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Why Not Indian English as an Alternative to British English for Pedagogical Purposes? – English: The Melting Pot – Impact of Intervention to Reduce Stage Fear and to Enhance the Speaking Skills of Prospective Teachers – Developing Academic Reading Skills among UG Students in Mumbai University – The Role of Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) in Enhancing Problem-Solving Skills – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Integrated English Learning – An Epiphany Beyond Reality

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

Periodicity

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

Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objectives of the Association

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

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

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

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



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Editorial

Of late, having realized the importance of continuing professional development (CPD), many English language teachers in India show interest in carrying out action research in the classroom, presenting papers at conferences and publishing their research work in journals. Active participation in ELT conferences does contribute to English language teachers' professional development.

The 11th International & 47th National Annual ELTAI Conference has a significant theme: Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Learning: Redefining the English Language Curriculum. Finding solutions to the challenge of enabling learners to acquire English within the context of specific academic subject, rather than out of context, is the need of the hour. A shift from 'controlled instruction' (controlled by the teacher) to 'demanded instruction' (demanded by the learner based on their needs) is required. The need to redefine the English language curriculum is more urgent now than in the past.

What variety and type of English should we teach our learners? Should we teach them BrE or AmE or InE? Should we teach them EAP, ESP or General English? These questions have been raised by English language educators in many forums. To make ELT in India relevant, English language teachers should seriously reflect these questions.

The current issue of JELT carries thought-provoking articles which address the issues mentioned above. How important is Indian English? In his paper titled "Why Not Indian English as an Alternative to British English for Pedagogical Purposes?" John Sekar describes the distinct variety of Indian English, stresses the need for recognizing it and exploring the possibilities to make it prescriptive for teaching-learning-testing purposes. Stating that India cannot follow British English for ever as it presents an unrealistic goal, he argues that "Indian English should eventually gain pedagogical status within the curriculum".

Priya Salonee in her paper "English: The Melting Pot" while stating that globalization has made English the new language of the global world and the varieties of the language spoken in different parts of the globe is different from the Standard English warns that the emergence of newer languages on the Internet might lead to the decline of English.

Joycilin Shermila and J. Dhivya in their paper "Impact of Intervention to Reduce Stage Fear and to Enhance the Speaking Skills of Prospective Teachers" discuss the communication apprehension of the teacher trainees and the impact of intervention strategies followed to improve their speaking ability and communication skills. Their research demonstrates that there is significant increase in the speaking ability and decrease in stage fear of prospective teachers of the experimental group when compared to the control group.

In her paper "Developing Academic Reading Skills among UG Students in Mumbai University" Anjali Verma raises whether strategy training can help learners develop their academic reading skills and describes the research she carried out among her students.

Dhar Dawanisa discusses the benefits of collaborative learning in the paper "The Role of Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) in Enhancing Problem-Solving Skills." The researcher finds that CLL boosts confidence and helps develop their critical thinking skills.

The paper "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Integrated English Learning –An Epiphany Beyond Reality" by Meenakshi Khar discusses the importance of ICT integrated English language learning, the potential of ICT tools which can enable teachers as well as learners in various ways and the need for creating learner autonomy environment.

Enjoy reading the articles. Start reflecting. Be reflective teachers. Share your ideas and experiences. Get involved in and do action research. Present papers at conferences and do send in your papers, book reviews and ELTAI SIG reports to JELT. Professional development is a journey. Enjoy the journey.

Albert P'Rayan, Editor

Why Not Indian English as an Alternative to British English for Pedagogical Purposes?



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ABSTRACT

For colonial and historical reasons, Indian academia has been following British English since Independence. Though American English has become the norm internationally due to the global status that it currently enjoys, Indian academia has not yet recognized this new emergent phenomenon. Of course, Indian learners of English are increasingly exposed to American English outside of the curriculum. Meanwhile, Indian English has evolved as a distinct, literary and non-native, national variety over a period of 400 years because of its peaceful co-existence with Indian languages and cultures. Code-mixing and code-switching, phonological and morphological mix and syntactic and grammatical features have made Indian English a distinct variety. It is high time that Indian academia focussed its attention on Indian English as an alternative to British English. This paper focuses its attention on the description of Indian English as a distinct variety and the feasibility of exploring possibilities to make it prescriptive for teaching-learning-testing purposes.

Key terms: Standard British English, Standard American English, Indian English, Code-mixing/-switching, National Standards of English, Native & Non-Native English

Background of the Study

Indian English is not taught officially even though it has established itself as an entity and a variety in creative writing in English. On the other hand, British English has been taught and tested curriculum-wise for the past four hundred years, yet it has not been 'mastered.' American English is not taught either, yet it has been influencing the twenty first century tech-savvy educated youths and researchers, and the workforce. Of course, technology has been proactive in promoting this native, national variety. Here

is a piquant situation: A variety which is not taught has evolved within the academia and recognized in society, but a variety which is taught at the state and institutional expenses, yet it is not internalized. Above all, it is Indian English that gives educated Indians a linguistic and ethnic identity. It appears to be the cementing force among the educated with a variety of regional, linguistic influences across cultures. Interestingly, it receives condemnation from among the academics in general and literati in particular. In spite of the fact that Standard British English is preferred for

pedagogical purposes, Indian English that is characterized as a deviant form has tenacity to socially survive successfully for the past four hundred years and the same has been approved either derisively or admiringly in literature written in English. The question in hand is “why can’t Indian English be taught and tested?”

Survey of Literature

Paroo Nihalani, R.K. Tongue, and Priya Hosali (1979) declare that the Received Pronunciation is unsuitable to a large majority of Indian users of English and have furnished a list of two thousand words with Indian accent. They also have provided one thousand words found in Indian English and they are distinctly different from British English. Balbir Singh (2004) has included a chapter in his book that compares General Indian English with British and American English in terms of pronunciation. R.K. Bansal (1983) is the first Indian phonetician to describe Indian English accent. T. Balasubramanian (1981) also describes Indian English accent and the same has been treated as a textbook at the postgraduate level. J. Sethi (2011) has created a corpus of ‘Indianisms’ ‘Indian Coinages’ ‘Idioms’ and ‘Archaisms.’

Research Questions

The questions that were addressed during the course of the present investigation are as follows:

1. Is there a linguistic entity called “Indian English”? If yes, what are its features?
2. Can it be described and prescribed? If

yes, what is English language teachers’ stand?

3. How does the untaught “Indian English” spread?
4. Why is the taught “British English” not followed?

Objective of the Study

Indian English can be tried pedagogically if systematic research attempts at phonological, lexical, and discourse levels are patronized by governments through appropriate language policies and documented by research universities and public and private institutions like English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, and leading private universities in the country.

Research Design & Method

Any innovation starts with teachers. What they think about the present issue naturally assumes importance. Informal conversations with a cross section of English teachers working in Madurai city colleges were used as a launching pad for the present investigation. Reflecting over the possibility of employing Indian English as an alternative for pedagogical purposes like materials production, teaching, and testing, many of them expressed three issues that are seen as problems.

1. British English cannot be done away with. It has been validated by time over four hundred years.
2. As teachers, they do not know how to go

about replacing British English by Indian English.

3. The capacity of Indian English to achieve international intelligibility is not known

On the basis of these views and the available literatures in the field, a questionnaire was

prepared and administered among randomly chosen fifteen faculty members who work in Arts and Science Colleges and Engineering Colleges. Fifteen statements on different aspects of Indian English were framed on a five point Likert scale like 'Yes' 'No' 'Written' 'Spoken' and 'Both.'

S.No	Question	Y%	N%	W	S%	B
1	Is there anything called 'Indian English'?	100				
2	Is it written, spoken, or both?	87			13	
3	Can Indian English be taught & tested?	33	67			
4	Should it aim at international intelligibility?	73	27			
5	Can mixing of words & phrases in Indian languages be permitted?	80	13		1	
6	Can Indian English have their own vocabulary?	67	20		2	
7	Is the untaught Indian English used?	80	1		1	
8	Is the taught British English unused?	53	40		1	
9	Do you think the influence of Indian languages on English is inevitable?	100				
10	Has Indian English evolved socially through teachers & the media?	87	1		1	
11	Has Indian English evolved as a necessity?	80	20			
12	Are there Indian Englishes?	87	13			
13	Is English ours (Indians)?	47	53			
14	Have you read any book or article on Indian English?	67	5			
15	Does the use of English enjoy prestige in India?	93	1			

Though English teachers take cognizance of the ubiquitous presence of Indian English, 13% believe that it is only the spoken variety that can be considered Indian. 76% teachers are emphatic that Indian English does not enjoy any

pedagogical value. 53% of them accept that British English is not used by Indians though it is taught whereas 80% accept that Indian English is patronized though it is not considered for teaching and testing. Though all teachers agree that the influence of

Indian languages on English is inevitable, only 80% of them recognize the bilingual phenomenon of code-mixing and code-switching. Again, it is quite revealingly ironical that while 80% agree that Indian English has evolved socially, 53% affirm that English is NOT Indian. It is gladdening to learn that 67% claim that they have read articles on Indian English though teachers are hesitant to use Indian English for pedagogical purposes. The same percentage of teachers thinks that Indian English can have its own vocabulary.

Theoretical Discussion and Reflection

English has stayed with Indians for more than four centuries. It is in the DNA of every Indian irrespective of levels of education, religion, region, caste, and community. It has done so much to them as they have done to it. India has adopted English in its family of languages and English has successfully learnt to co-exist with them. Such a mutually respecting multilingual reality has caused the birth of a new variety called “Indian English” and new linguistic phenomena like code-mixing and code-switching. These features characterize languages in a typical multilingual society where pure languages cannot strive to thrive. Mutual and friendly influence on each other is not only biologically natural but ontologically inevitable. For instance, Raja Rao, a noted Indian writer in English, predicts the emergence of Indian English in his foreword to *Kanthapura* (1963: vii-viii):

We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We

have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American.... After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on.

Of course, Raja Rao is not the sole voice in pleading for the Indian variety of English. P. Lal, a poet and a critic (1996: 30) developed an argument that was seen as controversial then when he affirmed that “English is one of the Indian languages, or putting it differently, a recent and very much alive and kicking adoption in the Indian family of vernaculars.”

Indian English need not be perceived to be derogatory. It is a legitimate national variety in its own right. It may or may not have any comparable national variety used elsewhere. At the same time, Indians who clone British or American accent are perceived to be unnatural Indians with marked affected accent. However, deviations (from the norm set by the British and the American English) are not to be considered ‘errors’ but ‘innovations’ that enrich English globally. Deviations can be described at phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. English is learnt either as foreign or as second language all over the world not necessarily to communicate

with the English speaking world but with the world that does not know each other's language. Indian English is best suited to the Indian setting and therefore it is correct. It need not parrot or clone either British or American English. Even if some Indians speak like the British or the Americans, it shows their harmonious relationship with the latter rather than a faithful imitation.

However, Indian English does not mean that it is monolithic. In fact, its variation (deviation) ranges from national educated variety to multifarious, unintelligible, uneducated varieties that could be on par with Old English dialects spoken in the seven Kingdoms into which England had been divided. Indian English seems to be dialectal in its birth in India. India is a country with one thousand six hundred and fifty two languages according to the 1971 Census. The Constitution has recognized 22 major languages as scheduled languages plus English. It is divided into 29 states and 7 union territories with their own cultures and languages. All of them add flavour to Indian English varieties. In the words of Hans R Dua (1991: 105), India is a big

sociolinguistic giant [that] presents complex language problems, involving official language policy and national multilingualism, language education policy and modernization, mass media planning, mass media planning and communication networks, language development, socio-political mobilization, and integration.

As a result, English has become virtually

and literally the link language of India. It is the only pan-Indian written language that is used by the educated Indians who are scattered culturally and geographically, and it is characterized by 'deviation'/innovations both in spoken and written varieties. But they are not yet taught though they have evolved in this multilingual lab.

W.D. Shaw (1981) reports that the variety of English spoken by the educated in India includes 27.4% of British English, 3.2% American, and 50.6% Indian English. The last variety keeps increasing in spite of the exposure to American English in the globalized technological era. Indian users of English feel happy, secured, satisfied, and good about their English. They are proud of being rightful owners of their variety because it gives them the much needed international address. No one can speak/use Indian English other than Indians. Thousands of youths who, after having attended courses on neutral accent, sojourn in the English speaking countries and non-English speaking counties for professional and occupation purposes and return to India without any affection in their accent. They remain Indian in their English variety because it gives them their identity globally as Indian users of English. English is the language of prestige in India and everyone would not miss an opportunity to admit that they know English. According to 1991 Census, 178,598 claim that English is their mother tongue and it has increased to 226449 in 2011.

There is no exact number of Indians who use English. According to the 2011 Census,

74% are declared as literates with 93% enrolled for primary education 69% for secondary education while 25% have enrolled for post-secondary education. They are all introduced to English formally and they do have some working knowledge of English at least at the lexical level. Even the remaining **26%** of the so-called illiterates do code-mix in Indian English of some sort involuntarily and effortlessly.

All English language teachers honestly attempt to teach British English accent, but miserably fail due to lack of a live model that could be imitated. Moreover, it is (appears to be) unrealistic goal. But Indian English has evolved diachronically through use in print and visual media, literature, and all formal and informal social discourses. There is a need to identify pan-Indian variety since India is a multilingual country and it has created a unique phenomenon of code-mixing and code-switching and its impact on Indian English.

It is not a pedagogically sound proposition to teach British English in India since it is not being used in all domains. Indians have a rich linguistic repertoire to choose from a galaxy of languages and their varieties for different purposes. Indians are different and they use English differently. Teachers are divided in their opinion on the pedagogical value of Indian English. They find it difficult to teach it and test it. Perhaps, they entertain the fear of the unknown. They are unable to predict the outcome of teaching and testing Indian English. Is this fear symptomatic of their colonial conditioning?

Socio-psychologically, English teachers might still feel the colonial hangover in the sense that they are unable to recognize the evolution of Indian English as part of World Englishes by decentring British English, the chief weapon of the colonial masters. Their attitudes toward Indian English reveal a kind of dilemma they are acutely experiencing in according the status that it deserves. Of course, they discuss postcolonial theories and literatures in a different domain, but they do so only through British English which is further reinforced through the curriculum of English studies that is British literature-biased. The bias toward British English language and literature and prejudice against Indian English language and literature stand in the way of a critical assessment of the evolution and recognition of Indian English. The stark reality is that English spoken and written by educated Indians are marked in several ways, but English teachers refuse to accept it. It is after all Indian English that gives identity to Indian users of English. There is no cause for a sense of incompatibility or shame in recognizing it for ordinary communication purposes. They cannot afford to be unreasonable in their expectation and wishful thinking that they are monolinguals in English against the socio-cultural-linguistic realities that are basically plurilingual and multi-cultural. This feature enables Indians to code-mix and code-switch effortlessly domain-wise.

British English cannot bear the burden of Indian cultural experiences and therefore

there has been a natural evolution of their own Englishes. India being the nation of minority languages has naturally adopted English as its permanent guest and it does have certain roles to socially perform which other Indian languages without the help of Indian English cannot accomplish. It is these multicultural and pluri-lingual contexts that have enabled Indian English to evolve its own grammar at all levels. Literary texts from Indian Writing English written at different points of time can be exploited through comparison and contrast so that people's attitude toward Indian English can be detected. For instance, Nissim Ezekiel's "Soap" that was written in the early post-colonial period can be contrasted with Meena Kandasamy's "Mulligatawny Dream" written in the early twenty first century. While the former elicits how Indians laughed at Indian English brand (because it is non-Standard), the latter is serious in appropriating English to talk about the economically strong India.

Feature of Indian English

Indian English enjoy exclusive features at phonological, lexical, grammatical, and syntactical levels. It also has an inbuilt feature of code-mixing and code-switching.

Phonological features

Indian English is characterized by its own phonological system. There are several variations in vowels and consonants between British English and Indian languages and they are reflected in Indian English. Indian English either substitutes certain English sounds with those found in

Indian languages, or has phonologically different sounds that are not available in British English. For instance, most Indian languages do not have several English diphthongs and certain monophthongs.

Lack of aspiration

There is no provision for aspiration in Indian English. As a result, speakers of Indian English do not distinguish between [ph] as in the initial sound of the word 'paper' and [p] as the medial sound in it. The same is the case with any voiceless plosive that occurs at the initial position of the stressed syllable.

Retroflexion in the place of alveolar constants

Indian English replaces alveolar plosives /t d/ with retroflex wherein the tip of the tongue gets curled upwards. No one is taught to replace like this, but all Indian tongues replace them!

Absence of interdental fricatives

Indian English does not have interdental sounds and it leads to these sounds becoming alveolar plosives. Its users pronounce expressions like 'thank you' or 'thick' or 'that' using alveolar plosive substitutes. Many Indian users of English replace the voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ with the voiceless bilabial /p/ as in 'fail' pronounced 'pail.' This is due to the non-availability of fricatives in Indian languages.

Lack of syllabization

Most Indian languages equate a letter and

a syllable and this leads to Indian English not following syllable division rules when words are pronounced as entities. Indian users of English tend to either lengthen the word as in 'college' or shorten as in 'superend' instead of 'superintendent.' Moreover, Indian English does not have syllabic consonant feature. Here, its users insert a vowel in between final consonants as in 'sudd(e)n' or 'butt(o)n' or 'litt(i)l' or 'fountain' or 'mountain, 'plantain.'

Absence of word-stress

Indian English is characterized by the absence of word-accent. Indian languages do not have this feature. While words are not pronounced syllable-wise, rules of word-accent are not followed as well. As a result, grammatical and structural function of word accent is not realized in Indian English. For instance, it is common to hear 'economics' without stress on the third syllable, or 'content' both as noun and verb.

Stressed-timed rhythm replaced with syllable-timed rhythm

Indian English is spoken like a typical Indian language that is syllable-timed. In other words, all syllables are given equal importance against the occurrence of stressed syllables at regular intervals of time with time taken for the production of one stressed syllable being the same as any number of unstressed syllables that come between two stressed syllables.

Grammar features

Indian English is innovative not only in oral features but also in written language with

well defined grammatical features. These features are not deliberately taught in curriculum but learnt collectively in society through the media and academic community. Indian English has evolved a new grammar that would have been or not been influenced by Indian languages. It has gone through the grammaticalization process. For instance, it prefers the adverb at the beginning of the sentence whereas it comes at the end of the sentence in British English as in "Yesterday I saw you" instead of "I saw you yesterday." It is linguistically called the 'transfer phenomenon.'

Reduplication

In English some words simply repeat themselves in the sense that the second part is identical with the first as in 'bye bye' 'haha' 'pooh-pooh' or the first part repeats with a change in its vowel as in 'flip flop' 'sing-song' 'ping-pong' or of consonant as in 'walky-talky' 'hotchpotch' 'hocus-pocus.' Indian English has invented a few expressions like 'small small (problems)/disturbances/favour' 'one one time'

Conversion of non-counts into count nouns

Indian English treats non-count nouns as count nouns. It is quite common to hear and see in spoken and written discourses expressions like 'furnitures' 'equipments' 'luggages' 'baggages' 'fishes' 'acommodations' "sceneries" and words denoting quantities like 'hundreds, thousands, billions, millions.'

Lack of distinction between similar looking phrases

Indian English makes no distinction between the following pairs of expression: 'few vs. a few' 'little vs. a little' 'beside vs. besides' 'in spite of vs. despite [of]' 'consist of vs. comprise [of]' 'a lot of vs. lots of' 'and vs. as well as' 'loose vs. lose'

Neologism

Indian English has coined a number of new expressions whose meanings are unknown to the native speakers. For example, Tip-top, cousin brother/sister, co-brother/sister, rascal (dishonest person), eve-teasing, double-income family [two-career family/two-career household, house owner [land lady/lord], prepone [advance], pin code, bed-coffee, cut piece centre, dearness allowance, America-/foreign-returned, goondas, hypothecated to [mortgage], Plate meals, shoebeat, shoebites, and pindrop silence.

Lexis & Lexeme

Indian English has evolved a set of lexical and grammatical expressions out of necessity or influence.

New Grammar

Indians "discuss about," "can come after [in] ten minutes," ask "Why hair cut not cut?," assert that "There is no wind in the football," wonder "I talk, he talk, why you middle middle talk?" and warn "I will give you slap," report that "the bus-driver was absconding since yesterday," admire "for someone's character," [strength of character] rule that

"someone is was age-barrred from promotion to a more senior post," observe that "students wrote a few alphabets on the blackboard," declare that "good in [at] Maths as well as English," ask "Is that fine with you? [Is that all right/OK with you?]" wonder "If supposing he asks us, what shall we answer?" and query "when did you return back?" They also treat certain adverbs as nouns and they appear in prepositional phrases. For example, 'abroad' is used as 'in abroad, as in "He is in abroad."

It is quite a strange phenomenon that Indian English spreads silently but steadily. Nothing could prevent it for the past four hundred years. It has matured enough to challenge the creative writers from the native speaker countries. Thousands of engineering youths go to English speaking countries for higher studies and for occupation purposes and survive there without any language crisis in communication. While they continue to live in such countries, they have not lost their Indian English identity. In fact, they are proud of it. The same is the case with Indian users of English in India particularly with Indian teachers of English language and literature. One source of Indian English spread is the English language and literature teachers themselves. They not only influence students but also subject teachers. It is further reiterated by the media (both print and electronic). There is a vast chasm between English used on the Indian channels and native English channels like English channels like BBC and HBO. Though youths are addicted to

English channels, their native variety has not affected them at all. Their written and spoken English is reflected in young adult fiction by youth writers like Chetan Bhagat, Ravinder Singh, and Preeti Shenoy.

Recommendations

The following thoughts can be investigated empirically and attitude study can be conducted with a view to exploring the feasibility to treat Indian English as an alternative for pedagogical purposes:

1. Codification of Indian English in its entirety by Indian scholars can be undertaken even though several attempts are being taken in the West.
2. Pedagogic grammar needs to be written
3. Theories about English language teaching in terms of methods, materials, and testing can be tried.
4. Variation studies in terms of inter-speaker and intra-speaker can be recorded in an attempt to giving direction to ELT.
5. English language teachers at the tertiary level need to be committed researchers undertaking action research periodically.
6. Textbooks can be written in Indian English.
7. A comparative study of British, American, and Indian varieties can be carried out with cultural backgrounds of these societies.

Conclusions

Indian English should eventually gain

pedagogical status within the curriculum. India cannot afford to follow British English for ever since it presents an unrealistic goal. Indian English has evolved socially and spreads uniformly across different geographic regions and segments of Indian society on its own and its own right without any institutional support. Its features have also been internalized without any explicit teaching. They are reinforced by socially powerful and respectable institutions like educational resources and the media. It is therefore imperative for English language teachers and researchers to identify mechanism and methods for codifying the features of Indian English, so that it can be made both descriptive and prescriptive. It can aim at both national and international intelligibility since World Englishes are both national and international ontologically and functionally.

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English: The Melting Pot

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has made English the new language of the global world. Mother Tongue is acquired whereas English as a second or foreign language has to be learnt. The way English is spoken in different parts of the globe is different from one another and also very different from the Standard English. Stress, rhythm and intonation are three important suprasegmental elements used in English and the basic difference in English usage lies in here. Though there are different varieties of English and eyebrows are often raised at their legitimacy but as long as it is comprehensible the purpose is served.

One World: One Language

Globalization has indeed brought us closer to the concept of “one world: one language” (Morrison, 2002). The primary reasons for a language to become global are war and conquests, trade, migration and the introduction of newer channels of communication. The voyages of exploration by British seamen; the vast spread of British colonialism and the industrial revolution in Britain are primarily responsible for turning English into the global language. This world presence of English has been further maintained and enhanced through the economic, political and technological superiority of America. The dominance of English has been registered and recognized worldwide. English today has become the most sought after language in the realm of scientific studies and technology, career growth and advancement, and is also viewed as a stepping stone on the ladder of socio-

economic status and prestige.

Sapir had predicted way back in 1931 that English would enormously grow and become the global language. Crystal’s acknowledgement in 1997 that the use of English as a link language and lingua franca was responsible for the rise and growth of the English language echoed the same voice.

To quote Redmann (2002, p. 45) “English spans the divide between people and cultures. It is not owned by Britain and America: now it belongs to everyone.” The very fact that English has gained its entry and established firm grounds in so many countries speak in itself about the worldwide status that the language has acquired. There are many scholars like Phillipson (1992) who feel it is a part of linguistic imperialism; Graddol (2006) terms it as “English Triumphalism”, and many others term it as ‘predatory’, ‘killer’, or ‘imperialist’. There are still others who feel it has broken all

“Linguistic Barriers” and has in fact been instrumental in reviving many endangered languages by giving them longer life in terms of rendering them a creolized or pidginized form.

The use of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by various professional communities eg.: “Seaspeak” spoken in the marine fraternity; “Airspeak” spoken by pilots and people manning air-traffic vouch for the supremacy and reach of the language (Wallraff, 2007). Technology has played a dominant role in the spread of English. The emergence of Internet with about 80% of its material being available in English clearly indicates the lead of English in this realm of modern technology.

English proficiency tests like TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB which are essential for gaining a seat in education or profession on a global front point at the continuing worldwide spread and hold of English.

The global dominance of English has made it the lingua franca and linguists and language specialists have been addressing it by different terminologies. McKay uses the term English as International Language (EIL) as an umbrella term covering both local and global uses of English; Seidlhofer (2001, 2004) and Jenkins (2000, 2003, 2006) refer to English in the Kachruvian outer circle (Africa, Asia and the Caribbean) as World Englishes and for the English spoken in the expanding circle they term it

as ELF i.e., English as a lingua franca. Terms like ‘International Englishes’, ‘World Englishes’, ‘World English’ (in the singular), ‘World Standard Spoken English’ (Crystal, 2003), ‘Nuclear English’ (Quirk, 1982), ‘English as a Lingua Franca’, ‘English as a Family of Languages’ (Canagarajah, 2006), ‘General English’ (Ahulu, 1997) are all being used for this language which has come to rule the world.

The Pot-Pourri

But there is no standard variety of English maintained worldwide. Language purists (Quirk, 1985) feel that there has been a fragmentation and distortion of the so called pure and pristine variety of English as we now have different flavors of English in its hybridized form i.e. Chinglish, Japlish, Hinglish, Singlish etc. There are linguists like Braj Kachru who sees English spread globally in three concentric circles and justifies the nativization of English (2005).

While Quirk (1985) vouches for the proficient use of the language by native speakers, Kachru (1992) counter argues, “the native speaker is not always a valid yardstick for the global uses of English”.¹ Whatever these arguments may lead to, it is an established fact that there is no homogeneity in English on the global front. There are no standards or set rules. The prescriptive grammar books of yesteryears are a thing of past; today’s English is best described as what is seen, spoken or heard worldwide. “The English

¹ Kachru, 1992, Teaching world Englishes. In B.B. Kachru (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (2nd ed.) (pp. 358). Urbana: University of Illinois Press

language now belongs to all those who use it” (Brown, 2000). As linguists say language is what it is in terms of usage, it is descriptive. How can then one define and describe English in today’s perspective – we have Singaporean English, Malaysian English, African English, Japanese English, Korean English, and the list goes on and on and within each of these varieties there are further sub-varieties too, for eg., Tamil English, Punjabi English, Bengali English, Malayali English etc. Each community, group or nation carries its own cultural imprints on English. There are traces of Mother Tongue influences in these varieties of English.

One does not forget one’s roots and culture and is not completely immersed in a new language and culture. Speaking English does not necessarily mean turning English in entirety. English spoken worldwide is not spoken the English way; it has local flavors to it. We cannot expect the English speaking word populace to turn English in their outlook; “to change the colour of their skin, the straightness of their hair, or the shape of their eyes to conform to other groups” (Cook, 1999, p. 196).

Alok cannot become Alec and Harmeet cannot transform into Harry. We cannot have an Arnold in an *angrakha*, a Shelley in a *salwar*, a Byron in a *burkha*, a Lawrence in a *lungi* or a Joyce in *jodhpuris*. English cannot be acquired the English way. There is a difference between language learning

and language acquisition (Krashen). Mother Tongue is acquired whereas English as a second or foreign language has to be learnt.

The English bred (pun intended) across the globe – prepared by the dough kneaded from the flour of English knowledge, leavened by the desire to be more Anglicized and British in their outlook, baked in the academic oven of English medium institutions – now seem sandwiched between the buttered slices of the Mother Tongue influence of their native dialects and the Received Pronunciation (RP)² of the native speakers of English. Native speakers of English look at non-native varieties – a legacy of colonial period – with either amusement or irritation (Kachru, 1983).

Though linguists do not agree on one standard form of English; yet they agree that it being a common link language should adhere to and maintain mutual intelligibility at least in those fields and domains where it is used internationally. (Kachru, 1985).

Mosaic of Varied Cultures

As linguists agree to the existence of a wide variety of English – all of them adapting some feature of English and stabilizing them into their own native milieu (Kachru, 1986); all these varieties are acceptable as long as they are intelligible and comprehensible.

We might hear a Dutch businessman talk about earning his *celery* instead of his *salary*, or a Korean finding it difficult to

² Received Pronunciation or R.P. is the kind of pronunciation that is well received or accepted as the standard in England. It is the form of speech generally used by educated people in the south of England.

differentiate between *pork* and *fork*. We can hear an Indian having trouble with the word initial cluster sounds like *st-* and words like *station* or *statue* are either *sation* or *istation*; or *satatu* or *istatu* depending on the place where the speaker is from. Non-native speakers of English often have a tendency to pronounce English words as they are spelled.

Clusters are an important area where non-native speakers usually face a lot of problem and often tend to ease out their problems by either inserting a vowel or dropping a consonant. The phonetic realization of English is poor amongst the non-native speakers as there are many sounds which are completely new to them and though there are some which do exist in their own languages but may be just as allophonic variations and not as distinct units. It can also be the other way round for eg., features like aspiration give rise to distinct and separate phonemes in Hindi whereas they are just allophonic variations in English used for plosive sounds in the word initial position. Often when a non-native speaker of English finds difficult to pronounce the English phonemes he replaces it by the closest approximation in his Mother Tongue, at times rendering his speech even unintelligible. These variations are difficult to comprehend for a non-native ear than for a native one. Though the native speakers do realize the mistake they don't have much problem in comprehending them than others who are neither natives nor belong to the place where such variant forms are used. For example a Japanese person as

compared to an American may have problems in understanding a Dutch person speaking English.

The vowel length is yet another feature which is a major reason for unintelligibility. The lack of finer distinction between longer and shorter vowels by non-native speakers result in speech which often sound strenuous for listeners.

Suprasegmental features like stress, tone and intonation pose much problem for non-native speakers of English. Modifications in connected speech and r-insertion are also difficult to copy. For non-native speakers of English from a syllable timed language following weak-form words and unstressed vowels in English is another area of trouble.

Though British or American English do carry accent but as long as it is neutralized in the non-native speakers it is intelligible and comprehensible to people across the globe. Strong MT (Mother tongue) influence in the form of heavy accents is a characteristic feature of non-native variety of English. Accents not only vary according to the geographical setting but they also vary along with the social class, age and gender.

In Arabic English /r/ is pronounced as a flap or trill; in Indian English often as a retroflex. For Hebrew speakers it is very difficult to pronounce English words like *hit/heat* as they fail to discriminate between a long and a short vowel. The confusion between /w/ and /v/ is across most of the languages. The Germans fail to pronounce a velarized /l/ in the word-final position.

Hungarians often replace /è/ and /ð/ sounds by [s:] and [d*]. The Italians replace /œ/ with [a]. As Russian does not have [è] and [ð] sounds, the Russian speakers of English language often replace them with either /s/ and /z/ or /t/ and /d/. Japanese speakers have a lot of confusion in pronouncing /l/ and /r/ as they face problem both in the perception and the production of these phonemes because Japanese language does not distinguish between the two. People from Vietnam generally do not produce final consonants as there are very few final consonants in Vietnamese.

Non-native varieties of English do not just sound different but also differ in word formation process and syntax. The word formation process which is prevalent in the MTs of people speaking the non-native varieties of English are often carried over to their English. We often see features of reduplication and at times even there is a lot of intra-word code-switching and code-mixing. English is not a Pro-drop language whereas there are many south Asian languages which are + Pro-drop. There is often a carry over feature of Pro-drop when these non-native speakers speak English. As Chinese lacks representation of number, the Chinese people while speaking English, often have problem combining subject and verb. Their subject and verb often don't agree in number. For Koreans there is confusion in gender.

As language has a cultural imprint English often cannot adequately take care of the

entire vocabulary of a non-native culture. Exact translation is not possible. There are three Hindi words for second person singular *aap*, *tum* or *tu* which when translated into English becomes *you*, losing out on the honorific/non-honorific information. Kinship terms like *uncle* and *aunt* cannot encompass the entire range of relationship that is connoted in the Indian context. A *mama*, *phupha*, *chacha*, *tau*, *mausa* or a *mami*, *bua*, *chachi*, *tai*, *mausi* cannot be put under an umbrella term of *uncle* and *aunt*. Each kinship term has different meaning and is culture specific.

Words often acquire colloquial meanings which are entirely different from their dictionary meanings and the same is true with English across many nations. English has also been enriched by other languages and cultures and the numerous loan words in English vociferate the same.

Conclusion

Although English has spread across the globe, an important factor that can reduce or marginalize this influence of English could be the economic power. "English is by no means the only language in global business ... as it only accounts for 30% of the world Gross Domestic Product, and is likely to account for less in the future" (Davis, 2003). China is emerging as a new force to reckon with and maybe it is not far off when Mandarin becomes essential for all to learn. While the Internet might have been once a primary factor which led to the growth and global status of English, it is the emergence of newer languages on the

net which might lead to the decline of English. The flavors of global English (Spanglish, Hinglish, Japlish etc.) are themselves posing a threat to the language and the Standard English users are gathering up for some sort of movement towards its preservation which can lead to the decline in its growth. "The US-dominated phase of globalization is fading ... and English does not enjoy a complete hegemony." Graddol (2006, p. 113).

But the vast spread of English cannot vanish soon. It has firmly rooted itself in almost the entire globe. Though there may be many varieties and flavors of English but as long as it serves the purpose of communication, the language lives.

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Impact of Intervention to Reduce Stage Fear and to Enhance the Speaking Skills of Prospective Teachers



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ABSTRACT

In the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students to develop their speaking skills by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies - using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language - which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. Learners have stage fear and they refuse to speak in front of others. Speech therapists describe speaking anxiety as something that has a great impact on one's self-confidence since it often makes one experience failure when not being able to speak out and show what one knows. Speaking anxiety creates a low self-confidence which makes students remain quiet in all situations, even if they have subject knowledge and the capacity to express themselves. The present paper discusses the intervention that can be given to reduce speaking anxiety and to develop the speaking ability of prospective teachers.

Introduction

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Language learners need to recognize that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

1. Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary)
2. Functions (transaction and interaction)
3. Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants)

In the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students to develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies - using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language - which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it.

Speaking Anxiety

When looking up the word anxiety it is described as “an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one’s capacity to cope with it.” (Merriam Webster dictionary)

Speech therapists describe speaking anxiety as something that has a great impact on one’s self-confidence since it often makes one experience failure when not being able to speak out and show what one knows. Irregular heartbeat, perspiration, stumbling and an inability to act are a few symptoms that block one’s capacity to act and speak. This explains that this issue often turns into a vicious circle because one bad experience from speaking often becomes a reminder when the next opportunity arises. If a student with speaking anxiety experiences failure he or she will rather remain quiet than take the risk of failing again. This

situation drags them into silence that becomes more and more difficult to break since it contributes to a role as “the quiet one” in class. Speaking anxiety creates a low self-confidence which makes students remain quiet in all situations, even if they have the capacity to express themselves and knowledge that is worth hearing.

Big Six Sources of Speech Anxiety

- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Disapproval
- Fear of Unknown
- Fear of the Spotlight
- Fear of the Audience
- Fear of Breaking the Rules

Speaking anxiety affects second language learning since it impedes students in improving their oral skills which is crucial when learning a new language. It automatically affects students’ grades since the syllabi demand oral proficiency and activities in classrooms that require oral communication. It is important to understand that inhibition is a major obstacle to second language acquisition since it makes students not to practice their oral proficiency. Since the hardest part for speaking anxious students is breaking the silence as it is the crucial part for teachers to create comfortable learning situations.

Research Problem

There is no doubt that the majority of second / foreign language learners experience

different degrees of anxiety when they are asked to express themselves in front of the class or other people. This is true even when their language abilities are quite good. Foreign language anxiety which is a well-known affective factor, is “a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning arising process” (Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Anxiety in itself is not a bad thing since a certain amount of anxiety can motivate a learner to learn and acquire a language. However, language teachers and researchers have noticed that there is a high level of anxiety which negatively affects many language learners’ behaviour and their educational outcomes. The main concern of teachers is helping students to pass the general exam. As a result, college students lack competency in speaking, and many have difficulties with pronunciation. This makes them unwilling to communicate in the target language.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the means to do away with the stage fear that makes speaking English more stressful and thereby affecting their speaking ability. This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does stage fear influence learners’ speaking ability?
2. Is there any possibility to reduce stage fear which will lead to effective speaking?

Experimental Design

In this present study the investigator has

used pretest – posttest control group design. In this design the control group and experimental group are formed and their equivalence are established through randomization. Of the various Colleges of Education in Thoothukudi district, the present study was confined to Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi. Forty four prospective teachers of the college were taken as the sample for the present study. The investigator prepared an intervention for prospective teachers to help them to overcome their stage fear and to improve their speaking ability. The intervention strategy consists of 5 training modules involving various activities. Three hours of training was given on each day.

Outline of the Intervention

Day 1 - Ways to improve communication skills and oral fluency

Day 2 - Reason out (Here think aloud strategy is used, the students are allowed to think upon their own weakness and finds out the root cause. It is also a form of self assessment and improvisation.)

Day 3 - i) Pick the card (Each student is asked to pick one card. They must think over the situation and come out with an explanation which serves as a solution for the problem) ii) Complete the proverb (10 proverbs were splited and the strips of paper were shuffled. Each student chooses a strip of paper and comes to the front of the class and reads the half of the proverb she has. Then eventually they find out their pair

having the other half. Having the complete proverb now they are asked to come out with a story relevant to the proverb).

Day 4 - Crazy Story telling & Sentence race

Day 5 - Common Expressions in English & Stress and Intonation

Data Analysis

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between control and

experimental group prospective teachers in their pre-test scores on speaking ability based on the following dimensions:

- Interaction
- Pronunciation
- Fluency & Coherence
- Vocabulary
- Grammar

TABLE 1
Test of significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their pre test scores on speaking ability based on dimensions

Group	Dimension	No. of Students	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value	Table t-value	Remark
Control	Interaction	22	2.09	0.52	1	2.08	NS
	Pronunciation		2.18	0.66	0.18		NS
	Fluency & Coherence		2.09	0.52	0.56		NS
	Vocabulary		2.05	0.37	0		NS
	Grammar		2.23	0.52	0		NS
Experimental	Interaction	22	1.91	0.61	1		NS
	Pronunciation		2.09	0.52	0.18		NS
	Fluency & Coherence		2.18	10.58	0.56		NS
	Vocabulary		2.05	0.65	0		NS
	Grammar		2.23	0.42	0		NS

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated t-values 1, 0.18, 0.56, 0 and 0 for all the dimensions are less than the table value (2.08) at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It shows that there is no significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their pre-test scores on speaking ability based on the following dimensions:

- Interaction
- Pronunciation
- Fluency & Coherence

- Vocabulary
- Grammar

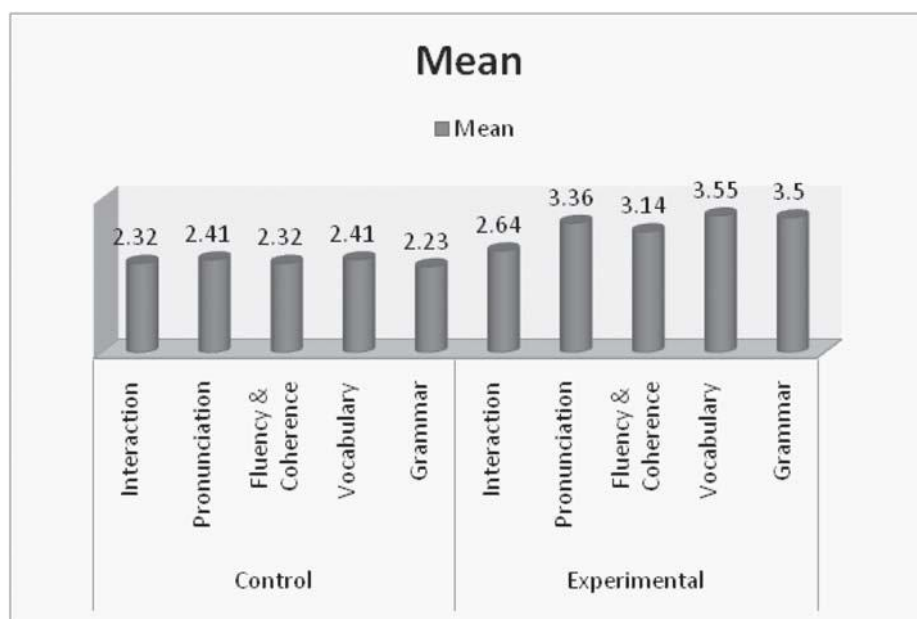
Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their post test scores on speaking ability based on the following dimensions:

- Interaction
- Pronunciation
- Fluency & Coherence
- Vocabulary
- Grammar

TABLE 2

Test of significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their post test scores on speaking ability based on the dimensions

Group	Dimension	No. of Students	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value	Table t-value	Remark
Control	Interaction	22	2.32	0.47	1.91	2.08	NS
	Pronunciation		2.41	0.59	4.28		S
	Fluency & Coherence		2.32	0.71	3.64		S
	Vocabulary		2.41	0.50	4.92		S
	Grammar		2.23	0.42	7.21		S
Experimental	Interaction	22	2.64	0.58	1.91		S
	Pronunciation		3.36	0.84	4.28		S
	Fluency & Coherence		3.14	0.77	3.64		S
	Vocabulary		3.55	0.85	4.92		S
	Grammar		3.5	0.67	7.21		S



It is inferred from the above table that the calculated t-value (1.91) is less than the table value (2.08) at 5% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their post test scores on speaking ability based on the dimension interaction. It is inferred from the above table that the calculated t-values 1.91, 4.28, 3.64, 4.92 and 7.21 for other dimensions are more than the table value (2.08) at 5% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. It shows that there is significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their post test scores on speaking ability based on the following dimensions:

- Pronunciation
- Fluency & Coherence

- Vocabulary
- Grammar

Findings

Based on the analysis, it is found that there is no significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their *pre test* scores on stage fear. It revealed that the students' performance was equal in pre-test irrespective of whether they belong to control or experimental group. This shows that the two groups of present study are equal in stage fear.

Based on the analysis, it is found that there is significant difference between control and experimental group prospective teachers in their *post-test* scores on stage fear. The mean score of the experimental group in their post test (91.64) is less than the mean scores of the control group in their post test

(110.32). This shows that to eradicate the stage fear just listening in the class will not help. Also, students get bored easily when taught through lecture method. The experimental group students when exposed to various activities show less stage fear. This may be the reason behind the significant difference found in their post test scores on stage fear.

The objective of this research study was to investigate the impact of intervention strategies in improving the speaking ability and reducing the stage fear of prospective teachers. The analysis demonstrates that there is significant increase in the speaking ability and decrease in stage fear of prospective teachers of the experimental group when compared to control group. It is found that following are the main sources of fear hindering students speaking ability:

- Limited vocabulary
- Inaccurate grammar
- Lack of fluency
- Imperfect pronunciation
- Lack of active listening
- Fear of speaking in public
- Fear of expressing certain views
- Diminishing confidence
- Dominance of hesitation
- Lack of group skills
- Fear of making mistakes

- Lack of exposure and practicing platforms

Discussion

The intervention strategies were designed in such a manner that it took care of all the above mentioned barriers. Thus it helped the students of experimental group to overcome these barriers and speak well. The results indicate that when students are exposed to well-designed intervention strategies their performance can improve. It should include a variety of activities that enable the students even the shy learners to come out of their comfort zone. All speaking activities can be made interesting only by making the students involve in it. Thereby through these activities they gain firsthand experience of using the language. Also unknowingly they start to use the language without fear. By making students involve in such activities constantly make them feel comfortable with the language.

Teachers should realize that language learning, and particularly oral production, is a potentially stressful situation for some students. Teachers are to assume the role of researcher in their own classrooms. Apart from academic achievement, language teachers have a great role in promoting the students' second language speaking skills. It is important to nurture the child's speaking ability right from the early stage. Hence, the language teachers must take this in consideration and must provide their students a platform to converse in the target language and must ensure regular exposure to speaking in the language.

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A4, Font size: Times New Roman 12, Double Spaced, Margin of 1 inch on all four sides.

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Abstract in about 150 words

Full paper should not be in more than 2000 words.

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Developing Academic Reading Skills among UG Students in Mumbai University



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ABSTRACT

Reading proficiency in an L2 does not develop as easily as it does in our first language (L1). Reading skills and reading strategies are different. The former are more automatic and applied to the text unconsciously, while the latter are used purposely to achieve a particular reading goal. Therefore, less skilled readers can and should be taught how to use more effective reading strategies.

Reading as part of academic study is a very active process. The age of technology growth is likely to make greater demands on people's reading abilities. Reading in second language (L2) settings continues to take on increasing importance. The overwhelming majority of societies and countries around the world are multilingual, and educated citizens are expected to function well in more than one language. L2 reading ability, particularly with English as the L2, is already in great demand as English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as the language of science, technology and advanced research. Many people in multilingual settings need to read in an L2 at reasonably high levels of proficiency to achieve personal, occupational and professional goals.

Reading proficiency in an L2 does not develop as easily as it does in our first language (L1). Actually, the development of L1 reading also takes a considerable amount of time. L2 students seldom devote much time to develop strong reading abilities. People often conceive of reading as a matter of passively transferring information from the page into reader's head, what actually occurs is much more complicated. The reader has his/her own expectations, prejudices and previous knowledge, and these shape their understanding of the literature they read.

Literature review

In the past three decades or so, L2 reading research has focused on the question of how reading strategy can be taught to help L2 learners read more effectively and with greater comprehension. One important conclusion that can be drawn from this huge body of research is that strategy instruction

can indeed improve comprehension. However, closer inspection of these studies seems to indicate a more complex picture: (i) not all strategies are equally effective (i.e., some are more effective than others), (ii) not all students benefit from strategy instruction. (iii) little is known about how strategies work, (iv) more importantly, the effect of strategy instruction may not be as

large as many believe it is. In the absence of a strong research evidence for teaching reading strategies, it appears that we would need to exercise caution when implementing it in a reading programme. Brief instruction on those strategies (e.g., monitoring strategy) that have consistently shown positive effects on reading comprehension seems sensible, but organizing a whole reading problem for lower proficiency learners around the notion of strategies may not be particularly productive. With lower proficiency L2 learners, it seems sensible to focus more on developing their reading fluency, increasing the breadth and depth of their vocabulary and developing a rich base of background knowledge, all of which can be effectively acquired through rich and wide exposure to the target language.

Below is a brief summary of research into reading strategy instruction:

a. Strategy instruction can improve students' comprehension. In general, research has shown that students can benefit from reading strategy instruction. Teaching students to make predictions before reading, ask questions during reading, and summarize key points during and after reading and monitor their comprehension, for example, has been shown to increase students' comprehension of the text (Cotterall, 1990; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Pg, 2010).

b. While strategy instruction can be useful, there is no strong evidence that all reading strategies are equally effective in helping students read with better comprehension.

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Dillingham (2006/7) did a review on reading strategy instruction and concluded that only a handful of reading strategies consistently produced positive results.

c. The impact of strategy instruction varies widely. In a small number of studies, the effect size of the strategy instruction is substantial (Palincsar & Brown, 1984), but in others (e.g., Dabarera, Renandya & Zhang, 2014), the effect size is quite negligible, that is, the improvement that students made following strategy instruction is not that educationally meaningful.

d. Research shows that good readers differ from poor readers in terms of the number of strategies they have and, more importantly, in terms of how effective they use these strategies in reading. The general conclusion is that compared to poor readers, good readers have a larger number of strategies and can use them singly or in combination more effectively to enhance their reading experience and improve their comprehension.

e. Not all students can benefit from strategy instruction. There are two things to note here. First, some students may already be using certain strategies in their reading quite efficiently, so teaching them strategies that they are already familiar with may not be useful or may in fact confuse them. Secondly, for L2 learners whose proficiency in the language is still at the lower end of the scale, strategy instruction may not be effective.

f. As pointed out by Willingham (2006/7),

brief instruction on reading strategies can be as effective as that which requires more extended instruction and practice. He further pointed out that comprehension strategy is ‘... easy to learn and use, and the only difficulty is to consistently remember to apply it” (p. 44).

Rationale for the study

In our life we need to acquire knowledge for various academic and non-academic purposes and reading plays a major role in the process of knowledge acquisition. Secondly, reading is a skill that gives the second language learner exposure to elements like vocabulary, grammar and text structure and enables the learners to develop the other language skills like speaking, writing. ‘Learning to read’ and language proficiency are interrelated as one’s language proficiency develops when one learns to read and basic language proficiency is a pre requisite to learning to read. Reading is a basic literacy skill and promotes language proficiency.

Learning how to read a second language is one of the most challenging aspects of second language learning as reading is a complex process. This study is, therefore, based on the following assumptions: teaching of reading involves the teaching of sub-skills/strategies and their effective use, and awareness and use of strategies can be enhanced through sustained training and concerted practice.

Research Problem

It is generally observed that students, who

have insufficient exposure to academic reading in English at the school level, face difficulty in reading academic texts at the undergraduate level due to the specific nature of the discourse, the density of information and technical vocabulary present in the texts. The fact is, at this level, students are expected to read extensively not only the prescribed materials but also reference books related to their specific field of study. This takes a great demand on their self-study skills and strategies. However, the students at this level seem to be under prepared for advanced level reading and experience difficulty in this area.

The data obtained from the questionnaire and structured interviews administered in Smt MMK College suggest that students are not familiar with the process of reading and do not seem to use varied strategies to read the texts differently for different purposes. Their inadequate reading skills seem to hinder their academic progress and impact academic performance because assessment is largely carried out through exams, presentations, records, observations, seminars and projects. The study, therefore, focuses on problems related to reading for academic purposes.

Aim

The objective of the present study is to enable students pursuing undergraduate study to develop adequate academic reading skills in English through strategy training.

Assumptions

Based on the data obtained from the

structured interviews and questionnaire the following assumptions are made:

- a) Students are under prepared for the intensive reading they need to do at the undergraduate level.
- b) Reading as a language skill does not receive due importance in most of the schools and colleges.
- c) Many teachers seem to be unfamiliar with the notion of strategy training for developing reading skills.
- d) Undergraduate curriculum does not have any course for developing the learner's academic reading skills.

Hypothesis

The present research is based on the hypothesis that a specially designed course aimed at developing academic reading skills through strategy training will improve academic reading skills.

Research questions

- a) What are the problems that learners face in reading?
- b) What strategies do they follow in reading, if any?
- c) Does strategy training help learners develop academic reading skill?
- d) How can the learner be trained to use strategies to develop and enhance their reading skills?

Research procedure

The following steps were undertaken for the

study -

- a) Questionnaire was administered to understand reading habits and reading strategies they are familiar with. The faculty was interviewed to elicit their views on the importance of reading and problems students face due to inadequate reading skills.
- b) The target group was administered a pre-test to assess reading proficiency in L2.
- c) Intervention by the researcher- the selected students were offered an intervention course focusing on developing reading proficiency in L2 through a wide variety of texts and tasks that were specifically designed for strategy training.
- d) Findings of the study were analyzed.

Reading Skills and Reading Strategies

Reading skills and reading strategies are different. The former are more automatic and applied to the text unconsciously, while the latter are used purposely to achieve a particular reading goal. Therefore less skilled readers can and should be taught how to use more effective reading strategies.

According to Papalia (1987) more fluent readers use the following main strategies:

1. read things of interest
2. have knowledge about the topic
3. predict meaning
4. draw inferences from the title

5. skip words they do not know
6. guess the meaning of unknown words from the context
7. reread to check for comprehension
8. ask someone what a word means ² (Teaching Reading to English Language Learners –Thomas S.C. Farrell ,Corwin Press, US ,2009 pg 34)

Research suggests that reading strategies can and should be explicitly taught to ELLs and that when strategies are taught, students' performance on comprehension tests improves, and they are better able to recall the contents of a text. Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991,p .609) have suggested six good reasons why we should teach reading strategies:

1. Strategies allow readers to elaborate upon, organize, and evaluate information derived from a text.
2. The acquisition of reading strategies coincides and overlaps with the development of multiple cognitive strategies to enhance attention, memory, communication, and learning.
3. Strategies and personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly.
4. Strategic reading reflects metacognition and motivation, because readers need to have both the knowledge and disposition to use strategies.
5. Strategies that foster reading and thinking can be taught directly by teachers.

6. Strategic reading can enhance learning throughout the curriculum.

Problems

Some of the problems associated with English Language Learners struggling to read can be attributed to particular methods of reading instruction that either test rather than teach reading or that do not take into account the differences between learning to read in a first and a second /subsequent language. For example ,when a reading teacher asks his or her students to read a passage and answer the comprehensive questions that follow or to write a summary ,or to explain the meaning of individual words and then to write the words in a sentence, all these are testing and not really teaching reading. Testing reading has a place in the curriculum but only after we teach our students how to read. We must also recognize that students learning to read in their first language have more knowledge of grammar and vocabulary than ELLs learning to read in a second/subsequent language. Furthermore, ELLs also have varying levels of English language proficiency that have an impact on reading comprehension.

Sample

The sample was selected using the technique called 'cluster sampling' to ensure that the sample has all the qualities of the population and in addition, some qualities relevant to the study.

15 students of first-year BCom were selected by administering a pre-test (to 40 students

from whom the target group is selected) to assess their reading proficiency in L2. The study focused on undergraduate level students as at this level they are exposed to read extensively for exam, assignment, project, presentation, seminar, records observation and other academic work. Moreover, studies in the area of strategy training and instruction are generally relevant and meaningful when they are carried out with adults, as they are cognitively mature to reflect on the process of reading and strategy use. Also, at this level, students need a set of well developed strategies and study skills to cope with academic reading, which unfortunately, are not taught explicitly. Thus, undergraduate students having basic to intermediate proficiency in English were selected for the study.

Here is a brief account of the methodology used for the study

- a) The target group was administered a diagnostic test to assess their reading proficiency in L2 and then a set of students who have basic to intermediate level of proficiency in L2 were selected from the target group.
- b) An intervention study focusing on helping students develop their reading skills with the help of strategy training through a wide variety of texts and tasks were designed and offered. The findings of the study were analyzed.

Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis

were used because the study deals with quantifiable features such as performance of the group in pre/post-tests, language proficiency of the learners, as well as non-quantifiable features such as reading habits, strategy use and transfer.

1. When there are unfamiliar words in the text, the students generally try to guess the meaning.
2. They read the entire text quickly and skip some part.
3. They read in English and summarize in Marathi/English.
4. They underline main points while reading the text.
5. They read the entire text once to get the gist of the text and then read paragraph by paragraph for deeper meaning.
6. They find illustrations /pictures/ flowcharts/diagrams helpful while reading in English.
7. They reread the text several times going back and forth to understand the text better.
8. They draw inferences from the text with the help of clues provided by the writer.
9. They have improved their reading skills, speed, and level of comprehension.
10. They feel confident about reading in English after training was given to them.

Conclusion

Strategy should not be chosen by the

teacher. More learner-centered, learner-directed strategy training program where there is personal involvement of the reader should be designed and used in the classroom. Learners should be given motivation support in the form of material, awareness raising discussion, more practice in using strategies to help improve reading skills. From this the researcher could understand the individual differences and preferences related to strategy use and reading styles. This in turn was helpful in training and motivating the students according to their individual needs,

strengths and limitations.

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READERS WRITE

Dear Sir

Only this evening went through the Journal of Nov-Dec issue. Quite a good one. Thanks for all articles with Editorial. Articles like 'English as Lingua Franca: A Brief Review', 'The Official Status of English in India', 'Being Creative in the Teaching of English', '2B or not 2B', and all other ideas will help us a lot in our classroom teaching. Thanks again for such a nice issue.

Dhanesh Ram Sinha, Rajnandgaon Chapter, Chhattisgarh

4 February 2016

The Role of Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) in Enhancing Problem-Solving Skills

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ABSTRACT

Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) plays a very important role in the teaching learning process. It is one of the approaches that enhance the learners' problem-solving skills. It serves as a practice ground especially for learners who are introverts since they are given the opportunity to communicate and interact with their peers. CLL also plays a pivotal role in professional courses today. Hence, this paper will attempt to look at how CLL benefit learners pursuing their professional studies.

Introduction

With the emergence of ESP in the 1960's, the approach to teaching English changed drastically. There has been a paradigm shift from a teacher-centred to learner-centred classroom. Professional courses came under the purview of ESP and hence, it was felt that these courses should have a separate English curriculum tailored according to the requirements of the course. For example, a separate English curriculum was developed for each of these professional courses such as English for nurses, English for doctors, English for engineers, English for social work, English for management studies and so on.

According to Munby (1978), the most important reason for emergence of ESP is the spread of higher and further education, especially in terms of English for Science and Technology (EST). Here, the required knowledge is available mostly in English.

Another reason for the growing demand of ESP is the 'obvious attraction to the client or learner' (p.3) since he is able to do his job or studies in a better and more specific manner rather than courses in General English or general literary English.

Due to the above factors, ESP gained momentum and a number of strategies emerged to make English learning more effective. Based on the needs analysis, experts developed strategies to enable learners to communicate effectively in the English language and one of the strategies developed was learning the language collaboratively with peers as well as teachers (Jianchang, 2011). This strategy proved to be effective and hence, teachers started adopting this strategy in the ESP classroom especially to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. Since then Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) became a popular strategy in the teaching-learning process.

Definition

To begin with, there is no specific definition of Collaborative Language Learning. However, researchers are attempting to define this concept from different points of view. According to the Oxford dictionary (2001), collaborative means to work jointly or to come together. Hence, Pastor & Perry (2010) defines Collaborative learning as “a teaching approach which enhances maturity, experience and social communication in an academic environment while discouraging passivity, repetition and individuality”. As defined by Reagan, Fox and Bleich (1994), collaboration is an underlying social orientation in which the participants share a general sense of purpose and orientation, and a discernible set of roles. Under this definition, adult learners become a community of people who bring in their own experiences to the classroom and interact on things that really matter. McInnerney & Robert (2004) defines collaborative learning as “a method that implies working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while respecting each individual’s contribution to the whole.”

Hence, in collaborative language learning, students are given the freedom to develop their own learning strategies and select their own objectives according to their interest. In addition, they are responsible for what they learn and how they gain knowledge of a topic. Therefore, collaboration can be broadly understood as “...the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem together” (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995:70).

An interest in the potentials and contribution of CLL encouraged me to find out its application and results in a group of students. Hence, a study was undertaken on twenty undergraduate students pursuing Social Work Studies and Management Studies.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- To enable learners to think independently and then collaborate with others to solve problems using problem solving task and activities
- To enable learners to develop critical thinking skills for solving a problem
- To enable learners to become more engaged in the learning process by sharing ideas in pairs/groups
- To promote healthy competition among learners
- To build learners’ confidence level

Research Design for the Study

The participants for the study were twenty learners pursuing their studies in the field of Social Work and Management studies. These two courses were selected since learners in the said field will require problem-solving skills in their day-to-day profession. They will have to apply the technical skills that they have learned in order to solve a problem.

The methodology for this study was an experimental study whereby learners were

divided in two groups – Control Group and Experiment Group.

The tool for this study was a Pre-test and a Post-test. These tests were administered to both the Control and Experiment groups.

Control Group:

Pre-Test: For the pre-test, the researcher took common topics related to the students' field of study. The topics were first discussed with the teachers in charge of the departments.

To conduct the pre-test, the researcher lectured an entire week on the topics chosen. This did not involve any intervention such as activities or group work. Learners were required to pay attention to the content/information given to them through the lectures.

At the end of week 1, learners were given an individual test based on the information given. The content for the test were Case Studies which required learners to apply the skills that they have learnt in order to solve the problems.

Post-Test: In order to authenticate the findings that Collaborative Language Learning has an impact on learning as a whole, the researcher administered a group test to the Control Group as well. The researcher divided the learners into two groups.

The researcher incorporated the collaborative methods by assigning tasks to each group. Using the same common topics, learners were asked to work in groups. The

activity given to the groups was each group had to write a story related to the topics which have been discussed. They were given time to think and discuss. At the end of the class, each group came up with interesting and creative stories. The groups could also apply the technical skills that they have learned. At the end of week 2, the Post-test was administered. For the Post-test, case studies similar to the individual test were given to the learners.

Experiment Group:

Pre-Test: For the Experiment Group, the same procedure was followed whereby no intervention was made in the first week. An individual test was administered at the end of week 1.

Post-Test: For the Post-test, learners were divided into two groups. The intervention was done after division of groups and Collaborative Language Learning was incorporated in the classroom. After a week, a group test was administered.

Findings of the Study

From the analysis of the data collected, one can conclude that Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) does have an impact on the way students learn in the classroom. When students were given individual work, they found it difficult to come up with a solution since they could not discuss with their peers. From the quantitative perspective, it has been proved that students learn better collaboratively. However, it is also important to interpret the qualitative aspect as well.

In order to find out the reasons for the above analysis, the researcher made a few observations in week 1, before the individual test was administered. Since the lecture method was adopted in this particular week, the students looked tired and bored. Some of them were restless and wanted to lie down on their benches, while some were stretching and yawning signaling to the teacher that they were bored. Some let out sighs and even told the teacher that they were tired.

However, in week 2, when the students were divided into groups and given tasks, it was observed that they were motivated and actively involved. The discussions flowed and students could come up with interesting and relevant answers. To support the observations, the researcher informally interviewed the students after both the tests had been administered. The responses from the students revealed the positive impact of collaborative learning.

When the students were asked as to how they felt during the lectures, their responses were in-line with the observations that the researcher made. They were 'bored', 'tired' and 'not interesting'. However, when asked about group work, they were very passionate with the responses and specifically told the researcher that they 'like to learn from one another', 'like to share ideas' and 'does not feel scared to share ideas because they are among friends'. These responses given by the students prove that Collaborative Language Learning does contribute positively to learning. It builds the confidence level of learners since they are

working together and feelings such as insecurity and failure is reduced to a great extent.

In addition, the respective teachers of the departments were impressed when they were shown the group test responses. They did not expect that these students who are 'slow learners' would outdo themselves while working in groups.

According to the group test papers, these students had the ability to use their technical skills and could apply them to the case studies in order to solve the problems.

From the above, the researcher can also mention that grouping plays a significant role in Collaborative Language Learning. Grouping should not be done according to skills, abilities and interest but heterogeneous grouping of learners will spark interest in the learners irrespective of whether a learner is considered 'bright' or 'weak'. The advantage of heterogeneous grouping is that the 'weaker' ones will learn from the 'brighter' ones since they will have to participate in the discussions (Tinzmann, 1990).

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that Collaborative Language Learning plays an important role in the teaching learning process. Apart from helping learners solve problems, it also builds the confidence of learners and helps them become critical thinkers.

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Integrated English Learning - An Epiphany Beyond Reality



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ABSTRACT

Learning is an evolving process. It has its foundations in learners' aptitude, interest and availability of resources. There is history of evolution of tools which have enriched the process of learning at different intervals of time from the printing press to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In the present scenario provision of ICT needs to be supplemented with faith in learners' attitude. The undertones should surface now and proclaim that teaching learning cannot be isolated from ICT for the simple reason of making them participatory and inclusive.

Introduction

Epiphany is described as sudden realisation of something of utmost significance. Generally, the term is used to describe scientific breakthrough, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realisation allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. The realisation that ICT can alleviate problems of literacy and lead to expansion of knowledge is intense. There is necessity not to count the numbers of computers and tabulate data about ICT related provisions in educational institutions. In order to actualise it, we need to move out of the euphoria of epiphany that is limited just to the presence of ICT in our surroundings.

Theories of learning are evolving with new insights on how we learn and subsequently what we should learn. From the historical perspective the printing press almost revolutionised the way learning was understood. There was lot of printing material available to the learners according to their needs. Textbooks and supplementary materials are part of this process. However, in-depth study would reveal that up to a major part of this century the trend percolated through education has been to create homogeneity in spite of variety of print resources available to the learners. This could probably be the result of industrialisation which has divided the system of production and distribution into segments, believing this would increase the efficiency. This compartmentalisation has

increased the production and productivity but it has done major harm by decreasing the limits of thinking/ cognition to specific compartments. Similar effects can be seen in the area of education. There is isolation of schools from social and cultural settings. Learning is fenced off from the wider and rich experience of the learner in social and cultural reality.

Behaviourist school of learning laid emphasis on symmetrical patterns of learning which can be achieved through a pedagogy which emphasised on learning through imitation, drill and practice. Language laboratory originated from this understanding. Speech and communication became important in language learning. English accent was the priority. All said and done this approach and language laboratory as its ancillary failed to address the issue of creativity in learning language. This aspect was brought to light by liberal linguists who believed that we acquire language outside the school or classroom.

There is evidence that children have a repertoire of language which they have not learnt in schools. This idea broadened our understanding of how languages are learnt. With this emerged the liberal views of giving autonomy to learners and teacher should occupy the role of the facilitator. The critical reflection on the part of the learners is promoted. The tool that came into the hands of learners this time was ICT. There is huge investment in ICT sector globally. Schools have been provided with computer labs with access to internet. Special training programmes are organised for teachers to

make them ICT empowered. In the context of ICT, learners too have ordinary mobile phones and smart phones which can be put to use for learning language.

ICT for Creating Autonomous Learning Environment

We can define ICT in simple words as a set of diverse tools and resources which can be used for the purposes of communication, creating, disseminating, storing and managing multiple sources of information. ICT is an integration of technology as computers, internet, and broadcasting technologies like radio, television and telephone.

The most significant advantage of integrating ICT in teaching learning of English is that it gives freedom and autonomy to the learners to navigate their learning outside the classrooms and without the handholding of their teachers. This has also resulted in a parallel growth of language which is computer enabled and is popular among learners. Learning to use computers provides a strong intrinsic motivation for learning English.

However advent of ICT has innocuously been linked with English. Understanding of English is also an important enabling factor to explore and broaden the horizon of learning. In fact, ICT creates a new and attractive environment. It makes language learning settings more socially interactive. Learners who prefer to remain silent in classrooms become interactive by sharing their resources with peers, teachers and friends. This mutual give and take develops

among learners a purpose of learning which is lost most of the time in face to face classrooms in terms of teacher's authoritative presence and instructions. ICT supported classrooms can successfully break the silence resulting in disinterest of learners. In the Indian context learners in senior classes attach prestige to learning English. The failures are difficult to cope with. Computers and other tools of ICT are medium of overcoming this individual shortcoming of being not proficient in English. Teachers can guide them on the issues by referring to authentic websites, online articles, interviews and news items to read. Academically speaking, learners, if purposefully guided by teachers, can learn to focus on developing skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They begin to develop for themselves the skill of comprehension once they get exposure to a variety of resources and sense to choose relevant materials for global understanding of issues and concerns.

There has been concern about maintaining standards of English which do not match with existing Indian standards. Use of internet can give exposure to English in an international context. One can access pronunciation, translation, materials on theme, audios, videos and online books. Tools for editing language can improve grammar and punctuation of the writer. Online dictionaries build vocabulary for different situations.

Other tools of ICT like smart phones also provide these facilities. Learners overcome intimidation of English reading and writing

once they have access to ICT. Web 2.0 has created space for the learners to have their blogs and other social networking spaces. These are interactive platforms where learners can exchange their views and consolidate their ideas as well.

Radio and television are also contributing in providing informative platforms to learners. English teaching programmes broadcast by the All India Radio are based on the material prepared by the CIFEL, Hyderabad, and other ELT institutes in India.

Integrating Technology in Language Learning —An Overview

ICT has been a fascinating phenomenon so far. Users have been enamoured as well as facilitated in carrying out their tasks with the tools of ICT though there is obvious lack of skills in understanding and making use of it. The availability of computers is made easier in schools and public places. This has raised the percentage of people who recognises computers as machines of information. The technology boon has also provided access to mobile phones to a very large population who have never been to schools. ICT literacy is progressing irrespective of age, class, caste, religion etc. There is another interesting fact which is emerging about the upscale trend of users of English. People in the remotest areas are becoming familiar with English through television, mobile phones and computers. This is an evidence of the fact that how languages develop faster and meaningfully in social contexts through ICT.

The point that must be highlighted here is to ascertain the reach of ICT in schools and for academic purpose of English language teaching and learning. The well set computer labs in schools may satisfy us in terms of availability of computers and ICT in schools. But another issue which appears to be more urgent is to how these can be made accessible to the learners. The most feasible way is to develop partnership among learners and the teacher in developing ICT skills. Technology is a recent development in this country so teachers and learners could be first time users. Teacher and learners should work together to explore the reaches of ICT.

Partnership is important for number of other reasons:

- A number of appropriate resources can be explored if the teacher and learners are interactive through ICT.
- A space can be created for relevant thoughts and ideas.
- Transparency and accountability can be determined.
- Online tasks are more readable in terms of handwriting, use of punctuation marks and grammatical correctness.
- There is exchange of ideas in a larger group and in the presence of the teacher which further determines the seriousness of task and responsibility of each member of the group to contribute.
- The online tasks have great potential of promoting democratic values among

learners. A patient reader always reflects before he/ she responds. Learners become sensitive to social demeanour which requires tolerance to the ideas of others who they think appear to be different.

- The use of technology is a great social equaliser in terms of overcoming cultural, language, physical, gender and other differences. It broadens our perceptions of this universe and our purpose of being. The exposure to world literature through ICT relieves them of prejudices.
- Power point presentation is a good medium of summarising our thoughts.
- Learners can make use of Microsoft word for their writing tasks which they can save to keep a record.
- Authentic materials can be identified from the website and can be shared with learners on LCD projectors.
- Assignments can be discussed through email which would save time and these can be read as many times as one wants for understanding.

The availability of technology and tools of ICT is there for a long time. However, there is hesitation in extending a friendly hand. Let us be realistic and know that it also means not utilising a huge sum of money that is being spent on developing infrastructure for ICT by the state. The non usage is also a hurdle in expanding the network of ICT. When computer labs are not being used there is no demand for better

and more accessible facilities like Internet, computer teachers, trainers etc. The records should not account for number of computers in the school but also for number of users per day. Otherwise the computer labs will have the same fate as of school libraries and science laboratories.

Creating ICT Environment in School - A Look Within

Teacher Preparation

One important issue is that teachers in the present system are not provided with pedagogical training in the use of ICT rather a simple training on the use of computers is provided which does not serve the purpose of integrating ICT with teaching learning processes. School administrators can look into the avenues which would motivate and empower teachers for making use of ICT.

- Training modules in short content specific courses can be developed.
- Short term computer courses can be designed for the teachers which can be handled independently by them in school computer rooms at their convenience.
- Technical assistance should be available to them.
- Infrastructure for ICT use should be ensured, it includes broadband accessibility as well.
- Massive On line Courses (MOOCS) is another option which provides inputs to teachers based on their needs.
- School administrators can create

computer enabled environment where teachers are encouraged to correspond, and communicate through emails and other means of social media.

The prime concern is familiarising teachers with technology and making it accessible to them. Hands on experiences can give them the confidence of handling it.

Teachers and learners can be introspective and ask themselves following basic questions;

- Are there adequate infrastructure facilities in school to support ICT integrated learning?
- How often are these facilities used?
- Do I possess sufficient skills to carry ICT integrated activities?
- What obstacles do I face while using technology?
- Is the school administration supportive of our endeavours?

Learners of this century have great attraction for technology and desire to master it. Schools can work meaningfully to give them time and space to use computers and mobile phones. There should be guidance and checks to ensure proper utilisation of technology.

It is observed that computer programmes initiated by schools have not been successful for one important reason that there is no integration of technology in their class room learning. The programmes focus on knowing about computers which is

another specialised area and that should be taken up later on. What is more important is the functional aspect of the computer which facilitates the process of learning. This can be experimented in the case of English; using computers and other tools of ICT improves all skills of English language-LSRW.

Teachers have to fight the fear that it will replace the traditional ways of teaching learning like printed textbooks and notebooks etc; ICT is a tool which accessorises knowledge, information, and ensures precision, fluency and accuracy in language learning and related tasks. It has also widened the parameters of assessment. The ICT tools can enable teachers to conduct online tests and assignments even beyond the textbook; this will also save time and allow learners to complete the tasks at their convenience. Teachers can maintain the record of formative assessment on computers. In terms of the boundaries of knowledge and information so far as English language and literature is concerned its reach is infinite as compared to textbooks and classroom teaching. The basic idea is to integrate textbook with ICT as a tool for building new understandings.

A word of Caution...

It would be appropriate here to mention a

word of caution too. It is important to follow the ethics of using materials which are available on the Internet. There are norms which must be followed for copyright materials. The permission from the writer should be sought to use materials for mass use or for publications. Similarly, for the social media the users should be careful in expressing their opinions.

There is huge storehouse of materials available on English language learning. Teachers and learners should select it judiciously and with an understanding of what is needed and appropriate. If we are really serious about realising the vision of education which rests on bridging the chasm of disparity, inequality and replacing them with voices of justice, and celebrating diversity, then we need to take a step towards empowering school curriculum of English language learning with ICT.

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READING ACTIVITY

Parallel Reading (Advanced Level)

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- Objective** : To create parallel texts to what one reads as to develop an ability to read creatively
- Participation** : Individual
- Material** : Any biographical or autobiographical text (A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s *My Journey, Wings of Fire, etc.*)
- Preparation** : Attempting consciously to draw parallels to one’s own experiences while reading a text
- Procedure** : While reading, especially biographical and autobiographical texts, apart from comprehending them, one should aim at generating parallel texts based on one’s life.

<p>An example: Kalam in his book, <i>My Journey</i>, writes the following: We lived in our ancestral home, a fairly large house made of limestone and brick, built some time in the nineteenth century. It was never luxurious, but was filled with love. My father had a boat-building business. Additionally, we also owned a small coconut grove some four miles away from our house. That was where my father would be headed for the early morning hours (p. 3).</p>	<p>When I went through this part of the book these are the thoughts that went through my mind: (a reader)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My thoughts automatically went to my father and the old house built by him. • ‘Filled with love’ brought the visuals of joyful families bound by love. • My mind also took me to the boat-building yards I have visited. • Then I experienced the pleasantness of the coconut grove. • ‘Early morning hours’ brought to my mind a host of people walking in the early morning on the beach and there was also a flash of the tsunami that swallowed the morning walkerson the Marina Beach.
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During my childhood, my father was mostly away in the neighbouring state running his construction business. He would normally come home at night and my siblings and I would have the pleasant surprise of seeing him when we woke up in the morning. We would be overwhelmed with gifts of playthings, clothes and delicacies. However, he used to spend very little time with us as we would be busy with our school work and hobbies while he would be busy with his visitors and his affairs. However, I have a very memorable experience of my father teaching us how to swim in one of the ponds in the village. We would rest on his palm to float in the water splashing our hands and legs and move in circles.

- After reading/even while reading one should record the created texts as they would become elusive after a while. These captured texts can be fine-tuned, if required any number of times, till they become highly readable.
- The created texts are to be reviewed by others and, in the light of the feedback, they have to be refined by adding, deleting, altering and/or restructuring to make them interesting.

Learning outcomes:

1. Learners understand that mere mechanical reading of a text wouldn’t make them enriched readers since it has to be personalized.
2. Learners realize that they could also create texts similar to the ones they read, which would subsequently lead them to become creative writers.

Further activity:

Any text that has certain similarity to one’s personal life should be utilized to read creatively.

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