history of language evolution in the midst of its isolated population. The variations and differences in the British dialects are not just among the countries in the United Kingdom – i.e. Scotland, Wales, England or Northern Ireland; differences are also rampant within the provinces. People belonging to different socio-economic strata in any particular region also speak differently. Received Pronunciation or RP English which is spoken amongst the educated people of the south-east England is regarded as the benchmark. Purists and grammarians have not allowed the standard southern dialect of English to grow with the tendency to

preserve and conserve the established. It is termed as “proper English”, “BBC English” or “the Queen’s English”. Coined by AJ Ellis in 1869, Received Pronunciation gained currency only after Daniel Jones adopted it in his second edition of *English Pronouncing Dictionary* in 1924. The origin of RP can be traced back to the 19th century British Public Schools and Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. RP English was eulogized as a broadcaster’s choice with Lord Reith, the first GM at BBC adopting it in 1922 as the standard. It is spoken by merely 2% of the people in UK as per a recent estimate.

BBC English does not restrict to RP English any longer.² The BBC presenters are no longer strictly confining their speech to RP English and are often seen carrying a variety of other accents and dialects; pointing to the decreasing popularity and prevalence of this standard form of English.

In the process of spreading to other parts of the world, British English has also taken words from other languages of the world. During its colonial rule, many loan words have crept into it and its vocabulary has truly been enriched. Among various other languages, Latin has been one of the first and most consistent languages that English has borrowed its loan words from. In English, there are more than 300 words that have seeped and survived in their original Latin form. Words like *actor*, *labour* and *elevator* are a few examples.

² <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/received-pronunciation/>

American English: Spreading Roots

It was way back in 1600s that a permanent English speaking colony came up in North America. Their English was however very different from the English language spoken in The British Isles. American English has inherited a lot from other languages and has both historical and contemporary influences. Black English, Yiddish and Spanish have massively left their imprint on American English. It also has a massive repertoire of loan words, euphemisms and jargons. *Jukebox*, *cookie*, *macaroni*, *bogus*, and *geisha* are words from African American, Dutch, Italian, African and Japanese languages. The acceptance of American and British English as two distinct units was first proposed in “The American Spelling Book” in the year 1786, soon after America gained independence (1776) from the British rule.

Americans have many forms of speech and different accents too. Californians sound different from New Yorkers who sound different from people from Texas who further sound different from people belonging to Boston and South Carolina. Despite all these differences American English remains relatively uniform when compared to the differences that feature in England.

One can notice the usage of a high percentage of slangs in American speech. Slang is part of colloquial English and there are many forms of it in American English. Americans speak at a rate of about 120 words per minute. Right from the colonial times, there has been a strong tendency to

reduce complex terms and concepts into abbreviations and acronyms in American English. Acronyms are very common in American English. The stress within acronyms is almost always on the last letter. For e.g. *UCLA*, *MTV*, *IRS*, *NBA*, *USC*, *US*, *ESL*, *PC*, *NFL* etc.

Why be bothered to say extraordinary when you can get away with strawdiny?

[Irish playwright St. John Ervine, quoted by H.L. Mencken (1948, p. 39)]

American English adheres to this formula and it deletes syllables massively. American English has reduced syllables in tri-syllabic words like *camera*, *evening*, *marriage* etc. and they have become two syllable words in American English. It was America’s unorthodox approach of not sticking to rules and precedence which resulted in America manufacturing new locutions. Americans like to take their language as they go along and don’t want to be restricted or held back by prescriptive grammarians.

Common Language: Uncommon Variation

There are three basic factors which make American English different from the British English. American English is different from British English in sound, sentence construction i.e., syntax as well as semantics. American English spells the words as they are pronounced whereas there is no one to one manifestation of sound and spelling in British English. George Bernard Shaw’s famous example of *fish* being spelled as *ghoti* elaborates on the same issue.

There are certain vowel shifts in American English. The R.P. /ɒ/ as in words like *dog*, *doctor*, *Bob* etc. becomes /ɑ:/, the R.P. /ɪ/ as in words like *laughter*, *fast*, *pass* etc. becomes /æ/, and the R.P. /ʊ/ as in words like *about*, *now*, *how* etc. becomes /ə +/.

The American 'r' is very different from the British. 'r' is not a simple consonant in the American language. American English has two 'r's. It differentiates between them on the basis of their placement in a word – final or non final. When it occurs in the word initial or medial position it is pronounced as *ruh*. When it occurs in the word final position, it is a combination of schwa and 'r'.

The manner in which the Americans pronounce /r/ when placed after a vowel as in words like *purse*, *better*, *tart*, *heart*, *part* or *north* is very similar to the pronunciation which was prevalent in England in the 17th century. In Received Pronunciation /r/ does not occur in word final positions, except when a word starting with a vowel immediately follows it.

There are apparent differences in the usage of syntactic categories between British and American English. In order to denote an action which has taken place in the immediate past, the use of present perfect tense is obligatory in British English whereas in American English it is an optional usage and is often inter-changed with simple past.

For eg

I've lost my purse. (British English)

I've lost my purse. / I lost my purse.
(American English)

Have or *have got* are the two ways to express possession in both American and British English. However, *have got* is more preferred in British English whereas the popular form in American English is *have*.

American English uses *gotten* as the past participle form of the verb *get*; whereas British English uses *got*. There are many verbs which have two acceptable forms to denote simple past/past participle. The more regular form like *burned*, *spoiled*, *dreamed* etc. are popular in American English whereas the irregular forms like *burnt*, *spoilt*, *dreamt* etc. are prevalent in the British English. British and American English also differ in their usage of Prepositions.

Eg.,

(American English)

I will see you on the weekend.

Write me soon.

I was selected on the team.

(British English)

I will see you at the weekend.

Write to me soon.

I was selected in the team.

There is also a difference in the use of articles in British and American English. British English uses *half an hour*, *half a dozen* whereas in American English it is *a half hour* or *a half dozen*.

In both American and British English words are spelt differently. Some general differences between the two are in the case of words ending in *-our/-or* and *-ise/-ize*. We have *color, humor* and *flavor* in American English whereas it is *colour, humour* and *flavour* in its British counterpart. The Americans do *recognize* their basic English characteristic features and *patronize* them and even a British English speaker does not fail to *recognise* and *patronise* his form of English.

Besides these glaring differences in pronunciation, grammar and spelling, American English and British English differ mainly in their choice of words. Some words though used in both varieties mean very different things. Eg., *mean* has a very different connotation in American English. It means an *angry* and *bad humored* person whereas its British meaning is *not generous* and *tight fisted*.

There are certain semantic differences between British and American English. Whereas it is *canteen, flat, lift* and *toilet* in British English; it is *cafeteria, apartment, elevator* and *washroom* in American English. Annexure I lists out some of the basic words in both forms of English.

American and British English differ in writing too. There are some very basic differences in the Punctuation pattern. The Americans use double quotation marks and there is a use of single quotation mark only when there are quotes within quotes; whereas it is vice-versa with British English. British English often retain hyphens in

compound words like *man-made, tree-like*; whereas in American English hyphenation is not used for words like *manmade, treelike* etc. British English prefers to have a gap or space in *per cent, any one*; whereas American English runs these together without any space – *percent, anyone* etc. American English follows the system of month, date and year while writing an abbreviated date whereas British stick to date, month and year. Eg., 6 July, 2008 would be 6-7-2008 in British English and the same date would be 7-6-2008 in American English.

Culture leaves its indelible mark on the language. Language is not just speech, words and meaning. It carries a lot of cultural connotation. This defines the pragmatics of the language usage. The degree of frankness among the British makes their English sharper. It is mainly because of the reflection of their culture, society and behavioural norms.

One World, One Language

Language undergoes change and evolution; it is not static. With the world coming closer, even British English and American English no longer stand apart. Though America and Britain are separated by an ocean and it has been over 200 years that they are politically separate identities; yet the English spoken at both the places are mutually intelligible. Both being variants of English, they are more similar than different. Though there are differences, they are not enough to make the two forms mutually unintelligible.

There is a lot of give and take between the two. There have been changes in both the American and the British forms of English in all directions. Both are gaining foothold in each other's territories. American English still uses many older varieties of English which have disappeared even in England.

Some words from American English have already become a part of British English. Words like *movie*, *apartment* and *semester* which are very much American are becoming popular in British English. Due to the vast American market in the field of scientific publications, even authors and publishers from Britain have begun using American English spellings. The two forms no longer stand in opposition to each other. Though allegiance to their originality is there they

have no qualms in accepting the other form.

Both American and British English flourish side by side in Canadian English. Whereas it is British English in all official correspondences by an order of 1890; the newspapers are splashed with American English spelling and even the same is taught by most of the public schools in Canada. In Australia too, though the official documents follow the British English spelling, various American forms are seeping in fast.

Who knows in distant future we can see a form which combines the two. Canadian English already does so; may be it is not far off when American and British English will combine to become one. We are prepared to taste the flavour – to use a language which is neither American nor British, yet both at the same time.

Annexure I

Semantic Differences between British and American English

British	American
Flat	Apartment
Dialing Code	Area Code
Cash Point	Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)
Concession	Discount
Pub	Bar
Toilet	Bathroom/Washroom
Note	Bill
Coach	Bus
Engaged Tone	Busy Signal
Canteen	Cafeteria
Town Centre	Downtown
Pharmacy, Chemist	Drug Store
Lift	Elevator

Junction	Exit
Ground Floor	First Floor
Torch	Flashlight
Traineeship	Internship
Autumn	Fall
University	College
Holiday	Vacation
Curriculum Vitae	Résumé
Ill	Sick
Bonnet	Hood
Boot	Trunk
Lorry	Truck
Return (ticket)	Round trip
Petrol	Gas (gasoline)
Main Road	Highway
Motorway	Freeway
Underground	Subway
Subway	Underpass
Pavement	Sidewalk
Car Park	Parking lot
Biscuits	Cookies
Sweets	Candy
Chips	French fries
Crisps	Chips
Fortnight	Two weeks
Tap	Faucet
Dust Bin	Trashcan
Trousers	Pants
Waist Coat	Vest
Trainers	Sneakers
Wardrobe	Closet
Term	Semester
Rubber	Eraser

Source: Compiled by the author from http://www.skillsheets.com/docs/SkillSheets_aanvulling_E8.pdf
[http://www. ielts help.co.kr](http://www.ielts help.co.kr)

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BOOK REVIEW

Skill Sutras Jayshree Mohanraj
Illustrations by Anupam Arunchalam
Bengaluru: Prismo Books Pvt. Ltd. Pages
120 Price Rs 120 / ISBN 978-81-7286-767-
6

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The book under review addresses the key issues of communication and offers an account of the various skills required for communication. As the country moves towards a 'Skill-ed India', where efficacy is appraised for reengineering the nation, there is a growing need for expression of ideas, views and information. It entails that for a technical skill there is the need of communication skills because the latter offers ways for the interface of seminal ideas for the constitution of new skills with practical implications. It is believed that this new book 'Skill Sutras' will help students develop their communication skills, especially those coming from the rural background to the cities for the purpose of higher education and/or employment. As the title suggests the 'sutras' or formulae given in the book will be helpful in inculcating new (updated) and necessary skills to communicate effectively according to the need of the hour. Having been foregrounded in the rich repertoire of Indian tradition and culture, and drawing upon anecdotes and events of the epics like the

Ramayan, the *Mahabharata* and so on the book carves a niche in the field of communication. In addition, instances from the lives of great Indian philosophers and leaders like Gautam Buddha, Adi Sankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar are taken to strengthen the argument as well as to motivate and inspire millions of budding minds.

Written in the form of a dialogue between Raju and his aunt, Nandita the book makes a good attempt to help the learners overcome their fear of communication. A successful youth like R.K. Narayan's Raju (as in *The Guide*), this Raju too, is a source of inspiration for millions of rural youth. Nandita, a consultant and an instructor of communication skills narrates various episodes from the great Indian epics on the various utilitarian values inherent in these. She feels that she can motivate Raju to use them for his development of communication skills. No doubt Raju is an intelligent boy but he requires some motivation. Further he needs to learn some strategies to overcome stage fear, began actively participating in discussions and debates, making presentations etc. To illustrate all these, Nandita uses examples from the classics. For instance, she uses the story of Ganesh and Kartikeya. She begins thus:

"Once Lord Shiva wanted to give a rare fruit to his favourite son. Kartikeya or Ganesh, who should be proclaimed his favourite? The condition laid down for obtaining the fruit

was very simple. One had to go round the Universe-the heaven, earth, and the nether land, three times to get the fruit.

As soon as the race began Kartikeya set off on his wonderful peacock.

Ganesh had his tiny mouse to ride. He thought to himself 'How can my tiny mouse take my weight and compete with the peacock?' Then he hit upon an idea. He asked Shiva and Parvati, 'Aren't you considered to be the parents of the entire creation?' Shiva affirmed.

Ganesh prayed to Shiva and went round the primal parents chanting 'Om'

When each time Kartikeya completed one round of the universe he would see his brother Ganesh ahead of him.

Ganesh went round his parents three times. This means going round the Universe three times successfully. He got the fruit even before his brother returned after three hectic trips round the Universe!"(p,19)

From this story Raju learnt that Ganesh is smarter and cleverer than Kartikeyan. He (Ganesh) employed a good strategy and solved the problem promptly as he had the simple presence of mind. Raju got some ideas regarding problem-solving. He also understood there are different ways to approach a problem. Nandita continues: "let's take a look at Ganesh. He has large ears. It means we must carefully in order to gather the correct piece of information. A person can become a good speaker by being a good listener. I am sure you know Ganesh was the scribe for Vyasa's Mahabharata. None other could record the great epic Vyasa

dictated at a great speed and it had a very complex structure." (p,19)

So Raju understands a few things: 1.it is necessary to listen carefully to what is being said 2. one should think and decide on a strategy required to solve a problem or address an issue 3. this will lead to the development of self confidence at a later stage. Another instance is given when Lord Krishna says in the Bhagvat Gita: "perform your prescribed duty, for, doing so is better than not working." (p,19)

Raju learns that one does not solve problems by running away from them. Instead one boldly faces them and uses good strategies to find a solution. During the entire ten weeks Raju acquires almost all the sutras required for the development of communication skills. A great change comes over the boy who had initially been very timid. After ten weeks training from Nandita he changes; from 'a failure' he becomes 'a winner' who won the debate competition in the college.

Being innovative and creative in her approach Jayshree Mohanraj captures the essence of the 'ancient wisdom' and its role in the development of 'modern communication'. The title is apt and catchy as it conveys the focus of communication strategies in letter and spirit. The illustrations enrich the content of the book by providing adequate strength to the topics discussed.

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Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Educational Technology (ET) and its Application to Facilitate Teaching / Learning in the 21st Century



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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to define Educational Technology (ET) based on NCF-2005. It describes philosophical assumptions of ET such as AECT, assumes that Education is a process, Technology can facilitate the process of education, and that Intentional learning environments are complex. Moreover, the current definition of ET referred to is the one given by Januszewski and Molenda (2008). Further, different perspectives of ET: Behaviouristic, Cognitive and Constructivist are discussed with their application in teaching and learning. Finally, the article attempts to point out that today, teaching and learning have moved from instructive to constructive. The Constructive method demands a more effective use of technology; i.e to access, adapt, and create knowledge. All these theoretical principles played a major role in shaping the discussion about how to facilitate learning early in the 21st century.

Key Terms: ET: Educational Technology, NCF: National Curriculum Framework, AECT: Association for Educational Communications and Technology.

Key Words: Behaviouristic, Cognitive, and Constructive.

1.1 Introduction

The NCF (NCERT's National Curriculum Framework 2005) *Position Paper* prepared by the 'National Focus Group' defines Educational Technology (ET) as "the efficient organisation of any learning system adapting or adopting methods, processes, and products to serve identified educational goals" ("Summary" V). On the role of new technologies, Januszewski and Molenda quote the words of Mc Luhan and Fiore from *The Medium Is the Message* (1967):

Technology is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social inter-dependence and every aspect of our personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider and re-evaluate practically every thought, every action and every institution formerly taken for granted. Everything is changing - you, your family, your neighborhoods, your education, your job, your government, your relation to others. And they're changing dramatically (Januszewski and Molenda, *Educational Technology* 18).

Technology has brought in a convergence of the media along with the possibilities of multi-centric participation in the content generation and dissemination process. This has implications not only for the quality of the interchange but also for drastic upheavals of centre-dominated mindsets that have inhibited qualitative improvement. Modern Educational Technology has its potential in schools, in the teaching of subjects, in examinations, in research, in systematic reforms, and, above all, in teacher education, overcoming the conventional problems of scale and reach through online anytime, anywhere (NCFV). Schumacher in his article “Technology with a Human Face” speaks about the importance of Science and Technology in education. To him, “Modern world has been shaped by its metaphysics, which has shaped its education, which in turn has brought forth its Science and Technology” (1). It is irrefutable that modern world has been shaped by technology and education in the computer age.

1.2 Philosophical Assumptions of Educational Technology

Technologies should be considered as inventions that extend human capability. Technological inventions are convincingly infinite and limited only by our creativity (Januszewski and Molenda 197). *Association for Educational Communications and Technology* (AECT) assumes that ‘education is a process’, ‘technology can facilitate educational process’ and that ‘intentional learning environments are complex’ (qtd.in Januszewski and Molenda 198). The

following explanations of these assumptions provide a philosophical orientation to this study as given by Januszewski and Molenda in their book *Educational Technology* (2008), abbreviated to *ET*.

Assumption 1 *Education is a process:* Education is a series of purposeful actions and operations - a process. The goals of education represent desired learning outcomes; thus, education in general can be regarded as a process.

Assumption 2 *Technology can facilitate educational process:* Technological processes are dedicated means, based on scientific thinking, for communicating ideas and taking action to facilitate teaching and learning. Thus, technology facilitates educational processes.

Assumption 3 *Intentional learning environments are complex:* Intentional learning environments refer to purposeful educational events that involve learners in multiple, concurrent interactions among people (e.g., teachers and peers), places, content, and media - situated within a context for a period of time, all seeking a common goal (*ET* 198).

1.3 New Concepts in Educational Technology (ET)

As the concept of ET developed, the term ‘technology of education’ came into vogue. By the mid 1970’s, ET borrowed the term ‘systems approach’ from management studies and ‘corrective feedback’ from cybernetics. The arrival of digital convergent media encouraged inter-activity and inter-

connectivity. The universally accepted definition of ET involves “processes, methods and techniques, products, resources and technologies organised into workable systems...charts, graphs, textual materials, experimental kits, projected electronic aids, audio materials, computers, films, videos, internet etc which can usefully serve the purpose of education in their own special ways and which together can make learning an enriching experience” (*NCF Position Paper 1*).

Januszewski and Molenda (2008) give a vivid definition of the term Educational Technology thus: “*Educational Technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources*” (*ET 1*).

What is proposed here is a revised definition

of the concept of ET built upon AECT’s most recent definition of Instructional Technology. It is a tentative definition subject to further reconsideration over time. ET is viewed as a construct that is larger than instructional technology, as education is more general than instruction. A summary of the key elements of the current definition on ET is given below (Fig.1):

1.4 Different Perspective on Educational Technology

Different theories of learning regard different elements of the process as being of paramount importance and they use a different vocabulary to describe the underlying processes that they believe are occurring within the learner. The behaviourist, cognitivist, and constructivist perspectives are discussed here briefly in relation to their main elements, emphases, and relationship to ET concerns.

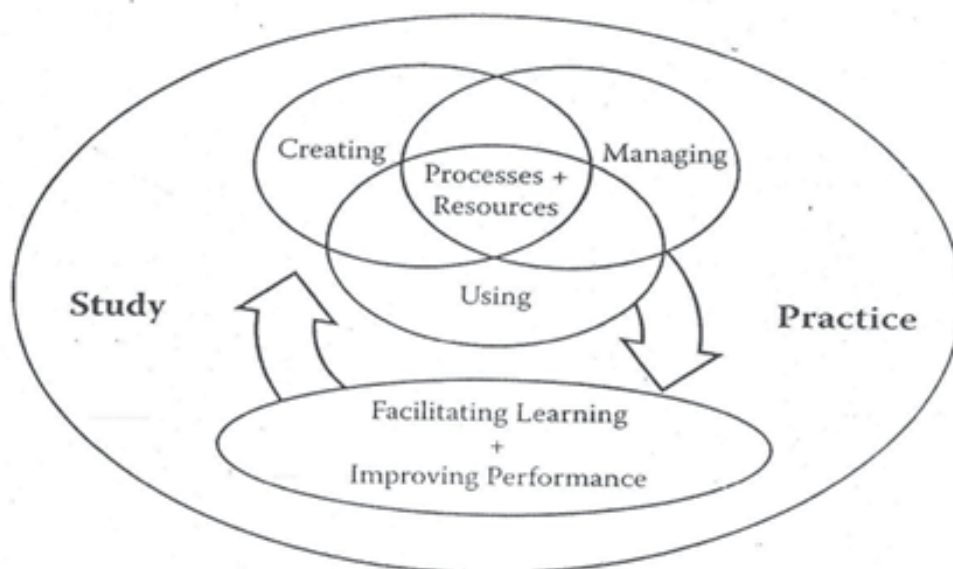


Fig. 1: A visual summary of the key elements in the definition of ET (Januszewski and Molenda 5).

1.4.1 Behaviouristic Perspective of Educational Technology

The name 'Behaviourism' refers collectively to several quite diverse bodies of thought in Psychology and Philosophy. B.F. Skinner, the key exponent of behaviourism, emphasises observable and measurable behaviour. His concept of 'operant conditioning' has had the greatest practical impact on the theory and practice of ET.

Prompted by his own experiences with schools as a parent, Skinner (1954) became interested in the possibility of applying operant conditioning to academic learning. This led to his analysis of the problems of group-based traditional instruction and his invention of a mechanical device for interactive learning, referred to as a 'teaching machine'. The pedagogical organization of stimuli, responses, and reinforcements in teaching machines became known as Programmed Instruction in 1960. He referred to his instructional strategies as a 'Technology of Teaching'. Other authors converted this term to 'Educational Technology' (Januszewski and Molenda 21).

Behaviourism's major impact on ET has been on the soft technology side, contributing several templates or frameworks for instruction, such as Programmed Instruction (PI), Programmed Tutoring (PT), Direct Instruction (DI), Personalised System of Instruction (PSI), Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) and online learning.

1.4.2 Cognitivism and Its Impact on Educational Technology

Like behaviourism, cognitivism is a label for a variety of diverse theories in Psychology that endeavour to explain internal mental functions through scientific methods. From this perspective, learners use their memory and thought processes to generate strategies as well as store and manipulate mental representations and ideas. Theories were developed in the 1920's and 1930's by Jean Piaget in Switzerland and Lev Vygotsky in Russia (Januszewski and Molenda 25).

Cognitive instructional theories focus more on the presentation side of the learning equation - the organization of content so that it makes sense to the learner and is easy to remember. The goal is to activate the learner's thought processes so that new material can be processed in a way that it expands the learner's mental schemata. Audiovisual technology, which could stimulate multiple senses, provided new tools to surmount the limitations of the text book and teacher talk. Dale (1946) in his 'Cone of Experience' expanded the notion of visual instruction by proposing that learning experiences could be arrayed in a spectrum from concrete to abstract, each with its proper place in the tool kit (Januszewski and Molenda 27-28). See the Fig 2. of the Learning Pyramid prepared based on Dale's 'Cone of Experience'.

In more recent times, the computer captured the attention of cognitivists. First, the digital format can present multimedia displays more cheaply and easily than was possible

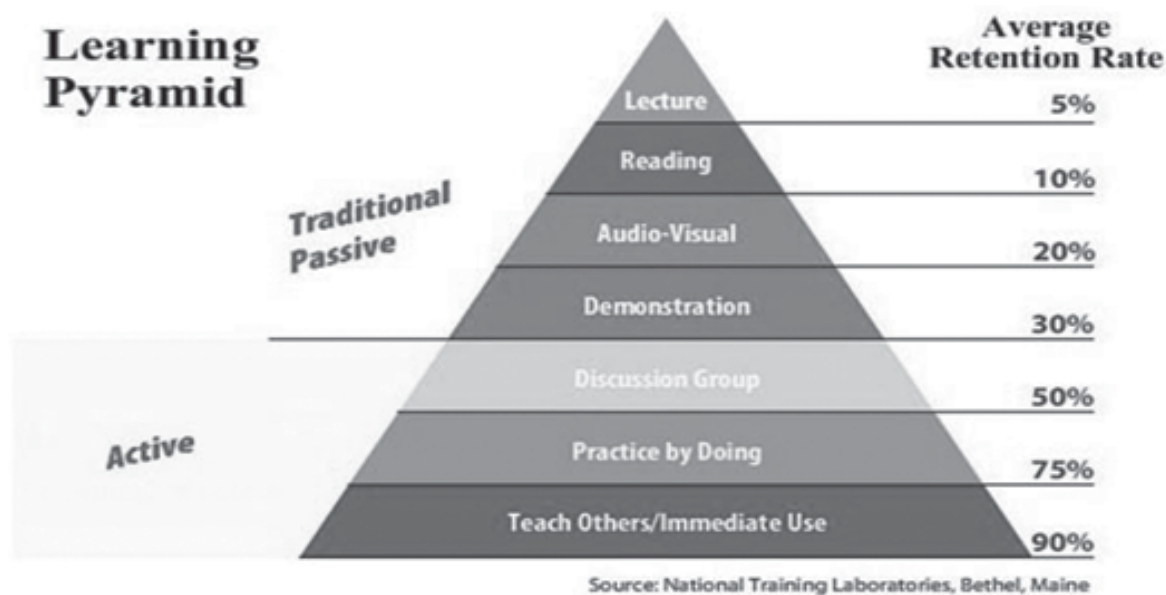


Fig.2: Learning Pyramid by Dale

with earlier analogue equipments. Second, computers can easily transform information from one symbol system to another.

1.4.3 Constructivism and its Role in Educational Technology

The most talked about learning perspective of the past decade has been labelled constructivism. The label itself is most closely identified with the self-educated philosopher, logician, linguist and cognitive theorist Ernst Von Glassersfeld (1984). Duffy and Jonassen (1992) used 'constructivism' as an umbrella term for a wide range of ideas drawn primarily from recent developments in Cognitive Psychology. Piaget and Vygotsky are also usually cited as formative influences on the development of this perspective (Januszewski and Molenda 32).

An analysis of 'constructivist didactics' by Terhart (2003) attempted to find out which elements of constructivist didactic theory are dependent on a new paradigm. Terhart concluded that constructivist didactics really does not have any genuine new ideas to offer to the praxis of teaching; rather it recommends the well-known teaching methods and arrangement of Self-Directed Learning (SDL), Discovery Learning (DL), Practical Learning (PL), and Cooperative Learning (CL) in groups (Terhart, "Constructivism and Teaching" 42).

Whereas Drisscoll (2005) concludes that "there is no single constructivist theory of instruction" (386), Terhart cites that 'knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their experiences' (387). Drisscoll's social negotiation (derived from Vygotsky) is

represented in collaborative learning which supported Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL).

1.5 Conclusion

Today, teaching and learning have moved from instructivism to constructivism. Constructivism demands more effective use of ICT. The effective use of technology is to access, adapt, and create knowledge. Moreover, Technology provides various resources such as physical, digital, human and social. Neither the teacher nor the text book is the repository of all knowledge; the Internet is an embodiment of, and medium for, the practice of constructivism. This is because it is an expanding store of accessible information and it requires students to examine and evaluate relevant information as also their own pathways for learning. Student-centred learning is a natural consequence of Internet usage and is therefore a significant feature of technological usage in Education.

Robinson, Molenda and Rezabek in their article titled "Facilitating Learning" (Januszewski and Molenda, *Educational Technology*) claim that different theories of learning can naturally lead to instructional theories that offer guidance for different sorts of learning goals. The theories do not necessarily contradict each other; rather, some explain certain phenomena better than others (38). Ertmer and Newby (68-69) suggest one such fairly simple formula for combining the theoretical perspectives which are discussed here:

Employ the behaviourist perspective in situations in which learners have lower levels of task knowledge and for learning goals requiring lower cognitive processing. Use the cognitivist perspective for middle levels of task knowledge and cognitive processing; and consider the constructivist perspective for situations in which learners have a higher level of prior knowledge and are working on higher level tasks, such as complex problem solving in ill-structured domains...They were 'learner-centred' principles which played a major role in shaping the discussion about how to facilitate learning early in the 21st century (Januszewski and Molenda 38).

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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**].
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Consultancy Services by ELTAI

ELTAI is happy to announce its consultancy in the use of technological tools for the teaching and learning of communication skills in English. The consultancy will specifically provide resource persons for conducting teacher training workshops on virtual learning, covering primarily the use of the following tools: Virtual Classroom; Wiki; Google Drive; Google and Yahoo Groups; Blogging; Social Networking; Mobile Learning; Flipped Classroom.

ELTAI resource persons may also conduct workshops on using these tools and technological resources for developing specific language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as teaching grammar interactively.

Institutions which require consultancy in these areas may write to Prof. S. Rajagopalan at eltai_india@yahoo.co.in with CC to Dr. P. N. Ramani at ramanipn@gmail.com.

SPEAKING ACTIVITY

TOUR GUIDE*

K. Elango, National Secretary, ELTAI&(Former) Professor of English, Anna University.

Email:elangoela@rediffmail.com

- Objective** : To familiarize learners with all the details (major/minor) of their place of study (university/college/school) and present them interestingly to visitors by infusing anecdotes, jokes and stories.
- Participation** : In groups of 3 each. (One group as tour guides and the other as visitors to the campus)
- Preparation** : Learners have to collect different bits and pieces of data (by reading and interviewing others) about their place of study and practice to present them and answer visitors' questions in a skilful way to leave a positive impression on them.
- Duration** : 15 minutes

Procedure:

- Teacher assigns the task in advance to half the class to gather data concerning their campus from all available sources and organize them to present in an interesting and coherent manner. (The suggested template includes aspects such as the year of establishment, founders, process of evolution, strength of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, facilities available, landmarks, achievers and so on)
- Flipped model: Learners to work independently or in groups as an out of class activity.
- In class, students who worked on the task are divided into groups of three each and a similar number of groups of those who have not worked together are formed. (Outsiders could be invited as the second group to lend authenticity and to make it a stimulating activity).
- The groups are paired drawing one from each side. The first group which carried out the task is instructed to conduct a walking tour for the second group.
- The groups could launch the tour from different places in the campus and members of the first group are asked to present the details in an interesting and appealing manner by bringing in plenty of information, stories and anecdotes about their place as they walk along.
- The second group is encouraged to raise clarificatory questions to the tour guides, thereby making it interactive and enriching to both the groups. At the end of the tour the second group is to offer feedback to their counterparts regarding their communicative competence.
- The first group which has done well (tour group) is asked to repeat the activity in class and every one joins in giving them feedback.

Learning points:

1. Learners realize that they need to possess an in depth knowledge of their place of study whenever they happen to talk about it to others as against the superficial knowledge many seem to have.
2. Learners understand that besides the historical details they need to constantly update themselves about the new developments in their place.

Further activity:

Learners have to create opportunities to talk to others about all those places that matter to them such as their home, neighbourhood, restaurant, malls and place of worship they frequent and so on.

*Tour Guide: Several Engineering and Arts and Science colleges conduct walking tours to freshers on the first day, which are usually carried out by the seniors.
The demand for professional tour guides is on the rise as the tourism industry attempts to promote our country as an international tourist destination.

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