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## JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

(A peer-reviewed and UGC approved Journal)

Reducing Monitor Overuse through Implicit Grammar Teaching – Is Murphy's *English Grammar In Use* out of Date?  
– What are the Characteristics of a Good ELT Research Paper?  
– Teaching outside the Teaching Machine: Analyzing and Adopting Geoffrey Kendal's Approach towards English Plays  
– An Exploratory Study of Language Learning Strategy Use – Speak Your Thought Out (SYTO): A Project – Creating a User-Generated Learning Environment through Flipping Classroom: An Experiential Pedagogy

# Journal of English Language Teaching

Recommended by the Director of School Education ( Proceedings D Dis No. 76301/76 dt 21 March 1979)  
and the Director of Collegiate Education ( RC No. 11059 / J3 / 2000 dt 28 February 2000 )

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

## Periodicity

Journal of English Language Teaching (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 2000-2500 words for theoretical articles and for others about 500 words.

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

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

Articles should be sent only as an email attachment – **AS A WORD DOCUMENT** to [eltai\\_india@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eltai_india@yahoo.co.in)

CDs and hard copies will not be accepted.

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

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

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

## Objectives of the Association

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

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

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

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## Dear Reader

The 13<sup>th</sup> international and 49<sup>th</sup> annual ELTAI conference is to be held at Bilaspur, Chattisgarh from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 01<sup>st</sup> July 2018. The theme of the conference is 'NextGen Learners: New Demands, New Responses'. It is an invitation to all ELT professionals in the subcontinent to think creatively and find innovative solutions to the problems they encounter while teaching English to Gen Z learners. It involves carrying out purposeful research in the field and making it known to those in the field of English language teaching.

Writing a good research paper is a tough challenge for most English language teachers and researchers. Editors and reviewers assess the quality of research papers based on many criteria including research questions, originality, relevance, usefulness, evidence, references, and organization. What are the characteristics of a good ELT research paper? Responding positively to my request, Richard Smith, University of Warwick, Stephen Krashen, professor emeritus at the University of Southern California, Sathuvalli Mohanraj, former professor at EFLU, Hyderabad, and Shreesh Chaudhary, former professor at IIT Madras, have presented their views on the topic. I am sure the readers will find the article immensely useful.

Teachers and learners of English in India are quite familiar with the title *English Grammar in Use* by Raymond Murphy. It is the most successful English grammar book ever produced and over 15 million copies of it have been sold ever since it was published. How good is the grammar book? In the article "Is Murphy's *English Grammar in Use* out of date?" David Murphy states that his "main objection to the book is that Murphy's analysis and the structure he gives to English Grammar comes out of an outdated model and that, through his popularity and influence, he helps to sustain it".

In the article titled "Reducing Monitor Overuse through Implicit Grammar Teaching", Leena and Lal discuss the importance of the communicative approach to grammar teaching and conclude that communicative approach offers a solution to monitor overuse.

Bhattacharya and Dubey discuss how training in theatre can be used as a tool for teaching English effectively in their paper "Teaching outside the Teaching Machine: Analyzing and Adopting Geoffrey Kendal's Approach towards English Plays". The authors present a case study of how they used the approach developed by Geoffrey Kendal to help learners learn the target language.

In her article "An Exploratory Study of Language Learning Strategy Use", Dishari Chattaraj presents the study she conducted with 30 undergraduates Foreign Language multilingual students at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and concludes that language learning strategies varied for ESL and FL.

Zulaiha Shakeel presents the report of the project 'Speak Your Thought Out' carried out by the department of English of TBAK College, Kilakarai, to help students develop their communicative competence.

In the article "Creating a user-generated learning environment through Flipping Classroom: An Experiential Pedagogy" Pushp Lata reports how the technique of flipping the classroom can contribute to active learning.

Happy reading! Do write to the editor at [JELTIndia@gmail.com](mailto:JELTIndia@gmail.com)

**Dr Albert P'Rayan**

# Reducing Monitor Overuse through Implicit Grammar Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

***The present article is an attempt to place communicative approach of teaching grammar as a solution to monitor overuse that has been identified as a great challenge to the acquisition of communicative competency. Beginning with a diachronic analysis of the place of grammar in ESL syllabus, the paper proceeds through Krashen's linguistic postulates that shook the very foundation of ELT pedagogies with a special emphasis on the monitor hypothesis that endeavored to redefine the place of grammar in an ELT curriculum. How the theory and practice of communicative approach addresses the key issues that Krashen puts forward, forms the core of the present enquiry.***

The place of teaching grammar in an ESL context has always been a matter of debate. It was generally believed that teaching of grammar explicitly would improve the command of the language and hence there evolved a descriptive linguistic pedagogy. The objective behind this explicit mode of teaching grammar was to ensure accuracy in each utterance. The eighteenth century temper of correctness encouraged the teaching of grammar for the purpose of correcting errors. Having originated from the Greek and Latin systems of language teaching, the English Language Teaching tradition had been inclined towards following the grammar translation method till the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its idiosyncratic characteristic of incorporating

a descriptive aspect of grammar in the design of the curriculum has left a considerable influence even upon the present day ELT scenario. It is no wonder that a layman's concept of grammar is still based on the eight parts of speech.

This historic linguistic convention that preferred to view language as a unique relational structure, described syntax in terms of taxonomy of a wide range of constituents each of which belongs to a specific grammatical category and serves specific grammatical functions. C. C. Fries' attempt to analyze the structure of English into four form classes and fifteen groups of functional words which gained much popularity because of its apparent objectivity

and precision can be seen as an attempt to bring about advancement in this tradition. A paradigm shift from words to patterns was witnessed with the publication of A. S. Hornby's *Guide to patterns and Usages in English*. Nelson Brooks also lays stress on this pattern practice:

Analysis is important in its proper sphere, but analogy is used instead through pattern practice to produce a control of language structure without the time and effort required for grammatical explanations.... Since every speaking person has mastered his own language through imitation and analogy without benefit of analysis it stands to reason that something of this ability will aid him in the learning of another language. Pattern practice permits this ability to function. (Brooks, 1960, p. 146-147)

The pedagogy of teaching grammar which marked an evolution from form to function was another reform strengthened by Michael Halliday's functional grammar, which identified three major functions such as ideational or experiential, interpersonal and textual, upon which Frank R Palmer built his epoch making studies.

A diachronic analysis of the place of grammar in ESL pedagogies shows that the need for teaching grammar was neither rejected nor underestimated ever in the history of ELT. But it can be observed that little attempt was made to relate grammar to the development of other language skills that learners must develop in order to use the language in real life

situations. As decades passed, there were claims that a conscious study of the grammatical rules of a language will only slow down or hamper one's ability to master the target language. Jim Scrivener records the change in the very perception of teaching grammar as follows:

Learning rules in a grammar book by heart is probably not 'learning grammar'. Similarly reciting grammar rules by heart may not be 'understanding grammar'. Even doing tests and exercises may not necessarily be 'learning grammar'. There is actually no hard evidence that any of these things lead to people being able to use grammar accurately and fluently in speech. These things are only useful if there is some way that students can transfer this studied knowledge into a living ability to use the language. The information is not in itself of much use. (Scrivener, 2005, p.253)

P. Gurrey also strongly felt that there was an urgent need for a more realistic study of language in schools. For this he claimed it was necessary to make the teaching of grammar such as it would help students,

to express themselves more clearly, more exactly, more vividly and it should train them to understand what they hear and read more accurately more completely and more appreciatively. (Gurrey, 1961)

D. A. Wilkins while proposing his 'notional' syllabus as a modification of the grammatical syllabus says:

It is taken to be axiomatic that the

acquisition of the grammatical system of a language remains the most important element in language learning. The grammar is the means through which creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of the grammar would lead to a serious limitation on the capacity for communication. (Wilkins, 1976, p.66)

It was in contrast to the taxonomic approach of grammar that Noam Chomsky developed his generative grammar. Though it was of little importance in actual classroom transactions, his revolutionary ideas, on both the nature of language and language acquisition brought about a complete change in the role of teaching grammar. The place of grammar in the instruction of ESL is clearly defined by Chomsky by pointing out that it must be recognized that one does not learn the grammatical structure of a second language through “explanation and instruction” beyond the most rudimentary elements, for the simple reason that no one has enough explicit knowledge about this structure to provide explanation and instruction (Chomsky N., 1968).

At certain points, it is observed that the place of grammar in an ESL curriculum remains a riddle to linguists like M.Canale and Merrill Swain:

It seems an appropriate conclusion to draw... that focus of grammatical competence in the classroom is not a sufficient condition for the development of the communicative competence. It would be inappropriate, however, to

conclude ... that the development of grammatical competence is irrelevant or unnecessary for the development of communicative competence. (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.17)

Penny Ur also voices the same concern:

Most people agree that knowledge of a language means, knowing grammar; but this knowledge may be intuitive and it is not necessarily true that grammatical structures need to be taught as such or that formal rules need to be learnt(Ur,2000,p.77)

As the need for reform in the realm of teaching grammar was at its height, Stephen Krashen’s observations and conclusions revolutionized the ELT scenario. The postulates that he put forward evoked a succession of linguistic debates that reallocated the space and expanse of grammar in ESL curriculum. Krashen himself sees it unfair to thrust complex linguistic formulas upon learners who are unable to understand even simpler messages in the Second Language (Krashen, 1982). Following this, it has been observed that too much attention on teaching grammatical rules believing that metalinguistic knowledge can contribute to linguistic competence and thereby enhance communicative performance, may turn out to be a hindrance in the acquisition of the target language. Krashen in his argument for Monitor Theory uses the term ‘grammar’ as a “synonym for conscious learning”. He outlines certain conditions, within which the ‘monitor’ may be used, but claims that

situations where all three conditions are satisfied are very rare, the exception being a grammar test. He concludes “It is therefore difficult to apply conscious learning to performance successfully” (Krashen, 1981,p.3).

A year later, trying to define the “place of grammar” Krashen asserts:

Conscious learning has two possible roles in the second language teaching program. First it can be used with some profit as a monitor... second use for grammar is as subject matter... (sometimes called “linguistics”)... neither role is essential, neither is the central part of the pedagogical program, but both have their functions. (Krashen, 1982, p.89)

When Krashen puts forth his theory of the monitor model, he defined acquisition as a subconscious activity similar to the acquisition of a native language by children in which overt teaching or error correction is not effective. It is quite obvious that monitor starts functioning when the learner focuses on form. Krashen points out that the learner’s attempt to apply the conscious rules to their output during oral conversation can literally affect the flow of speech.

Krashen identifies the ‘wrong’ ways of learning grammar as the crucial cause behind the incompetent monitor use that impedes the internalization of linguistic skills. He never ignores the chances of rules getting misinterpreted and transformed, to be impediment to communicative

competence. He observes:

In effect, both teachers and students are deceiving themselves. They believe that it is the subject matter itself, the study of grammar, that is responsible for the students’ progress in second language acquisition, but in reality their progress is coming from the medium and not the message. Any subject matter that held their interest would do just as well, so far as second language acquisition is concerned, so long as it required extensive use of the target language (Krashen, 1982, p.120).

Krashen prefers to call the “feel for correctness”, a by-product of acquisition. He tries to explain the evolution of the ‘feel for correctness’ by juxtaposing the inductive and deductive approaches of learning.

When the goal is inductive learning, the focus is on form and the learner attempts to analyse formal aspects of the data presented. When the goal is acquisition, the acquirer attempts to understand the message contained in the input. Also, the “rule” developed by the two processes is different. An inductively- learned rule is a conscious mental representation of a linguistic generalisation – an acquired rule is not conscious, but is manifested by a “feel” for correctness. (Krashen, 1982, p.114).

While discussing the feel for correctness, the Error Correction strategy also demands attention. The Second Language Acquisition Theory maintains that error correction is not of use for acquisition. Acquisition

occurs, according to the Input Hypothesis, when acquirers understand input for its meaning, not when they produce output and focus on form (Krashen, 1982).

The 'wrong' pattern of teaching grammar mentioned by Krashen can also be remedied by consciously avoiding the practice of teaching descriptive rules of grammar transacted with a pedantic terminology which has nothing to do with the actual purpose of learning English. Why should a learner be able to distinguish between a demonstrative pronoun and an interrogative pronoun if he does not want to get a Masters in Linguistics?

Memorising grammatical rules just as mathematical formulae are learnt by heart will definitely place the Affective Filter high. Hence the anxiety regarding teaching/ learning grammatical rules as well as their appropriate use in the production of actual utterance is to be ruled out in order to ensure communicative competency.

It is at this juncture that the relevance of a communicative approach of teaching English as a second language is unfolded. Communicative language teaching developed with a recognition and awareness that any kind of language learning involves the learning of the basic structural principles of the target language. But it is of no use if the learner fails to apply them in the production of actual discourse. The theory of the communicative approach laid its emphasis on the centrality of meaning in acts of communication rather than on form, 'use' rather than on 'usage'.

Communicative approach does not advocate that grammatical competence is irrelevant or unnecessary, but that it should not be overly emphasized. In methodology it calls for an increase in communication activities in the classroom involving the learner to interact in the language so that he actually uses it. A new syllabus based on this approach, with its focus on knowing how to carry out very specific tasks in the target language, helps teachers to replace grammar with memorized phrases.

In the communicative approach, real language in real situations is used at the transactional level. The classroom activities that aim at replicating the process of communication allow learners to rehearse the forms of the target language within a communicative framework. The information gap exercises enhance the communicative competence. Norm oriented exercises are replaced with goal oriented and criterion oriented activities. Thus a paradigm shift from grammatical competence to communicative competence is effected in the communicative approach.

Wilkins developed the category of communicative functions and the semantic-grammatical category when he was a part of the Council of Europe to develop a language teaching system based on the communicative language teaching theory. While elaborating his notional syllabus, Wilkins wanted to overcome the limitations of grammatical and situational approaches which were in their experimental stage.

The communicational teaching project put

forward by N.S. Prabhu, based on the premise that form is best learnt when the learners' attention is on meaning, also substantiates this view. He proposes to teach language through communication rather than teaching for communication. He advocates for a communicative pressure. Eric Hawkins' observation is also worth mentioning in this context:

The evidence seems to show beyond doubt that though it is by communicative use in real 'speech acts' that the new language 'sticks' in the learner's mind, insight into pattern is an equal partner with communicative use in what language teachers now see as the dual process of acquisition /learning. Grammar, approached as a voyage of discovery into the patterns of language rather than the learning of prescriptive rules, is no longer a bogey word. (Hawkins, 1984, p.154)

Thus the communicative approach with all its endeavours to bring its focus on meaning rather than on form, contributes to 'acquisition' rather than to conscious 'learning' that hampers actual linguistic production and thereby adversely affecting communicative competence. By providing replicas of real life situations during the transactional level, this approach reduces the chances of anxiety and at the same time enhances communicative pressure which progressively reinforces the learners to come up with the desirable linguistic output. Hence it can be concluded that both in theory and practice, communicative approach offers a solution to monitor

overuse.

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# Is Murphy's English Grammar In Use out of date?

David Piper

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*English Grammar In Use* by Raymond Murphy is the most successful book of English Grammar ever produced. Aimed at intermediate level, it was first published in 1985, is currently in its fourth edition and has sold well over 15 million copies. It has been hugely influential, and has helped generations of students of English as a Foreign Language to improve their language. For English teachers such as myself, it has been a godsend. Many of us, all over the world, have relied on it heavily for years. I continue to recommend it, although with increasing reluctance.

This is because I have a number of specific objections to Murphy which I will discuss below. Nevertheless, my main objection to the book is that Murphy's analysis and the structure he gives to English Grammar comes out of an outdated model and that, through his popularity and influence, he helps to sustain it. Murphy's division of grammar into various categories is arbitrary. Other books of grammar can and do vary the categories, but they usually have the same faults as Murphy without his huge influence.

The result is that English teachers all over the world tend to look at English and English grammar with the model that we are familiar with. And, of course, we pass on that model to our students.

If your car was made in 1985 and you have

looked after it carefully and given it new bodywork three times since you bought it, it might still be a good car. However a car made in 2017 will have technical features that the makers of your car couldn't even have imagined. It might still need petrol and you will still need to drive it on roads. But it will be a lot more comfortable, efficient and easier to drive. And it is much less likely to break down. Isn't it time to change our car?

Now let's look at Murphy's *English Grammar In Use* in more detail.

The format in Murphy is one of its strengths. After a very brief introduction, there is a contents page listing unnumbered section headings. Each section contains some numbered units and all of them, without fail, consist of two pages.

The left-hand page in each unit illustrates and explains a particular grammar point. There might be a simple line drawing as an illustration, or a box in which the rule is shown. There are always a large number of examples of the grammar in use. The vocabulary in the examples are carefully controlled and do not cause difficulty to students, which is one of the great strengths of the book.

On the right-hand side of the page are numbered exercises with gaps for the student to supply the answers. Answers to

the exercises are given in a key at the back of the book.

Murphy makes it clear in his introduction that this is a reference book not a course book and that students should study only the material that they want or need to study.

..... *English Grammar In Use* has always insisted through every

edition that this is a “self-study and practice book”.

Through the different editions, essentially the same structure has been used. The box below indicates the structure used in the second (1994) edition with comments about any changes made in the fourth 2014 edition.

The Contents Structure of Murphy’s *English Grammar In Use* (Second Edition, 1994)

SECTION HEADING	UNITS (as numbered)	CHANGES by Fourth Edition (2014)	TYPE OF GRAMMAR
Present and past	1 – 6	no change	verb tenses
Present perfect and past	7 - 18	no change	verb tenses
Future	19 - 25	no change	problematic
Modals	26 - 36	one extra unit added	type of verb
Conditionals and “wish”	37 - 40	section heading changed to “If and wish” – no other change	clause level
Passive	41 - 45	no change	verb patterns
Reported speech	46 - 47	no change	verb patterns
Questions and auxiliary verbs	48 - 51	no change	verb patterns
-ing and the infinitive	52 - 67	section heading changed to “-ing and to” – no other change	verb patterns
Articles and nouns	68 - 80	no change	two word classes
Pronouns and determiners	81 - 91	no change	two word classes
Relative clauses	91 - 96	no change	clause level?
Adjectives and adverbs	97 - 111	no change	two word classes
Conjunctions and prepositions	112 - 119	no change	two word classes
Prepositions	120 - 136	no essential change (but see below)	the same word class as previous section
Phrasal verbs	137-145 (does not exist in second edition)	in the fourth edition this entire section has been added	not a grammatical category

As can be seen from the above, over a period of nearly 30 years this trusted and successful division of English grammar has hardly been touched. The first edition had essentially the same contents page but was weak in the area of the exercises and examples and the book was rewritten from this perspective. The only substantial change in the structure over the entire 30 year period is the addition of an extra section at the end.

As previously mentioned, there are less successful competitors to Murphy who have may have taken a slightly different approach in their sub-divisions of the categories of grammar. Many of them, however, can be criticized for the same reasons that I criticize Murphy below.

My objections to Murphy can be divided up into the following six inter-connected areas:

1. LOGIC
2. PRIORITY
3. SPOKEN/WRITTEN LANGUAGE
4. CONTEXT
5. WORD LEVEL/CLAUSE LEVEL
6. RULES NOT MEANING

### **1. LOGIC**

By this I mean that there seems to be no real logic to the way Murphy has organized English grammar. He doesn't begin by defining anything or explaining why he has divided up English grammar in the way he has. The first sections are about the basic tenses of the verb but he doesn't explain

what a verb is or if there are different types of verb. He doesn't even mention on the contents page that the first sections are about verbs and he doesn't say anywhere what modal auxiliary verbs are. Some sections focus on word classes such as nouns or adjectives, although, for some reason, Murphy likes to deal with two word classes at the same time. Others sections look at more complex structures which would best be understood at a clause level rather than at a word level.

We teachers are all so familiar with Murphy's divisions and categories that we have failed even to realize how arbitrary and illogical they are. Grammar is supposed to be a logical system of connecting ideas but where is the overview in Murphy? I would suggest that any good book of grammar or website about grammar must begin by stating what structure it proposes to use. What are the parts of speech in English? This is especially important in the case of English grammar because we don't all agree about exactly which categories to use or what to call them.

More specifically, to perpetuate the myth that the future in English can be compared with the present and the past is wrong causes terrible confusion. This continues to be a controversial point and will not be discussed here.

### **2. PRIORITY**

There is absolutely no sense of priority, of what matters, in Murphy. His book contains more than 130 Units but which ones are

REALLY important if you want to be good at English grammar? Surely some things are more important than other things? Or is every single Unit in Murphy just as important as any other? What about if you want to get a high grade in IELTS: which aspects of grammar should you be good at? A student asked me this question more than five years ago and I just can't forget the desperation in her voice. I realized that Murphy has absolutely nothing to offer in reply to this question. But a book of grammar should try to address it. Surely corpus linguistics has by now taught us something about which grammatical structures are most frequently used and in which contexts? Don't we owe it to our students to tell them which structures are most used, based on current knowledge?

### **3. SPOKEN/WRITTEN LANGUAGE**

Probably my strongest objection is that there is no distinction between spoken English and written English in Murphy. We are supposed to think of some unitary thing that exists of itself called "English" but this is a simplistic and out-of-date idea. Actually we use language to communicate in a variety of different ways and even the distinction between written and spoken language is simplistic. What about chatting on Facebook or telephone texting? What about when someone appears on television but they are reading out from a text prompter? Are these things spoken or written English? So even dividing English into two categories is not quite right – but surely there are differences even in grammar between a conversation with friends and an academic text? So what

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are they? If a book of English grammar in use doesn't deal with this, then, with respect, what use is it?

The triumph of what I call "the cocktail method" but which is usually called "the communicative method" made us realize that most people want to learn to SPEAK English rather than write it. One of the attractive things about Murphy is that his examples are mainly taken from spoken language. They are great examples of the kind of things that people actually say (at least in the UK). Although this is never made clear, most examples in Murphy obviously come from spoken language. But not all of them. Some – perhaps as many as 25% of the examples – are more likely to have come from written language.

The annoying thing for me is that this is not even touched upon. There is no reference anywhere in Murphy to the existence of spoken and written English much less that some types of grammar are more characteristic of one or of the other.

### **4. CONTEXT**

A very high percentage of Murphy's examples and exercises (although not all of them) hardly have any information about context. It is probably unfair to criticize Murphy in particular for this and the same can be said of all my other objections. All twentieth century grammar books tend to have the same faults. But we have moved on since then and understand language better today. Any language is used in a context. So to teach English successfully and in ways that students can relate to, a

context must be supplied for examples of usage as frequently as possible.

To not supply context relentlessly example after example causes many people to feel that there is something unreal about the whole thing (which is correct) and they might get discouraged.

### **5. WORD LEVEL/CLAUSE LEVEL**

Even when describing the use of tenses or verb patterns, Murphy focuses on English at the word level – but meaning is expressed using phrases and sentences. Even a topic that apparently focuses on the clause level of meaning – relative clauses – is really just about the use of relative pronouns, which is, presumably, why Murphy places this section immediately after the one on pronouns.

The intention is to simplify down to basic rules that can be studied in isolation. But things in real life are more complicated than this. A grammar for the twenty-first century would supply authentic text (meaning material that was actually used) with an

indicated context and an analysis of how meaning is produced using multiple factors in combination.

### **6. RULES NOT MEANING**

This is similar to the last point. Murphy focuses far too much on rules and not enough on meaning and the choices that a user of English has. This is an inevitable outcome when questions of context and the difference between spoken and written language are ignored.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the coming years Murphy needs to be abandoned, for the reasons given above. However, I doubt that a new bestselling grammar book can replace it. What we probably need is a world-class website that presents a grammar for the twenty-first century in a way that efficiently and painlessly meets the needs of the modern student of English. While many websites are very good, none, to my knowledge, has become the acknowledged leader in the field as Murphy was, and, for the time being, still is.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Another milestone in the history of our Association  
ELTAI E NEWSLETTER  
(A Quarterly)**

**It carries ELTAI updates, News from our chapters as well as *IATEFL*  
*and other ELT Associations worldwide.*  
*You may access it at any time from the*  
*Home page of our website [www.eltai.in](http://www.eltai.in)***

# What are the characteristics of a good ELT research paper?

Writing a good research paper is a tough challenge for most English language teachers and researchers. Editors and reviewers assess the quality of research papers based on many criteria including originality, interest, relevance, usefulness, evidence, and references.

What are the characteristics of a good ELT research paper? Richard Smith, University of Warwick, Stephen Krashen, professor emeritus at the University of Southern California, Mohan Raj, former professor at EFLU, Hyderabad, and Shreesh Chaudhary, former professor at IIT Madras, present their views on the topic.



## Characteristics of a Good ELT Research Paper

Richard Smith

University of Warwick

**Richard Smith** is a Reader in ELT and Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, UK. His professional and research interests range from history of language learning and teaching to ELT research capacity-building and teacher development. In the former area, he is known for his achievements in putting ELT history 'on the map', as founder and curator of the Warwick ELT Archive ([http://www.warwick.ac.uk/elt\\_archive](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/elt_archive)), as the author of ground-breaking articles including 'Building Applied Linguistic Historiography' (*Applied Linguistics* 37/1), editor of a three-volume *History of Language Learning and Teaching* and founder of the AILA Research network on History of Language Learning and Teaching (<http://hollt.net>).

'Research' can be defined as 'original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding' (<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/elt-research-database>). 'ELT research' can be viewed as 'any research whose data and/or findings relate directly to the teaching, learning or assessment of

English as a Foreign, Second or Additional Language' (*ibid.*). 'Good research' can of course be defined according to questions such as the following (from a recent blog post by AchilleasKostoulas):

- Does the literature review point to a gap in the literature?
- Is this gap worth investigating?
- Do the research questions correspond to the gap identified?
- Are the methods / sample appropriate for the questions posed?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the methods used?
- Is it clear how the data were generated using these methods?
- So what? Now what?

However, in this short piece I'd like to reflect primarily on what makes a 'good research

*paper*’, not just on what makes ‘good research’. For this, I think we need to revisit the notions of ‘originality’ and ‘relevance’ in the above definitions of ‘research’ and ‘ELT research’, respectively, and introduce a third term – namely, ‘interest value’.

Firstly, it is of course important that the investigation should be ‘original’ in the sense of having been carried out by the named author(s) and not copied from somewhere else. On the other hand, it is possible – and often useful – for a research paper to summarise others’ research in an original way, or to replicate research procedures carried out by others in a different context. When it comes to teacher-research (where the gap to be filled comes from an issue in the practitioner’s experience rather than from the literature), or in the absence of good access to journals, the originality of a piece of research can’t necessarily be established by reference to a wide array of previous studies. However, the *interest value* of a research report (involving creation of an *impression* of originality) can be established through provision of a full and rich description of context – the specific setting in which the research is being carried out or which it is intended to address. These days, there is broad recognition both that research findings are rarely universal in relevance, that is, cannot be divorced from the context in which they arise, and that, in previous research, ELT settings in the Global South have been neglected. Hence, ELT research reports which bring alive and attempt to address real issues confronting teachers in India have potentially very

strong and wide interest value, internationally as well as within India, even when they reproduce, replicate or fail to mention many previous research studies.

This brings me to the issue of relevance, and, here again, I think ‘interest value’ can be seen as an important superseding factor for a ‘good’ ELT research paper. After all, ultimately, only practitioner-readers can say whether the data / findings presented in a report ‘relate directly’ to their practice. However, it’s unfortunately well known, firstly, that teachers rarely read journal articles even when they do have access to them and, secondly, that many research articles are written in an off-putting, academic style which discourages possible engagement by teachers. This means, then, that writers should try very hard to attract and keep the reader’s attention. Again, if you can write interestingly about a local issue, describing your context fully and explaining why the issue is important, then this is likely to catch the interest of teachers elsewhere, including internationally. Finally, if you want practitioners to see your article as relevant, spell out the practical implications of your research quite clearly, and write in a style they can understand.

Note: some good examples of research papers have been published recently by the British Council in its *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* (<https://www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/english-partnerships/research-policy-dialogues/eltrep-papers>) series.

## To Write or not to Write: The Art of Writing a Research Paper

S Mohanraj

Former Professor, EFLU, Hyderabad



**S Mohanraj**, a former professor at the CIEFL (now EFLU), has authored over 50 course books and books in ELT and published nearly 100 research papers in India and abroad. His areas of specialization include materials production, teacher training and technology-integrated language teaching. He has traveled widely and taught in the USA, Austria, Eritrea, Yemen, China and Singapore.

Writing a research paper is more of procrastination, speculation, hesitation than execution. I do not say this in any negative sense, but in reality this is what happens to all of us. We do not sit at the computer and start keying in our papers impulsively, a lot of thinking, introspection, revision, discussion (within self or with others) has happened before something can appear on the paper.

Research by definition is *re-search*. We are not finding out something new, inventing nothing, but making ourselves aware of what has been around us for a long time, and giving it a reason for people to believe. If you look at several of the concepts put forth in the field of ELT, you will become more than aware of this fact. We are reminded of what we have been doing in the class as a good method with reasons to prove that it is good. e.g. We have been teaching our learners to use language by making them repeat what we have said or make alterations to come out with their own sentences. Using language is the best means to learn it was well practised before it was

said in most obvious terms.

Any good research paper should begin with a commitment. A sense of faith and belief in the work we are doing. Why am I taking up this research? Is this a genuine problem? Do my friends have a similar problem? An answer to these questions leads us to think and arrive at a problem (tentative or confirmed) which can be stated crisply. The title of a research paper should not read like the title of a thesis. Here is an example: 'Teaching writing to Undergraduates' is good enough for a paper, while in a thesis it would be "Developing Writing Skills among Undergraduate Students Using Communicative Strategies in the state of Telangana". Perhaps, the research problem in both these cases remains the same, but the scope may change.

Having arrived at the title, it is necessary to reason out what the focus of the paper is on. In this case, we may have students whose writing is weak because of weak competence in language, weak vocabulary, unorganized thought processes as manifest in disjointed sentences or any other reasons. A research paper cannot focus on all these aspects. The author has to pick one of these, which appears to be most important (prioritize) and pick that up and formulate a strategy (action research) to help the learner overcome the weakness. This can be stated as a problem or a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a conditional statement that can either be proved and accepted or

rejected. (Rejecting the hypothesis is not a reflection on the scholar's weakness or failure.)

The Hypothesis when stated e.g. 'If learners are exposed to good literary pieces, their organization skills in writing can improve.' (do not take this seriously) can help the researcher plan strategies of teaching or remedying. In this case we have a hypothesis that needs to be established. The learners are undergraduate learners. Their textbooks have literary pieces. Can we analyse these pieces and look for their relevance in terms of their lexical, syntactic and conceptual load and replace them with appropriate alternatives. The paper should delineate what criteria are used of selecting these pieces and how these can be analysed for their organization.

Some graphics (e.g. flowcharts, web charts, outlines etc) can be used to help the learners understand the structure of a paragraph which basically has a topic sentence (obvious or apparent) and how this is supported by other sentences. The graphic can show the linkers that bring about the unity among the sentences and how these can be made obvious to the learner. The paper should also suggest how much time is required for the teacher to teach these materials. Perhaps, six to eight teaching hours and how these can be divided rationally and what strategies of teaching are employed. e.g. analysis of the text, brain storming, developing web-diagrams, flow charts, discussing with others, using mother tongue as a support to understanding etc.)

The teaching in the classes followed by assignments written by the students forms the data for analysis. The data has to be presented in tabular forms or in the form

charts using simple percentages where complex statistical analysis is not essential. Data organization in a systematic manner facilitates analysis. Analysis for a simple research paper can restrict itself to generalizing using percentages, or analysis of variance to establish significance of the experiment.

Once the analysis is over, an honest conclusion should be written suggesting to the reader why the author thinks the experiment has either been a success or a failure. Failures let us remember are the stepping stones to success. Let us not shy away for them.

One last word! While writing this paper, you would have relied heavily on earlier research. You would have gathered ideas from a variety of sources through your reading, discussion etc. If you have used these ideas, remember to acknowledge them faithfully. There are accepted ways of acknowledging, and these days, your computer helps you organize your bibliography properly. Beware of plagiarism. This is taken very seriously these days.

These are a few stray thoughts I have put together on how to write a research paper. This delineates some of the features which can be listed as:

- a. Choose a genuine problem that bothers you.
- b. Crystallize it in the form of a title.
- c. Define your hypothesis – research problem/questions.
- d. Plan your action and describe it.
- e. Provide data and its analysis.
- f. Give your conclusion.
- g. Acknowledge the sources you have used.

Happy writing!

S Mohanraj

## Some Characteristics of a Bad Research Paper

Stephen Krashen

Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California



**Stephen Krashen** is professor emeritus at the University of Southern California. He is a well-known linguist, educational researcher, and political activist. Known for introducing various hypotheses related to second-language acquisition, including the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter, and the natural order hypothesis, Krashen has more than 500 publications to his credit. Krashen promotes the use of free voluntary reading during second-language acquisition, which he says “is the most powerful tool we have in language education, first and second.”

1. Make the paper too long (Krashen, 2012a).

Example: Far too many papers waste space on long and irrelevant literature reviews, designed only to show that the author has done some reading. “When we ask the time, we don’t want to know how watches are constructed.” Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799)

2. Fill the paper with unnecessary jargon and jibberish (Krashen, 2012b). Incomprehensible papers are a good way of avoiding criticism: “As long as academics write in the tortured vocabulary of specialization for seminars and conferences, where they are unable to influence public debate, they are free to espouse any bizarre or ‘radical’ theory” (Hedges, 2010: p.125). Such papers do not advance knowledge.

3. Publish in an expensive journal or an even more expensive book. Prices of journals and books are now outrageous, which means research is not available to most people unless they have access to a first-class university library. Universities make it worse by insisting

that professors only publish in these expensive journals or collections.

Mathematician Tim Gowers, winner of the Fields Medal (math’s Nobel Prize), has led a boycott of the Elsevier publishing company because of their high prices. His solution is open-access journals published on the internet that do not charge readers and that either don’t charge authors or charge only minimal fees to meet some of the journals’ expenses (e.g. not US \$600 but US \$10).

Education should be the first field to encourage and accept open access, but instead it seems to be the last. The results of educational research should be made freely available to all teachers, researchers, and interested members of the public.

Note: Many of my papers and books are available for free download at [www.sdkrashen.com](http://www.sdkrashen.com). I am gradually adding more, and I intend to add this one.

Gowers, T. 2017. Another journal flips. <https://gowers.wordpress.com/2017/07/27/another-journal-flips/#more-6336>

Hedges, C. 2010. *Death of the Liberal Class*. (New York: Nation Books).

Krashen, S. 2012a. A short paper proposing that we need to write shorter papers. *Language and Language Teaching* (Azim Premji University). 1(2): 38-39. [http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/a\\_short\\_paper.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/a_short_paper.pdf)

Krashen, S. 2012b. Academic jibberish. *RELC Journal*. 43 (2): 283-285. [http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/academic\\_jibberish.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/academic_jibberish.pdf)

## Research in ELT

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***Shreesh Chaudhary** has a PhD in English Phonology from the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad. Well known in the ELT circle in India, Chaudhary has been a resource person at numerous ELT conferences across India and has many books, research papers and articles to his credit. He has taught English in many parts of India. Chaudhary, a former professor at Indian Institute of Technology Madras, is currently Distinguished Professor at GLA University.*

Great research anywhere:

1. asks **new questions**
2. uses **new tools**
3. brings **new data, and**
4. offers **new answers.**

Works of Plato, Galileo, Newton, Adam Smith, Coleridge, Einstein and Chomsky belong to this class. In Asia, Upanishads, and works of Wyasa, Wishwamitra, Patanjali, Panini, Valluvar, Confucius, Al Beruni, Shri Shankara, Kabir and Gandhi belong to this class. They influence generations.

Another class of research is conventional in one of the features mentioned above. Works of Buddha, Freud, Darwin and Marx belong to this category. Their impact may be relatively limited. Buddha's followers could not answer Shri Shankara when the latter asked them to explain variety in form and substance without assuming the presence of God or hand of

nature. Piaget and Descartes have a similar problem, as do Foucault and many modern philosophers.

Other works have no new questions and new tools. Using old tools, they find new answers to old questions, or new questions for old answers. Many PhD theses belong to this class. They collect data to confirm what we already know.

The fourth kind has nothing new, they are wrongly called research.

Let us now look at a research problem in ELT. It is believed that given exposure and motivation, language learning is inevitable. But many learn English in spite of limited exposure, while many others fail to do so in spite of it. The same family, and the same residential schools may have learners with unequal achievements. Aptitude in language learning is under investigated.

So is the alleged "influence" of mother tongue (MT). MT has been blamed for various ills in second language learning. But no language obstructs the learning of others. Besides, speakers of the same MT learn other languages with different degrees of success. Learners make mistakes even where MT is not an obstruction. Aptitude seems an important factor in language learning. But what is it? How does it work? Who has how much of it? How can it be measured? We need to investigate these questions with new tools and find valid answers.

# Teaching outside the Teaching Machine: Analyzing and Adopting Geoffrey Kendal's Approach towards English Plays

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## **Introduction**

English Language Teaching is younger than the desire to learn English in Indians. Many methods of English language teaching have been developed in less than a century. This paper is written based on an experiment done at the GLA University Mathura to teach English language to select students of B.Tech. Second Year, Mechanical Engineering.

The paper is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with an approach developed by Geoffrey Kendal. This approach maintains that training in theatre can be a tool for teaching English. The second part reports, elaborates and analyses the experiment done to teach English to students with the help of the approach explained in part one.

English plays are more often read as play-texts in Indian schools, colleges and universities rather than as stage-texts. When the students of English literature write about the plays, the resultant is mere textual comprehension, instead of the theatrical one. Such a practice mars the appreciation of the genius of the

playwrights. In this context, the British director-actor Geoffrey Kendal (1909 – 1998) and his professional repertory theatre company, *Shakespeareana's* methods of introducing English plays, specifically Shakespearean plays, to the educational institutes of India could be seen as an essential supplement for the comprehension of English plays. Generating the discourse of teaching outside the teaching machine by allowing it to re-acquire its interdisciplinary nature, Kendal has thus served a purpose of initiating fresh discussions in the recent times. A student of literature feels lacking in sufficient tools of understanding if s/he seeks to remain within her/his own discipline. The way one approaches the social sciences for answering various unsolved questions, s/he may also have to consult the performative aspect for similar reasons.

## **Tale of the Locale**

In the first half of the British rule, India observed the first staged version of English plays. The performance of Shakespearean plays in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1770 and in Calcutta (now Kolkata) can be treated as

the first few examples of performing English Plays in India by the professional English troupes. But these plays have very modest influence on the Indian viewers. In 1822, through the performance of some celebrated scenes from various plays of Shakespeare in Dhurrumtollah Academy, Kolkata, Indians got the opportunity to enact English plays. In 1817, Serampore College and Hindu College were established in Bengal Province. Forty years later, in 1857 three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were established. These institutions basically were the prototypes of their British counterparts, specifically, the University of London. Though at that time the people of India were familiar with the enactment of English plays, the performative aspects of the dramas mentioned in the syllabi were overlooked. The fact that the Indians bare the pride of upholding the heritage of their predecessors, can be found in the contemporary scenario where the respective universities follow this tradition of negligence. Interestingly enough the relation between English Plays and Indian audience has always been confined within the affluent, aristocrat, upper or upper-middle class society. In India, the students of English as L2 has never been able to get the exposure of the performance of the plays mentioned in the syllabi of their respective courses. In this scenario, the tour of Geoffrey Kendal with his professional repertory theatre company, "Shakespeareana" as the first British professional theatre company was of great significance. It exhumed English plays from the theatre halls and the drawing rooms of the upper-class and

unveiled him to the common Indian mass through their pan Indian performances; especially in Indian schools and colleges.

### **Achievements of Kendal**

The performance of the English plays was much needed for the Indian audience. This was needed not simply to get right entertainment, but also to see those plays performed with the flavour of their original British context. It is interesting to note that Kendal had never been appreciated in his home-land as a great director of Shakespearean plays. But to the Indian audience and most prominently to the young Indian people he associated with his troupe, the impact of the man could never be undermined. Taking English Plays specifically, Shakespearean plays to the educational institutes he played a highly significant role of preparing the young minds so that they might look at them in a specific way. In a television interview (Beautiful People, CNBC TV 18, 2012), the famous Indian stage-actor and film personality, Nasiruddin Shah has clearly expressed his debts to Kendal in receiving the performative knowledge of Shakespearean plays. When Shah came in contact with the members of Shakespeareana, he was very young having his early dreams of being a professional actor. The spirit and zeal of professionalism in taking Shakespeare to the theatre aspirants seemed extra-ordinary to Shah and for this at the heart of his heart he made Kendal his theatrical guru.

Much earlier in 1947 and almost in a similar context, an identical thing happened with

another renowned theatre and film personality of India, Utpal Dutt who fell in love of Kendal during the visit of Shakespeareana to the St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Dutt, a promising student of the college at that time had his own small troupe of amateur artists producing *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. This troupe called "The Young Shakespeareans" also tried their level best to stage *Richard III* in their college which was seen by Kendal and his family. This was the event which allowed Dutt to come closer to Kendal and learn the art of Shakespeare production at his feet. However, the training he received at the Shakespeareana was not a very easy one. It was not for him to simply to read and memorize the plays and perform them on the stage. Kendal was an extremely disciplined teacher who perhaps believed in the totality of the theatrical production and wanted to train his pupils beginning from sweeping the stage till the final nods to the audience at the end of each performance. He happened to be an ardent advocate in giving heart and soul to theatre by letting his associates know every meticulous detail of all aspects of the stage-craft. The regimentation he brought to his team was sometimes extremely harsh to the individuals and Dutt too received furious treatments from Kendal. Gradually, he grew up showing every sign of development as a seasoned actor. In her essay, "Shakespeareana to Shakespeare Wallah: Selling or Doing Shakespeare in India", Paramita Dutta describes the cordial relation between Kendal and Dutt:

A pioneering figure of modern Indian

theatre and National Award winning actor, Utpal Dutt, who had been awarded the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship for contribution to theatre in 1990, had worked with the Kendals in the beginning of his tryst with theatre. His association with them began the first time they had come to Calcutta in 1947, and then again in 1953 when they called him to join them at Madras for their India and Pakistan tour. In an interview with Samik Bandyopadhyay, Dutt claims to have learnt all the rules and methods of a professional repertory company from the Kendals and said that their theory of carrying everything with them on their tour was the correct theory. He had learnt from them that "There is no art without discipline and no discipline without sacrifice." Dutt even dedicated his book *Shakespearer Samajchetana* (1972) to Geoffrey Kendal, proclaiming him to be his "guru" one who had trained him to act Shakespeare. (124)

At the time of writing the obituary of Kendal, Kuldip Singh perfectly portrays the uniqueness of this actor-director. This piece of writing also gives us the vivid description of the "Indian Chapter" of *Shakespeareana*. Singh Writes:

For two generations of schoolchildren – now in their fifties – Kendal's Shakespeareana Company provided them their first introduction to the Bard.

.....He had begun his theatrical career treading the boards of repertory companies across England those were

shrinking fast, but he never gave up. He performed at boarding schools, colleges, small town squares - wherever anyone was willing to defray basic costs, from the turbulent North West Frontier Province now in Pakistan in the north to the sylvan settings of Ooty in the south. In its meanderings his troupe slept on crowded station platforms, suffering privations even the most dedicated of actors would have happily foresworn.

When money was tight Kendal's retinue travelled third class by rail, which in India has always been nothing short of a nightmare. (N Pag)

#### **'Why' follow Kendal?**

Generally in India, plays are read and discussed in the classroom rather than performed. This is due to the fact that our educational system is more prone to give degrees to the students through the process of allowing them pass through examinations. One has to write on the plays, especially the students of literature to express their knowledge of the texts, which to them as well as to their teachers are nothing more than letters printed on page. The actual appreciation of the genius of the playwright is nevertheless left out in such a practice. A student of literature feels lacking in sufficient tools whenever he or

she seeks to remain within its own discipline. The text printed on a page itself poses various challenges to the reader for which suitable answers need to be sought in various other texts which may not belong to that very discipline. To appreciate a play in a better way, one may also take refuge to the discipline of performance. Though English plays entered into literature classrooms almost hand in hand with the introduction of English language in India, the very necessary training of performing the plays perhaps came much later. I would not claim here that Geoffrey Kendal and his Shakespeareana has taught our academia the performance of English plays for the first time, but I have no hesitation at all in putting forward my opinion that he was the one who felt the necessity of teaching English plays through performance.

#### **Response to Kendal's Stimuli**

The application of the proposed theory is done with a particular set of students at the GLA University, Mathura. The authors have done this experimental training with B. Tech. (Mechanical Engineering), Second Year students of Section F. Section F had the majority of students who may be either termed as 'slow learners' or, factually stated, they were the students with below average marks in the university examinations of spoken as well as written English.

Initially, a test was conducted with around 30 students of the class. Following is the result of the language test:

S. No.	Skills observed	Maximum marks (Out of 10)	Minimum marks (Out of 10)	Average marks (Out of 10)
1.	Use of correct simple sentences	7.25	1.5	4.9
2.	Use of correct complex/compound sentences	5.0	0.25	3.9
3.	Use of proper lexical items	4.75	1.25	3.8
4.	Pronunciation	7.5	1.5	4.9
5.	Error free sentences	6.5	1.5	4.8

**Chart 1: The Table of Marks of the 30 Students in the Beginning of the Semester**

It can be clearly observed that in each of the five parameters the average marks of the group are less than 50% of the maximum marks. An analysis of the minimum marks shows that they are less than 20% of the maximum marks. Referring to the use of proper lexical items, it can be said that most of the students could hardly use any adjective beyond 'good', 'bad' and 'great'. The frequency of using adverbs is even worse than the usage of the adjectives.

This is to be noted here that the course in which the students were registered had an input of 'skit presentations' in the syllabus. The course code AHE 3083 taught to the third semester students had around 3 contact hours for the skit presentation. The 30 students referred here attended and performed in the 3 contact hours allotted for the activity. The 10 students (preferably those who scored less in the test) out of these 30 students were given extra inputs on practice and performing scenes from the following three plays:

- i. *Macbeth* of William Shakespeare
- ii. *Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare
- iii. *Chakravyuha* by Ratan Thiyam

Here is a brief introduction of the scenes enacted as the part of this experiment:

The Banquet Scene of *Macbeth* (Act II, Scene IV) is one of the most significant scenes of the play with the dialogues like:

"the feast is sold  
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making," (n pag)  
and  
"Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,  
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal;  
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd  
Too terrible for the ear: the times have been,  
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,  
And there an end; but now they rise again,

With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,  
 And push us from our stools: this is more strange  
 Than such a murder is.” (n. pag)

The Banquet Scene proves to be one of the most powerful and moving scenes of the play. Once the students were out of the burden of English learning, their natural play came into act. They performed some parts of the scene really well both at the time of practice as well as the time of the final performance. The performance was followed by a discussion. The Court Scene of *The Merchant of Venice* (Act IV, Scene I) was the second piece that was enacted by the students. The efforts made and confidence gained during the first performance was quintessentially visible at the time of performing the Court Scene. The

performance once again was followed by a discussion. The third but perhaps the most important performance was of the English translation of the Manipuri play, *Chakravyuha* (1984) by Ratan Thiyam. Thiyam’s *Chakravyuha* exploits the story of Abhimanyu’s assassination from the *Mahabharata* to depict the contemporary socio-political scenario. Abhimanyu, the protagonist, represents an individual who succumbs to the social machinery and his assassins the *Saptarathis* (seven charioteers), the social system. Often this play has been related with the insult and denial of civil rights experienced by the Manipuris at the hands of the state machinery empowered by the ‘Armed Forces Special Power Act’. The students were given the specific parts of the play to practice and perform.

Once the training sessions and performances were over, a test on spoken English was conducted and the result was surprising.

S. No.	Skills observed	Maximum marks (Out of 10)	Minimum marks (Out of 10)	Average marks (Out of 10)
1.	Use of correct simple sentences	9.5	3.5	6.9
2.	Use of correct Complex/ compound sentences	7.5	3.5	5.9
3.	Use of proper lexical items	5.5	2.5	4.1
4.	Pronunciation	7.5	2.75	6.3
5.	Error Free Sentences	7.5	4.5	5.9

**Chart 1.1: The Table of Marks of the 30 Students at the time of the Conclusion of the Semester**

The result of the select ten students is worth analysing here. The analysis falls in line with the goal of the paper. The result shows the improvement of the spoken and other related skills of these 10 students:

S. No.	Skills observed	Maximum marks (Out of 10) (Before - After)	Minimum marks (Out of 10) (Before - After)	Average marks (Out of 10) (Before - After)
1.	Use of correct simple sentences	2.5 – 6.5	1.5 – 4.5	2.2 – 5.5
2.	Use of correct Complex/compound sentences	1.0 – 4.2	0.25 – 3.5	0.8 – 3.9
3.	Use of proper lexical items	2.5 – 5.8	1.25 – 2.5	1.9 – 3.9
4.	Pronunciation	4.7 – 5.7	1.5-2.75	2.9 – 4.0
5.	Error Free Sentences	4.4 – 6.7	1.5 – 4.5	3.9 – 5.1

**Chart 1.2: The Table of Marks of the 10 Students in the Beginning and at the end of the Semester**

Some of the important points to be observed are:

- a. The difference between the average marks under the category 'The use of the correct simple sentence' for the entire group is 2.0 whereas; for the ten students, it is 3.3. It is undoubtedly clear that these ten students have learnt the correct use of the simple sentences much better than their other counterparts.
- b. The difference between the average marks under the category 'The use of the correct complex/compound sentence' for the entire group is 2.0 whereas for the 10 students it is 3.1.
- c. The difference between the average marks under the category 'The use of the correct lexical items' for the entire group is 0.3 whereas for the 10 students it is 2.0
- d. The difference between the average marks under the category 'Error free correction' for the entire group is 1.4 whereas for the 10 students it is 1.1.
- e. Under the category 'Pronunciation' the average growth of the entire class was better than the average growth of these ten students. It may be understood that pronunciation is an act that requires longer duration to be improved as it deals with many other aspects which are not the part of this paper.
- f. The difference between the average marks under the category 'Error free correction' for the entire group is 1.1 whereas for the 10 students it is 1.2.
- g. Some other data that were recorded were a clear shift in the 'managerial skills' and in the 'confidence level' of the students selected for the experiment.

## Conclusion

Kendal's inception as a brand is essential for the globalized Indian mass to preserve their linguistic dignity: to preserve the Indian English from linguisticism (meaning, linguistic genocide; as Tove-Skutnabb Kangas terms it).

The analysis in this paper has succeeded in showing:

- a. How English can be taught with the help of a training in theatre.
- b. How students can be given additional input simultaneously with the teaching of English.
- c. There is need to revisit the kind of teaching of English Language is being done, particularly at the engineering colleges across India.

Loss of formality (breached by words and expressions like 'wanna', 'gonna' and so on in the glitch of linguistic matrix) – a tug-of-war between British and American dictums of English can lead to a resulting 'no zone'. The performance aids the students to minimize different types of Communication Barrier in L2 (as analysed in this paper). Being a facilitator in diverse dramatic events in the institution, even a teacher earns cultural and managerial skills

through multi-personal and multi-situational cases thus getting acknowledged as a director – an identity more dynamic than just a 'trainer'.

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# An Exploratory Study of Language Learning Strategy Use

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## ABSTRACT

*Literature shows that Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are powerful language learning tools. The present study was conducted with 30 undergraduate Foreign Language multilingual students at JNU with an aim to find out how the use of language learning strategies varied for ESL and FL. Data was elicited by means of a questionnaire divided into four sections i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing strategies. Statistically significant differences were found in the use of Listening and Speaking strategies. The strategies were also analyzed from cognitive angle to gain a better insight about the difference in learning process for SL and FL. The study also discusses the impact of learner variables on LLS use.*

**Key Words: English Language Learning, Foreign Language Learning, ELT, Language Learning Strategies**

## 1. Introduction

The proverb 'Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime' has been used by Griffiths (2013) and Feleciya et al. (2015) to explain the relevance of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) in the life of a language learner; the significance of the proverb is that while the immediate problems of the learners can be solved by providing them with answers to their queries, a language learner who is empowered with Language Learning Strategies will, in the long run, be capable of managing her own learning. Language Learning Strategies make learning, as Oxford (1990) says, more self-

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directed, effective and enjoyable, paving way for a confident and autonomous language learner.

The importance of Language Learning Strategies for accelerating the process of language learning is a well-established fact. However, the number of studies conducted in this domain are comparatively less, and, almost all the studies have been conducted are with Second Language Learners (SL) from a cognitive perspective (Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; De Silva, 2015 etc.). The present study is very different both in its approach and methodology hence it has been referred to as an exploratory study; the study makes a comparative analysis of

the use of language learning strategies by multilingual Foreign Language learners who have also learnt English as a Second Language. While the learners have been learning the Foreign Languages for a period of 1-3years, they have learnt ESL in school for at least 12-15years. The chief objective of the study is to find out whether there is a difference in the choice and frequency of the use of Language Learning Strategies. The study deals with seasoned ESL learners who are new bees in the domain of Foreign Language learning to find out strategies which are relevant for beginners' level on one hand and for advanced levels on the other. Methodology wise the study differs from the other studies in this field as it studies strategies from a skill based perspective and finds out how differently the learners apply learning strategies which directly contribute towards their LSRW skill development.

## **2. Literature Review**

As mentioned earlier, most of the studies conducted in the domain of language learning strategy use deal with Second Language learners. Often the terms 'Second Language' and 'Foreign Language' have been used synonymously in the literature (Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1983). However, the socio-cultural contexts of learning a SL and a FL varies a great deal as Chattaraj (2017:69) points out "learning a second language provides immediate socio-economic benefits within the country where it is learnt, a foreign language doesn't have any in the country where it is learnt but is useful to communicate elsewhere." Evidently, as the

scope of communicating in a FL is highly restricted outside the classroom domain, it can be assumed that the use of certain strategies which are based on social interaction will be very limited. Due to lack of studies in the domain of LLS use in FL learning contexts, the studies that have been conducted in ESL domain in India are briefly reviewed.

The earliest study in this field of LLS use was carried out by Sheorey (1999). He studied the use of LLS by first year India undergraduate ESL students and found that the students used LLS from high to moderate frequency on a five-point scale. Patil and Karekatti (2012) conducted a study with 60 engineering students to Maharashtra and found that the most frequently used strategies were the metacognitive strategies (M=3.69) and the least frequently used strategies were the memory strategies (M=3.05) and the average use of strategies in all the domains were 3.37. P. Madhumathi et al. (2014) conducted a study with 60 1st year ESL B.Tech students of a private university in South India all of whose proficiency level in English was low. They found that the most popular strategies used were memory (M=3.30) and affective strategies (M=3.31) while the least preferred strategy was metacognitive strategy (M=2.48) and on an average the learners reported a low use of LLS (M=2.81). It can be seen that in spite of being carried out in the same contexts i.e. with 1<sup>st</sup> year Indian undergraduate engineering students, the studies yield completely opposite results as the figures suggest. One of the

explanation for this might be while one set of learners were low level learners, the other set weren't. The present study by drawing a parallel between strategies used in ESL and FL will shed further light on how the level of language learning impacts the use of Language Learning Strategies.

### **3. Methodology**

The present study is a cross-sectional study where data was collected at a single point in time (Rasinger, 2010) and is based on primary data (Brown, 2001) collected from the classroom by the teacher-researcher. The questionnaire for the study has been designed such that it would find out the quantity and frequency of Language Learning Strategy use for both ESL and FL among learners. The questionnaire was circulated twice, once for ESL and the second time for FL among the learners who at the time when the data was collected were taking a course with the teacher-researcher of this study.

#### **3.1 Participants**

30 Foreign Language (FL) learning (Russian, Korean, Chinese and Japanese) undergraduate students at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India participated in the study. Among these 30 students, the Mother Tongue (MT) of 19 students were Hindi, 5 students had Bangla as their MT, 2 students had Maithili as their MT, 1 each had Magahi, Odiya, Maitei and Paite as their MT. 19 students had done their schooling from English medium

schools while the rest of the 11 students had done it from regional medium schools. The students knew on an average 4 languages.

#### **3.2 Tools**

A Language Skill Development Strategy (LSDS) questionnaire was designed for this study; it consisted of 47 questions the answers to which had to be given on a 5-point Likert Type scale ranging from "Never-Always". The questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha test to test its reliability and it recorded an average alpha reading of 0.75 making it a reliable questionnaire. The questionnaire was broadly divided into four sections i.e. Reading Strategies (9 questions, alpha 0.7), Writing Strategies (17 questions, alpha 0.6), Listening Strategies (10 questions, alpha 0.89) and Speaking Strategies (11 questions, alpha 0.78). While designing the questionnaire, Top-down, Bottom-up and Metacognitive Listening Strategies (Yeldham, 2016), Pre-post Strategy Instruction questionnaire for Writing (Silva, 2015), LSD (Griffiths, 2013) and SILL (Oxford, 1990) have been consulted.

#### **3.3 Analytical Procedure**

After analyzing the results of the questionnaire in the above mentioned four categories, the questions are further divided into Cognitive (24 questions) and Metacognitive strategies (23 questions) and are analyzed; followed by this, the effects of the other variables on language learning strategy use are also examined.

## **4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results**

### **4.1 Reading Strategies**

The learners have reported using 5 Reading Strategies (RS) highly frequently for learning both the FL and ESL; however, these five strategies are not the same. They have reported using the RS reading for information and for pleasure in English more frequently than in FL while they have reported using the strategy of writing notes in the margin and making summaries more frequently in FL. The strategies which they have reported using more frequently in learning both the SL and FL are underlining the sentences and revising them often, guessing the approximate meanings by using contextual clues and using dictionaries. The least popular reading strategies for learning both languages were using the library to obtain resources and skim reading the text. Overall, the learners reported making use of Reading Strategies highly frequently both ESL (3.52) and FL (3.65) and T-test revealed that there is statistically significant difference in the use of RS for ESL and FL.

### **4.2 Writing Strategies**

Among the 17 Writing Strategies, the learners reported using only 8 strategies highly frequently; however, these 8 strategies are not the same. Whereas the learners reported using the strategies of writing letters, messages, emails etc. highly frequently in English and the strategy of attempting those questions which can be written in ones' own words, the learners reported the strategies of translating from

MT, avoiding complex sentences while writing and using reference materials highly frequently in Foreign Languages. The strategies which were reported to be used highly frequently for learning both ESL and FL are the strategies of learning when mistakes are corrected, making notes in exams, planning before writing, using for synonyms etc., and supporting an idea while writing by using examples from the text. The strategies which were reported to be used least frequently while learning both the languages are the strategies of translating SL/FL sentences to MT to see if the message is clear, attempting questions which have been memorized, revising several times, trying out complex sentences, focusing on expressing meaning without worrying about the correctness and writing a diary. Overall, the learners reported a comparatively low use to Writing strategies for both the SL (3.45) and FL (3.36) and the difference in the use of Writing Strategies between the ESL and FL were not statistically significant.

### **4.3 Listening Strategies**

The learners reported using 9 out of 10 Listening strategies for Foreign Language while they reported using only 6 of the strategies for ESL. The Listening Strategies that were reported to be used highly frequently for ESL and FL are the strategies of using media to practice listening skills, listening to key-words, predicting what other person will say based on context knowledge, avoiding translation while listening, guessing the meaning and listening to native speakers carefully. The Listening Strategies which were reported to be used highly

frequently only for learning the FL are listening to native speakers in public places and trying to understand what they are saying, asking the speaker to slow down, repeat or clarify their message and using the speakers' tone of voice and body language to guess the meaning. The strategy which was reported to be used least frequently was attending out of class events like seminars etc. where the learner can hear the TL. Overall, the learners reported using Listening Strategies frequently for both FL and ESL; however, they reported using the Listening Strategies more frequently in the context of learning the FL than the SL and the T-test also confirmed significant statistical difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in LS use between FL and ESL.

#### **4.4 Speaking Strategies**

The learners reported using 8 out of 11 Speaking Strategies highly frequently while learning the FL but for ESL they have reported using only 3 Speaking Strategies highly frequently. The strategies which were reported to be used frequently for learning both the languages are the strategies of remembering when the mistakes are corrected and avoiding making those mistakes, asking questions and using synonyms. The Speaking Strategies which were reported to be used only for FL are repeating structures for practice, seeking out people to talk in FL, planning sentences in advance, practicing in FL with other students and pronouncing FL like native speakers. The strategies which were least frequently used for both the languages are not worrying about correctness as long as

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the meaning is communicated, translating from MT and using gestures to maintain a conversation. Overall, the learners reported using Speaking Strategies highly frequently only for learning the FL and T-test showed that there were statistically significant differences between the use of Speaking Strategies by the learners for FL and ESL ( $p < 0.05$ ).

#### **4.5 Cognitive Strategies**

The learners reported using Cognitive Strategies more frequently for learning FL ( $M=3.54$ ) than ESL ( $M=3.48$ ). As the average means suggest, the difference is very less and not statistically significant. However, when the analysis was conducted sub-category wise, it was seen that statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were present in the use of Memory and Creative strategies with the learners applying Memory strategies significantly more frequently for learning the FL whereas they reported applying Creative Strategies significantly more frequently for learning ESL. Memory strategies are relatively low-level strategies whereas Creative Strategies are high level strategies; the strategies thus are directly proportional to their level of language learning. For the other two sub-types namely processing and monitoring strategies, no statistically different usage are reported; but the learners reported using both the strategies more frequently for learning FL than ESL.

#### **4.6 Metacognitive strategies**

The learners reported using Metacognitive Strategies more frequently in the domain of

FL (M=3.6) than ESL (M=3.44); however, the differences are not statistically significant. Sub-category wise, statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) is noted only in the use of Social Strategies as the learners reported using Social Strategies much highly frequently while learning FL (M=3.9) than while learning ESL (M=3.28) which is unexpected given the fact that the domain of social interaction for the FL is highly restricted. In the categories of resourcing, planning and formulating, the learners reported using the strategies more frequently for learning FL than SL while they reported using compensation strategies equally frequently for both the languages and applying the affective strategies more frequently while learning ESL which might be because they identify with the ESL better than they can do with FL.

## **5. Learner Variables of LLS Use**

**5.1 Gender and LLS Use:** Among the participants who participated in this study, 17 were female and 13 were male. The study found that gender did not have much of an impact in the use of strategies for both FL and ESL. While in FL the female learners (3.64) reported applying strategies slightly more frequently than the males (3.55), in case of ESL there was hardly any difference in the use of strategy among the females (3.49) and the males (3.45).

**5.2 Medium of Instruction in School and LLS use:** Among the participants who participated in this study, 11 were from regional medium schooling background and 19 from English medium schooling

background. It was seen while the medium of instruction in school had an impact on the frequency of the use of strategies in case of learning FL with the English medium students (3.74) applying more strategies than the regional medium students (3.35); however, the difference in usage was not statistically significant. In case of learning ESL, the learners from both the English (3.49) and regional medium (3.45) schooling background reported using strategies almost equally frequently.

**5.3 Score and LLS Use:** The learners were divided into three categories according to the grades they obtained in the class. While for their FL score their performance in the FL exams was considered, for their English score, their performance in form of essays and interaction carried on in the class was observed. It was found that whereas the score obtained by the students in FL was directly proportional to their use of strategies as the high scoring learners made the maximum use of the LLS (3.83) followed by the medium scoring learners (3.76) and the low scoring learners (3.2). An ANOVA test revealed that the differences were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). But, there was hardly any impact of the performance in ESL on the LLS use.

**5.4 Level of Language Learning and LLS use:** Among the 30 undergraduate FL learning students, who participated in the study, 8 belonged to 1<sup>st</sup> year, 12 belonged to 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 10 belonged to 3<sup>rd</sup> year. While the first year students made the maximum use of LLS (3.75) followed by the second year students (3.59) and the third year students

(3.37) in case of the FL, no such differences in the frequency of use of strategies were found among the ESL learners.

## 6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The study shows that not only is there a difference in the pattern of use of Language Learning Strategies but also in the frequency of its usage. Overall, out of the 47 strategies listed in the questionnaire, the learners have reported using 15 strategies highly frequently for learning both the languages. Among the rest of the 32 strategies, the learners reported using 13 of the strategies highly frequently for learning FL out of which many of the strategies were low-level memory and monitoring strategies. The learners reported using 5 strategies highly

frequently for learning ESL which were all high-level Cognitive Strategies dealing with processing and creating language. The results of the study prove the fact that the level of language learning has an impact on the pattern of their usage.

It is seen that the same learners apply more number of strategies (more than double) more frequently for learning the FL which is relatively a new language for them than they apply for learning ESL. Thus, it can be said that Language Learning Strategies are more useful tools for an early level learner hence strategy training, which had been found very effective in literature (Sarafianou & Gavriilidou, 2015; Silva, 2015; Yeldham, 2016), should be introduced at an early stage of language learning to procure the best results.

### Appendix I

SL. No.	READING STRATEGIES	Cognitive(C) /Metacog. (M)	FL	ESL
1	I read extensively for information	Processing. C	3.16	3.96
2	I read for pleasure	Processing. C	2.83	3.68
3	I use a library to obtain reading material	Resourcing M	2.78	2.8
4	I first skim read a text then go back and read it more carefully	Processing. C	3.47	3.12
5	I underline the sentences I find important in the text and revise them often	Memory. C	4.21	3.76
6	I write notes in the margin to help remind me of the things I need to come back to after reading	Memory. C	4.04	3.44
7	I make summaries of what I read	Processing. C	3.60	3.04
8	I guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context	Compensation. M	4.21	3.96
9	I use a dictionary to get the exact meaning	Resourcing M	4.52	3.96
	<b>Average</b>		<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.524444</b>
	<b>Number of Strategies reportedly used highly frequently</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

## Appendix II

SL. No.	WRITING STRATEGIES	Cognitive(C) /Metacog. (M)	FL	ESL
10	I write letters or emails to friends	Creative. C	2.5	4.2
11	When my mistakes are corrected, I learn from the corrections	Resourcing. M	4.29	4.4
12	I write a variety of text types (e.g. notes, messages, emails etc.)	Creative. C	3.16	4.4
13	Most of the writings I do in is for making notes for exams	Creative. C	3.5	3.52
14	I plan my writing before I start	Planning. M	4.08	3.72
15	If I cannot think of correct expressions I think of another way to express my meaning (e.g. synonyms)	Compensation. M	4.25	4.28
16	If I cannot think of a correct expression I translate it from my Mother Tongue	Monitoring. C	3.83	3.24
17	I translate the sentences I write into my Mother Tongue to see if the message is clear	Monitoring. C	3	2.64
18	I avoid writing complex sentences to reduce errors	Monitoring. C	3.62	3.24
19	In exams I only attempt those questions whose answers I can remember as it is in my notebook	Memory. C	2.75	2.68
20	In exams I attempt only those questions which I can write in my own words	Creative. C	3.16	3.52
21	I revise several times before submitting	Formulating. M	3.29	2.84
22	I support my ideas with examples from my readings	Formulating. M	3.58	3.6
23	I try out complex sentences that I have identified from reading	Formulating. M	3.37	3.4
24	I use reference material (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus or grammar book) to check what I am writing is correct	Resourcing. M	4.04	3
25	If I am unsure about something I want to write I try to express my meaning and do not worry too much about correctness	Affective. M	3.25	3.36
26	I write a diary	Affective. M	1.45	2.76
	<b>Average</b>		<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.458824</b>
	<b>Number of Strategies used highly frequently</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>

### Appendix III

SL. No.	LISTENING STRATEGIES	Cognitive(C) /Metacog. (M)	FL	ESL
27	I attend out of class events (seminars, conferences, talks etc.) where I can listen to the new language (FL) being spoken	Processing. C	3.41	3
28	I use media (e.g. YouTube, TV, radio, movies) to practice my listening skills	Processing. C	3.87	3.6
29	I listen to native speakers in public places (e.g. shops, restaurants, buses) and try to understand what they are saying	Processing. C	3.83	3.28
30	I listen to key words which seem to carry most of the meaning	Processing. C	4	3.64
31	I predict what the other person will say based on context, background knowledge or what has been said	Compensation. M	3.62	3.56
32	I ask the speaker to slow down, repeat or clarify if I do not understand	Social. M	3.87	3.24
33	I avoid translating what I hear word for word	Monitoring. C	3.62	3.76
34	I use speaker's tone of voice, gestures, pauses or body language as a clue to meaning	Compensation. M	3.7	3.4
35	If I am unsure about meaning I try to guess it	Compensation. M	3.87	3.8
36	I listen carefully to how native speakers pronounce the language (FL) I am trying to learn	Processing. C	4.45	3.92
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.82</b>	<b>3.52</b>
<b>Number of Strategies used highly frequently</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

### Appendix IV

SL. No.	SPEAKING STRATEGIES	Cognitive(C) /Metacog. (M)	FL	ESL
37	I repeat new language (FL) to myself in order to practice it	Memory. C	4.12	3.32
38	I seek out people with whom I can speak FL	Social. M	3.95	3.08
39	I plan in advance what I want to say	Planning. M	3.83	3.28
40	If I am corrected while I am speaking, I try to remember the correction and avoid making the same mistake again	Monitoring. C	4.29	4.28
41	I ask questions	Social. M	3.83	3.68
42	I do not worry about correctness as long as I can communicate the meaning	Affective. M	3.12	3.28
43	When I do not get the correct expression in FL, I translate it from my Mother Tongue	Monitoring. C	3.25	3.28
44	If necessary, I use gestures to convey my meaning and keep a conversation going	Compensation. M	3.25	3.28
45	I practice FL with other students	Social. M	3.95	3.12
46	If I do not know the vocabulary I want to use, I use similar words or phrases	Compensation. M	3.95	4.28
47	I try to pronounce FL like the native speakers	Monitoring. C	4	2.88
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.432727</b>
<b>Number of Strategies used highly frequently</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

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# Speak Your Thought Out (SYTO): A Project Initiative for Communicating in English

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## ABSTRACT

***The paper aims to present the objectives, strategies and outcome of an initiative taken up by the department of English, TBAK College, Kilakarai, Tamil Nadu on the topic SYTO to train the students to speak in English fluently without any inhibition. The objectives of the project are to create recreational and consolidating opportunity for students to learn and practice oral English, and to trigger students' creative talents by to provide encouraging atmosphere. The criteria for analysing the speaking skill are: their ability to choose the topic on their own; preparation; flow of thoughts and ideas with illustrations; delivery mechanism; and pronunciation. The concluding part of the paper discusses the success rate of students' effort to speak in English, the outcome and plan for its future improvement.***

English is the official language in a large number of countries and it is also considered to be the dominant business and social language. Tejshree Auckle stated in his article, "...it will examine the way(s) in which convert language policy and planning construct English as a valuable social, cultural and linguistic resource" (80). Hence it is very much necessary for people to speak English if they are to face the global workforce. Much of the world's top films, books and music are published and produced in English. By learning English therefore, one will have access to a great wealth of entertainment and a greater cultural availability. Hence, a major priority of higher education should be to provide the

highest possible quality in English language teaching.

Many students who enter college are unprepared for the demands career platform places on them. The understanding of education in the modern context, is not exclusive in academic terms alone. Higher education's role is also to produce graduates who are prepared for the workforce. Education should provide its learners skill to strike a balance between academic and practical experience.

Effective Communication is one such skill. It plays a vital role especially in domains where democracy prevails. As mentioned by Dr. C A Lal in his article on "Theme Centred

Interaction – Towards a Democratic Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom,” ‘Democratic Life’ constitutes another name for a life of inquiring, communicating, and learning.” (23). So democracy is a mode of associated living making possible the very process of interactive learning and understanding.

To relate and express their experience, knowledge and academic credentials, graduates need to possess communicating in English as their primary skill. One of the productive ways to improve speaking skill is “good listening.” Good listening plays a vital role in improving the communication skills. But people do not listen carefully. Ferguson states it as, “we hear only one quarter of what’s being said. The rest of the time we’re daydreaming or just tuned out completely”(3). Among all the four skills of language, listening and speaking are interdependent. One’s ability to speak well depends on his ability to listen well.

Higher educational institutions find it as a challenge and are prepared to train students in this art of spoken English and Communicating skills through listening. It is one of the prime factors for success. This pertinent issue and requirement in the current world of job market, employability and maintaining of relationships has been under constant debate, analysis and study. Though many observations and practice have been arrived at, a further attempt of experiential and experimental study was undertaken among the college students of TBAK college.

This paper discusses the need for students to speak in English and analyses their problems and impediments that hinder them from exercising the skill. The following observations were made: Young learners appear psychologically, emotionally and socially sensitive and vulnerable while talking in English in front of peers and they are called ‘fragile learners’ by Nothan Thomas in his article on “Attachment in the Young Learners’ Classroom: Overcoming Silence and Reticence.” They are often labelled shy, quiet and introverted. As such attempts were made to find ways to encourage the young learners to improve their speaking ability by overcoming these obstacles.

The outcome of one such initiative taken up by the department of English, TBAK College, Kilakarai is – SYTO Speak Your Thought Out, to train the students to speak in English fluently without any inhibition, to get practice in speaking and seek opportunities to speak in front of others.

**The objectives of the project are:**

- (i) to create recreational and consolidating opportunity for students to learn and practice oral English
- (ii) to trigger students’ creative talents by providing encouraging atmosphere

**The criteria for analysing the speaking skills are:**

- (i) their ability to choose the topic on their own preparation
- (ii) flow of thoughts and ideas with illustration

(iii) delivery mechanism; and pronunciation

This is implemented for all the students from Undergraduate level (See Table 1) from the year 2014-15 to 2016-17. It is made mandatory that five students from each class come and speak for 3-5 minutes to any teacher they preferred in English. Students are chosen by a system of lots. Marks are allotted by the staff they converse with. A record of the same is maintained by

the students for reference. This is a routine assignment they perform in rotation throughout their study.

This exercise is added as a main activity of the literary association apart from the routine task; interested students may purchase more number of tokens and speak to score points for award during the valediction of the association. Finally the students who have more tokens will be selected to be rewarded.

**Table 1**

S.No.	Class	No. of Students	Year	Involvement Intermediate Level	Involvement Advanced Level	Best Performers
1	I BA (3 Sections)	180	2015-16	10	7	3
2	II BA (3 Sections)	170	2016-17	63	3	5
3	III BA (2 Sections)	120	—	—	—	—

Among 470 students involved, all the 470 had attempted to speak out at least once. In the year 2015-16 three students were given best performer awards, seven students were given certificates for their involvement by taking special efforts to speak apart from their routine using extra lots and gained marks, ten students reached the intermediate level and the rest used only the minimum tokens which was made compulsory for them.

A special attempt was taken in the name of SFS (Start from the Scratch) as an extension of SFS to guide and encourage the slow learners by selecting one from each class to speak on a topic with continuous guidance for a period of three months. Given below is

the content of the format of SFS given to each student with guidelines and time frame for them to follow. Analysis of the year 2016-17 is given in Table 2.

- They have to communicate to two of their own department teachers and one teacher from another department in English
- The next step is to go to a higher level by communicating with the deans, vice principal and principal of the college
- Each section has a box for remark
- The final opportunity is to speak before an audience
- Teachers award marks in the column

- given
- Dates to be covered are printed in a format drafted by the purpose
  - Final remarks will be given by the staff-in-charge

The prime selection criteria to identify for SFS project are: Students who

- (i) have the eagerness to learn and speak fluently but feeling shy or not confident
- (ii) never speaks or utters a single word in English
- (iii) feel they have no potentials
- (iv) afraid of people making fun of them

**Table 2**

S. No	Class	No. of students	Positive Remarks	Suggestions for improvement
1	I BA	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved</li> <li>• Rigorous practice will help to improve better</li> <li>• Clarity in language</li> <li>• Proper pronunciation</li> <li>• Confidence improved</li> <li>• Good language flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay attention to body language</li> <li>• Improve pronunciation</li> <li>• Be slow</li> <li>• Improve eye contact</li> <li>• Improve language flow</li> <li>• Needs more training</li> <li>• Given few words to practice pronunciation</li> <li>• Be clear and audible</li> <li>• Pause and stress can be improved</li> <li>• Needs refinement in delivery</li> <li>• Cope with your nerves</li> <li>• Listen to recording of your speeches</li> </ul>
2	II BA	3		
3	III BA	3		

Few problems identified as a result of this project initiative are their (i) poor listening skill (ii) vocabulary (iii) pronunciation (iv) confidence. After practicing speaking through these assignments students started paying attention to what others say. They became conscious and started to think before they speak. In response to the remark given by the teachers from the format, students were given guidance to practice listening to audios in English

everyday, to prepare list of words with definitions and memorize them, to listen more and to practice pronunciation and to communicate effectively, keep a positive attitude. Ultimately, English as Foreign Language teachers need to develop their own corpus by providing relevant and high-frequency vocabularies to the learners which may be more beneficial to them to have a lists for their learning from the custom corpus.

## Stage 1



- Unreflective Speaker**  
They are unaware of the significant problems in their speaking
- Challenged Speaker**  
They face the problems
- Beginning Speaker**  
They try to improve

## Stage 2



- Practicing Speaker**  
They regularly practice and advance accordingly
- Advanced Speaker**  
They are committed to lifelong practice and are beginning to internalize intellectual virtues
- Accomplished Speaker**  
Intellectual skills and virtues have become second nature in our lives

Expected outcome of this project initiative:

- i. Formulating a theme of writing clearly and precisely to practice speaking
- ii. Gathers and assesses relevant information
- iii. Thinks open-mindedly and communicates effectively with others

This project is, in short, a self-directed practice. It requires rigorous exercise and mindful command of the use of language. It entails effective communication and the commitment to overcoming shyness in speaking.

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# Creating a User-Generated Learning Environment through Flipping Classroom: An Experiential Pedagogy

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Participatory learning improves students' learning and understanding of the concepts taught in a course. It can prove to be very effective in developing communication skills, higher order cognitive skills and inculcate problem solving ability among students. This kind of teaching learning environment calls for a paradigm shift, that is, to move from the teacher-centered approach to the student-centered approach. For better active learning, flipping the classroom is one of the techniques which can be employed.

“Flipping the classroom” means that students gain first exposure to the new material outside the classroom, usually via reading papers or watching lecture videos, or listening to audio and then use the class time to do the assimilation of that knowledge through problem solving activities, discussion, brainstorming or debates. Eric Mazur and Carl Weiman have published evidence that flipping the classroom and applying peer instruction techniques can result in ‘significant learning gains’ when compared to traditional instruction (Deslauriers et al., 2011). Similar results of students gain in learning through flipping classroom in arts discipline have been worked and validated in the Monash University Peer Instruction in the Humanities Project (Butchart et al, 2009).

Walvoord and Anderson describe examples of how this approach has been implemented in history, physics, and biology classes, suggesting its broad applicability (cited in Linda and Smith).

My work over the years has brought me into thinking heavily about the change of the role of learners from receiver to participant in the whole teaching learning process of a subject. Besides, I acknowledge the drastic shift in the learning aptitude of students due to an easy exposure and accessibility of technology and internet. I therefore, have been experimenting with, blogs, online forums and task based approach activities for collaborative learning from time to time. The flexibility and students' active participation were the key features which motivated me to try this pedagogy in my classroom.

The present study therefore, is an attempt to integrate flipped classroom environment in teaching of Cross Cultural Skills course which is a humanities elective course being offered to the first degree engineering students at Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani. Before the semester, during summer break I planned and worked out my teaching methodology and assessment for the course. In the first class after introducing the course, I discussed the

teaching methodology and assessment with my students (58) enrolled for the course. I taught most of the topics of Cross Cultural Skills by flipping the classroom in the First semester 2015-16.

Knowing this not being an easy regular technique, I decided to use it keeping in view the nature of the course and level of understanding of the students. Unlike regular flipped classroom I did not record my lectures but used the huge resource of YouTube videos and other video lectures available at other universities' websites as source. I feel video is a powerful tool in today's classroom. For example, Khan Academy is one such resource in a teacher's arsenal. Since nowadays, students are very much visual learners and with the quick spread of broadband internet access, this particular source should be used for the academic advantage both by teacher and students. I utilized a blended learning approach where students were asked to watch the video lectures and to read a couple of research papers related to the topic to be discussed in the next class. These were sent to them through LMS Nalanda. A *guided inquiry approach* was used at the beginning of the class which was followed by quiz or case studies for focused discussion or a task related to the topic was given to be completed in the class hour. This gave the students an opportunity to learn and conceptualize the concept even before they came to the class. They could go through the videos and papers at their own convenience of space and time but after coming to the class they were to have richer

discussions and practice the concepts with problems, so that they think critically and discuss the areas of problem with greater details with the help of peer feedback and teachers' insightful guidance.

Flipping saved time for deeper understanding and discussions and provided me with an opportunity to reach every student on one hand and engage students in independent learning process on the other hand. To ensure that students do the preparation necessary for productive class time, Walvoord and Anderson propose an *assignment based model* in which students produce work writing, problems, etc.) prior to class. This type of *inverted teaching* was done for teaching the topic, Intercultural Conflicts and Marketing. Students became interested in the topic because they learnt how culture affects marketing across cultures and lack of cultural sensitivity leads to conflicts and resulting into crumbling of many a business. They were asked to read a few papers and reading material sent through LMS Nalanda and also to work out on an application oriented question. This prior reading and working created an experience and also triggered questions and arguments which shaped the classroom session more interactive and experiential. This is in line with John Dewey's where he believes that the *nature of experiences* is of fundamental importance and concern in education and training. It is I's responsibility to *structure and organize a series of experiences* which positively influence each individual's potential future experiences.

The ensuing part of the concept note discusses how an entire topic was dealt with by using flipped classroom setting. For the first topic *Intercultural Communication: an overview* I sent to my students three research papers on Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context; An exploratory study of Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions in construction projects by Low Sui Pheng and Shi Yuquan; The Effects of Cross-Cultural Training on Expatriate Assignments by Hsiu-Ching Ko & Mu-Li Yang; and also sent three video links <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiOO8L031PY>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV04Msn-1GY>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcrFudqIGr4> through Nalanda. I also sent them the expected learning objectives and points of discussion for the next class. This way lectures became homework and class time was used for collaborative student experiential exercises. I initiated the discussion in the classroom regarding their understanding of the need for intercultural communication, the role of culture in international business and dimensions of culture affecting the businesses. During 20 minutes discussion there were arguments, examples and views. I conducted a quiz for 5 marks based on the videos and research papers for 10 minutes. After collecting the quiz papers I encouraged them to discuss the answers. Though the questions were multiple choice type but were application oriented which demanded a lot of deliberation for reaching the right answer. For last the 10 minutes the Euro Disney case was discussed which

failed due to lack of sensitivity of French and European Culture and imposition of the American way in Disneyland Paris. As a follow up, I gave them one take-home written assignment for 5 marks. I asked the students to identify business cases where cultural problems might have been the contributing factor to its failure, discuss and analyze it in the form of maximum 5 pages journal. They were also asked to provide the credit to the source of their case and also to quote the references if used any.

### **Observations and Reflections**

The transformation activity through the flipped classroom experiment went on really well. Students really used the knowledge gained from the given sources even before reaching the classroom and also actively participated, discussed, analyzed, applied it to have the hands on experience. However, I felt that more time need to be given to students to work on problems in class. To work more one on one with students more time is needed as compared to teaching in the non-flipped classroom. For this, if one more teacher is given to co-teach, the flipped classroom could be an effective means to have more time for one on one student-teacher interactions and helped in scaffolding deeper understanding of the concepts. Besides, planning a flipped lesson demands two times more time than the regular non-flipped classroom in order to identify the right and suitable videos, video questions, supplementary handout, and then plan the lesson to build upon the video effectively.

## Conclusion

With the growth of open education resources like Youtube, vodacasts, online journals, blogs etc flipped classroom pedagogy proves to be a learner-oriented classroom setting as it provides space for learning with interest, discussion and authentic learning experience. In terms of Bloom's revised taxonomy (2001), this means that students are doing the lower levels of cognitive work, that is, gaining knowledge and comprehension outside the classroom, and focusing on the higher forms of cognitive work that is, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation during class, where they have the support of their peers and instructor. However, as with any other pedagogical theory, the flipped classroom is not without criticism because a few teachers may find problems who value spontaneity during lecture. It can also be argued that a larger time investment is required, at least initially, for implementing the flipped classroom which is a difficult proposition in the syllabus-bound university teaching.

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**READING ACTIVITY**  
**READING TEXTBOOKS\* (PQRST Strategy)**

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**Objective** : To enable readers to employ PQRST strategy to read intensively to get the most out of a text and make use of them for the appropriate purposes

**Participation** : Individual

**Material** : Any lesson from a prescribed textbook

**Preparation** : Reading the lessons deliberately employing the PQRST strategy

**Procedure** :

Start with the **previewing** of a lesson. While previewing one looks at the titles, sub-titles, abstracts, summaries, illustrations, highlighted parts, graphs, charts, and other visual texts to get a sense of what the lesson is about before actually reading it. However, as most of the lessons in textbooks do not have these features students after glancing at the title should read the first paragraph completely and proceed to read the first sentences of a few paragraphs at random and end with reading the last paragraph. This will acquaint the students with what the lesson is about.

**Questioning** begins along with previewing the title itself. For instance, for a lesson namely, "The Selfish Giant" (Periyar University, Interactive English p. 49) one could raise questions such as how do giants look like?, are they imaginary or real creatures?, how could the giants be selfish like humans?... so on and it continues till the end of reading the lesson. The last strategy, testing, essentially depends upon the number of questions asked throughout the lesson. The more the merrier as the comprehension will be better and deeper.

**Reading**, as against the normal practice of plunging into the first paragraph of the first page, begins only after previewing and questioning and these two aspects lend sufficient familiarity to the text which enables a reader to read and comprehend the text faster. And, the processes of questioning and finding answers should continue even while reading between and beyond the lines and making inferences as well. As it is an intensive reading one may have to vary the reading speed and even pause at places to reflect over and integrate new knowledge with the existing ones.

**Summarizing**, again like questioning, is an ongoing affair. As and when a reader comes across an important idea it has to be summarized in his own words to internalize and to transfer it to the long term memory, which is the primary purpose of reading. A smart reader resorts to various mnemonic devices such as mind mapping to remember the ideas. What is stored in the memory comes handy while writing tests and assignments.

**Testing**, like other components such as questioning and summarizing, should happen all through reading as a reader has to constantly check whether he has understood all the significant aspects of the lesson. Testing doesn't mean answering those questions given at the end of the lesson after reading the entire text. And, it is obviously easier to answer the questions immediately after reading but one should be able to recall all the key ideas even after some time lapse which is possible only by frequently testing oneself.

**Learning outcomes:**

- 1) Students realize that learning from textbooks, even if it is challenging and tiresome, can be made possible by resorting to strategies such as PQRST.
- 2) Students understand that reading with a strategy, unlike blind reading, can make them effective readers by deeper comprehension and application of the knowledge gained.

**Further activity:**

Reading all the lessons of a textbook using the PQRST strategy.

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\***PQRST** is an acronym wherein P stands for Preview; Q for Question; R for Read; S for Summarize; and T for Test. While all the components are somewhat similar to the strategy SQ3R, the only variation is the last one, testing, which could be different from reviewing.