Language and Language Teaching

Vidya Bhawan
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Contents

In the memory of Prof. Rajendra Singh

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That many of us would witness the departure of Prof. Rajendra Singh so soon is still difficult to believe. He was a major linguist of the past few decades and his work in Phonology, Morphology and Sociolinguistics and in South Asian linguistics will always be remembered and valued forever. After getting his Ph D from Brown University, he joined the University of Montreal and made seminal contributions in phonology and morphology. Prof. Probal Dasgupta remarks: "His 1987 article 'Well-formedness conditions and phonological theory' (Wolfgang Dressler et al.[eds] *Phonologica* 1984, 273-285) was a much-cited landmark paper that helped change the course of phonology." Similarly, his work on Whole Word Morphology provided a completely new paradigm for examining the formal relationships obtaining among words. In fact, similar things can be said about most of his interventions into the nature and structure of language and its relationship to mind and society.

He was on the Advisory Board of LLT and was a very special person for the Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre of the Vidya Bhawan Society (VBS), Udaipur. He promised to spend a few weeks every year at VBS, and shared its dream of building bridges between the academia and education professionals of all kinds. He helped us conceptualize and eventually conduct several of our international seminars; the proceedings of some of these seminars have been published and translated into Hindi. He conducted courses on some aspect of language every year to enrich the resources of the Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre. Some of these included lectures/ discussions/ workshops on 'The Nature of Language' (published in English and Hindi as separate monographs from VBS, Udaipur, 2008); a lecture series on the Greco-Roman tradition in language teaching (likely to be published soon); a course in academic writing etc. He often 'blamed' some of us for pulling him into the discourse on 'Indian English' (IE) but that intervention on his part resulted in a position on IE that became a major site for discussion across the world. The 'Afterword' to the 1994 Sage volume (R.K. Agnihotri & A. L. Khanna, [ed.] *Second Language Acquisition*) initiated that discourse and it reached its climax in the publication of *Indian English: Towards a New Paradigm* (R.K. Agnihotri and Rajendra Singh, [eds.] 2013 Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi).

Those of us who were fortunate to share evenings with him at Udaipur remember him with great affection, respect and awe. Every time he concluded a discussion, we used to wonder how he could digest so much knowledge. Though he was always so humble and gentle in his academic discourse, he was never willing to surrender an inch unless there was a solid reason to do so.

VBS salutes him and would always cherish memories of the precious moments he spent with the VBS faculty.

Vidya Bhawan Society

Multilinguality in Academic Institutes in India

Nilu and Rajesh Kumar

Introduction

India is a land of many languages. According to the 2001 census, there are twenty-two official languages in India, and more than one thousand six hundred regional dialects along with their varieties. In the villages, children go to government schools for their primary and secondary education. In the government schools, the syllabus, examination, debates, speeches, official formalities, etc., are conducted in the first language. In high school and at the higher secondary level, all school activities in schools are conducted either in the first language, or in Hindi. Until high school, English may be one of the subjects, but it is not the language of the functional domains in most cases. Soon after the completion of formal secondary education, some students get into institutes of higher education such as the IITs, NITs, IIITs, IIMs, AIIMS, or other medical or engineering colleges and universities. When these students come to such institutions, everything feels alien to them. Almost overnight, the language of all their functional domains becomes English. English, which until now was restricted to being one of the subjects, becomes the medium of instruction. Discussions, speeches, debates, assignments, examinations, official formalities are all conducted in English. The drastic change in language from mother tongue to other tongue (English) becomes an impediment for the students, and not just in terms of their education. This change makes students suffer academically as well as psychologically. Achievements and knowledge are lost in questions of language that require serious attention in academics.

We know that every child is fluent in her first language (Chomsky, 1965). A child grows up with her/his first language, and brings it to school. However, when the child reaches a higher educational institution, she/he has to switch to English. A natural question arises at this point; why are higher educational institutions restricted to English? If India is a land of multilingualism, then the medium of instruction in academic institutes should also be multilingual. This paper examines the Indian scenario of education that offers a monolingual solution to a multilingual situation. The paper discusses multilinguality and the acquisition of English language in higher academic institutes with particular reference to IIT Patna.

Multilingualism in India

India is a land of multiple religions and socio-cultural environments. In fact, most children in India are multilingual. Multilingualism in India is a way of life so taken for granted, that we possibly cannot imagine another way of living socially. Not only do people speak different languages within and outside their homes because of social divisions, they also speak different versions of the same language across situations and with different social players. Chomsky (1986) argues that a child is born with the innate quality of acquiring/learning language. He further suggested that one of the requirements for such an acquisition was input

from the society that was fuzzy in nature and inadequate in quantity. It is reasonable to assume from this hypothesis, that the output of the acquisition may also result in a 'fuzzy' (*khichri*)—multilingualism. It is critical to note here that the acquired language is highly organized and rule-governed at all levels. Chomsky had described the concept of an ideal native speaker/hearer. However, an ideal speaker/hearer does not exist. The language in the real world cannot be defined as 'a language'. A person acquires and speaks many languages simultaneously. We take our language capacity to be monolingual, and consider multilingualism as an ability alien to humans. On the one hand we are programmed to learn our first language naturally and we have to make an effort to learn any other language, and on the other hand popular discourse in education that questions the learning ability of children in a non-native/foreign language drives us to consider humans as essentially monolingual. We all possess the capacity (Language Acquisition Device and Universal Grammar) to acquire and decipher different languages. However, this does not mean that we have direct access to languages. External input of the specific language is needed to learn it; however, we learn and comprehend much more than the input and this comes from a natural ability for languages. As Jackendoff (1993) puts it, "... language acquisition has to go far beyond just memorizing and reshuffling inputs one has heard. Much of the organization has to come from inside the brain" (p.101-111). The flexibility, with which a child picks up different languages spoken in the neighborhood, somehow seems to get lost, or wane as the child grows older. Why can't this adaptability in children to different languages be used as strength in teaching?

According to Chomsky (1965), linguistic theory should concern itself primarily with the investigation of a speaker's competence. He described competence as speaker's/hearer's knowledge of her language. Chomsky's ideal speaker/hearer was someone who lived in a completely homogenous speech community, had perfect command over its language, and was not affected by any grammatical irrelevant factors, such as limitation of memory, distraction, shift of attention or error (momentary or characteristic), in making practical use of her knowledge. By this definition of Chomsky, a multilingual speaker was considered to be a *non-ideal* speaker. However, people live in heterogeneous speech communities where they have an equally fluent command over many languages. Chomsky further talked about LAD (language acquisition device) according to which the acquisition of language takes place innately. But this acquisition device is not restricted to one language. A child gets exposed to a multilingual environment and has the capability to acquire many languages at the same time. The whole language acquisition process is designed to be multilingual; multilinguality is natural. The ideal speaker/hearer of Chomsky's idea of language was simply a machine for the scientific treatment of language in the society. However, when we look at society today, the scenario looks very different, i.e. 'language' can only be defined as multilingualism (Agnihotri, 2007, 2009).

There are many factors that are responsible for a multilingual society. A few obvious reasons are the necessity and co-existence of multiculturalism. Communication is essential for any society. When people move from one place to another, they need a local language. Multilingualism includes interdependence between speakers of two or more languages. In India, it is generally found in states where the natives do not share the predominant language, e.g., Santhali is spoken in Jharkhand, where the predominant language is Hindi. People who have an interest in a foreign language may also be multilingual. Sometimes people may find it necessary to acquire a second language for

practical purposes, such as business, information and entertainment. In countries such as India, multilingualism also stems from education; we teach children different languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, and English at school. Residents in border areas between two countries or states with different languages are naturally multilingual. In the Indian context, people may also learn different languages for religious purposes. Thus, we can say that multilingualism is an outcome of various direct or indirect factors.

The IIT Patna study

To substantiate the discussion so far, we conducted a pilot study at IIT Patna. This case study highlights the multilingual scenario of higher education with the dominance of English among the Indian languages. The study revealed that there is a mismatch between the languages spoken by the students, and the languages used for teaching in the institution. In fact the study of multilingualism in IIT Patna is closely related to multilingualism in India. There are about twenty languages spoken across IIT Patna; these include Hindi, Rajasthani, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, Kannada, English, Assamese, Manipuri, Sanskrit, Bengali, Haryanavi, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Malayalam, Braj, Maithili, Gujarati, Urdu, and Magahi. Almost every student at the institute is multilingual. There is no student who speaks just one language, or a 'pure' language. The knowledge of these languages is either through acquisition, as first language; through contact with speakers of the language; or through formal learning. The percentage of students who speak two languages, three languages, and four languages is 37 per cent, 54 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. English is included in every student's language profile and is most frequently used by the students. An analysis of the data collected for this research suggests that students

interact between themselves and with outsiders in many different languages as per the functional domains.

Although multilingualism has always been appreciated in the society, English seems to command a higher status. However, the dominance of English as a medium of instruction at IIT Patna results in students dropping out from the course, and performing poorly. Students living in a linguistically rich environment with the knowledge of so many languages are systemically forced to go through a situation that brings down their performance. Ironically, the same students are allowed to enter these very higher institutes of education even if they do not speak English as the entrance examinations are available in Hindi. However, when it comes to education, students do not have an option of education in anything other than English.

Conclusion

In schools, students speaking different first languages come together to study where they interact with each other without any difficulties. Yet, they are assumed to have problems if the medium of instruction is multilingual. This is the beginning of the neglect of multilinguality. In this era of globalization, English is not just the language of the world, but also dominates all Indian languages in terms of status and technical information. However, multilingualism is not a threat or an alternative to English; it is simply a solution to education. It is high time the educators recognize the need for multilinguality as a resource (Agnihotri, 2007).

Despite such strong motivating factors for learning multiple languages, our educational institutes continue to exist in a monolingual world. One needs to ask a significant question: Is multilingualism a barrier for education or an asset? In a time of domination of English and linguistic genocide (prohibition of the use of language of the groups in everyday

conversation and school), even the theoretical recognition that multilingualism is an inevitable aspect of human social fabric and accepting it as an asset, is half the battle won (Agnihotri, 2009). This thought itself has potential for a radical change in the world order, by turning it into a more sensitive, just and equitable society. Accepting multilingualism will imply forgoing the populist rigid notion of 'a language' and recognizing that all languages are equally rule-governed, rich and complex at the level of sounds, words and sentences. It will also free us from the shackles of linguistic stereotypes such as distinction between language and dialects. There appears to be a general belief that languages are pure, and dialects are their crude, unscientific versions. There was yet another belief that knowing many languages hampers cognitive development. Hence, we can say that Chomsky's idea of 'a language' is helpful only for theoretical machinery, whereas language in society, i.e. multilingualism, is considered as a practical skill.

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Multilingual Education and Literacy: Research from sub-Saharan Africa

Kathleen Heugh

Introduction

Countries of the global south have long histories of educating their children through local or regional languages which are used in the villages. They also have a rich literary tradition of scholarship, which pre-dates the colonial intervention that invariably resulted in the introduction of European languages, administrations and education systems. Today, with the rapid increase in the mobility of people, and the spread of global technologies, European, North American and Australasian education systems are grappling with how to manage linguistic and cultural diversity in the best possible manner. Books on bi-/multilingual education, mainly from Western-Northern perspectives (Heller, 2008; García, 2009; Blackledge & Creese, 2010), offer contributions on the utilization and the importance of inclusive approaches to education. However, these studies have limited traction in countries of the 'South' because they focus on the needs of linguistically diverse students who are regarded as minority students in a sub-set of majority mainstream systems. Despite increasing evidence of substantial 'South-led' research (Agnihotri, 2007; Mohanty et al., 2009; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010), academic contributions of the 'North' continue to disregard what has already been practised and learnt from valuable research in the 'South'.

In this article, I discuss some of the most recent, large-scale research conducted on literacy and multilingual education systems in Africa; I believe they may offer comprehensive findings which may be relevant for countries where multilingualism and multilinguality (Agnihotri, 2007) are the norm, rather than the exception. Kenyan scholar Alamin Mazrui (2002) argues that solutions to the current failure of education to meet the needs of school pupils in Africa include the dissemination of research regarding what works well and what does not work. He further emphasizes the importance of multidirectional exchange of information, research and experience, i.e. from Africa to the diaspora (South-South and South-North), rather than the mono-directional North-South exchange which has undermined development in Africa since the nineteenth century.

'Invisible' African education practices

We know that Africa has experienced at least three well-defined periods of multilingual educational practice which pre-date colonial intervention. These begin with the early Egyptian use of hieroglyphics, through the Coptic Christian use of Ge'ez, to the spread of education in various African languages written in the Arabic script as evidenced in the manuscripts of Timbuktu in Mali. Scholarship in various languages, which peaked in the twelfth century in Mali, was ahead of the Italian Renaissance. Yet, the late nineteenth century European partition of Africa 'invisibilized' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) African educational practices and records of this period. European or North American models of education, entirely out-of-kilter with the continent, and designed for

societies in which there was a single dominant language, were superimposed on the diverse African communities. Such ill-fitting models, of which 'outcomes-based' or 'constructivist' curriculum is the most recent, have not only been costly and have incurred an Africa-wide debt, but they have also underserved students for one hundred and thirty years.

Nevertheless, recent African research (in liaison with development agencies such as UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme-UNDP) has uncovered extensive data in language and literacy education, which may be useful for theoretical developments in international education and applied linguistics where these engage with linguistic diversity beyond Africa.

Part of international contemporary wisdom is that the longer children are in school, the more likely they are to access mainstream society and the economy. It is believed that successful students in mainstream state-provided education are those who succeed in developing high level literacy skills in the language(s) of the immediate community, which can later be transferred to high level literacy in a language of wider communication such as English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic or Mandarin. While research in Northern Europe and North America has pointed towards such findings in alternative-to-mainstream programmes (e.g. immersion bilingual, two-way immersion), in neither setting have data been drawn from system-wide (mainstream) studies.

Such data have however been gathered from studies conducted in African countries, particularly in South Africa and Ethiopia, as well as from other multi-country studies covering Sub-Saharan Africa (Alidou et al 2006; Heugh et al., 2007; Reeves et al., 2008; Ouane & Glanz, 2010, 2011). In addition to this, in an exchange of South-South research, the findings of a particularly interesting systemic study of language education in Ethiopia have recently been debated in relation to multilingual education initiatives in Latin and North America, India, Nepal, South-East Asia and Burkina Faso. Scholars from these settings have contributed research and theory from the 'peripheries to the centre(s)' (Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010). The implications of the Ethiopian and other studies of this volume point towards: decentralization of education to regional and local authorities, local skills development and community involvement in schools, provision of multilingual education, and improved rates of achievement. While this collection of studies may surprise stakeholders who are accustomed to looking North or West, it is generating international interest in what we do in the South.

The Ethiopian study

The Ethiopian study, which is backed with data collected from urban, rural and pastoral (nomadic) communities, demonstrates that it is possible even in one of the poorest countries of the world, to accommodate low cost linguistic, ethnic and faith-based diversity across an entire education system, and within a ten year timeframe (Heugh et al., 2007). The Ethiopian (federal) Ministry of Education adopted a new education policy in 1994, which included eight years of mother tongue education (MTE) along with the teaching of Amharic as a national second language, for all students whose mother tongue was not Amharic (this covered two-thirds of school students). In addition to this, the policy included the teaching of English as a Foreign Language from grade one, with a transition to English as a medium of instruction for secondary education (by grade nine). Like Afrikaans in South Africa, Amharic was used as a language of privileged political power and control in pre-1990 Ethiopia. Since Ethiopia had not succumbed to colonial rule, English had a limited role prior to this point. Political and educational changes in Ethiopia occurred along a similar

timeline to those in South Africa during the 1990s, with interesting comparisons over the last two decades. By 2010, MTE had been implemented for at least six years of primary education in eight out of eleven Ethiopian regions, and for eight years in four out of these (accompanied by language development in 32 languages). The uptake of this policy in an environment where only Amharic, Afan Oromo, and a little English had been used as languages of education prior to this point is phenomenal, given the minimal resources at the disposal of the federal and regional governments.

During the data collection phase of the study on the medium of instruction in Ethiopian Primary Schools in 2006, what was particularly striking for the researchers was the availability and daily use of locally produced textbooks and learning materials in languages of the local community. What was even more remarkable was that, in contrast with the results of the field research conducted in the schools in South Africa, these books were used in class and taken home for homework tasks on a daily basis. In South Africa, where commercial publishers produce expensive school textbooks, these are usually locked away in cupboards, seldom given in the hands of students, and rarely allowed home (Reeves et al., 2008). While there have been considerable challenges within the Ethiopian education system, and it has serious flaws and risks, including a recent change in publishing policy, South Africa has a great deal to learn about effective education reform from this resource-poor country. So do other countries from the South and North, where youth whose languages and cultures receive less acknowledgement either exit school prematurely, or face social alienation.

The Ethiopian case offers a microcosm of each of the language education models currently implemented across Africa and in other diverse settings. While there is a single federal language education policy, the regions have implemented it to different degrees. Systemic assessment in grade four and grade eight in the years 2000, 2004 and 2008 have provided the largest multilingual education datasets, across the world. These datasets illustrate the relation between the medium of instruction and student achievement across each of the language education models (zero MTE; 4 years of MTE; 6 years of MTE; a mix of 6 and 8 years of MTE—certain subjects in MT/MT for 6 years and another language for 8 years; and 8 years of MTE). The findings are historically and chronologically important.

Firstly, the data show that students with eight years of MTE outperform those with fewer than eight years of MTE. Students with a mix of six to eight years of MTE outperform those with six years of MTE, and students with six years of MTE outperform those with four years of MTE. This data correlates with the earlier data on African studies which indicates that students demonstrate higher levels of achievement with six years of MTE under ideal (well-resourced, experimental) conditions (Bamgbose, 2000), and with eight years of less well-resourced conditions (Alidou et al., 2006; Ouane & Glanz, 2010).

Secondly, the data suggest that students who learn three languages in the school system (including at least two scripts/orthographic systems) have higher levels of academic achievement than those who learn only two languages.

Thirdly, students' achievement in science declines sharply with fewer than eight years of MTE.

Fourthly, students who have at least six years of MTE before they switch to English medium, do best in mathematics.

Fifthly, where there is a higher concentration of rural and small urban centres, students exhibit higher levels of achievement than students in the more urbanized contexts. These findings

correlate with higher community participation in schools and education in the rural and small towns. Despite frequent misconceptions about the low levels of involvement and interest of nomadic communities in education, the Ethiopian study revealed that even in pastoral societies, communities hold strong and informed views on education and the role of languages in education.

There is yet another critical phenomenon in relation to the data emerging from the Ethiopian study. While the MT/home language policy was implemented and given strong federal government backing between 1994 and 2002, a change in the education minister was accompanied by a change in focus towards a greater prioritization of English throughout the education system from 2003. A new set of plans was put in place to increase the role of English which emphasized the teaching of English in primary schools. By 2004, an English language consultant from the United Kingdom was brought in to develop an in-service teacher education programme to improve teachers' proficiency in English. This diverted 42 per cent of the teacher education budget towards a cascade model English language improvement from 2005, involving one hundred and twenty hours of intensive contact time for English language tuition and eighty hours of distance education. Within two years all primary school teachers in the country had participated in this programme. The data collected in 2006 elicited disturbing information about this programme and its efficacy. The report (Heugh et al., 2007) and the volume (Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010), reveal the impact and 'washback effect' of greater prioritization of English on the achievement of students in the system at the time. Despite the enormous cost of providing in-service teacher education in English across the system, student achievement in the 2000 and 2004 assessments showed significant decline subsequent to the focus on English in the 2008 systemic assessment, particularly in mathematics

and science. This has occurred subsequent to the roll-out of the English language improvement programme across several regions, and a switch to English medium, especially in mathematics and science (see Coleman, 2011 for critiques of over-dependency on English in developing countries.)

Lessons from the Ethiopian study

The Ethiopian case offers international educational theory not only large datasets which validate contemporary theory of bi/multilingual education, but also four valuable lessons.

- The first lesson is that it is possible, even with minimal expenditure, to develop, and implement multilingual education in resource-poor countries.

- The second lesson is that high cost intervention provided by experts from other countries (in this instance, a cascade model for English language improvement) does not always show positive returns on investment. In fact, in this case, the evidence points to lower levels of student achievement.

- The third lesson contributes to new theory that students who learn three languages have higher levels of academic achievement than those who learn two languages, particularly in mathematics and science.

- The fourth lesson indicates that students with longer MTE followed by a transition to English have higher achievement levels, particularly in mathematics and science.

The last two points counter earlier unsupported claims that the learning of more than one language detracts from students' potential achievement in mathematics and science.

Finally, Alamin Mazrui (2002) recommends that in order to transform the education system in Africa, more attention ought to be directed towards what can be learned from within the continent and from South-South exchanges of expertise, rather than looking towards models

outside Africa. In fact, a lot can be learned from Ethiopia, and from a thorough investigation of education on the African continent through different historical periods dating as far back as ancient Egypt. Similarly, exchange of research experience between South Asia and Africa would also offer insights to European, North American and Australasian investigations on how best to include linguistic and cultural diversity in the curricula of Northern systems of education, both in respect of indigenous and migrant minority education.

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In a Multilingual Class

Rajni Dwivedi

I was assigned the task of teaching grade three children in a government school. Most of the children were from the lower middle class background, and were first generation learners. While the mother tongue of these children was Chhattisgarhi, some of them could speak and understand Hindi (a few common words and sentences in *kamchalau* Hindi, not textbook Hindi). I did not know a single word of Chhattisgarhi. I present below a brief account of some of my initial interventions in the teaching of Hindi to these children.

One day, I decided to tell the children a story as we were not able to make much headway with reading the textbook. When I asked the children if they would like to hear a story, all of them showed a keen interest and enthusiasm. I prepared a story, and the next day I began narrating it to the children. But within a few minutes (I was not able to finish even one-fourth of the story), I realized that the engagement and interest level in the story had dipped significantly; as many as 80 per cent of the children were not listening and were engaged in some other work (copying something from a book, playing with a bottle or a pen, talking, etc.) I told them to stop whatever they were doing, and then asked them why they were not listening. I did not get any answer. Just to check, I asked a few questions, (*kahani mein kaun kaun hai?; ped kahan hai?*). Once again, I did not receive an answer.

Some more questions later, I realized that most of the children had not been able to comprehend the story. Their enthusiasm and interest had vanished as they were not able to understand some of the key words in the story, and were therefore neither able to make sense of the story nor make any connections. It was therefore natural that they had lost interest.

I asked a few of them—who seemed to understand—to translate the story in their own language for the others. They were surprised. They could not believe that a teacher was asking them to translate the story in their language. Some of the children looked at me in confusion, others were feeling shy to come forward, some were smiling at me, and some may even have been thinking what a stupid task I was assigning them.

I then requested a grade five child to translate the story for the class. He asked me if I really I wanted him to translate it. He reconfirmed thrice to reassure himself, and then with a shy smile on his face, he started translating.

There was pin-drop silence in the class. Everyone was listening with rapt attention. After the story was over, I asked the children some questions, and they were able to answer them. I was quite satisfied. The class did not end that day, in fact the real classroom transaction started from that day; a lot of children gradually started talking to me in the language(s) they knew.

At times, when I was not able to understand what they were trying to say, they tried to communicate with the help of gestures, or by making pictures, or by asking another child who they felt could help. The reverse was also happening; they unhesitatingly started asking me

to re-explain things if they did not understand what I was trying to say.

They also started sharing their fights, jokes, songs, experiences of home, functions, field, and the work that they did, in the class. The children not only started speaking up, but they also started taking part in the class activities. I also noticed a change in the behavior of the children who were initially not listening to me; gradually they started helping me. They started participating in the group activities and helping other children, and stopped going out from the classroom whenever they wanted to.

The entire interaction became very meaningful for all of us. We were all learning from each other, not just about the words of each other's language and the way the verbs, plurals, etc., worked, but also about how we did different things, how we said things, and how we related to things. In short, we learnt a little bit about each other's culture. The conversations brought out the diversity in how people address each other, how they celebrate festivals, what kind of work their families are involved in, how it is done, what it requires, etc. There were conversations around each of them, and the recognition that each of them was worthwhile and contributed in a meaningful manner. We also talked about different languages, identity issues, dignity of the individual and culture and its relationship to language.

This experience of a multilingual class gave me an insight into a lot of important issues related to language and communication. I could appreciate what it took to break through the boundaries of 'a language'; although language by itself was not the only tool, but it certainly played a crucial role as it was not only connected to aforesaid values, but also with meaning-making, thinking, sharing, and communicating ideas.

The whole experience made me very reflective about what may have happened in the earlier classes that I had taught. Had the children been engaged at all, and had they comprehended anything? Why had the children been so hesitant to use their mother tongue? It also made me think about the kind of changes I should make in the way I facilitated the classroom, and what I could learn from the children. I also realized that given the opportunity, the children could put in a lot more effort to understand what was going on, and also follow the teacher and the learning route proposed by her/him. More importantly, they could make the teacher understand what they wanted to convey and thus ensure that the classroom transactions become more meaningful.

Finally, I realized what the term 'engagement' implies, and how an unfamiliar language could hamper children's contribution in the class; while the use of their own language could increase their participation. Giving a voice to all the languages of children in the class could be a really challenging task as it involves a lot of effort on the part of the teacher, but the gains are immense and more than worthy of the effort.

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Role of L1 in Foreign Language Learning Classrooms: A Case Study of Learners of French

Shambhavi Singh

Introduction

Research into the role of using learners' first language (L1) in a foreign language (FL) classroom has been a subject of much debate. On the one hand, there are researchers such as Prodromou (2000), who claim that a learner's mother tongue is a 'skeleton in the closet'; on the other hand, there are others such as Gabrielatos (2001), who find L1 as a 'bone of contention' in the second language (L2) or FL learning. But in a country such as India, which has an unavoidably multilingual and multicultural societal set-up, use of the learners' L1 in an FL classroom can help the teacher preserve learner identity, and simultaneously promote language learning. This is especially relevant given the strong support in favour of multilingualism by several researchers (Jessner, 2008; Agnihotri, 2009) in the last decade, and the emphasis on using learners' L1 in L2 and FL classrooms in the national educational documents such as the National Curriculum Framework and Position Papers (NCERT). Hence, although multilingualism has been accepted as an advantage, it is not yet a part of common FL teaching practice in India.

At the university level, most students often learn foreign languages as their third (L3) or fourth language (L4). It has been proven that effective learning entails proceeding from familiar to new items. Hence, FL teachers could utilize the students' knowledge of their L1 to familiarize them with the linguistic or extra linguistic features of the FL. But not many teachers are convinced about this, therefore the L1 awareness of learners remains unused or underused.

In the light of the above discussion, this paper reports the findings of a study which aimed at improving the writing skills of French (as a FL) language learners by using their L1 systematically and judiciously.

Use of L1 in the FL classroom

Proponents of exclusive use of the target language (TL) (Ellis, 1986; Krashen, 1981) in FL classroom consider learners' L1 as a source of interference in FL acquisition. But as rightly pointed out by Macaro (2005), till date no study has been able to prove conclusively that exclusive use of TL leads to improved learning. On the contrary, there are studies and theories which confirm that L1 can be used as an effective pedagogical tool in the FL classroom. The proponents of multilingual theory claim that a multilingual class is expected to promote not only healthy interaction, but also greater tolerance of unfamiliar cultures and languages. In addition, *multicompetence* (Cook, 1991) has been proved as a facilitator of cognitive flexibility (Agnihotri, 2007) and positive transfer of competence among languages (Kecskes, 1999). Since multilingualism is a widespread reality in the Indian linguistic map, use of the learners' L1 in an FL classroom can be no less than a boon, as their previous experiences as language learners can be utilized in the target language classroom.

Cook (2005), talks about two languages in the same mind, and emphasizes on the systematic and deliberate use of L1 to promote L2 learning through incorporation of methods which allow the use of both languages. Similarly, Butzkamm (2003), asserts that selective use of L1 helps in maintaining a relaxed atmosphere, and reducing affective filters such as stress and frustration.

The present study is also grounded in the sociocultural theory which postulates that L1 works as a mediating tool, enabling learners to have access to things which they cannot achieve through exclusive TL use in a collaborative task (de la Colina & Garcia Mayo, 2009). Therefore, when a task is challenging and complex in the target language, learners turn to their L1 to perform the tasks (Swain & Lapkin, 2005).

Hypothesis and research questions

This study is based on the assumption that tactical use of learners' L1 awareness facilitates successful learning of writing skills in French. It attempts to answer the following questions:

- Can learners' L1 awareness be used to develop their writing skills in French?
- How effective is the above approach?

Methodology

Participants: A case study approach was followed for developing the design of the study. The sample for the study consists of a homogeneous group of six learners pursuing a Bachelor's degree in French (II year) at EFL University, Hyderabad. They belonged to the age group 19-22 years, and shared the same L1—Hindi. These learners studied English as L2, and were studying French as L3.

Tools for data collection:

- Classroom observation schedule
- Pre- and post- tests
- Semi-structured interview schedule.

Procedure for data collection: Data collection began with the observation of five classes in French writing. These were followed by pre-tests in Hindi and French, and then by an intervention and a post-test in French writing skills. A detailed descriptive account of learners' responses to the intervention was maintained. Finally, the learners were asked to share their experiences of the intervention in a group interview.

Results and Discussions

Classroom observation: The researcher observed that the teacher used Hindi for translating new words and expressions, and learners used it for answering questions and participating in group work. Furthermore, the main focus of the writing course was not only teaching writing skills, but also improving the comprehension of written texts. Learners were allowed to use their L1. The class followed a free writing approach rather than a guided one.

Pre-tests in Hindi and French: Pre-tests both in Hindi and French were administered in order to determine the ability of the learners to perform writing tasks in L1 and L3. The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) B1 level assessment grid for writing was used to score the answer scripts. To maintain objectivity, the scripts were evaluated by the researcher as well as a French teacher.

For the pre-test in Hindi, questions were taken from a CBSE intermediate board examination, and the scripts were assessed by the researcher as well as a Hindi teacher using a CEFR B1 level writing assessment grid. Due to space constraint, the citations from the participant's scripts could not be included in this paper.

By minutely analyzing the Hindi pre-test scripts, it was ascertained that the learners did not face any problems in writing an essay; the average score was around 85 per cent. However,

analysis of the French essay revealed that the learners faced difficulties not only in following the morphosyntactic and grammatical rules, but also in structuring and organizing the essay. Hence, this study focuses only on the structure, organization and revision of writing for a beginner level, as suggested by Brown & Abeywickrama (2010).

Intervention: During the five day intervention, a process-genre approach was used to teach writing as it is considered as the golden mean of three approaches, namely process, product and genre. The content of the intervention and the type of tasks used were based on the analyses of the pre-test and classroom observations, and the socio-cultural background of the learners.

The objective of the intervention was to use L1 to teach writing skills in French as a FL, wherever necessary. The use of L1 during the intervention was not pre-determined as there is no theory or research that touches upon about the exact situations for using L1. However, the learners' pre-test scripts gave an indication of where they needed help.

In this study, the learners' L1 awareness was used during the intervention for:

- Structuring and organizing the essay
- Brainstorming
- Learning connectors
- Revision
- Giving instructions.

Comparative analysis of the pre- and post-tests in French

After the intervention, a post-test was conducted in French, and analyzed to measure the impact of the intervention. This analysis was done in two stages:

- *Stage 1*: A comparative intra-paragraph analysis of the students' writings was done

to determine whether each paragraph consisted of a main idea and supporting details; and that ideas were linked.

- *Stage 2:* A comparative inter-paragraph analysis of the students' writings was done to determine whether there was an introductory paragraph, a main body and a conclusion; and that paragraphs were linked.
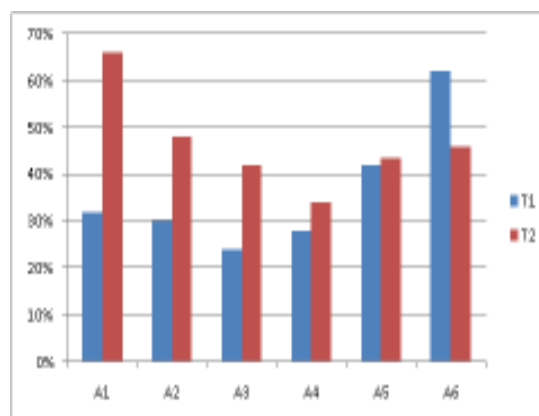
The regression in the performance of A6 can be attributed to physical or psychological factors such as fatigue, anxiety, illness, etc. (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

Conclusion

The findings of the study confirm that L1 is an effective pedagogical tool that can be consciously exploited by making explicit references to the learners' L1 knowledge, in order to accelerate the learning process in an FL classroom. Also, the interview with the learners confirmed that their language of thought is Hindi (L1), and that it facilitates the understanding of new things. Similarly, L1 awareness should also be used to reduce the cognitive burden, which in turn may give rise to a high affective filter. In other words, it is a constructive way of making the most of what FL learners already know in terms of ideas, concepts, and linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge. Utilization of L1 may lead to

successful learning as it enables us "to learn a new language without at the same time returning to infancy and learning to categorize the world all over again" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p.72).

Future studies can perhaps focus on the use of L1 in relation to different aspects of writing in detail. Also, studies may be taken up with experimental and controlled groups so that the findings can be generalized for a larger population.

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Language and Culture: About a Saora class one primer

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Introduction

This article reflects on the process[1] of producing a class one primer for the Saora children, and its subsequent field trial. The socio-cultural context of the child is seen as the foundation of learning. In the primer, Saora folklore was used as the content, and Saora language as the medium of learning, thus ensuring an inbuilt context drawn from the children's environment. Our work showed that it was possible for a child to learn two or more languages at the same time if her own language is actively used in the learning process; it also seemed possible to engage children in analytical activities which enhance their logical and cognitive abilities.

Schools in the saora context: issues and challenges

Saora is a scheduled tribe from the Gajapati district of Odisha, India. The tribal population constitutes 50 per cent of the total population of Gajapati. They speak Saora, a language belonging to the southern Mundari language group. Out of 895 villages with schools, in 440 villages Saora speaking children constitute over 90 per cent of the population. While 332 schools have 90-99 per cent Saora speakers, the rest of the 118 villages are completely (100 per cent) inhabited by the Saoras. Children in these villages have little exposure to Oriya, the school language. Therefore, teaching and learning become a major challenge in these villages since there is a wide gap between the language of the teachers, the children and that of the textbooks.

For this project, about 30 schools were taken up on pilot basis where there were only Saora children. Teachers from the Saora community were identified and trained to write bilingual primers. Community tales and songs were collected from the Saora villages. The Saora teachers, along with resource persons[2], conducted workshops on preparation of bilingual primers in Saora and Oriya.

The primer for class one was culturally identifiable by the children and teachers. The book was entitled *Erai Erai* (Come Come), since it opened with a Saora poem that meant 'Come come children, let's play'. This book took shape in a workshop (see endnote '1') that focused on the preparation of materials which recognized the linguistic potential of children and valued their cultural practices as a resource. The primer comprised 34 lessons that were based on cultural themes provided by Saora resource persons. These included home, garden, village, mountain, fruits, folktales about birds and animals, cultivation, hunting, market, and many more themes that represented the experiential knowledge of the Saora children and community.

The experience was a departure from the conservative pedagogical texts and practices. It was a space where the content and process, context and language were from the Saora community. A new discourse of indigenous knowledge had been created for the Saora children. The thirty-four lessons of *Erai Erai*,

composed and illustrated in collaboration with the Saora teachers, perhaps for the first time privileged the linguistic and cultural practices of the children in the formal domain of school. This acknowledged the existence of the historically denied language and content of Saora knowledge system by the dominant school and social system. For the Saora teachers and children, it was indeed a new dawn.

The tale is as follows

Saora [3]	English	Oriya
Aboi aaniblin baagu anti daakunlinji	In a tree, two birds were living.	Gotie gachhare duiti chadhei rahuthile.
Badina aaninji rudilinji	One day they had a quarrel.	Dine semane kali kale.
Arudilinji aasele jaitaa galuliji	As they quarrelled, they fell down.	Kali kari semane tale padigale.
Aboi dukriboi daakuli	There was an old woman.	Jane budhi thila.
Anin bindiaan bindiaanlin kumaabaan aaboi mungbaa daakuitin.	After she had finished cooking, she stored the ash in one place.	Se randhi sari,paunsaku gote jagare rakhila.
Aasaajan baraan aaboi mungbaa daakuitin	She stored the charcoal in another place.	Angara ku au gotie jagare rakhila.
Aayinte aawamti kumablingan lagtule, ani paludun deyle.	One of the birds fell into the ash and became a heron.	Gotie chadhei paunsa upare padila o baga hela.
Butinte aashaajan asailingan laagtulli aani yegaadun deyle.	The other bird fell into the charcoal and became a crow.	Anya chadhei ti angara upare padila au kau hela.

The field testing of *Erai Erai* took place over seven days across twenty-four pilot schools in the Nuagada block. The text book writers demonstrated all thirty-four lessons in these schools and gathered the responses of the children.

I went to the village of Titising to observe the field testing. Philip Mandala, the Saora teacher narrated the tale to the children, and the children grasped the tale in one go. Next, he showed the children pictures depicting the story and asked them some questions based on the story. The children exhibited very diverse reactions to the pictures. The pictures of the story were speaking much more than the written text.

Using local myths

Out of the thirty-four lessons, an aetiological myth, *kadan da kaka* (the Heron and the Crow) was used in one of the lessons of the primer. This Saora tale tries to explain how the heron and the crow were born. I have attempted to reproduce the classroom transaction of this tale, as observed by me during the field testing of the class one primer.

Children's construction of texts out of text

The Saora children reacted enthusiastically to the text, and there was a distinct sense of ownership. They provided refreshing perceptions of the tale and the pictures. They even formed new tales out of the picture, which, until now, had been inconceivable for a teacher.

A child looked at the picture of the text book and said, "That tree in which the birds hang about has a hollow. A snake lives there. When the birds are away, the snake will go to the nest and eat the eggs." (Of course this was text was not from the textbook.)

I noted that the children knew about snakes eating eggs from the nests of birds, and did not

hesitate to talk about it if an appropriate context was provided. However, what was particularly striking was that the high levels of silence that one usually associated with formal schooling in the early classes was completely absent.

Another child looked at the picture and remarked, "The hut is under the tree, and because the hearth is outside the hut, the hut will catch fire."

The teacher asked, "Why will that happen?"

The child replied, "The old woman will cook food and go for her bath to a brook nearby. While she is away, the hut will catch fire. The woman will have no house when she comes back from her bath."

These two creative events narrated by the Saora children were clearly experiential, and had been derived from their cultural context. The snake eating the eggs of the birds, or huts getting burnt in fires, are events which originated in the imagination of the Saora children looking at the situation in the picture. Their priority, after looking at the picture, was not the text that the teacher had narrated, but a recollection from their memory. This in turn helped the teacher construct new knowledge from their past events. The teacher (Philip Mandal), puzzled by the responses of the children, was not ready to accept the new narratives of the children. However, on being prompted that children learn from the known to the unknown, and the fact that they were right when they spoke about the bird, the tree and the fire, he got an insight into the fact that children had the ability to create new texts from a given text. Philip's eyes were bright with a sense of wonder and he confessed, "I thought that children got distracted from the main text."

Therefore, allowed to construct from their knowledge, children could create a text within a text. Their language of thought helped them discover their own experience, based on which they constructed new knowledge of their own.

In this case, they connected their previous experience with the pictures given in the book.

Needless to say, the whole class participated animatedly in the discussion between the teacher and children conducted in Saora as the children did not feel oppressed by a language they did not know. The primacy of using languages that children were familiar with was firmly established.

Teachers' language pedagogy

In the workshop, there were several sessions in which participants focused on the analysis of the patterns that had evolved from related words and sentences. The bilingual words and the grammatical patterns that were deconstructed from the text were easily accessible to the school teachers and children; even the non-Saora teachers were able to handle them.

Some words from the tale: From Saora to English

aboi - one, *bagu* - two, *anin* - she/he, *anib* - tree, *badina* - one day, *aninji* (plural), *dukri* - old woman, *bandin* - oven, *kuma* - ash, *assaj* - charcoal, *dakuitin* - stored.

Once the grammatical markers were brought to the notice of the children, they were able to grasp them easily. Some grammatical patterns learnt from the text: 'ji' is used as plural after the verb in past tense.

1. *Rudilin + ji* = Kali + kale (quarrelled)

   Dakulin + ji = rahu + thile (living) (in the case of singular it is *dakulin*, for plural it is *dakulinji*)

   Galu + li + ji = padi + gale (fell down, plural) *galuli* (singular)

Once they had learnt the principle of using 'ji' in Saora for past tense, the Saora children learned the Oriya verbs very easily by following the Saora verbs for past tense. They inferred that the equivalent of 'ji' in Saora is 'le' in Oriya.

The verbs were hence transferred spontaneously from Saora to Oriya in the mind of the child. They understood that 'ji' was used in the plural form and it corresponds to objects.

2. *Kumab + aan* = paunsha + ku (to ash)

   Assaj+ aan = angara + ku (to charcoal)

   Kumaab + lingan = pausnha + re (on the ash)

   Assaj+ lingan = (angara + re) on the charcoal

Similarly, another principle of grammar was explored by the children. They understood that the Saora suffix 'aan' became 'ku' in Oriya, and that 'lingan' meant 're' in Oriya, and that it corresponds to location in space.

The grammatical principles were compared with the Oriya sentences in the given Saora tale. The Saora children had the content and the language to learn a new language through a few words, i.e. association of words and objects in both languages. Thus the text, context and texture were analysed to unfold new processes of learning.

Once this lesson was taught:

- Children could read Saora words that were known to them;

- They could understand the different forms of related words from their language;

- They could understand the Oriya words in the picture, and also learnt their spoken and written forms;

- They were able to read, comprehend, and write a few words in both languages;

- They were able to explore the principles of grammar in both languages and arrive at the conclusion that a language is governed by rules. They also recognized that Saora was in no way inferior to Oriya;

- The teachers participated actively in the preparation of the material.

Enam Gomanga, an experienced Saora teacher drew a picture of a bird eating an apple. This picture was shown to a child. The child recognized the bird, but the fruit was not familiar to her. The child uttered the word *Antidan* (bird), and then stopped. I asked Enam to change the picture and draw a mango instead of an apple. Now the new picture was shown to the child. Under the picture, there was a sentence. We wanted to see how a child was able to read out a text just by looking at a picture. The idea was to help the child to develop confidence in picture-reading, which could subsequently become guessed picture-sentence reading in any other language.
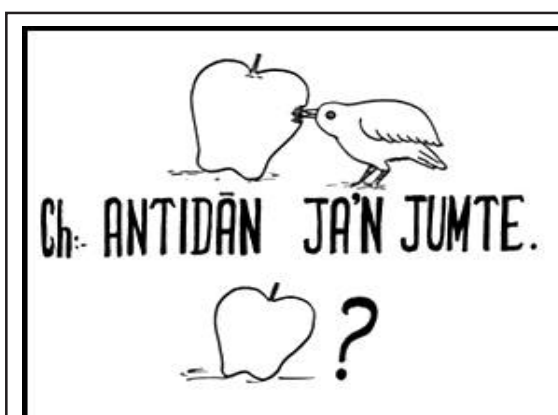
Situation I: Non-contextual	Situation 2: Contextual
Antidan jaan jumte.	**Antidan** *uda* jaan jumte.
The bird is eating the fruit.	The bird is eating mango fruit.

In situation I, the text was presented to the child and she was expected to read the sentence.

In situation II, the child framed a new sentence using the word *uda* (mango), which although not given in the text, was read confidently by the child. This was not word reading, but picture reading with understanding.

These pictures were not created by teachers, but by artists who were not familiar with the children's visual culture. In Saora villages, people are familiar with mangoes but not with apples.

Observations

When the Saora villagers and parents visited the school, to their surprise they heard the teachers narrating stories in their spoken language. They could not believe that their language could be taught in school. For the part of the children, since they could easily grasp what was being taught, they did not remain absent from school. The classroom became culturally responsive, and the teachers were happy to see that each and every child was participating in the class.

The Saora children were talking to the Saora teachers in the classroom; they were asking questions, giving answers, taking part in discussions and thinking about the text from a metacognitive point of view. They were exploring their own experiences individually as well as in small groups, focusing on the events in the story. It was possible for them to articulate their real life experiences as well as their imagined tales and fantasies.

When a tale is written down and made into a text for the children, it is accepted as a part of recognized curricular text. This reminds us about the power equation between oral and written texts in our society. The whole process provides an agency to the teacher which is completely absent from the superposed normative textbooks. For the children, the teachers and the parents, there was clearly an assertion of self-identity in this whole process.

Conclusion

Respecting diversity means accepting the healthy democracy in a society where co-existence of man, animal and environment is maintained. The globe is sustained through cultural diversities. Perhaps the most constructive way of engaging children in language and knowledge construction is to give place to their linguistic and cultural practices in the class.

[1] I have been interested in the cultural and linguistic practices of various tribal communities of Odisha, India. A series of workshops were held during the late 1990s by several educationists, sociolinguists and psychologists including Prof Rama Kant Agnihotri and Dr Minati Panda. I was deeply influenced by the work and perspectives of Prof Agnihotri and Dr Panda, which encouraged me to focus on the potential of the child and his/her cultural and linguistic repertoire. It also became clear to me that the most meaningful materials for children must be in their own language, and folklore could best be produced in collaboration with the teachers who were going to teach those books. It was against this background that a workshop was held in Gumma, near Parlakhemundi in Odisha.

[2] Prof Rama Kant Agnihotri tried to analyse Saora grammar in Guma Block. Prof Agnihotri participated in 5 workshops in Odisha during 1998-1999.

[3] The story teller was Sri Ghasi Sabar , a teacher and a cultural resource person from Rayagada district, engaged in writing the Saora primer.

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Thinking Culture in a Language Classroom: Teaching Gujarati as a Foreign Language

Venu Mehta

Introduction and background

It becomes indeed a pleasant experience for the learners of a foreign language to be in an atmosphere where the culture of the target language is present, or has been incorporated in the teaching. This article attempts to demonstrate the significance and function of cultural elements/artifacts in teaching a foreign language. It is an account of a promising practice where the cultural associations of the target language have been attached to language learning. It is an academic reflection, and recounts the experiences of a teacher who teaches Gujarati as a foreign language at an American university[1]. The article gives a detailed description of an active classroom where Gujarati vocabulary is taught by integrating cultural elements/artifacts. In the classroom, culture is the main focus of curriculum, hence influencing the content and image of the teaching material. For the purposes of this paper, Gujarati will be the target language for those whose native language is English. The goal of the article is to demonstrate to foreign language teachers how they can incorporate the teaching of cultural elements/artifacts into their foreign language classrooms.

Vocabulary in a FL classroom

Vocabulary is an essential component for successful communication in a foreign language (FL) classroom. When it comes to learning a foreign language, it becomes even more critical. Awareness of words seems to give enough confidence to learners to produce a language. The task of teaching vocabulary is challenging for most language teachers, for FL teachers it is especially challenging . The teacher needs to be very innovative to design a lesson where learning the vocabulary becomes an interesting activity in the classroom. The teacher also needs to ensure that the new words are taught in the appropriate context ensure maximum retention.

The classroom structure and the learners

At this point, it will be helpful to define classroom structure and learners in order to understand this study. For the purposes of this paper, learners are defined as having beginners' level familiarity with Gujarati, and having an awareness of the Gujarati culture when they first come to the beginners Gujarati class. The process of teaching-learning focuses on communicative approach, therefore the classroom activities are highly dependent on hands-on activities by the learners.

Culture in language learning: from theory to practice

Austrian-British philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who worked on the philosophy of language stated, "If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world." Wittgenstein indicates a definite relationship between language and culture-society. Culture is often considered as mere information conveyed by the language, and not as a feature of language; cultural awareness

therefore becomes an educational objective in itself, separate from language. If, however, language is seen as a social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency, and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency (Kramsch, 1993, p. 8). Language is considered as a human institution. Lado (1964) posits, "language does not develop in a vacuum. It is a part of the culture of a people" (p. 23). It is clear that language is undoubtedly a social phenomenon. It is not possible to break apart the relationship between culture, society and language. Lado (1964) further states, "as the chief instrument of communication, language attaches specific words and phrases to the most frequent cultural meaning" (p. 23). Thus, the beliefs, rituals, customs, thoughts, mannerisms, and arts of any society or culture are reflected in and transmitted through its language. In fact, the linguistic development of human beings is mostly a social and cultural process. Conversely, socio-cultural patterns are reflected in language and in all major aspects of language such as vocabulary, pronunciations, and variations in sentence structures. Involvement of socio-cultural theory suggests that human mental activity emerges specifically as a result of the internalization of social relationships, culturally organized activity and symbolic artifacts (Vygotsky, 1986; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In this regard, the integration of cultural artifacts/ elements may facilitate and ensure a more cognitive way to foreign language learning as it allows learners to experience a more motivating environment. Another important relevance of incorporating cultural elements/artifacts is the consideration of an 'affective filter'; Krashen (1981) remarks, "… people acquire a second language only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input" (p. 84). This suggests that integration of cultural elements/artifacts helps in lowering the affective filter, and provides 'comprehensible input' in learning a foreign language.

Rangoli and Toran: Cultural artifacts/ elements as a tool and authentic material

It is now an acknowledged fact that the study of different cultures aids us to know about different people, and is necessary in order to understand and respect other peoples and their ways of life. It also makes us aware of the similarities and differences in the lives of various cultural groups. If we provide our learners with just a list of facts of history or geography, and a list of lexical items, we will not have provided them with an intimate view of what life is really like in the target culture and language.

After discussing the relevance and the impact of integrating culture into the teaching of a foreign language, I would like to put down the style and method of integrating culture. The practice of integrating the culture of Gujarat for example, should not be limited to simply describing its cultural background, but to actually making use of the cultural elements/artifacts of Gujarat as tools and authentic materials in the classroom to teach new words.

I designed a lesson to teach shape and colour vocabulary, where I used a Rangoli and a Toran as cultural elements/artifacts. Rangoli—a folk and traditional art form of Gujarati culture— is a decorative design made on the floors of living rooms and courtyards during Hindu festivals. They are meant to be sacred welcoming areas for Hindu deities and guests. In Gujarati, Toran is the name given to a sacred or honorific gateway. It is typically a projecting cross-piece that rests on two uprights or posts. In Gujarati culture, Toran may also refer to a decorative door hanging, Both, Rangoli and Toran feature vivid colours and shapes.

Instead of simply describing the shapes and colours used in making a Rangoli or a Toran, I went one step ahead. I asked the students to make their own Rangoli and Toran to learn the colour and shape vocabulary in Gujarati. For this purpose, I did the following:

1. I showed the learners various designs of Torans and Rangolis, and made them aware of the importance of these two cultural elements/artifacts. I also familiarized them with the significance and symbol of different colours and shapes in the Gujarati culture and tradition.

2. The process of showing involved two steps: Displaying a picture of a Toran and a Rangoli; and presenting a PowerPoint Version in which all the shapes and colours were animated to create a complete design of a Toran and a Rangoli. The learners were then asked to identify the different colours and shapes.

3. I asked the learners to make their own Toran and Rangoli. For this I gave them various colors (special sand colours) to make a Rangoli on the floor. I also gave them papers of different colours to cut into different shapes to make a Toran.

4. I gave each student a unique design instruction detailing the colours and shapes they had to use in the making of the Toran and Rangoli so each learner had an exclusive pattern. The learners therefore had ample opportunity to explore various shapes and colours.

5. As soon as the learners were ready with their artifacts, I asked them to identify the colours and shapes of the Torans and Rangolis made by the other learners. Therefore, once again they got a chance to work with the shape and colour vocabulary.

6. This learning was then followed by teaching them to make simple sentences using colour and shape vocabulary. This included asking questions such as "which colour is this?"; or "which shape is this?"; and then answering them.

My observations: Discussion

The whole exercise was successful in two ways. Firstly, the learners became aware of the cultural significance of Torans and Rangolis in the Gujarati tradition and art. Secondly, learning became very live and interactive by using and making Torans and Rangolis in a hands-on activity. The experience of interacting with shapes and colours while creating the Toran and Rangoli demonstrated learning. It was also observed that such a method of teaching turned cultural elements/artifacts into authentic materials.

Conclusion

Understanding of the target culture helps to motivate learners to learn the language. The close association of culture and language will be truly successful only if cultural artifacts and elements are incorporated as tools and authentic materials in the narration of theoretical matters. The positive impact of such an exercise enables learners' involvement, ignites interest, and makes learners active participants in the process of learning. Hence, learning activities which focus on active learning are best practiced in a culturally enabled environment.

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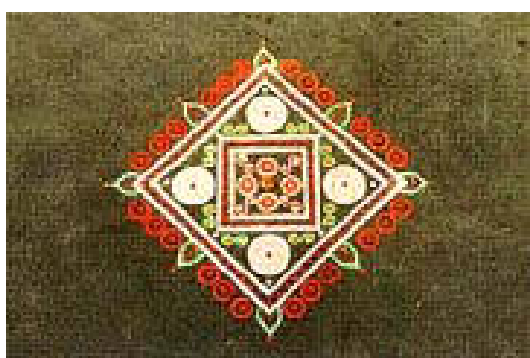Vygotsk, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

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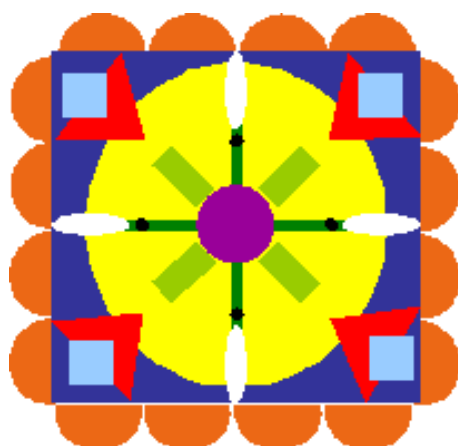
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Images of Rangoli and Toran used for demonstration

1. Source: Stock pictures taken from the internet

2. Source: PowerPoint animation image sample

Writing in Classrooms: Missing Voices and Reflections

Nidhi Kunwar

Introduction

Writing is a medium to express our thoughts, ideas and views. It is a kind of communication in which a writer must be able to convey her/his views to the readers. We write because we want to share and discuss.

However, the shape which writing takes in our classrooms is in stark contrast to these ideas. We equate writing with 'copying' and 'handwriting'. In a typical Indian classroom, one can find students religiously writing on topics such as 'Ideal Student', 'Visit to Delhi', 'Our Dear Chacha Nehru' and 'Benefits of Libraries'. Students copy content from different guidebooks and spend hours producing beautiful handwriting and error-free work. Teachers encourage children to use help material and produce perfect writing in the first attempt. Writing, thus, gets reduced to a purely mechanical skill where there is no place for expression. We demand 'perfection in the first attempt' at any cost. Failure in achieving these standards results in criticism, lower marks and sometimes even punishment.

Research in the field, however, present writing in a different perspective. Studies indicate that writing becomes meaningful with the presence of 'voice' (Graves, 1983). Two components are extremely necessary for meaningful writing—desire to convey and sense of audience (Kumar, 1996). Thus, students must be encouraged to develop their writing pieces on the basis of these two factors. Teachers also play an extremely important role in developing students' interest towards writing. The feedback provided by teachers must be meaningful, and must emphasize on the quality of the content. Exclusive focus on mechanics and criticism from insensitive audience can end students' desire to write (Calkins, 1986; Atwell, 1987; Kumar, 1996).

Clearly, there exists a gap between recent research on writing, and our writing pedagogy. We still design our classes on the basis of drill, practice and reinforcement. Expression, reflection and discussion are currently not valued in our writing classes. As a result, writing has become a difficult task for teachers as well as students since everyone prefers to evade it. The present paper is written with the aim of exploring issues related to writing, and generating reflections on the status of writing.

Writing in classrooms

Currently, the writing scenario in our classes is quite dismal. Writing and expression are considered as completely opposite fields. In the following analysis, the status of writing is explored from different perspectives to present a holistic picture of the existing state of affairs in our schools.

Faulty teacher training courses: Teacher training courses are expected to train teachers in foundational as well as pedagogy courses. It is believed that such training courses will create teachers who are well acquainted in the fields of philosophy, psychology, sociology as well as pedagogy. However, the reality appears to be sharply different. Decade old syllabi are

transacted to teacher trainees without any reflection or revision, and the pedagogy courses that are transacted to students do not include any of the latest research. The teaching of 'writing' is not an exception in this regard. Teacher training programmes do not teach the pedagogy of writing in detail. Questions such as 'what are the recent researches in the field of writing', 'what are the implications of recent research for classroom teaching?' and 'how to approach writing as a process and not as a product?' are not discussed with the teacher trainees. In fact, the entire energy of aspiring teachers is used on creating fancy teaching aids based on the ideas of drill and practice. Unequipped with the knowledge of literacy pedagogy, teachers go on to create classes that are based on traditional and outdated theories.

Assumptions of teachers: Teachers are the most important part of our entire education system. Their perceptions, ideas, views, visions and thoughts greatly influence the students and the teaching pedagogy itself. If teachers have knowledge of recent writing research, then they can plan their lessons in a progressive way; but if teachers' knowledge is based on outdated theories, their planning may replicate the same. A teacher, who feels that writing is handwriting, will create classes dominated by drills for handwriting tasks; but a teacher who feels that writing is expression, will design classes that values content over mechanics. The limited knowledge of 'writing' that informs in-service and pre-service training programmes creates teachers who do not know how to use writing as a medium of expression. They equate writing with 'handwriting' and 'copying', and this is also reflected in their pedagogy. Jyoti (2004), found that teachers are not aware of the various forms of writing such as journal, narrative, poetic, etc. They accept writing as a means of communication but they completely neglect its creative aspect. Hence, students also learn to equate writing with copying.

Assumptions of students: As already pointed out, teachers encourage students to copy and they create students who also end up equating writing with copying and handwriting. Kunwar (2003) studied students' responses to writing and good writers. On being queried regarding their idea of a good writer, most students believed that qualities of a good writer included beautiful handwriting, perfect grammar, correct spellings and neat work. Some students even suggested using gel pens for beautiful handwriting, ensuring that all letters are of the same size, and copying perfectly from the board. Sadly, none of the responses spoke about the quality of content; for most students writing well was connected only with punctuation, grammar and handwriting.

Nature of writing work: Writing is generally viewed as copying in our classes. It does not provide any space for students' expression or views. A study of students' school writing conducted by Kunwar (2003) revealed that most of the content was related to conventional and traditional topics. Moreover, the content was Sanskritized and the language lacked spontaneity and looked rather contrived. There was also a similarity between the school writing samples and guidebooks. The teachers' feedback was limited to correction of wrong spellings; there was no productive feedback to students on the content of their writing.

Reasons to reflect

It is clear from the analysis that writing is taught as a mechanical skill in our schools. The pedagogical practices used in schools do not teach students to use writing in a functional or creative manner. When students are unable to use writing as a medium of expression, we blame it on the 'poor background' of students and try to evade the situation. Although students' background is an important factor in school performance, the time spent with the teacher is far more significant. Does the current pedagogy

allow teachers to create a meaningful writing environment and learning experiences for students? The focus shifts even further towards 'pedagogy' when we realize that the standards of writing across all types of schools, whether government or private, are similar. This indicate that it is not the background of students that is the sole factor responsible for students' failure, the pedagogy followed in schools is also an important factor. (Kumar, 1992; Sinha, 2000).

It must be acknowledged that pedagogy of reading and writing is a serious area of reflection and demands several improvements. A student's success at school depends on mastering these literacy skills. Now the question is: What should be the beginning point for bringing a change? Students define 'writing' in terms of what they are taught by their teachers, and teachers for their part are simply utilizing the pedagogy style that they have learnt during their training period. This highlights the major fault of our teacher education courses. It must be accepted that there is a huge gap between what we teach in basic theoretical courses and what we transact in pedagogy papers to our teachers. We educate our teachers about 'constructivism' and 'active nature' of children, but our pedagogical theories do not teach them how to fit practical teaching into that framework. In the foundation papers, teachers learn that the student is not *tabula rasa* or a 'blank slate'; but their lesson plans are full of worksheets and aids for drill, practice and reinforcement.

In the Indian context, the pedagogy of reading and writing is practically non-existent since most of the training programmes do not have any courses on the teaching of these literacy skills. Ironically, the components that we are neglecting in our courses form a core part of students' success in schooling. A teacher unequipped with the knowledge of pedagogy of literacy skills cannot enable his/her students to utilize these skills in a functional way. The ignorance of teachers can be really damaging for the entire education system.

Possibilities and alternatives

There is an urgent need to bring about changes in the system. The shortcomings and the flaws should not be allowed to continue, as they will damage the entire education system. Thus, on the basis of the above reflection, I have shortlisted the following suggestions for effecting improvements in the system.

- Pedagogy of reading and writing need to become the core components of every teacher training course, whether in-service or pre-service. Knowledge of the latest research findings will equip teachers to design their classes more effectively.

- The syllabus on the pedagogy of literacy skills needs to include detailed units on teaching 'writing'. The syllabus should provide teachers with the required theoretical framework so that writing is not reduced to the level of drill and practice. The syllabus needs to include components such as developmental stages of writing, importance of voice, role of teacher feedback, process writing, language experience approach, importance of ownership, role of errors, and assessment of writing. The teachers must understand the importance of 'content' over 'mechanics'.

- It is however not enough to just train the teachers, it is also necessary to provide the required support system for making writing meaningful for students. As reading and writing are connected, classrooms need to be organized in a way that provides scope for reading and writing. Provision of a print-rich environment through class libraries, space for students to write freely, creation of message corners—these are some of the opportunities which can encourage students to engage with writing in a functional manner.

- 'Assessment' comprises one of the major phases of the learning process. If assessment procedures are traditional, teaching is also forced to become traditional; but if assessment procedures are constructive and involve scope for thinking and reflection, teaching also takes a similar shape. This implies that assessment should be developmental in nature, and include methods such as portfolio assessment, journal entries, writing workshops, and self-assessment. If assessment techniques are progressive, teachers will also have the freedom to create meaningful learning opportunities for their students.

These recommendations have been made bearing in mind the current status of writing in our classrooms. If we wish to create meaningful writing classes, it is critical to equip our teachers with the knowledge of pedagogy of writing. Teachers also need to be aware of the latest research trends and their implications in the classroom. It is only by understanding the basics of literacy instruction that our teachers can do justice to the potential of writing, and develop students into 'writers' who can write with voice and reflections.

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Continuing Professional Development: The Way Forward for English Language Teachers

Kirti Kapur

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) centres on the idea that an individual aims to augment her/his professional skills and knowledge beyond the training received at the onset of their career, or as part of the qualifications required to carry out a job. Over the course of any career, it would be reasonable to expect that there are opportunities available for informal and formal engagements that assist individuals in the renewal of their technical skills and enhancement of thinking. In the case of teaching in India, after pre-service training, there are few opportunities for in-service development. This is because in-service training is dependent on external factors such as institutional support, employer's initiative, policy measures, etc. As a result, opportunities for growth and learning often rest with the individual teacher, and individual learning can be incidental, or evolutionary, or in some cases, planned. It can also be isolated and slow. Moreover, CPD as a lifelong career development strategy should be more than just aiming for career progression or incidental learning because of personal interest. "[CPD] is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching..." (Day, 1999, p.4).

The paper will discuss the principles of CPD and the importance of evolving CPD from being an individual and unguided initiative to a collaborative process. It will also suggest some means of professional development for teachers in the field of language education, which may be adopted or adapted by teachers and teacher trainers.

CPD for teachers

CPD should not be treated as an event, but should be considered as a process that includes knowledge development and change in attitudes, skills, disposition, and practice. Also, CPD does not comprise only of knowledge transfer from field experts, but has ample scope for experiential learning, involving participants as active learners, and facilitating peer group based review of practices. According to Harwell et al. (2001), "professional development for practising teachers must combine the expertise of researchers and the knowledge of practising teachers in a collaborative effort to inform instructional decision making if educators want to create learning environments conducive to effective learning among students" (p. 260). Bryant et al. (2001), have also stated that "time must be allocated for teachers to share their own personal knowledge about their students and teaching and to receive guidance from experts on topics" (p. 251).

Teachers also need to understand the social, professional and administrative contexts in which they work. In a school, CPD can function as a catalyst for change in school-related practices. Conscious analysis of, and engagement with the specific contexts in which they teach will further the professional development of teachers as well as the growth of their learners. Julian Edge

(1999) defines this as the "professional body perspective" wherein teachers "…try to set up standards and criteria according to which individuals can register themselves as professionals and demonstrate their commitment to their continuing development." Evaluating oneself vis-à-vis personal goals as well as institutional and community goals can provide a framework for constructive feedback, and appraisals can be in the form of self-appraisals, peer appraisal, and feedback from students and concerned authorities.

CPD therefore includes "private, unaided learning…informal learning opportunities and…more formal learning opportunities available through internally and externally generated in-service education and training activities" (Day, 1999).

CPD for English language teachers

As established above, teacher education needs to be ongoing, onsite, as well as preparatory. In the context of language education, the emphasis of CPD initiatives should be on teacher proficiency or familiarity with the language, as the teacher is often a role model. It will also be a means to cultivate teacher awareness or sensitivity to language learning. (Position Paper on Teaching of English, 2006) Teachers should in fact be given opportunities to develop their competencies and proficiency in the language they teach. Self-reflection is therefore a vital component of such programmes wherein the teachers can themselves work towards identifying and addressing gaps in knowledge and practice. Opportunities for reaffirmation of their own experiences will also boost their confidence and have a positive impact on the teaching-learning process.

According to Krishnan & Pandit (2003), "Teacher proficiency in English is linked to the teacher's sense of satisfaction, indeed to his/her willingness to teach English." Wright &

Bolitho (1993) believe language acquisition is important "to develop their sensitivity towards their language, as part of a strategy aimed at enhancing classroom teaching and learning." CPD programmes may therefore address concepts such as:

- Self-improvement: Improving their own skills in order to be role models for learners in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing;

- Pedagogy of language education: Emphasizing that language teaching and learning cannot be mechanical and introducing new methods and approaches;

- Constructivism: Facilitating learners' construction of own knowledge through participatory activities;

- Critical thinking skills: Integrating peace, values, special needs, gender, environment, culture, inclusiveness and vocational skills in language teaching-learning;

- Use of grammar and vocabulary in context;

- Multilingualism as a resource: Approaching language education holistically in that languages supplement and complement one another;

- Methodologies of teaching English/Second language: The different methods and a critique thereof;

- Materials development and curricular renewal: Becoming materials developers themselves and proactively using locally available authentic texts;

- Assessment and evaluation: Linking continuous and comprehensive evaluation to everyday classroom practices and learning outcomes;

- Teacher as a researcher: Conducting action research for identifying and addressing problems in language learning through audits of their own practices with the aim of improving effectiveness.

According to Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1996), "Effective professional development involves teachers both as learners and as teachers and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role…It must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students."

Individual ownership/initiative

CPD necessitates a self-development perspective on the part of the teachers. Often, constraints such as demanding schedules, lack of motivation and support from authorities as well as additional expenses can deter individuals. However, teachers must recognize that CPD is a journey, and it is important for teachers to remain learners themselves if they aspire to develop the qualities required in their careers. Above all, teachers should learn from their learners and recognize the value of reflecting on their own performance. Richard Whiteside (2012) sums this succinctly when he says, "…we teachers should endeavour to provide the best education we can to our students...to consider our situation and try to identify what exactly 'best-practice' is for us in our context." For this, regular analysis, and consultation with peers and colleagues are a must.

Here, ICT can play an important role in ensuring that individuals can transcend institutional and geographical barriers to interact with their peers and domain experts. Online discussion forums, SIGs, archives and blogs are rich sources of information and best practices. At the same time, face to face interactions, be they peer to peer or individual to expert, can enable participants to enhance their spoken skills as well as learn from others. Writing articles for journals based on their classroom experiences is another way of facilitating peer review and feedback. Attending seminars and conferences also boosts confidence and enhances one's knowledge base.

Teachers may also:

- record and reflect on their own practices by writing a daily journal;
- read and explore about areas of teaching that interest them;
- observes colleagues' or seniors' classes;
- enroll in training programmes;
- discuss observations with groups;

Institutional support

Often, teacher orientation programmes are time-bound and budget-driven. Moreover, the organizing bodies (State, NGOs, Teachers' associations) often have narrow/specific and therefore non-representative agendas which may not cater to the needs of all teachers. Consequently, it is critical that managing bodies foster CPD in their schools. Schools should emerge as spaces where collaborative communities are established and which engage with the shared aspirations and values of all members. Lack of information and access impact participation by teachers, and these can be addressed by ensuring relevance to teachers' needs and contexts. Further, investments also need to be made in the development of teachers' materials such as teachers' packages, handbooks, manuals and journals so that they can be self-reliant when it comes to updating themselves. Rather than imposing a uniform plan, CPD systems should be able to facilitate personalization of the CPD process. Offering a range of options will stimulate teacher initiative, experimentation and agency.

At the same time, thought must be given to:

- defining goals and standards of CPD for teachers;
- identifying the strategies and practices that will support them;

- developing tools to monitor and assess CPD initiatives;
- promoting teacher autonomy and responsibility.

Demonstrating commitment to the continuing development of employees by facilitating a discussion on these aspects will boost the standards of the institution by creating a competent, adaptable workforce. Also, "people's professionalism may be considered to be enhanced" (Evans, 2008), which will have a direct positive impact on the learners.

Conclusion

Developing teachers' resources and proficiency in a language facilitates innovation, and increases teacher proficiency. CPD is a planned and systematic activity, and the space and the ability to reflect on methodology, content and approach will help teachers to develop a deeper understanding of language learning and make the English classroom a vibrant centre for knowledge acquisition and development. After all, change in education depends on what teachers do and think.

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Designing Second Language Curriculum

S. C. Sood

Introduction

Through this article, I have attempted to study the designing of a second language (L2) curriculum. The aim is not to suggest a new theory of L2 curriculum, but to describe in simple non-technical language the existing theory and its essential components. I will also explore how the various components of the theory have been used to design an L2 syllabus. The overall aim is to describe the theory and its practice over the years for the benefit of non-specialist teachers assigned the role of teaching L2.

A second language (L2) curriculum designer should begin with the question: Is he/she designing a new syllabus or revising an existing one? In the case of a new syllabus, the designer should decide the three components of curriculum theory, as propounded by Taylor & Richards (1979). These comprise:

- Curriculum philosophy (in this case, it could be rationale for teaching L2);

- Conceptualization, of: (a) goals; (b) means of attaining the goals; and (c) testing of learners;

- Management and implementation, involving: (a) development; (b) implementation; and (c) curriculum evaluation.

In the case of revision of an existing curriculum, the exercise could start with a critical analysis of the existing syllabus in the light of the three components. It may also be useful to study previous revisions, if any, to see how the syllabus has evolved.

Curriculum philosophy (rationale for teaching L2)

An important aspect for consideration is the rationale for teaching L2, and the nature and background of the learners. The designer should be clear about the justification for teaching the second language, e.g. teaching of English in India in the post-independence period has a history which has a bearing on syllabus designing.

Learners' profile and learning infrastructure: Another important factor that needs to be evaluated is the profile of the learner. This includes information such as identifying who the learners are, their socio-economic background, age, motivation, emotional state, aptitude and previous experience in L2 learning, attitude towards the target language and its speakers, learning strategies, learning environment at home, personality, entry behaviour, needs, goals and expectations. It is also useful to know the teacher's profile, instructional time available, class size, and learning infrastructure such as learning/teaching aids, technology and resources.

Conceptualization of the three components

Goals and objectives

The goals and objectives of the curriculum are formulated based on the needs of the learners. The needs are identified using various research tools: Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, polls, and so on. The identification of needs is essential for drawing up a syllabus, selecting and grading

the content for teaching, and for working out instructional strategies. However, learners' perception of their own needs have been questioned on various grounds because in reality, it is the institutions and their representatives who determine the language needs of the learners on the basis of their experience.

There are however some prominent studies of such 'needs analyses'. For learning English, for example, there are: *Threshold Level* by van Ek (1975), published for the Council of Europe, and Functional and Notional Needs described by Wilkins in *Notional Syllabuses*, 1976. Munby (1978) suggests needs analyses in terms of the settings in which learners will use the target language for specific purposes, e.g. Hindi for Science and Technology, English for Academic Purposes, and so on.

2. *Means of attaining goals/objectives*

Teachers have used different methods and instructional materials at different times to help learners learn the target language. These can be discussed under two heads: (i) Pre-scientific, and (ii) Scientific.

a. Pre-scientific: *Grammar-translation method*

We are all familiar with this once widely-used method. In fact, it was not a method in the true sense of the word, as it was not based on a theory of language or language learning. That is why it was called 'pre-scientific'. Moreover, its purpose was not to teach language; grammar-translation was simply a way of translating classics from one language into another.

b. Scientific: The scientific approach to language learning takes the theory of language and learning into consideration. The analysis of language has given us two ways of looking at it—language as a structure of structures, and language as a tool for communication. Hence, in the history of language teaching, we have two types of approaches—structural and communicative.

b1. *Structural approach:* This approach to language learning evolved under the influence of structural linguistics. Language was defined as a structure comprising phonemes (sounds), morphemes (words) and syntax. Classroom teaching was influenced by Skinner's behaviourist theory of learning in which learning a language was looked upon as learning a new behaviour for which the learner needed motivation, repetition and reward. Structural approach is still followed in some classrooms.

Since language is infinite, the principles of teaching suggest that we select some items for teaching, grade them, and then present them to the learner in meaningful contexts. So, at each stage of learning, specific structures were selected along with certain vocabulary items and the learner was exposed to them. Therefore, the classroom practice was mimic, memorize, repeat, and drill, until the structure became a habit with the learner, e.g. the teacher holds a pen in her uplifted hand and says:

> *Yeh pen hai* (This is a pen).

and the students repeat:

> *Yeh pen hai* (This is a pen).

The sentence was repeated and drilled a number of times.

Errors were strictly avoided, and the emphasis was on grammatical competence. It was expected that this repetition would help learners learn structures and consequently the language.

b2. *Communicative approach:* This approach was ushered in by socio-linguists. They talked of language not as an abstract system but as a tool for communication in society, in meaningful situations. They also redefined language competence as communicative competence, which meant (1) accuracy/grammatical competence, and (2) fluency, i.e. familiarity with the rules of usage, which included social appropriateness. There can be many types of

communicative syllabus based on the situation. Possible themes include:

- functions and notions, e.g. thanking, apologizing, seeking help, giving help
- Situations, e.g. at the railway station.
- Topics, e.g. weather, shopping
- Authentic tasks and activities,
- Role play and simulation,
- Analyses of discourse structure - conversational analysis and discourse analyses–to help learners learn the strategies of how the target language is used to make meaning.

The goal of all these syllabuses is to help learners focus on communication rather than the form or structure of the language. It is not unusual to select subjects such as Social Sciences, History, Economics or Commerce; or themes such as population, environment, Aids; or genres such as prose, poetry, fiction, drama, etc., for helping learners practice language forms and functions.

Classroom procedures: Communicative syllabuses consider language as a tool for communication, and language learning as a cognitive activity. This perspective has a strong bearing on the role of materials, the teachers and the learners, and the syllabus designer outlines these details. In this method, learners are seen as active participants in the process of language learning rather than just a passive receptacle. The role of the teacher is complex, and much of his/her effort goes into providing the right learning environment, selecting the right task/activity, creating an appropriate setting, and supervising the learning process. Since interaction is an integral part of communication, the class is arranged in pairs or groups.

Integrated syllabuses: It is believed currently, that for effective language teaching, integrated syllabus (integration of structures and functions)

is the right solution. However, to implement an integrated syllabus, materials need to be selected and graded to suit the learner's needs, coordinated with the class below and above, and correlated horizontally with different texts and skills.

Testing : Syllabuses must also provide for testing/evaluation of learners to assess whether the stated objectives were achieved. What should be tested (content or skills); how and when should the assessment be done (internal or external assessment and what is the weightage of each component); will the evaluation be continuous (formative) or end-programme (summative); who will test; how will learners be scored; how will objectivity and uniformity be ensured–these are questions that need to be answered before implementing a testing process.

Impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

During the last two decades, many researchers (Kern 2006, Nguyen 2008) have written about the use of ICT in second language teaching and its impact on what Richards (1990) terms as 'design' and 'procedure'. This includes the nature and types of teaching-learning materials; the roles of teachers, learners, and instructional tasks and activities; and the nature and kinds of teaching-learning practices and behaviours. The use of ICT in second language instruction is an emerging but fast-developing field, and its advantages and drawbacks ought to be kept in mind by language syllabus designers.

Management, implementation and feedback

This is an important process of any project and L2 syllabus designing is not an exception. There are three steps under this head: (a) Project development, (b) Implementation, and (c) Evaluation.

(a) Project development

One of the criteria for the success of a project is that it should follow a 'bottom up' movement in all aspects, in this case syllabus, materials and methods, testing, and teacher training. Initiation for language syllabus revision must come from the local authorities after a wider consultation with all stake-holders. They themselves must redefine their needs from time to time and see what is wrong with their existing situation, and seek a solution either on their own or in collaboration with other agencies – local or foreign.

The nature and role of local agency is crucial. Is this the right agency for initiating and completing this project or are their other local bodies concerned with this area? Does this local agency have the necessary expertise to assist the 'community'–the teachers—or will it seek collaboration with other local agencies or a foreign agency. If the job is outsourced to a foreign agency or their collaboration is sought, what their status and role would be. Rivalries among various local agencies can pose a problem in developing and implementing a project. In India, for example, any differences between the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for drawing up a language syllabus for teaching at schools can be harmful for the success of a language project. Hence a proper local coordinating authority ought to be in place to assist the 'community group'.

(b) Implementation

For effective implementation, the L2 project would require teaching/learning materials to be produced, teacher training to be executed and testing and evaluation procedures to be worked out. Will there be just one group to handle all the above three areas or will there be one group each for these areas? Since not all the teachers can be involved, a selection from the 'community group' has to be made. Who will be selected and how? What would be the role of the local pre-service and in-service teacher training institutes in the initiation, designing and implementation of the project? Since the new curriculum must be understood by classroom teachers, their willing participation in understanding the change must be ensured. All these points are important, and need to be heeded when taking up a curriculum project.[1]

(c) Feedback and evaluation

This step is vital to assess the new curriculum, and to find out the extent to which it has achieved the stated goals. Monitoring and feedback may be 'formative' (assessed during the stage of implementation), or 'summative' (evaluated at the end of the project). Two people need to be designated, one to monitor and give feedback, and the other to evaluate the project once it is put into operation.

Cyclical nature of curriculum/syllabus designing

The aim of the feedback and evaluation is not to criticize those responsible for designing the curriculum/syllabus, but to learn lessons for the future and to initiate new changes in the curriculum in accordance with the feedback received. Curriculum designing is a cyclical process, and changes and updating are required to be made from time to time.

[1] Those interested in such projects may find more useful hints in Tribble (2012). This collection of papers and case studies, though these relate to Teaching of English as a Second Language, can prove a useful guide.

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Teaching Learning Materials in a Multilingual Education Programme

Urmishree Bedamatta

In 2008, the Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) issued a leaflet on the mother tongue based Multilingual Education programme (MLE) in the State, entitled 'Education for Tribal Children in Orissa'. In the leaflet, programme planners categorized Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) for MLE under two track strategies—Track I, which looked at the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); and Track II, which evaluated Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). Track I focused on correctness and accuracy, and imbibing new knowledge; it included alphabet charts, alphabet books, number charts, number books, and Math books—all of which helped develop CALP. Track II comprised of picture books such as the big book and the small book, experience stories, environment studies, games, sports, songs, tales and riddles, and focused on meaning and communication, and exploration of the child's experiences. Going by Jim Cummins' original BICS/CALP distinction, such categorization of TLMs under BICS and CALP seems to be a case of conceptual conflation. In Cummins's own words (2008), " The distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) was introduced by Cummins (1979, 1981a) in order to draw educators' attention to the timelines and challenges that second language learners encounter as they attempt to catch up to their peers in academic aspects of the school language. BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students'

ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school" (p. 71).

Mohanty (2011), simplifies this in the context of MLE, " From using language for social communication or, what has been called, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS, for short), children must develop to use language for reflective engagement with academic learning and purposeful thinking or to the level of cognitive and academic language proficiency" (p. 2).

This means that first generation tribal students need to learn to use their mother tongue for academic discourses before moving on to using the school language. In the MLE programme, such TLMs, which call for greater, imaginative use of language, are used only to develop BICS when in fact they can be used to develop CALP as well. Given the kind of TLMs that have been categorized under CALP, it is the teacher who ends up doing all the talking. There is hardly any scope for the children to indulge in 'academic talk'. Stories, riddles and folk games, if used imaginatively by the teacher, could help initiate BICS and CALP talk simultaneously. Cummins (2008), talks about this simultaneity during his discussion on the evolution of the theoretical constructs of BICS and CALP: " The initial BICS/CALP distinction was elaborated into two *intersecting continua* (Cummins, 1981a) that highlighted the range of cognitive demands and contextual support involved in particular language tasks or activities (context-embedded/context-reduced, cognitively

undemanding/cognitively demanding) … It was also recognized, however, that these dimensions cannot be specified in absolute terms because what is "context-embedded" or "cognitively demanding" for one learner may not be so for another as a result of differences in internal attributes such as prior knowledge or interest" (Coelho, 2004; Cummins, 1981a, p.74) (my emphasis).

It is evident that the distinction invoked in the MLE programme to separate TLMs is the result of conflation. Not only that, one is also led to read a hidden agenda in such an invocation. The experience stories, songs, riddles and folk games which are categorized under BICS are simply meant to draw the tribal students into the classroom; the academic language register is that of the dominant state language. The TLMs in the mother tongue which are used for BICS, could be used to develop academic discourse (CALP), but that would displace the established academic register. Also, since the mother tongue-intensive TLMs are seen to be useful only for BICS, they may not be considered fit materials for academic discourse as the grades advance.

Cummins also relates the difference between conversational and academic language registers to Gee's distinction between primary and secondary discourses. The following explanation by Cummins (2008) is crucial in understanding the argument of this paper: "Secondary discourses can be oral or written and are equally central to the social life of non-literate and literate cultures. Examples of secondary discourse common in many non-literate cultures are the conventions of story-telling or the language of marriage or burial rituals which are passed down through oral tradition from one generation to the next. Within this conception, academic language proficiency represents an individual's access to and command of the specialized vocabulary and functions of language that are characteristic of the social institution of schooling. The secondary discourses of schooling *are no different in principle* than the secondary discourse of other spheres of human endeavor—for example, avid amateur gardeners and professional horticulturalists have acquired vocabulary related to plants and flowers far beyond the knowledge of those not involved in this sphere of activity. What makes acquisition of the secondary discourses associated with schooling so crucial, however, is that the life chances of individuals are directly determined by the degree of expertise they acquire in understanding and using this language (my emphasis)" (p. 75-76).

The success in acquiring the 'secondary discourses associated with schooling', however, may be crucially dependent on the 'secondary discourse of other spheres of human endeavor'. Beach's study (1995), for example, provides important insights into how cognitive transfer is better when there is a strong relationship between schooling and work practices, or when participating in the practices of schooling and work are experienced as commensurable by the learners (Cobb & Bowers, 1999, p. 7). In the study which focused on 'transitions between work and school', Beach compared the arithmetical reasoning competencies of 13 shopkeepers attending adult education classes, and 13 high school students apprenticed to a shopkeeper in a Nepali village. The shopkeepers performed better than the students as they wanted to learn because they felt that by learning arithmetical reasoning, they would be able to increase profitability in their shops. The students, on the other hand, had to learn school arithmetic as an end in itself, as well as to generate profit as a shopkeeper. Cobb and Bowers (1999, p. 7) cite Hanks (1991) who says, "if both learning and the subject learned are embedded in learned skills must rely on the commensurability of certain forms of participation." In another study, Rampal et al. demonstrate how a domestic worker helps her daughter who is a fifth grader and is confounded by algorithms, by breaking a

problem into manageable parts[1] . That is how she does her everyday arithmetic. The purpose of these examples was to illustrate the necessity of using the 'secondary discourse of other spheres of human endeavor' to help the students acquire the 'secondary discourse associated with schooling'. This secondary discourse of other spheres of human endeavor is embedded in the numerous stories, riddles, folk games and work practices of rural tribal communities. Panda and Mohanty (2009), both directors of the MLE Plus programme in Odisha have illustrated in their study on seventh grade Saora children, how a folk game called *Aphuchhi* can be used to teach probability.

Community knowledge, which includes work and play-related discourse, can therefore be regarded as a secondary discourse and a source of 'academic language'. But the MLE programme planners seem to have missed this point. The MLE programme, for all its success, depends on the transfer of learning from the mother tongue to the school language. If the academic component of the secondary discourses conducted in the mother tongues of non-literate cultures is not exploited for classroom use, there is little hope of effective transfer of learning from the mother tongue to the school language. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to hope that MLE can rehabilitate community knowledge in the school curricula. To illustrate the point, one finds traditional measurement practices labeled as 'non-standard' in the MLE Math textbook.

To conclude, the title of the MLE leaflet says it all—'Education for Tribal Children in Orissa'. The aim of the programme is to make students proficient in Odia which is the 'cognitive academic language'. But how this aim can be achieved when language-rich TLMs (from the mother tongue) are categorized under BICS is not clear. It is therefore essential to plan a careful use of TLMs for the so-called 'two track strategies'.

[1] The fifth grader has to divide 180 by 3. The mother first separates 50 thrice. Of the remaining 30, she puts 10 along with each of the 50s so that at the end she has three separate 60s.

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Do Language Codes Affect Multilingualism?: A Case Study of an Inclusive School

Sneha Subramaniam

Introduction

When I first visited Poorna, an inclusive, 'alternative' school in Bangalore and spent time with the students, I was struck by their candour and easy articulation, and most of all by their free and fluent expression. They showed a complete lack of self-consciousness about background, class, caste and religion, in forging relations. I wondered how social rights and equality, expressed so matter-of-factly by these young ten-year-olds, had come to be a part of their lives. In a school hallmarked by its socio-economic and cultural diversity, how did the identities and expression of the students, escape from falling into class traps?

I wanted to observe how these learners had chartered this journey, and whether class distinctions had initially played a role in the way they expressed themselves. Therefore, armed with Bernstein's theory of language codes, I revisited Poorna at the beginning of their academic year, and observed and spoke to children and teachers of the youngest classes.

Bernstein's theoretical framework

Basil Bernstein, a British sociolinguist, made a significant contribution to education with his theory of language codes. Bernstein studied the influence of the structures of class, power and ideology, and their impact on language. He found a strong relationship between societal class and language. He derived the terms 'restricted code' and 'elaborate code' to explain his findings.

While Bernstein's restricted code speaks of a language that is highly contextual and is understood only by those aware of circumstantial specificities, the elaborate code is more universal in its outlook. The elaborate code refers to an explicit language that does not assume that its audience will be homogenous. Bernstein found that learners from a working class background spoke a restricted code and performed poorly in language-related subjects, while their middle class counterparts performed better at language-oriented subjects and spoke an elaborate code.

However, his analysis did not stop at this superficial level. Bernstein viewed language not only as an instrument of communication, but also as an expression of mental structures shaped by a symbolic differentiation of classes. According to Grimshaw (1976), Bernstein believed that the language one used was symptomatic of internalized class structures, and revealed one's *Weltenshauung* (one's conception or apprehension of the world based on one's specific standpoint).

Although criticized for being a deficiency theorist, Bernstein sought answers as to *why* discrepancy between language codes occurred and pinpointed pedagogical and curricular aspects that hindered or fostered elaborate code.

To understand this discrepancy, he coined the terms classification and framing. According to him, classification refers to the *separation* between the subjects taught in school. Strong classification means the boundaries between subjects are clearly defined, while weak

classification allows for links to be made between subjects. By being able to relate different subject matters to each other and to their everyday life, students gain the ability to transcend context and speak in a manner that people beyond their class can understand, i.e. using elaborate code. However, if, for instance the language used in a Mathematics class cannot be used in an English class, then one remains in the restricted code, able to confer only with an audience that has exactly the same information. It then becomes very difficult for these learners to go home and tell their parents what they learnt in the Maths class if the parents themselves are not in the Maths class, because the general concepts do not seem to transcend the boundaries of the class into actual life.

The framing of the classroom reveals who has the *right to expression*. While high framing suggests that it is mostly the teacher who is relaying information, low framing implies that the dialogue in the classroom is structured so that the students too are able to contribute to discussions and express themselves. Bernstein noticed that classrooms which have low framing, encourage students' expression and create environments for an elaborate code, so that the student's own words and home contexts find relevance with the subject matter.

Arriving at a hypothesis

On my first day at Poorna, I observed the children interacting with each other and the teacher in the UKG class. I remarked something curious which I thought related to Bernstein. A young girl S, from an affluent background, told me immediately after meeting me that she spoke Hindi at home. She said this in English, she talked to her friend in Hindi, and in her Kannada class, she seemed to be most vociferous, even though this was her third language. On the other hand, another young girl C from a migrant labourer family whose first language was Kannada,

remained largely quiet, and mostly played alone. Even during the Kannada class she seemed to express herself only by making inarticulate sounds and gestures.

This observation led me to wonder whether children who spoke in a restricted code found it harder to grasp a second language. Does being able to traverse contexts relate to being more easily able to traverse between entire languages? I was inclined to think so. Therefore, I decided to investigate whether one's language code had any implications on multilingualism.

Method

To study the impact of language code on multilingualism, I undertook classroom observations, watched out-of-class play, and conducted teacher interviews for class I at Poorna . During classroom observations, several questions were going through my mind. Some of these were: *Was the language in the classroom mostly the teachers'? Was there formal or informal use of language? How did the teacher cue/ restrict students' response? When students spoke who did they direct their speech to and was it self-regulated? What did students use their speech opportunities for? How did the teacher deal with students' mistakes? Did students' degree of expression vary depending on the language being taught and familiarity with it?*

Findings and analysis

The language used in the classroom was controlled mostly by the teacher, who led the class, and chose the song and the activity carried out. While the teacher used formal language, she did not hint at any correction when the children expressed themselves using incorrect grammar. Her focus instead was on the expression itself. Students spoke to each other

and to the teacher in the class, sometimes about related topics, asking questions, giving their comments, and sometimes saying unrelated things. They did not self-regulate, which was indicative of low framing.

When students made mistakes while repeating the songs being sung, the teacher did not reprimand them. Instead for S, she reiterated the instructions once again and for C, she repeated the instructions in Kannada. Hence, while initially it seemed that C's expression in English was limited because she did not know the language, as she became familiar with the classes she became the loudest of all. The fact that she *did not know* the language very well was never emphasized, and special translations were made for her. As a result, she never felt that her expression should be limited.

The analysis of C's teacher vis à vis her potential for expression and her propensity towards multilingualism ties in with Bernstein's ideas of classification and framing. The teacher took pride in the fact that C did not have predetermined boundaries dictating how she should behave and what she should say in school. If she walked out barefoot from her home, she was happy to do the same from school. She had a strong connection between her school life and her everyday life, and this implied that classification of activity—which precedes the classification of subjects in a child's education—is a non-entity.

As far as out-of-class play was concerned, C applied her learning in everyday life as well as in play. In fact, while playing by herself in the sandpit, I heard her say, "*mele, kelegede*, up, down," (up, down in Kannada and then in English) and making corresponding hand gestures and laughing to herself as she recited the words.

S brought her knowledge of language to all the classes, and sometimes made an effort to ensure that all the children understood her, thus stressing upon a non-particularistic understanding.

This observation illustrates that these students are generally not aware of any class distinctions in the classroom, and even if they are, it does not shape or influence the way they interact or express themselves. There are no feelings of superiority or inferiority based on class or caste. This is fortified by the fact they are never ever disparaged in class for not expressing themselves in a 'correct' manner, nor are they ever compared to one another. These are, perhaps, social factors that influence whether one has an elaborate or restricted code in early primary school years, in the sense that they are probably highly influential in determining whether a child who speaks a restricted code in the primary years is able to arrive at the elaborate code expression later. The very fact that societal class does not impact the children's lives outside of their home—at school where they spend most of their day, means that they are not given a chance to internalize class differentiation as mental structures. At this stage, therefore, C's working class background does not seem to precipitate her speaking in a restricted code, nor does it seem to have any effect on her inability to relate to another language besides her mother tongue. On the contrary, she seems to be making meaning of what she is learning in the classroom outside the class, in Kannada and in English.

It seems likely, therefore, that the relationship between class, language codes and multilingualism depends firmly on the curriculum and the pedagogy of the school, and is highly susceptible to classification and framing, just as Bernstein suggested. In the case of Poorna, in fact, the curriculum and pedagogy deliberately addresses differences in language exposure in the classroom, which in turn seems to dissolve the stratification of language codes so that one is not affected by the other.

Conclusion

While Bernstein undertook his research in Britain, this study demonstrates that his theories can also be applied in the Indian context. With regards to whether language codes do or do not relate to multilingualism, I am not sure whether my findings will be replicated if this study is conducted in Britain. Perhaps, this is largely because the majority of India is multilingual, and multilingualism is often a matter-of-fact part of our day to day living. Moreover, in India, multilingualism is mostly acquired conversationally, rather than in academic arenas and is part of informal socialization, rather than pedantic expression. When a language is learnt informally, then the connections between code and language acquisition seem to disappear, as in the case of Poorna.

Finally, I believe that this investigation into Bernstein's theories emphasizes just how crucial it is for educators to be cognizant of the larger responsibility and influence they have, which goes far beyond transacting the transmission of information. It is with this hope that we may use Bernstein's theory to foray into critical thinking so that learners and teachers alike may step back and examine the structural forces imposed upon them, in order to consciously and concertedly use our own understanding and expression to transform prejudice. My study establishes that there is absolutely no relationship between the societal class and the *potential* linguistic ability of a child. Such stratifying connections seem to be hegemonic constructs that we as educators must work towards dissolving with what seems to be a rather sturdy scaffolding of weak classification and low framing. If the autonomous beings we help shape, develop in this solid environment, as opposed to crumbling under the subjected expression of others, I am sure they will be able to hold their own and exude their own identities and worth.

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Language across Curriculum: Principle to Practice

Nisha Butoliya

'Language is best acquired through different meaning-making contexts, and hence all teaching is in a sense language teaching.' (NCF, 2005, p. 39)

How do we approach teaching at primary level?

All our methods of teaching have been derived from the insights that we have generated through lively interactions with children, observations and simple experiments. We would all agree that children learn by feeling things, throwing them, banging them, observing them, by asking questions, by listening to others, by experimenting, by narrating, etc. While doing all this, they are constantly connecting to their previous experiences and building on it. Thus, the education processes in our schools are geared towards providing opportunities to children where they learn by connecting to their previous knowledge and achieve understanding in the desired domain (at least we advocate it through our curriculum documents!).

What is language?

According to Halliday (1993), "language is the prototypical resource for making meaning" (p. 1). A child uses a language to understand the world around her/him. Higher the ability to use a language for detailed descriptions of concepts, and explaining phenomenon, deeper will be its understanding. Krishna Kumar (1986) adds, "language shapes the child's personality, including perceptions, abilities, attitudes, interests and values" (p. 9). Therefore, language is at the heart of all kinds of learning.

According to the NCF (2005), "…………all teaching is in a sense language teaching" (p.39).

How should we approach language teaching at the primary level?

Observing children to understand how they acquire their mother tongue should give us an insight into how we should approach language teaching in schools. For example, at the age of four, when children call an object 'a bag' they are not referring to a particular bag, but are identifying bags in general. They identify it even though the bag may be of plastic or jute or cloth. They won't necessarily be able to tell that these bags are of different material, but definitely, identify and say that these are bags. If we look at this example a little closely, we realize that in order to identify a bag, one needs to know that it has a handle, and a space to keep something. The handle may be of different kinds, but children are still able to recognize it. They recognize that all handles share a certain similarity—all handles are U-shaped, more or less. Sometimes, they may refer to a steel container with a handle as a bag, but this is precisely how a child learns new words or concepts, by accommodating changes. Therefore, a child enriches his concepts when he understands that not everything that has a handle and a space is called a bag—this, for me, is a lifelong process.

Therefore, when a child identifies objects, he knows their concepts well—to the extent his age and exposure permits. If we ask a child of age four years to categorize some objects, she/he would display a conceptual understanding of the objects, even though that understanding may or may not be acceptable in the world of adults.

Also, she/he may not be able to explain the rationale behind the categories (due to fear/hesitation/other similar factors), but she/he would have an understanding about their uses, shapes, sizes, where they may be found, whether they are edible, etc. To my mind, this understanding is holistic, and not YET divided by the boundaries of subjects—since I know shapes, I know Math; since I know uses, I know EVS; since I call it correctly, I know language.

Further, when a child describes a bag in minute detail—its size, shape, material, design, embroidery or painting, number of pockets with zips or buttons, etc., two processes take place simultaneously. On the one hand, she/he is uses language to describe the bag, and on the other the description of the minute details using a language help her/him to understand the bag better. Numerous such examples are available around us. To generalize, language learning in children takes place along with concept formation and cognitive engagement with the world around them.

Secondly, the use of appropriate linguistic components (words, gestures, stress, intonation, etc.) is not only an indicator of a person's linguistic abilities, but reveals much more. Which words can be used with whom? Where to put the stress? What is the point one is making? How to respond? Where is the gap in the arguments? What is the essence of the talk? Analyzing all this also requires sound knowledge of the subject matter being discussed, apart from the skills of analysis, synthesis, questioning, responding, etc. Although these cognitive academic skills are transferable, the knowledge of the subject matter can only be gained through active engagement with the content. Thus, conceptual understanding requires language, and for learning a language we need conceptual understanding. We cannot separate the two.

Today's scenario

In schools, we teach mathematics, two languages and EVS as the 'main' subjects, and other subjects such as art, craft, and P.E. (physical education) are considered as co-curricular activities. How many Science teachers help children to understand and analyze the text, or engage them in meaning-making processes? For instance, how many of us have really had an opportunity to derive meaning out of the term 'photosynthesis' through our own engagements in relevant activities. That is supposed to be the responsibility of a language teacher. Conversely, in how many language classes do the students find time to take up science concepts and analyse and discover its meaning. Different kinds of lessons—History, Science or Geography—given in a language textbook get the same treatment. Thus, it is clear that school subjects are so isolated from each other that collaboration among teachers teaching the same classes is also rare.

The second related notion is that of 'language as a medium of instruction'. One only looks at language in the context of other subjects, as just a medium of instruction. When a language teacher was asked for an opinion, the reply was, the language in which the majority of subjects are taught should be given importance and should be taught in the class. This implies that the one who instructs needs a language. Since, a child is there just to follow, she/he either does not require a language, or can manage with the language of instruction. To my mind, there is a serious flaw in this scenario. Where is the place for the child's language? What will happen to the concepts that a child forms while acquiring or learning a language? Since we look at language simply as a medium of instruction, we do not advocate the utilization of the child's language. Under such circumstances, the entire practice of school teaching is set up for failure.

The problem under consideration

The syllabus is compartmentalized, and so is the meaning; the children fail to understand the holistic perspective and the teachers find it difficult to provide meaningful opportunities.

Way forward

The only way to sort out this problem is to follow the ideal of 'a language across the curriculum'. According to the NCF (2005), "A language-across-the-curriculum perspective is perhaps of particular relevance to primary education. Language is best acquired through different meaning-making contexts, and hence all teaching is in a sense language teaching" (p. 39).

A language-across the curriculum approach focuses on providing hands-on experience to the children so that they can discover, explore and question the world around them. Language plays an important role in this, because a child's abilities flourish through her/his own language. He feels respected and included in the teaching-learning process; his language flourishes because she/he works with other children as well as a group of teachers who speak different languages. As mentioned earlier, she/he uses language to understand the world, and in turn this process enriches the language itself.

In order to promote 'theme based teaching and learning' process in schools by demonstrating its efficaciousness, my team[1] and I attempted to apply the concept of a language across the curriculum.

We analyzed the curricula and syllabi of all the subjects taught at Primary level (Classes 1 to 5). We identified the concepts that needed to be discussed, the skills that needed to be fostered, and the abilities that were required to be nurtured from classes 1 to 5. We found that there were three themes that ran through all five classes, and addressed most of the concepts mentioned in the syllabus. These themes were 'Myself', 'Water', and 'Trees in the

playground'. We selected the themes based on the following criteria:

- Themes should be very specific.
- Children should be able to get a first-hand experience.
- They should be age appropriate and interesting.
- They should not be too broad, such as 'Our earth'. This is because at that age, a child will not be able to actually feel 'the earth', or comprehend its vastness.

For one year, we worked on three themes. We wove the concepts, skills, and abilities around them in such a way that we progressed from class 1 to class 5. Thus, we got concentric circles around each of the themes. Figure 1 illustrates how various concepts such as shape, size, colour, kinds of roots, angles, breadth, length, leaves, and photosynthesis can be woven around the theme 'trees in the playground'. The concentric circles correspond to different levels of difficulty. This simple example gives us a glimpse of how a simple theme can be used to explain concepts
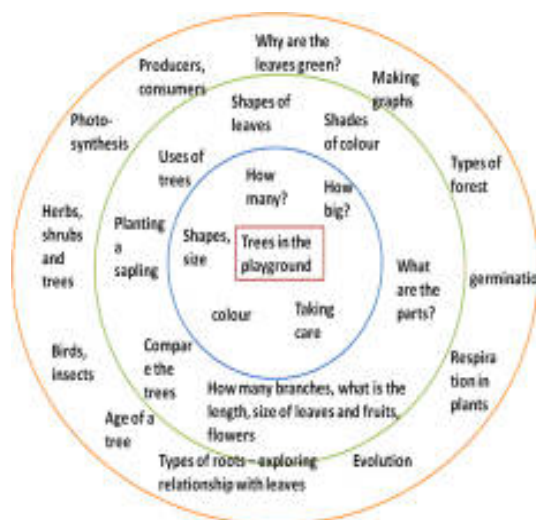

Fig 1

Once the themes were finalized and the concepts and skills were woven around them, we chose age appropriate literature and other reading materials for all the subjects from various

sources including text books, to get the relevant material. With the content ready, we started thinking about interesting and challenging theme-based activities which would bind the concepts and skills of all the subjects together. We came up with a lot of activities which provided opportunities for exploration, analysis, collection of data, deriving conclusions, questioning and interviewing, public speaking, etc. Figure 2 illustrates how the activities were woven with the concepts[2]
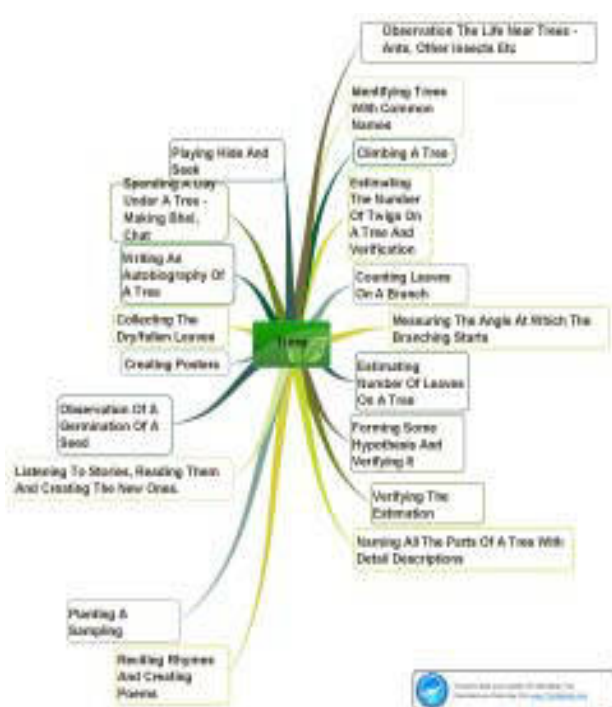

Fig 2

Although the activities were not new, they gave us a glimpse into how meaning-making context was readily available with us. We were able to easily remove the boundaries between subjects and shake the notion that language was just a medium of instruction.

We came to the conclusion that theme-based planning takes time and effort, but once it is done children LEARN in the true sense of the word. They even learn the school language by mastery of the concepts. This, I feel, is 'learning without

burden'. But for this, there cannot be any one prescribed book for the children, they may refer to and read several books out of their interest for exploration.

In primary schools where one teacher teaches all the subjects, implementing theme-based teaching and learning is easier. In schools where there are different teachers for different subjects, they all can collaborate to apply theme-based teaching learning.

Reflection

While doing activities such as the ones listed above, I found that my students of class 3 had become more vocal—they asked more questions, they started explaining concepts to each other, they suggested different ways in which class 2 students could participate in skits, they wrote poems, and drew pictures. They even wrote their own answers, and framed their own questions. Even though these were far from perfect, it was their own work. For me, this was truly (language) learning in context.

[1] We, the team of teachers at the Aditya Birla Public School, Kharach were guided by an educationist Shri Rasik Bhai Shah to implement theme-based teaching learning.

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Fricatives and Affricates of English: A Case Study of Assamese Learners of English

Anima Baishya

Introduction

Vocabulary and its accurate pronunciation play a pivotal role in learning a language. When we consider the phonological aspect of vocabulary , it includes both the vowels (monopthongs and diphthongs) and consonantal sounds. Teaching and learning of English and its vocabulary are unsatisfactory in Assamese medium schools, especially in rural areas. The present article attempts to study the learning of some difficult sounds of English language, especially fricatives and affricates. Through the article, I have tried to identify the reasons behind the phonological problems encountered by English language teachers and students in Assamese medium schools, and recommend remedial measures in order to improve the second language teaching-learning scenario.

Fricatives and Affricates are the two classes of consonantal speech sounds that Assamese learners of English either pronounce wrongly, or find most difficult to pronounce. In the articulation of fricatives, the active and passive articulators form a stricture of close approximation, and the air escapes through the narrow gap, causing audible friction. Affricates on the other hand, are a combination of a plosive and a fricative. Instead of a complete closure of the vocal tract, there is a delayed release in the articulation of affricates.

The objective of this research is to ascertain the accurate pronunciation of these two classes of speech sounds of English language.

Learning the vocabulary of a language is indeed a complex process. The primary aim of students while learning vocabulary is to have the ability to recall a word at will, and to recognize it in its spoken and written forms. The principles of learning English vocabulary in a proper and systematic way are based on the assumptions that learners can be taught, and can teach themselves. Teaching and learning is a complementary process since the teacher has to follow the same principles that are required by the student for learning purposes. Hence, language learning is not an activity that takes place in vacuum.

Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. David Wilkins (1972), summed up the importance of vocabulary for language learning: "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p. 111).

It has been observed that most Assamese learners seem to have an instrumental motivation for learning English. They learn English simply to fulfil the school requirement, since English is a compulsory subject like any other subject. In the indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) setting, "the reasons for studying English and the skills desired are overwhelmingly the ones normally labelled instrumental" (Shaw, 1981, p. 121). Often, lack of motivation becomes one of the main reasons that a majority of the students fail the examination, or remain low achievers. Students find the English period uninteresting and difficult, and that also impacts motivation levels.

The problematic consonantal phonemes

As mentioned earlier, Assamese-speaking learners of English language find consonantal phonemes of English difficult and problematic. These problematic consonantal phonemes include seven out of nine English fricatives, and two affricates of English. These are:

Fricatives: /f, v, è, ð, z, ʃ, ʒ / are non-existent in Assamese.

For example, many Assamese students would find it difficult to pronounce 'fan, van, thin, they, zebra, ship and measure' accurately.

Affricates: /ʧ, ʤ/ are also non-existent in Assamese.

These sounds appear in words like 'church and judge'.

Assamese rendering of sounds

It has been observed that the English fricatives and affricates as spoken by the Assamese show different properties as compared to the way fricatives and affricates are pronounced by the native speakers of English. It should be clear that it is NOT the case that the Assamese children hear the native sounds and render them as plosives or fricatives. On the contrary, they reproduce what they hear from their teachers and may be parents. They seem to be replaced by some easier and similar sounding sounds, in accordance with the law of least effort as proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1966). These sounds are:

a) / f /→/ph/   e.g. /fæn/ 'fan'→/phEn/
b) /v/→/bh/   e.g. /væn/ 'van'→/bhEn/
c) /θ/→/th/   e.g. / θæŋk/ 'thank'→/thEŋk/
d) /ð/→/d/   e.g. / ðen/ 'then'→/den/
e) /z/'/ɟ/   e.g. /zuː/ 'zoo'→/ ɟu/
f) /ʃ/→/s/   e.g. /ʃip/ 'ship' →/sip/
g) /ʒ/→/ɟ/   e.g. /vɪʒn/ 'vision' →/bhiɟOn/
h) /ʧ/→/s/   e.g. /ʧeɪnʤ/ 'change' →/senɟ/
i) /ʤ/→/ɟ/   e.g. / ʤɔɪ/ 'joy' →/ɟOi/

Causes of the phonological problems

Teachers play a crucial role as far as second language teaching is concerned as they have the authority to adopt effective approaches or methods as well as suitable teaching strategies. However, for this language teachers have to be proficient enough in the language they are teaching to be role models for their students. They also have to be cautious of their own shortcomings as wrong pronunciation on their part may result in a negative image of the language in the minds of their students. Gatenby (1967) is right when he says, "If we can train the teacher, make him efficient, and give him confidence, he can himself remove or get rid of most of the other drawbacks" (p. 213).

Some of the reasons for the problems encountered by English teachers of Assamese medium Schools while teaching English pronunciation include:

* The teachers themselves do not know the correct pronunciations.

* In-service training programmes are not compulsory for teachers and are generally conducted for a short duration. Moreover, the notification regarding training of teachers normally does not reach schools on time. Also, very often, school authorities are reluctant to send the teachers for training as because the number of professional trainers is very small.

Thus, teachers of English in Assamese medium schools are not normally exposed to the phonetic features of the English language so as to teach their students correct pronunciation of English words. Most of them have a lack of comparative knowledge of English sounds and Assamese sounds, not being able to correct the spoken form of English words of their students.

* Oral work is not encouraged or practised sufficiently by the teachers.

- Most of the English language teachers in Assamese medium schools do not have a specialization in English. Some of them are just matriculate, and surprisingly, they are allowed to teach English without having a basic knowledge of the language themselves.

In order to have a clear picture of the teaching-learning scenario of English in the upper primary level of Assamese medium schools, the problems faced by learners are also a subject of concern. It is evident that when Assamese students learn English, they come across speech sounds that are quite different from those of Assamese. They often find it difficult to articulate these sounds. Therefore, they substitute these English speech sounds with speech sounds of Assamese. This pull of Assamese causes unintelligibility. Such problems are meant to be handled by the language teacher in the classroom. However, it is debatable whether the language teacher takes note of these problems and makes the necessary corrections. Also, Assamese students do not get enough exposure to English. Not only does this contribute to difficulties in articulating the correct pronunciation, but it also impacts spellings, as the students are not able to perceive the correct spelling as a result of faulty pronunciation.

Suggestions and recommendations

I have made an attempt to suggest academic principles in general and pedagogical issues in particular that underline the teaching of phonology of English vocabulary in the context of Assamese medium schools. These can help us to understand the problems related to teaching and learning English and its vocabulary in such schools.

Academic factors

- In-service training programmes should be made compulsory for teachers, and they should be conducted for a longer duration. The concerned authorities must ensure that the notification regarding training of teachers should reach the schools on time. The school authorities should allow the teachers to go for training so that they can improve their skills as well as equip themselves with the new teaching methods and modern techniques.

- Teachers of English in Assamese medium schools should be exposed to the phonetic features of English language, so that they can teach their students correct pronunciation of English words. They should also have a comparative knowledge of English and Assamese sounds, so that they are able to correct the spoken English of their students.

- Efficient and knowledgeable teachers should be recruited to teach English. The selection of teachers should be impartial and fair.

- Oral work should be encouraged and practised.

Pedagogical issues

Careful attention must be accorded to pronunciation as it is an essential part of vocabulary teaching if the new English lexis is to be used effectively, or understood without difficulty. The degree of attention paid to the pronunciation of a lexical item depends on the importance of the item in spoken English, and the extent to which it poses a problem for the students.

Before teaching new pronunciations, the teachers should highlight the new vocabulary while writing it on the blackboard. They should use the technique of 'Mimicry-Memorization' through repetition drills to teach pronunciation. In addition to this, teachers may use minimal pairs to teach two similar sounds that are

problematic for the students. Error-analysis and correction in different areas of pronunciation helps students distinguish between vowel sounds—in rounding or reduction of rounding, in the lengthening or shortening of vowels, and in the consonant sounds absent in Assamese or in consonant clusters.

In order to teach the pronunciation of problematic fricatives and affricates of English, the teacher should utilize the following sequence:

1. Articulate the sound in a word.
2. Articulate the sound by itself.
3. Get the students to repeat the sound, in chorus.
4. Contrast it with other reinforced sounds.
5. Get individual students to repeat contrasting sounds.

The teacher may also write down all new words that the students have encountered during the week on the board. He/she should then articulate the words, and the students should repeat them. Then the learners should take turns articulating the words independently and the teacher should give them feedback on their pronunciation.

The articulation of the fricatives /f, v, θ, ð, ʃ, z, ʒ/ in the lexis must be given special attention as they do not have equivalent sounds in Assamese. Similarly, /ʧ and dʒ/ also need special care, and the language teacher must make sure that these are articulated and pronounced correctly.

a) For the production of /f/ and /v/, the Assamese medium learners have to be told to keep their upper teeth very close to their lower lip, and not to bring their upper and lower lip into contact. The air in the vocal tract must be allowed to flow continuously, causing friction. It is important to also understand the difference between the voiceless (when the vocal chords are not vibrating) and the voiced (when the vocal chords are vibrating) sounds. /f/ is voiceless but /v/ is voiced. In fact, that is the only difference between these two sounds.

b) For the production of /è/ sound, the learners should be told to not touch their teeth with their tongue, but to keep it very close to them, and subsequently allow the air to escape slowly and continuously.

c) With regard to /ð/, the learners have to form a stricture of close approximation instead of a stricture of complete closure. They have to be taught the basic difference between a fricative and a plosive. Once again, in order to articulate this sound the learner needs to bring the tongue very close to the teeth without touching them. Although this needs a bit of practice, the language teacher can handle it in the classroom.

d) In order to articulate /ʃ/, the Assamese learners of English have to be asked to raise the blade of their tongue to touch the hard palate, keeping the tip of the tongue level with the teeth ridge and rounding the lips slightly.

e) For the production of /z/, the learners have to be taught to lower the body of the tongue, and place the tip of the tongue very close to the alveolar ridge so that the air can escape continuously through the narrow gap instead of touching the hard palate with the blade of the tongue.

f) The Assamese medium learners can be taught to pronounce /ʧ/ by raising the blade of the tongue and placing it very close to the hard palate, getting the lips slightly rounded.

g) For the correct articulation of /ʧ/, the learners must understand that /ʧ/ is a combination of /t/ and /ʃ/. During the

articulation of /ʧ/ , there is a complete closure of the oral passage and then there is a delayed release or continued flow of air. The learners have to be taught to stop the air passage by firmly placing the blade of the tongue on the teeth ridge in /t/ position, build up air pressure between the palate and the tongue, and then to release the pressure by quickly bringing the tongue to /ʃ/ position.

h)   The same remedial measure is suggested for acquiring /ʧ/ . The language teacher has to demonstrate the difference between a voiced sound and its voiceless counterpart. The learner then needs to acquire the voice feature by regular practice.

Conclusion

So far, we have looked at the difficulties of the Assamese learners of English and how they pronounce native English fricatives and affricates differently; the fricatives /f, v, è, ð/ are replaced by stops unlike /z, ʃ, ʒ/ in place of which they use fricatives /ɟ, s, ɟ/. Similarly, instead of affricates, fricatives are used. The learners must be made aware of the basic difference between a fricative and a plosive, and between an affricate and a plosive. Finally, the language teacher must take into account the fact that in addition to the input received from teachers and parents and the peer group, the law of least effort is one of the causes of sound replacement; they should accordingly make changes in the language teaching process.

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Interview

Face to Face with Navnit Kumar
Vijay Kumar

Mr. Navnit Kumar is a language teacher (PGT Hindi) in a Delhi government school. He has done his teacher training from the Department of Education (CIE), Delhi University.

Vijay Kumar (VK): Most people have a perception that teaching is a very relaxed part-time job. Do you agree?

Navnit Kumar (NK): No, not at all. If taken seriously, it is one of the most tiring, challenging but also satisfying professions. That is why I chose this profession. In fact, my whole family is in the teaching profession. I was also interested in teaching. Therefore, I chose to be a teacher, and at present I'm teaching in a government school.

VK: Can you tell me something about your schooling? How was it different from the present day scenario in terms of the teaching-learning process, the curriculum, the textbooks, etc.?

NK: I did my entire schooling in a government school in Bihar. During our days, teaching was textbook-centric. Generally, students would read the text and teachers would explain it. However, when stories or anecdotes were used, students could understand the concepts more easily and the class became more interesting. In our times, there were fewer public schools; consequently there was a good mix of students from different socio-economic backgrounds–a sort of common schooling. It was very different from what we see these days in the government schools in Delhi, where most of the students are from poor or extremely poor families.

VK: What was the linguistic background of the students in a class? What was the medium of instruction and how effective was it?

NK: At school level, the medium of teaching was Hindi. In my class, most of the students used to speak Hindi (standardized *Khari Boli*) at home, but some spoke *Maithili, Bhojpuri, Bangla* or *Magahi* (a variety of Hindi) at home. The vocabulary of these languages is similar to that of Hindi with minor variations. In fact, Hindi has more than eighteen related varieties. So, Hindi was the medium of instruction, but at times one could see the influence of native languages on the Hindi used in class. For example, Hindi verb forms vary with gender, but in *Magahi*, the verb forms are gender neutral.

VK: What did the language classes of that time look like? What was the pedagogical process/strategy adopted in language teaching? To what extent was it successful in the teaching of the second language?

NK: We used to enjoy our language classes, especially the prose (stories, novels etc.) part. The poetry part used to be comparatively less interesting. The reason for this was that most of the Hindi poetry, from *Aadi Kal* to *Riti Kal* has been written in *Braj Bhasa*, *Awadhi* or *Maithili*. Understanding standardized Hindi is not a problem for a child even if his mother tongue is a variety of Hindi, because he knows it through textbooks, news papers, magazines, TV, radio, films, etc., but understanding a completely different variety is more difficult. Also, traditionally, while teaching poetry there is an emphasis on the *chhand* (meter), *alankar*

(figure of speech), etc., which is generally dry and uninteresting for a child. I wish these technical aspects of poetry could be taught in a more interesting way.

VK: Moving on to your teaching experience, can you tell us something about the socio-economic and linguistic background of your students?

NK: My students are generally first generation learners. Their parents are mostly daily wage earners, labourers, helpers, etc. In fact, most of them are first generation learners from the rural villages of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana. Most of the children either speak Hindi, or a variety of Hindi at home.

VK: Having children belonging to such diverse linguistic backgrounds, how do you manage your classes? Do you face any problems?

NK: Most of my students use different dialects of Hindi in class, which has an impact on both their spoken and written Hindi. Sometimes, they make mistakes because of the variation in their mother tongues from standardized Hindi. I explain to them that some of their mistakes are common and are simply a reflection of the influence of their mother tongues. Then I demonstrate to them that there is a certain pattern in their mistakes. The idea is to make them proud of their mother tongues, while at the same time making them aware of its variation from the standardized language, so that they can pronounce and write correctly.

VK: What do you think about the effect of the mother tongue on the acquisition of other languages? Is it negative or positive?

NK: I feel that the mother tongue helps in the acquisition of a second language. Through the mother tongue, a child is already acquainted with a language system. Therefore, a word of a second language can be learnt as a synonym of the corresponding word in his mother tongue. Similarly, grammatical constructions can be learnt as a model, with certain variations as compared to the mother tongue. But, as I have already said, sometimes the influence of the mother tongue on the second language cannot be ruled out. For example, a child tends to make mistakes in the pronunciation and grammatical constructions of Hindi as a result of the influence of the mother tongue: a child whose mother tongue is Haryanvi may pronounce 'bulb' as *'balab'*, or a child whose mother tongue is *Maghi* may make mistakes related to verb forms because her/his mother tongue is gender neutral.

VK: What pedagogical process/strategy do you adopt while teaching Hindi in school? In what way is it different from the way teaching was done in your school days?

NK: In our school days, the emphasis was on textbooks. There was also a lot of stress on the technical aspects of literature. I feel that though these technical aspects of language teaching are important, the manner in which these were taught was not very appropriate. I try to teach these topics through discussions, examples, anecdotes, debates, etc. I suggest to my students to read newspapers, magazines, novels, stories, etc., because one can't master a language by focusing on the textbook only. I also tell them to read about the topics that are referred to in the chapter. Interdisciplinary approach, according to me, is always better.

VK: I had a chance to attend a presentation made by you at Ambedkar University, Delhi. You explained how a difficult chapter '*Kootaj*' (name of a plant), written by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, could be made interesting for children. Could you tell me a little more about this method?

NK: Unfortunately, when I was in school, this chapter had been taught in a linear, one-dimensional and uninteresting manner. I found that '*Kootaj*' encompasses or touches on diverse areas such as Geography, History, Mythology, practical wisdom, zest for life, satire on corruption, etc. Therefore, while doing this chapter with the children, I touched upon all these topics. Similarly, if there is a reference in the chapter to plate tectonic theory, I encourage the students to refer to this topic in their geography books. If there is a reference to Indo-European languages, I encourage them to independently find similarities between various languages. In the same way, if there is a reference to Rahim, a child can better understand the point if he is aware of the story of Rahim, his achievements as a poet, etc. If the author has written a satire on corrupt practices, the teacher should initiate a discussion on it. The students can be asked if they have encountered any corrupt practices, and what changes have been made to curb these practices. Thus, I work on the premise that inter-disciplinary approach in teaching is one of the prerequisites of language classes.

VK: What is your opinion regarding language curriculum at various levels of schooling. Is it relevant and interesting?

NK: As far as Hindi is concerned, certain changes have been made. For example, at the higher secondary level, some relevant topics related to creative writing and journalism have been introduced. However, in the junior classes, instead of including poetry or prose chapters written in archaic, older or different forms of the language, chapters written in the contemporary form of the language should be included. Unnecessary emphasis on *alankars* and *chhands* in Hindi poetry at the junior level of schooling should be avoided.

VK: Children fear grammar. In fact, I too dread grammar. Do you think grammar should be taught in the manner it is taught?

NK: During my school days, I used to consider Sanskrit as the most difficult subject. It has so many *dhatu-roops*, *sabda-roops*, rules, etc., and one has to memorize all of them. In Hindi, the grammar portion, particularly the technical parts certainly creates disinterest among students. However, this does not mean that grammar should be totally neglected; in fact, the word-building aspects of grammar such as *upsarg* (prefix), *pratyay* (suffix), etc., should be taught in an interesting way. Topics should be chosen in a manner that grammar teaching does not become a tedious and boring exercise.

VK: What modifications would you suggest in the course content of Hindi textbooks to make it compatible with the recommendations made in NCF 2005?

NK: The recommendations of NCF 2005 are good, but its problem areas are implementation and training. As I have already told you, emphasis should not be only on the technical aspect of a language. The language curriculum should be such that it should directly or indirectly touch on different disciplines and subject areas such as Sociology, Political Science, Philosophy, History, Natural Science, Mathematics, etc.

VK: Thank you for sharing all this.

NK: Thank you for such a nice discussion.

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Landmarks

Chomsky's Innateness Hypothesis: Implications for Language Learning and Teaching

Ayesha Kidwai

Noam Chomsky's 1959 review of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* is widely acknowledged as having sounded the death knell of behaviorist approaches to human learning and knowledge, and as paving the way for the 'cognitive revolution' in the decades to follow. Over fifty years later, Chomsky's remarks are not merely of historical significance, as they are still relevant to the contours that an enquiry into human cognition and behavior must have.

At its most basic level, Chomsky's critique of behaviorism claims that children's first language(s) acquisition is directed by the stimuli provided by adults through a reinforcement of casual observation and imitation by children. What Chomsky is suggesting in this early article is that much of the child's linguistic knowledge is expressed in contexts where no reinforcement is ever available. As research has progressed in the area, a more complete picture of the inaccuracy of the behaviorists' fable has emerged. Parents neither reinforce children's grammatical utterances, nor pay any special attention to their grammatical wellformedness; and children also resist any attempts at correction. Furthermore, while children may well imitate the linguistic utterances of adults, such imitation does not form the basis of the linguistic knowledge they put to use. The following two sets of dialogues—which form part of research conducted *after* Chomsky's review—demonstrate this:

A) Adult: Where is that big piece of paper I gave you yesterday?

Child: Remember? I writed on it.

Adult: Oh, that's right, don't you have any paper down here, buddy?

B) Child: Want other one spoon, Daddy

Adult: You mean, you want the other spoon.

Child: Yes, I want other one spoon, please Daddy.

Adult: Can you say "the other spoon"?

Child: Other … one … spoon

Adult: Say "other".

Child: other

Adult: "spoon"

Child: spoon

Adult: "other … spoon"

Child: other … spoon. Now give me other one spoon.

(Pinker, 1995, p. 281)

The first set of dialogues (A) show that the reinforcement that a child gets, through parental agreement in this case, is for an ungrammatical utterance. Simply put, parents care more about the meaning and truth of their children's linguistic acts, than about their grammatical form. The exchange in (B) illustrates that while imitation is something that a child may easily do, neither does she/he see the injunction to imitation as a reinforcement behavior by the adult, nor does she/he let the imitated utterance form the basis of her own utterances.

Add to this the fact that the nature of reinforcing behavior may itself be full of 'noise', as verbal communication is full of false starts, stops, incomplete utterances, etc. If a child were to rely on this flawed input as the basis for learning language, the speed with which she/he acquires the basic grammar of her/his language would be unexpected. Across languages, a normally developing child has a complete grasp of its rules of sentence formation (syntax) by the time she is five. Beyond that age, even as children (and the adult) continue to learn new words and phrases, very little syntax learning needs to take place; in fact, by the beginning of the teens, very little syntax learning *can* take place. An oft-mentioned example in this context is that of a child named Genie, who was rescued from an abusive father at the age of eight. Genie had been kept in an outhouse, chained to a potty since the age of one, and while food was pushed into the shed twice a day, she had never been spoken to by anyone. After her rescue, Genie made rapid strides in cognitive development, but her overall linguistic skills remained poor, and she could never produce grammatical utterances of even average length.

It is also rare for a child to hear ungrammatical sentences as part of the stimulus. However, if a child's knowledge of 'ungrammaticality' is also the product of reinforcement, how is this knowledge ever arrived at? This is especially relevant when we consider the number of mistakes that children do *not* make. A simple example is that of a phrase order in a sentence, which in a language such as English is of the order of Agent-Action-Recipient-Object-Location. As Roger Brown observed in the 1970s, while the earliest utterances of children in the age group 2-2.6 years conform to this basic order, and the difference between their output and that of an adult lies mainly in the fact that children's outputs have more omissions. These omissions can be due to a variety of factors, some acquisition-related factors and others extra-grammatical. An example of the latter is that children often allow the discourse context to do the talking as it were, so if an object can be pointed to, they do not linguistically represent it. For example, sentence (f) below could be accompanied by a pointing gesture to the object that is to be laid on the floor. A case of grammatically-conditioned omission could however be made out for the systematic omission of prepositions in the entire set of examples – clearly the realization of prepositions as markers of spatial relations cannot be produced at this early stage of acquisition.

(C)	Agent	Action	Recipient	Object	Location
	(Mother	gave	John	lunch	in the kitchen.)
a.	Mommy	fix.			
b.	Mommy			pumpkin.	
c.	Baby				table.
d.		Give	doggie.		
e.		Put		light.	
f.		Put			floor.
g.	I	ride		horsie.	
h.	Tractor	go			floor.
i.		Give	doggie	paper.	
j.		Put		truck	window.
k.	Adam	put		it	box.

In the examples above it will be noticed that while the early utterances of children do not uniformly realize the full frame of Agent-Action-Recipient-Object-Location (as shown in the adult sentence *Mother gave John lunch in the kitchen*), they do have knowledge of the frame. If they did not, then children should have been equally likely to produce *Mommy fix* as well as *fix Mommy* to mean 'Mommy fixed it'; however, they do not. Similarly, if this frame were not available, we would expect that the children would have used example (g) to describe an event when the floor was being laid in a building (I.e. when the floor was interpreted as the Object), but that was never the case – (g) was used when something was to be laid on the floor (i.e. the floor was location).

Children also do not make certain mistakes that they would be expected to make were they generalizing from observed patterns. As Pinker (1994) points out, if British/American English-speaking children were generalizing from observed patterns, we would expect that on observing the patterns in (D), they would utter the ungrammatical (Eii). However, British/American English-speaking children never make this mistake.

(D) (i) Irv drove the car into the garage.
    (ii) Irv drove the car.

(E) (i) Irv put the car into the garage.
    (ii) *Irv put the car.

Since the 1970s, this line of reasoning has come to be known as the 'poverty of the stimulus' argument: Given that the data children receive from the input is woefully underdetermined to serve as the basis for language acquisition, and given that children nevertheless do acquire the grammar(s) of their native language(s), it must be that the child's learning of language is guided by some form of innate linguistic capacity. The existence of a critical period—a window of time

in which environmental exposure stimulates an innate trait—for language acquisition suggests that this innate endowment is genetic, "spurred on by the unfolding of the genome during maturation" (Pinker, 1995)

Finally, if grammar is what this innate endowment must be, then this human cognitive ability is an instance of *domain-specific* intelligence, unrelated to the development of general intelligence and cognitive abilities. Research, both preceding and following Chomsky's *Review* has confirmed this in a number of ways. The human brain has circuitry in the left hemisphere exclusively for language, and there are a few inherited syndromes that target language alone. One such syndrome is Specific Language Impairment (SLI), which recent research has established as genetic. SLI is a purely linguistic inherited disorder caused by mutation in the gene FOXP2. Moreover, intact language has been found to coexist with severe retardation, as in the famous case of Christopher, who was born with hydrocephalic brain damage, and was severely retarded, but had unique and prodigious language abilities—he could read, write and communicate in any of fifteen to twenty languages (Smith and Tsimpli, 1995).

For language teachers of young children today, Chomsky's nativist ideas point towards a profound question—how much of the innate endowment is implicated in the construction of linguistic knowledge? Chomsky's answer would be much along the same lines as his observations in the Creation & Culture Conference in Barcelona in November 1992:

Most problems of teaching are not problems of growth but helping cultivate growth. …Typically, they come in interested, and the process of education is a way of driving that defect out of their minds. But if children['s] [...] normal interest is maintained or even aroused, they can do all kinds of things in ways we don't understand.

It is therefore important to question whether the methodology we employ assumes that first or second language learning is primarily graphic, and that the process is deductive, requires rote memorization, role playing and structure drilling, and stress habit formation as a means of learning language. These are all behaviourist assumptions. Teaching first or second languages through grammar is not really teaching language at all, because what is taught is a system of prescriptive rules that linguists/grammarians have come up with to describe a language. To tell students that they must not split an infinitive with an adverb is to teach an aesthetic choice—i.e. the 'correct' form is not *I want to quickly tell you* but *I want to tell you quickly*—because all native speakers of English actually agree that both alternatives are grammatical. Teaching young students the grammatical jargon for the form 'I am reading" is the present progressive, is not teaching language, but grammar, and while an appreciation of grammatical analysis is an important aspect of learning, this is a sophisticated skill and not suitable for very young children. At the heart of our teaching must lie the understanding that children already know their first language, and that this knowledge can be harnessed to acquiring other languages as well. Finally, while the focus on writing is crucial, it must not be at the cost of encouraging children to fully 'activate' their developing knowledge of language, by learning new vocabulary (the only aspect of language acquisition that carries on throughout one's lifetime) and using all the syntactic constructions they have an innate competence in.

Awareness of the innateness argument should also enable us to critically evaluate the instruments by which we teach language—textbooks, storybooks, readers, etc. While one can be misled into thinking that a particular lesson 'teaches' some aspect of language, quite often the lesson's content simply piggybacks on the child's tacit knowledge of language. For example, no textbook would ever attempt to explain the linguistic properties of the Hindi use of *apne-aap*, or the English *themselves*. In fact many crucial properties of language are not the subject matter of lessons at all. Consider Chomsky's (1983) example of the kind of sophisticated knowledge that children must have to be able to process their parent's utterances (even before they can themselves produce similar ones):

Take the sentence, "John believes he is intelligent." Okay, we all know that "he" can refer either to John or to someone else; so the sentence is ambiguous. It can mean either that John thinks he, John, is intelligent, or that someone else is intelligent. In contrast, consider the sentence, "John believes him to be intelligent." Here, the pronoun "him" can't refer to John; it can refer only to someone else.

Now, did anyone teach us this peculiarity about English pronouns when we were children? It would be hard to even imagine a training procedure that would convey such information to a person. Nevertheless, everybody knows it – knows it without experience, without training, and at quite an early age.

The 'Chomskyan revolution' has had an important impact on language teaching methodologies, particularly in the development of content-based communicative approaches. These approaches make active learner participation the centrepiece of the activity, and aim at providing appropriate language input and increasing communicative competence. However, there are still many other fruits that remain to be picked. One of them is the implication that the Chomskyan revolution has for mother tongue education and multilingual learning.

Although we have not mentioned it thus far, the Chomskyan perspective argues that the innate

mechanism enables children to acquire as many languages as there are in the input provided a child's environment. So, if a child has parents that speak to her in two languages, say Malayalam and Bangla, and her playmates and other caregivers speak to her in Hindi, she will acquire at least three languages in her childhood. By the time she is five, she will be roughly equally competent in all three (provided, of course, that the input is regular and use of all three languages is not discouraged). It has been observed that once children start going to school, this incipient multilingualism gets eroded, and some of the languages get restricted to the home domain, often withering away. However, imagine a school in which the languages of all children were encouraged, where homework involved learning poetry in more than just one or two dominant languages, and where these other languages were brought to the classroom and shared. In that world, children's cognitive development and linguistic creativity would develop more rapidly, and they would be more aware of differences and the rights of others. In such a scenario, even though education may ultimately move in the direction of one or two languages, the richness of the initial multilingual resource would ease the transition.

In the world we live in, however, many, if not most, children are often educated in a language that they have never heard as the input. While this language could be English, it could also be a major regional language not spoken in their home environment. This imposes a tremendous cognitive burden on the child who is expected to gain 'knowledge' through a medium that she/he does not comprehend. This creates a fundamental inequity between her/him and other children who do have access to the language of education, an inequity that cannot serve as the edifice on which true learning can be built.

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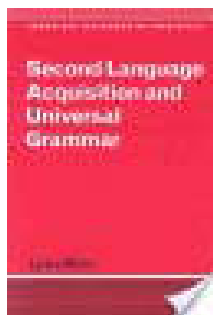*ayesha.kidwai@gmail.com*

Book Reviews

Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar

By Lydia White (2003). Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics Series.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paperback ISBN: 9780521796477, pp. 316.

Reviewed by: Pritha Chandra

Lydia White's book is on interlanguage grammars (ILGs) and the mechanisms used by second language learners in acquiring them. The concept of an ILG first came up in the 1970s. Researchers commonly held that ILGs are systematic, with 'errors', that on closer probe, turn out not to be random mistakes but rule-governed behavior. Therefore, while they appear to be beset by faults, these languages have grammars just like other adult grammars. The second language (L2) speakers using them therefore have complex linguistic systems underlying their linguistic competence.

White takes the debate surrounding interlanguage or L2 grammar representations a little further. She suggests that ILGs are constrained by the principles and parameters of a Universal Grammar (UG). The principles and parameters model of grammar (Chomsky, 1981) builds on the premise that there is a specialized module of human language in the brain of every normal infant. This module comprises a UG with inbuilt invariant principles (the requirement that lexical information of individual words must not be lost while building structures using them, more popularly known as the 'Projection Principle')

and parameters to allow variation between natural languages (the 'Verb-Complement Parameter' that allows languages to either have their objects to the right of the verb or to its left). These principles and parameters have for long been argued to shape the linguistic competence of native speakers of first languages (L1); they give the speakers the ability to build grammars in the face of impoverished input data in a surprisingly short duration, and without much explicit instruction. Not surprisingly, research into L2 acquisition has also largely been directed by the objective of investigating whether or not UG mechanisms are at play in this domain. A second question concerns the extent of L1 grammar mediation in learning the target L2. Since L2 learners already possess the grammar of at least one adult language, it presents the potential risk of intervention in the target (L2) language.

The literature, as many second language researchers point out, is often unclear between the roles given to UG and Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in shaping linguistic competence. As White very succinctly points out, UG is a theory relevant to the issue of linguistic competence, i.e. it is a theory on the nature of grammatical representations. It provides a hypothesis space for grammars, i.e. it constrains possible grammars in the course of acquisition. However, it is not a theory of acquisition. Unfortunately, many researchers incorrectly assume it to be an equivalent to LAD. In actuality, however, it is more appropriate to think of UG as just a part of an LDA or as a part of a language faculty. For language acquisition in general, and L2 acquisition in particular, we therefore do not just require a theory of constraints on IL representations, but also a

theory of development that would tell us how those representations are acquired.

As for the role of UG, there is a lot of work on whether parameters are at use in L2 acquisition, as for instance the research into head position or the pro-drop phenomenon (i.e. subject-less constructions) by White herself. There are broadly three approaches in this regard. The first is the 'parameter (re)setting' approach, where researchers probe for instances of parameter (re)setting in ILGs, with a certain parameter depicting an early stage L1 value and a later stage L2 value, with relevant clustering of properties. The main idea of these works is that while L1 settings prevail initially, subsequently they change into L2 settings. Then there is the 'no parameter resetting' hypothesis which states that L2 grammars are UG constrained, and fail to reset parameters. According to yet another approach, L2 settings are attainable without prior adoption of L1 settings.

White's work is a defense of the significant role that UG plays in the formation of ILGs. She illustrates with several 'poverty of stimulus' cases, where the phenomena in question are underdetermined by the L2 input and cannot be easily inferred by looking at frequency effects, or learned on the basis of instruction, analogical reasoning etc. It is also explicitly suggested that the phenomena under study work differently in the L1 and L2 domains. The subtle and abstract knowledge that L2 learners display is therefore not due to the knowledge of the L1 grammar alone.

It has previously been pointed out in Bley-Vroman's influential 1983 paper that "work on the linguistic description of learners' languages can be seriously hindered or sidetracked by a concern with the target language" (p. 2) and that "learner's system is worthy of study in its own right, not just as a degenerate form of the target system" (p. 4). Therefore, several UG/

SLA researchers, White included, emphasize on the need to consider ILGs as a separate arena of study. In more explicit terms, this amounts to considering whether ILGs are natural language systems, instead of merely comparing L2 learners to native speakers of the L2. Researchers have variously tried to argue that if the focus in on properties of the ILGs, one may arrive at interesting results that show that L2 learners arrive at grammars that account for the L2 input (though not in the same way as the grammar of the native speaker). The questions, then, are (a) whether the ILG is a 'possible grammar' and (b) how learners arrive at these grammars in the face of impoverished data. Some researchers argue that L2 learners arrive at their target grammars using a completely different set of analyses than L1 speakers of the same language. To illustrate, while learning how to form questions, they do not use displacement of the wh- phrases, instead opting for a base-generated analysis for them. L2 learners, according to these authors, thus choose very different learning mechanisms from the ones chosen by L1 speakers.

In sum, White's work is a defense of a nativist account for L2 learning. It is a very clear exposition of theoretical assumptions and novel empirical evidence indicating the significant role of innate mechanisms in language learning. In recent years, a number of alternatives have been proposed in opposition to Chomsky's 'representational nativism, commonly known as 'emergentism' (see O'Grady 2010 for a comprehensive survey). Contemporary emergentism often tries to explain linguistic development by reference to the operation of simple mechanisms (essentially inductive generalizations) that extract statistical regularities from experience. White, while endorsing the view that language acquisition mechanisms are not limited to innate biological principles, shows us how UG based studies can lead us to a better understanding of language

learning. She also makes a very strong case for why ILGs should be studied in their own right, instead of relating them to the adult native grammars of the same languages. This study can therefore be considered as a landmark in the study of L2 learning.

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Learning and teaching language as a cognitive activity has been part of most literate societies since ancient times. The debate about the correct method of teaching language is also old, perhaps starting with the Greeks (Horrocks, 2010). The modern world has seen various waves of theories regarding language teaching methods, the most traditional among them being the grammar translation method. The book, "Advanced English Grammar: A Linguistic Approach" is the fruit of labour of two experienced teachers of English language who have tried to bridge the gap between traditional method of teaching English, and a thoroughly linguistic analysis of language. This was an effort to make clear to the students "that there is a logical system underlying the rules they were learning by rote memory", which is apt for the target population of this book, namely advanced learners of English.

The book is neatly laid out in six chapters. After discussing the primary notions of various grammatical forms and functions in the first chapter, the authors move on to describe the important notions in English grammar from a linguistic analysis vantage point. An important aspect of the design and choice of topics in this book is that it discusses the relevant notions of language structure that will help the student better grasp the concept rather than burden them with linguistic theories and terminologies. The chapter on 'Verb and its Compliments' addresses some main basic notions of verb morphology in the language, including the classification of verbs into lexical and auxiliary verbs, and the passive and complement structure of verbs. 'Nouns and the Noun Phrase' (or the noun morphology) covers the expected ground of modifiers, determiners and subject-verb agreement. The treatment of the 'genitives and possessive determiners' in this section is a welcome surprise, and has been dealt with clearly and with adequate examples. 'Tense and aspect' is discussed in a separate chapter in great detail. A significant aspect of this chapter is that the

authors take care to show the relationship between time and tense, and the different type of mapping possible between them, such as present tense to talk about future time etc. In a clear departure from traditional approaches, the book aims to teach the students that "choice of tense… follows from a few basic generalizations related to how time is perceived in English", referring to the underlying perceptual factors responsible for language structures. 'Modals and Modality' is a detailed chapter; it discusses the different ways to use modal verbs to communicate either epistemic or non-epistemic meaning. The discussion brings out the equation of modal meaning with respect to temporal reference and aspectual distinctions, thus creating a holistic picture of the rules governing the function of verbs in this language. The last chapter on discourse is short and crisp. At the end of the chapters, there are exercises on each chapter, which is of great use to the language teacher as these exercises can be used in classroom teaching as well as by the students themselves to sharpen their skills.

On the whole, this is a very welcome book that fills a gap between traditional grammar approach and pure linguistics analysis, and is written in a style that steers clear of the intimidating prose of linguistic analysis and the prescriptive nature of traditional grammar. It is perhaps because of the long teaching experience of the authors that there is a conversational attitude in the writing that can be expected to be student-friendly. Though the book is primarily addressed to the non-native learners of advanced level English, it could also prove useful for the native speakers as a reference book, owing to the systematic analysis of the underlying rules of the language. The idea of a nagging necessity of teaching language through linguistic theories is not entirely new, and books with this approach have been fruitfully engaged to fill the gaps (Wardhaugh, 2002). All in all, this book provides the readers with a refreshing viewpoint of the traditional method of teaching English and a linguistic analysis of language. In addition, there is companion website to accompany the book, from where users can download resources.

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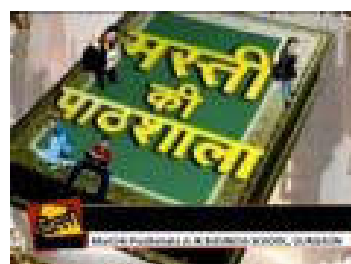
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Masti Ki Paathshala [in Hindi.]

By Jha, Kamalanand (2009).

New Delhi: Publication Department, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

ISBN: 978-81-230-1621-4, pp. 153.

Reviewed by: Parmanand Jha

Stephen Spender, the celebrated British poet, in his famous poem, 'An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum', portrays, with down to earth realism, the depressing faces of school children confined within the four walls of the school classroom. On the room wall are the pictures of Shakespeare, the Tyrol Valley and a map of the world—all far removed from the interests and concerns of the children coming from a socially and economically backward background, and whose world is represented by

the foggy world of slums. Spender concludes the poem, emphasizing that education should help these children re-establish contact with nature and life. Kalanand Jha's *Masti Ki Paathshala* not only vindicates Spender's views to a considerable extent, but further examines various issues and concerns underlying school education in India. Based on the personal experience of Jha's stint as a school teacher, and his findings as a research scholar at JNU, the book covers all the aspects of teaching school children. The fourteen chapters of the book, divided equally into two parts, have a nice introduction. The first part focuses on issues such as the relevance and role of course books, question-oriented education, self-image of teachers and students, cultural context of modern education and the role of children's magazines. The second part of the book examines the challenges and relevance of homework, and suggests interesting methods of teaching poetry, story, drama, essay, social sciences and grammar.

Course-Books, Jha believes, are fundamental to teaching but they should be child-oriented; related to children's lives and backgrounds; completely free from communal, political or sectarian biases; and be taught by trained and competent teachers who understand the psychology of children and rise above class and caste contempt. Jha's concern for a proper training for teachers so that they may create targeted support programs in schools for children coming from underprivileged backgrounds stands vindicated by a recent survey conducted among more than a lakh of class 5 students in 6602 schools across India under the aegis of NCERT. "After fairly exhaustive questions in Mathematics, Environmental studies and language, it was found that the performance of students from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe backgrounds was rather worse than that of students occupying the general seats." (The Telegraph, 14 September. 2012).

Jha favors attempts to encourage inquisitiveness in children rather than disciplining them into silence. In one of the chapters, *Aadhunik Shiksha ka Nachiketa*, Jha frankly admits that education for children has become a source of boredom in place of an interesting and delightful activity. When scoring marks becomes the be-all and end-all, the whole purpose of imparting education is reduced to an exercise in futility. Jha's views are fully corroborated if one reads Anil Thakkar's remarkable defense of the poor performance of Indian students in the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) on the grounds "that a standardized test can produce any sort of objective picture of students' abilities is a ridiculous proposition." (Times of India: Counter View,7 September 2012).

Cultural disconnect, according to Jha, has led to a gnawing gap between tradition and modernity—the biggest irony of modern education. Only by striking a balance between traditional and the modern strategies of teaching can we make our education meaningful and relevant. Jha mentions educationists such as Gijubhai Badheka, Prakash Chandra Shukla, Anil Sadgopal, Krishna Kumar and Rama Kant Agnihotri, whose contributions to the field of education have been significant and have generated fruitful debates and discussions all over the country. Books authored by them have helped tremendously in honing the skills of teachers. Jha suggests three specific magazines (*Eklavya* from Bhopal, and *Primary Shishak* and *Bharatiya Aadhunik Shiksha* by NCERT) that may improve the standards of teaching substantially. The last chapter of the book condemns banning of books or portions thereof due to vested interests, and strongly advocates a shift of marginalized materials to the centre.

Part 2 of the book begins with a realistic account of the challenges faced in the teaching of social sciences, and offers strategies to handle them. History teaching, Jha holds, requires objectivity

and impartiality on the part of teachers who must also have a historical insight. Geography and Civics can be made more interesting by relating them to the children's' immediate surroundings, and through group activities and team work. While assigning homework, the teacher must take note of the different levels of students in the same class. The next five chapters explore innovative methods to make the teaching of poetry, short story, drama, essay and grammar more interesting and delightful. Traditional methods of teaching these genres have also been critically examined. Jha concludes by asserting that many of the old methods need to be dispensed with in favour of new ones which make the students stay connected and enjoy what they read.

Masti ki Paathshala is indeed a seminal work, which presupposes that education grows out of, and is impacted by the socio-economic-cultural environment. Education, as Stephen Spender says, should instill in students the spirit of freedom and enjoyment'. Jha wants to add the elements of fun and frolic in the teaching methodology so that we allow children to retain their childhood and learn the lessons simultaneously.

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Suggested Readings

Vocabulary

By John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri

ELBS (Educational Low-priced Books Scheme)

Oxford University Press, UK

First Published: 1986

ELBS edition first published: 1991

ISBN: 019442135X (Paperback)

Vocabulary is part of the 'Resource Books for Teacher' series. It provides the teacher with a guide to some of the key concepts of language teaching. Intended as a book for teachers of English as a foreign language, the book explores the process of vocabulary learning and suggests practical classroom activities that can help learners acquire vocabulary. There is no linear divisioning as such in the book, and one section can be read independently of the other. The sectioning follows the authors' core underlying intuitions regarding the acquisition of vocabulary—that it is *not* linear but a branching process; it is *not* an impersonal but an intensely personal process; that it is *not* a solitary but a social process and finally, it is not a purely intellectual/effortful process but an experiential and 'hands on' process. The book also gives freedom to the teacher to plan lessons that reflect the required styles of activity rather than follow any sort of progression within the text.

The book is divided into seven sections of which sections A and B deal with vocabulary in written texts. Section A comprises exercises that draw the student's attention to new or known vocabulary, and offers a psychological reason for reading. Section B lists exercises such as guessing words in the target language from a given context. Section C is concerned with the imagery of words, and the associative power of image and gesture. Pictures, for example, can help in remembering words, and children can be asked to draw all the words related to a certain concept which can then be labeled. The basic idea being explored is that children tend to remember things that they have created or discovered for themselves. Section D deals with the set theory of words—why and how we categorize words internally thematically in causative and/or temporal chains, through associations that derive from reading or clichés and prejudices. There are activities to explore word profiles, intelligence tests, unusual word families, collocations, classifications, etc. Section E encourages the learner to explore personal responses to words ('power words' for instance that are important in view of the learner's life experiences), while section F suggests ways in which the dictionary can help in creative learning. From the point of vocabulary improvement, section G is crucial in that it gives novel as well as traditional ways of coping with vocabulary revisions. Apart from the traditional bilingual 'lists' of words, there is also scope for interactive learning of vocabulary from some of these exercises, which makes this book an extremely effective resource book for teachers.

Language Teaching Games and Contests
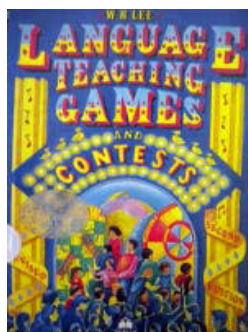
By W. R. Lee

Series title: Applied Linguistics and Language Study

Oxford University Press, UK

First Published: 1979/ 1994

Pages: 214

ISBN: 019 4327167 (Paperback)

Language Teaching Games and Contests, now considered a classic, is designed for effective and enjoyable learning of language. Although it includes games for all age groups and language levels, it is especially suited for use with large classes. There are ten chapters in all and each chapter begins with a short introduction followed by an explanation of a game. The chapters are suitably entitled as: 'Structure games', 'Vocabulary games', 'Spelling games', 'Pronunciation games', 'Number games', 'Listen-and-do games', 'Read-and-do games', 'Games and writing', 'Miming and role play', 'Language club games' and 'Discussion games'.

An underlying tenet of the book is that a language is learnt by using it in situations and communicatively. Language teaching through games not only improves the performance of students (games are typically played to outstrip another's performance), but also proves enjoyable given the involvement of classmates. An advantage of using language games is that often, these games distract the learners' attention from the study of linguistic forms per se: "they stop thinking about the language and instead use it, receptively or productively as a means of considering something else" (p. 2-3). Repetition of successful and interesting communication is an enjoyable and encouraging way of learning language. Each chapter suggests different games dealing with various aspects of language learning. Chapter 1 for instance proposes structure games that expose the learner to the syntax of the target language. Also included are 'guessing games', which encourage learners to communicate they think is the right answer to the questions. These can be learnt at an elementary level (example: yes/no answers), intermediate level (example: brushing up vocabulary with here/there kind of answers), or advanced levels (example: conditionals/ hypotheticals such as "I would visit…", and tenses/reported speech). Likewise, Chapters 2-5 give various examples where vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and numbers may be learnt at an elementary, intermediate or advanced levels. Chapters 6 and 7 may be particularly useful in that they deal with conventional listening and reading skills of language learners. The former includes games that help in the recognition of oral commands, listening and communicating via storytelling/ drawing etc, while Chapter 7 gives variants of games that help in responding to familiar commands in an unfamiliar print medium, and facilitates word recognition, etc. Chapter 8 introduces and thereby encourages meaningful writing practice through games (from elementary level games that familiarize learners with the letter-shapes: A is like a hut, S like a snake, and T like an umbrella; to advanced levels of sentence relay type of games). Finally, Chapters 9-10 include games involving miming, role play and discussion that ensure maximum class participation and enjoyment while learning. This handy book should be on the 'must read' list of all teacher training programmes.

Suranjana Barua, has a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Delhi. She is currently working at the Centre for Assamese Studies, Tezpur University, Assam. Conversation/Discourse Analysis, Language teaching, Gender Studies and Translation studies are her areas of academic interest.

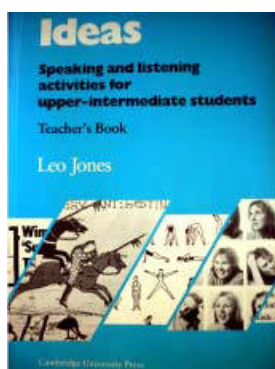*suranjana.barua@gmail.com*

Meri Badi Kitab

By Franz Hohler

Translated in Hindi
by Amrit Mehta

Vani Prakashan,
Delhi

First published in
2009

Hindi edition 2012

Pages: 316

ISBN 978-93-5072-205-3

Meri Badi Kitab—a collection of short stories by Franz Hohler, the famous writer and cabaret performer from Switzerland—is a valuable addition to children's literature published in Hindi. Unfortunately, since writing for children has not yet become a serious and viable business in India for authors and otherwise also, it lacks diversity of form, style and content. At the same time, children reading Hindi and other Indian languages hardly get an exposure to world literature (not even Raduga Publishers' Hindi titles from Russia, which used to be a staple diet for the previous generation).

The stories in this collection, written originally in Swiss, have all the characteristics which mark Franz Hohler's literature. His stories oscillate between the real and the imaginary. They have a narrative that is often grounded in fantasy, but the fantasy in these stories is such that it will fascinate even those readers who may not have a particular liking for things intangible. This is because these stories are contextualized in the real, everyday world. The fantasy in Hohler's stories do not aim to mesmerize or mystify; it gives them a subtle element of comic and humorous, e.g. a chimney visiting a doctor for sore throat (*Saaf-saaf Mamla*, p. 155), or Mr. Tsogg's clothes going to his office to attend duties when he refuses to get up on time (*Mr.*

Tsogg's ke Kapre, p. 137). These stories also have a wide range of how and why stories (such as *Mendhak aur Toothpaste*, p. 152), etymological stories (such as *Beemar Bahane ya Nursen*, p. 266), and a story with seven different endings (*Luhar aur Naanbai*, p. 168) which compels children to analyse a situation and reflect on it. Many of the stories in the collection have the quintessential Hohler feature of having a social relevance. They covertly focus on the problems of society (as in *Shahar me Van ki Zameen*, p. 253). Thus, Hohler's stories are different from the kind of stories Indian children get to savour usually in terms of form, craft and content. Another attraction of the Hindi edition is the artistically done original colour illustrations.

While these stories are refreshingly enjoyable for children, they also give them exposure to a different culture. In fact, these stories are also a good resource material for teachers to use in the classroom. Given the fact that the book is bulky and the stories have different levels with regard to background knowledge (*Maskhari*, p. 258), abstraction (*Srijan*, p. 78, *Ek Doosari* p. 80, *Aadmi ka Baccha* p. 268) etc., the teacher can pick and choose specific stories for pleasure reading according to the level of the students.

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Classroom Activities

Activity 1: Dominos Fun

Objectives

- To build listening skills by hearing instructions;
- To enrich vocabulary;

Materials

- Picture cards of words and letters;
- Counters or Buttons or Dominos.

Scope: Group Activity for pre-primary classes and classes 1-2.

Procedure

- Divide the class into groups of five. Give each child in the group a counter.
- On each table, give 5-6 picture cards. Tell the children that when they are shown a letter card, they have to quickly find the picture that starts with that letter, and keep the counter on it. For example, if you show the card for the letter 'L', the children should put the counter on the card of a lion, lamp, leopard, or whichever 'L' picture card is available on their table.
- The group which does this first for all the letters is the winner.
- For Classes 1 and 2: Picture cards can also be used to reinforce the concepts of synonyms and antonyms. The teacher shows the children some picture cards. The children have to put the counter on the picture card which is the synonym/antonym of the word card shown by the teacher.

Activity 2: Searching Spree

Objectives

- To be able to use logical thinking and comprehension skills
- Vocabulary enhancement

Material

- Worksheet attached herewith or another similar designed by you;
- Crayons or counters Letter cards.

Scope: Pre-primary and primary classes.

Procedure

- Give one activity sheet to each child.
- Tell the children to look carefully at the faces on this sheet.
- In lower classes, they have to listen to the name of that face and place the letter card with which the name starts on the picture of that face.

In higher classes, students have to choose the picture which is described by the teacher. For example, identify Harjeet who has curly hair and a moustache. Or identify Ram who has a beard, wears spectacles and has a centre parting in hair.

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WHO's WHO?

FRED	JOHN	BILL	RICHARD
ANDREW	TIM	MARK	GEORGE
CHRIS	PETER	PAUL	STEVE
ALAN	TONY	JULIAN	DAVID

Activity 3: Say only 'yes' or 'no'

Objectives

To develop observational skills

- To develop the ability to classify.
- To enable children to think, and ask precise and accurate questions.

Material

25-30 objects of various shapes, thickness and materials (e.g. an eraser, scale, comb, folder, key, key rings, etc.) that one can easily find in the school/classroom.

Scope: Young learners of classes 3-5

Procedure

Divide the class into two groups. Name the groups (the names could be A and B).

Put all the objects in the centre of the class (or at a suitable place) so that both the groups can see all the objects.

Now ask any one person from one of the groups, say group 'A', to look at the objects carefully, and select any one object and write its name on a piece of paper. This piece of paper is handed over to the teacher.

The other group, i.e. group 'B' has to guess the name of the object that has been written on the piece of paper. There are certain conditions:

1. They can ask a maximum of 10 questions from group A.

2. All questions should be of 'yes/no' type, e.g. 'Is it made of plastic?' Informative questions are not allowed.

3. Similarly, direct questions such as 'Is it a lock?' or 'Is it a rubber?' are also not allowed to be asked.

The group may/may not guess the name of the objects in ten questions. In case they are not able to guess the name, the other group takes a turn. Now group B will choose an object from the centre of the room, and group A will try to guess its name.

The teacher may keep count of the number of questions each group has asked. This makes the activity more challenging for the groups as the students try to think carefully in order to ask accurate and the least number of questions. For this they need:

1) to observe carefully each object, including its shape, colour, material, use, etc., in other words about the properties of the objects. For example, the student may ask questions such as 'Is it made of plastic? Is it round?' etc.

2) to think about the usage of the object, e.g. is it used for keeping papers? Is it used for writing?' etc.

3) to think about various categories of objects, i.e. stationery, electronic, wooden material, etc.?

This activity may lead to learning outside of what is described here. Conduct the activity in your classroom, and find out what happens.

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Activity 4: Writing Poems

Objectives

- To familiarize the learners with idiomatic expressions (in English) that include colour.
- To enable the learners to write simple poems in English.

Material

A few objects that share the same colour, e.g. leaves, lady finger, broccoli (for green); sunflower, lemon, picture of sun (for yellow).

Scope: Individual activity for middle school learners (Grade VI to VIII) for task 1 - 'My Colour' poem.

Procedure

- The teacher takes a few similarly coloured objects to the class, and asks the students to name the colour of the objects. He/she also asks them to name a few other objects associated with that colour.

- The teacher then asks the students to think of a colour of their choice, and write the names of different objects associated with that colour. He/she encourages the learners to write in the following pattern: 'As (name of colour) as a (name of object) '

  Examples: As red as a tomato, As red as a letter box

  As red as blood

- The teacher narrates a poem based on the above examples to give the learners an idea of how to write a poem using a colour, and the objects associated with it.

Red is the tomato
that I relish eating
in my salad;
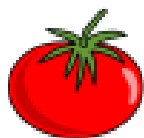
Red is the letter box
that helps me reach
my distant relatives;

Red is the blood
that flows freely
in my veins.

- The teacher asks the students to write a poem (in English) based on their favourite colour and the objects associated with that colour. The students may name their poems 'My green colour poem', 'My red colour poem' and so on. (The students may draw pictures related to their poem, or write them on a poster. The teacher can put up the work on the notice board to encourage the learners.)

USP: The above-mentioned task encourages learners to write a poem independently. Poem-writing, in this task, is a step by step procedure. It takes the learners from controlled writing to guided writing, and then from guided to free writing. The task aims at nurturing the creativity of the learners by giving their imagination a free rein.

Activity 5: Rhyme in line

Objectives

- To enable the learners to create a string of similar sounding words (rhyming words) in English.

- To enable the learners to write a poem in English, using rhyme as a poetic device.

Material

A few folded slips of paper (each slip must have a word written on it), shuffled together.

Skill involved: Group writing

Scope: Middle school learners (Grade VI to VIII)

Procedure

- The teacher divides the class into groups of 5-6 learners each.

- The teacher picks up a slip from the bunch of shuffled slips, opens it and reads aloud the word written on it. She then utters 3-4 words that rhyme with the word in the slip.
  o Example:
  o Word: night
  o Rhyming words: bright, white, light, height, might, tight, flight

- The learners of each group are asked to follow the teacher's example. A member from each group picks up a slip, reads out the word to her/his group. The members of the group discuss and write down words that rhyme with the announced word. The teacher helps the learners wherever necessary.

- Once all the learners have completed writing a set of rhyming words, the teacher encourages them to make small sentences using the words at the end of the sentences. The sentences are then clubbed together cohesively to make a small poem. The teacher uses the words in the 'night' example and makes up a poem to help the learners understand the idea better.

Example:

The sun was shining bright

In came the light

I woke up, brushed my teeth white

Then, went on the roof to fly a kite

My kite reached great height

Happily, I went to bed at night.

5. Each group writes poem/poems using similar sounding words (to the word in their slip) in a cohesive manner to make a poem. The teacher asks the groups to share their poems with the rest of the class either by reading them aloud, or by writing them on a paper for the display board.

USP: In the above mentioned task, learners write poems in a progressive manner in a group. Encouraging writing in a 'step by step' manner removes the fear of creative writing from the minds of the learners. Tasks performed in groups enable and motivate even the shy or weaker learners to listen and learn from the quick learners.

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Activity 6: Playing with Meaning

Introduction

Reading is the ability to decode and make meaning. There is a difference between making meaning from a word, a sentence, or a group of sentences, popularly called, 'textual meaning'. A text can be oral or written. Irrespective of its form, a text consists of sentences with a thread running through them that binds them. The thread is called *cohesion* and it refers to the relation of meaning that exists within the text. In fact, the technical meaning of the term cohesion is the relation of meanings that exist within the text. It occurs when interpretation of some elements of the text depends on another element. In a classroom, generally, the word meaning as well as the sentence meaning is taught. It is often assumed that textual meaning is a combination of meanings of sentences put together, and so it need not be taught explicitly. An explicit teaching of textual meaning is however necessary for more effective literacy and for enhancing the level of awareness of the language itself (called metalinguistic awareness). The following activity represents a basic level of cohesion.

Objective

The objective of the activity is to explicitly teach textual meaning.

Scope: This game can be used with any class from 5 to 7. The complexity of the passage needs to be increased for higher classes.

Procedure

- A text is given which has several blanks. Students have to fill in the blanks from the list of options given.
- Give the following instructions to students:
- There is a small story with several blanks numbered 1, 2, 3, etc.
- A set of options numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., is also given.

- Fill in each blank selecting from the corresponding set of options. To illustrate, blank number 1 has to be filled in by selecting the answers from option number 1, blank number 2 with options from 2 etc.

- Caution: Ensure that you do not mix up the numbers in the blanks and the numbers in the options.

- You are free to select any word/phrase from the list of options as long as you do not mix up the blank numbers and the option numbers.

- No answer is right or wrong; they are either appropriate or inappropriate.

- After filling in the options, read through the story to make sure that it makes sense.

Extension Activities

- Encourage the students to play with different options and then read through the passage to see if it makes sense, identify spaces where it does not make sense, and discuss the reasons.

- Encourage the students to play with the sentences in the text by substituting the words and phrases.

Outcomes

- Students will be able to define the meaning of textual meaning.

- Students will be able to identify places where textual meaning is violated, and understand reason for it.

Tips for Teachers for Creating the Stories

- Create five to six identical texts using different options. Ensure that the texts are the same.

- Remove all the options and place them together in accordance with their blanks

For example, text with blanks:

एक माह पहले **Option I** जब मैं **Option 2** और **Option 3** मुझे लगा कि **Option 4** शायद तुमने पहले कभी अनुभव किया हो मुझे **Option 5** और एहसास हुआ कि मुझे **Option 6** **Option 7** जो मेरा मित्र है, उसने मुझे एक दिन पूर्व **Option 8** से जुड़ी **Option9** कि समस्या के बारे में बताया था मैं **Option10** थोड़ा परेशान था अचानक से **Option 11** देखा **Option 12** और मैंने तुम्हें इसके बारे में बताने का निर्णय लिया।

Option I	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
• एक अँधेरी तूफानी रात में • एक अजीब घटना मेरे साथ हुई • क्या हुआ • तुम यकीन नहीं करोगे • क्या हुआ सुनो	• शहर में था • घर पर था • गणित कि कक्षा में था • घर के पीछवाड़े में था • रसोई में था • होटल में था	• फ़ोन पर बात कर रहा / रही थी • पूरी खा रहा / रही था / थी • अपने बाल सुखा रहा / रही था / थी • पैदल चल रहा / रही था / थी • आधी नींद में था / थी • आइना देख रहा / रही था / थी • बैठा हुआ था / थी	• मैं मुसीबत हूँ • कोई मुझे देख रहा है • कुछ ठीक नहीं है • कोई बदबू आ रही है • मैंने घड़ी नहीं पहनी है • मैं एक छोटा बच्चा हूँ।

Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8
• अचानक डर लगा • खुशी हुई • भय लगा • बहुत अच्छा लगा	• कोई निर्णय लेना होगा • कुछ करना होगा • स्नानघर जाना होगा • साने जाना होगा • अपने बालों को जल्द सुखाना होगा • किसी को बुलाना होगा • सच का पता लगाना होगा।	**Write your friend's name**	• पुलिस • सड़ पर के कुत्ते • प्रधानाचार्य • माँ • पिता • किसी अपरिचित

Option 9	Option 10	Option 11	Option 12
Write another friend's name	• उन्हें लेकर • उसे लेकर • यह सोच कर	• मेरी आखों ने • मैंने आईने में • मैंने दीवार पर लिखा देखा। • मैंने पेड़ के पीछे • दरवाज़े से किसी को आते देखा	• एक भयानक सच • एक कुत्ते को भौंकते देखा • उस सच को जिसे मैं नज़रअंदाज कर रहा था • उस व्यक्ति को देखा जिसे मैं देखना चाहता था • अपनी माँ को • एक बुरे स्वप्न को

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Report

Workshop on Material Development
June 25- 30, 2012

Suneeta Mishra

Background

The Sansarg group comprises a team of people working together on different aspects of education ranging from theatre to teacher education. In collaboration with University School Resource Network (USRN), the team has successfully created a functional network between schools, teachers, education colleges and the Department of Education (CIE) of the University of Delhi, an outcome of which is a series of Material Development workshops in the past few years. These workshops focus on understanding the use of the current material, as well as developing new material for pedagogical use in schools. The material developed in these workshops has been 'tried' in some schools that were part of the USRN project. It is theme-based and most of these themes cater more to the areas of Language and EVS.

This six-day workshop on Material Development, conducted at District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Daryaganj from 25 to 30 June 2012, was a continuation of the previous workshops but with a more focused goal—reviewing the material developed till date, and improving upon it. During the course of the workshop there were numerous discussions on the theoretical foundations of material use in classrooms, particularly in light of NCF 2005 and the syllabus based on it. The participants included trainee teachers from various courses such as BElEd, DIET and ETE.

Objectives

The sessions of the workshop were planned in such a way that 'Material Development' was not seen as a solitary process, unrelated to the basic philosophical and psychological tenets of the teaching-learning process. Another underlying objective was to counter the prevalent notion of material being limited to something concrete, as well as limited by the particular pedagogy areas. With these objectives, the sessions were basically of three kinds: 1) Theory-based (discussions around NCF, CCE, etc.); 2) Activity-based (material development); and 3) Review and analysis (film-screening, material review, etc.).These sessions were not restricted to any specific category.

Sessions

Day one began with the participants sharing previous teaching experiences, along with the resource material/teaching aids used by them. The discussion brought out many assumptions and expectations that the teaching-learning process is based on. This was followed by a discussion on some of the basic tenets of the NCF, such as 'local to global', 'home language to school language', 'spiralling of curriculum', etc., along with an understanding of a broader concept framework. Finally, there was a 'hands-on' session where the participants took up different pedagogical themes/areas and worked in pairs to chalk out a lessonplan and select the appropriate material required for it, based on the discussion.

This discussion, anchored in the link between theory and practice, continued on the second day as well. Day two also included debates on the components of CCE, and the scope of the use of material other than just paper and pencil, in the CCE system of assessment.

The Arts faculty of DIET Daryaganj conducted a session in which the participants learned how to use paper, pencil and paint as powerful tools to represent abstract ideas.

Day three and four were mostly spent in the review of existing material that had been developed in the earlier Sansarg workshops. The participants made presentations on the gaps in the existing material, and how these could be eliminated by adding more content. The sharing of material review brought up many interesting issues and ideas that helped to enrich it further. For instance, many participants, while reflecting on the language used in some of the stories taken as material for various themes, changed it to more a child-friendly and familiar language. They also included the addition of local language words wherever possible. In some text-based material, participants even added pictures.

Different types of writing —descriptive, analytical, narrative, etc.—were also discussed, keeping in mind the basic philosophy of considering reading and writing as a medium of learning rather than as skills to be learnt separately.

On the fourth day, the Science faculty and the Principal of DIET Daryaganj, jointly demonstrated how a simple, workable Science kit could be developed out of waste material. Participants prepared a pool of material that could be used effectively in the teaching of scientific concepts, and developed easily by the students themselves.

The Art faculty from DIET Daryaganj conducted a session on mask-making from 'papier mâché' and plaster of paris. Thiswas followed by a discussion on how masks could be used as a resource in classrooms for the purpose of story-telling, enactment, or dramatization of various concepts.

Picking up on the previous day's discussion on the use of masks, the role of material in motivating students was explored further on day five. There were debates on how various materials could reduce the negative competitive spirit between students, and lead to healthy group work and peer-learning. The experiences shared by the participants brought up once again the differences between assessment and evaluation in CCE. Participants discussed the tasks and activities that could be used for assessment within the teaching-learning process rather than designing tasks especially for evaluation. Thus the difference between assessment and evaluation was also addressed.

On the last day, a film was screened, and feedback on the workshop was collected from the participants. The film, entitled 'A teacher's journey', was based on the life of a school teacher in a rural single-teacher school. It presented the struggles faced by a teacher in handling multigrade classes without much support from the system, and the gradual success in developing effective ways of dealing with the situation. The post-screening discussion centred on the effectiveness of locally-available, cost-effective material; use of childrens' knowledge and repertoire as resources; positive use of peer-learning in a multigrade class; and the integration of knowledge across different subject areas.

Feedback and Suggestions for future endeavours

The feedback and suggestions from the participants provided a valuable learning experience for the Sansarg team. A large number of participants suggested sharing the material that they develop in their teacher-education courses, across colleges where

Sansarg could provide a common platform and space. Participants from Jamia expressed the need for more workshops, particularly those related to language pedagogy, and the screening of films pertaining to educational and social issues. Some participants asked for a focused workshop on major educational psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner.

Suneeta Mishra, M.Phil. (Linguistics), teaches at the Institute of Home Economics, University of Delhi, Delhi. She has written this on the behalf of the Sansarg Group..

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Workshop on Language and Language Teaching in Schools at SCERT, Patna
July 19-21, 2012
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Introduction

A workshop on language and language teaching in schools [contextualizing Bihar] was held from 19th to 21st July 2012 at the SCERT, Patna campus. It was organized by SCERT in collaboration with Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur. It was attended by the faculty members of DIETs and Primary Teacher Training colleges, people from Gyanshala, team members of Vidya Bhawan, faculty members of SCERT and an Education specialist from UNICEF.

The purpose of the workshop was to present to the language teachers a platform on language teaching that was innovative, in tune to innate and natural ability of the child (however, it also focused holistically on the entire gamut of learning process of child at the school level). The event was unique in the sense that for the first time, teacher educators and all other participants got opportunities to think on different dimensions of language and its teaching process in the schools that till date are largely archaic and not willing to give *'space'* to the child in the whole activity.

Proceedings

The Workshop began by a brief introduction of the Guest Experts, Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri, renowned linguist and Prof. A.L Khanna (both formerly at University of Delhi). It was followed by the introduction of participants where in they were also asked to mention the language/ languages they know. More importantly, the participants also mentioned what they expected from these types of workshops and the kind of difficulties they faced in language and in its teaching. It was also reiterated by the experts that the workshop was not on Hindi language but on language and on language teaching.

Multilingualism is natural and inseparable was evident in the introductory session of the workshop when attendees mentioned their ability to write and speak these languages - Hindi , English, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri , Magahi , Angika, Bangla, Urdu, Punjabi, Maithali, Santhali, Himachali, Vajjika etc. It reflected that generally one person knows more than one language and multilingualism is quite natural. This factual revelation emphatically underlined the fact that all countries of the world are multilingual. There is no regional language but there is a region of language. The other thing which prominently surfaced in the introductory session was the mistakes child normally commits in *Matra, Varna, Ucharan* [pronunciation], *linga* [gender].To them these mistakes are due to environment, society they are/ were in. They were also willing to know mechanism to overcome these problems.

After the completion of the introductory session, a sheet was given to each participant containing 10 statements on different aspects of the language. A few a reproduced below:

1. Hindi is not the national language of India.

2. India has over 1500 languages.

3. There are 18 languages in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution.

Some of the statements seemed to test information but through these statements an attempt was made to assess the conceptual thinking of the attendees on language. Paper was not meant to gauge the knowledge level of the participants; contrary to it, it was aimed at understanding opinion, attitude, views and thinking process of participants on language and its teaching process in the schools. Responses of the participants reflected their understanding on the status of language, constitutional provisions for languages, evolution of Indian languages, status of Sanskrit [people generally consider it the mother of Indo-European languages of the world; Sanskrit is actually mother of only Indo-Aryan languages], status of Hindi language in the country, learning process of language of a child.. Most of the participants were not aware that Hindi is not a national language. This exercise was done to get the wider perspective of the attendees on different dimensions of languages and role of societal, political and historical factors in the recognition and status of languages. Emphatic attention was drawn on multilingualism and a reminder that the constitutive feature of India is heterogeneity of language, religion and culture and this unique feature supports and hastens rather than retards the process of learning language/ languages.

The concluding session of the first day concentrated on the structure of word. Participants were asked to write some words of different languages in Roman script and were asked to think on what could be said on this basis. Taking into account the views of the attendees, Prof. Agnihotri underlined the fact that script has nothing to do with language and all languages of the world could be written in one script. It was also shown that words follow the structure of CVCV (C= consonant, V= vowel) and it was also highlighted that approximately 98% languages of the world follow this structure. The participants also

derived the rule that when structure of the word is CCCV then first C= ??, second C=??, ??, ? and third C=?, ?, ?, ?.

Second day of the workshop started with the feedback of the participants. In it, attendees were asked to highlight their take on previous day's proceedings and what *new* they had learnt. In the first session, it was underlined that language [philology] reflects-**SAC** i.e. Structure, Acquisition and Change. There is a certain structure of language, there is process of acquisition and on temporal basis there is change in it. The other thing figured prominently in the session was subtle evolution of '*R*'. For example, 'R' of *mar* is without *swar* [vowel] but with *swar* in *ram* etc.

Prof. Agnihotri did not subscribe the common notion of the people that there is linkage of one's ability to learn language with that of one's ability to hear/listen and speak. Use of sign language is the testimony to this fact. He also opined that if government can afford availability of infrastructure to schools then a large number of physically challenged, deaf and dumb children could get access to education

In the post lunch session of the last day, he drew some universal rules on the basis of some sentences. After their responses, Prof. Agnihotri outlined the rules regarding a) Person, Number and Gender [PNG] of Verb b) rule regarding verb and objects

On the last day of the workshop, it was firmly stated that meaning of word is not innately [by origin] linked to it [with word]; it can vary with place. Structure of language is intricate and complex. And a child understands these complexities without any external help. Against the misconception of the participants, he reiterated the fact that existence of language is not possible without grammar and the latter does not contradict the former. There is no slavery in language and it knows no boundary.

The concluding session of the workshop emphasized the need to apply these things at the target level [schools] and at the teacher educator level. Language teachers who are looking for more effective and interesting ways to teach language/languages left this three day workshop with many practical ideas that they could apply in their classrooms to enliven their lessons/ class. They gained confidence about helping their students learn the seemingly difficult things with great ease and scientific base, particularly in language. The workshop created grounds to assist in addressing the continuing need to provide professional development opportunities that enhance the teaching skills of language teachers in Bihar's schools and in the training colleges. The workshop's emphasis on "What a child knows before coming/joining to school" tried to bring in the issue to the fore that a child knows many things [including language structure] before she enters into school premises.

Amresh Chandra (PhD, JNU, New Delhi) works in Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre, Patna. His interest in language stems from his father, who spent time with eminent scholars such as Hajari Prasad Dwivedi and Ramchandra Shukla, both of whom have greatly influenced Amresh.

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Forthcoming Events

January 2013

International Conference on Empowering the English Language Classroom

Dates: January 18-19 2013

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 15 November 2012

Organization: Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur

The conference will focus on significant issues related to English Language Teaching in the technology-dominated academic and professional environment, and will also explore modern pedagogical approaches which can empower the teacher in the English Language Classroom.

http://www.mnit.ac.in/new/cms/uploads/2012/10

Brochure_International_Conference_Jan.18_-19,_2013_.pdf

Contact person: Dr Preeti Bhatt and Mrs Nanny Tripathi

IAIRS: International Conference on English Language and Literature (ICELL - 2013)

Dates: 19-20 January 2013

Organization: International Academic and Industrial Solutions (IAIRS)

Location: The Golkonda Hotel, Hyderabad, A.P, India

Registration: 25 December 2012

Website: http://www.iairs.org/eng_hyd/ENGLISH.html

Contact person: Conference Secretary

February 2013

Confluence: The 4th Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language
Dates: 22-23 February 2013
Location: Nagpur, India
Last date for submission of abstracts: 15 December 2012
Last date for submission of full papers: 15 January 2013

Enquiries: eslconfluenceinfo@gmail.com
Web address: http://www.confluenceindia.co.in

March 2013

3rd International English Language Teacher Educator Conference

Dates: 16-18 March 2013

Organization: British Council, EFL-U (English and Foreign Languages University), ELTAI (English Language Teachers' Association of India) and IATEFL (International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)

Location: Hyderabad International Convention Centre, Hyderabad, India

June 2013

2nd Annual International Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics (L3-2013)

Dates: 17-18 June 2013

Organization: Global Science and Technology Forum (GSTF)

Location: Singapore

The Conference Proceedings (Print ISSN: 2251-3566, E-Periodical ISSN: 2251-3574) will be indexed by EBSCO, CrossRef, ProQuest, and Ulrichsweb**,** and will be submitted to Scopus, ScienceDirect and Cabell's Directories amongst others,where applicable.

Depending on their importance, originality, quality, relevance and other editorial considerations, eligible research articles will be invited for publication in the GSTF Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS) (Print ISSN: 2251-2853, E-periodical: 2251-2861) which is indexed by EBSCO, CrossRef, ProQuest, Ulrichsweb and Cabell's Directories. Best Paper Awards and Best Student Paper Awards will be conferred at the conference (in order to qualify for the award, the paper must be presented at the conference). L3-2013 will also constitute a Special Panel Session. Panel Proposals are invited for submission to the L3 2013. A minimum of three papers centring on a specific topic will be accepted for submission under Panel Category. Website: http://www.l3-conference.org
Contact person: Penny Jing

July 2013

ECLL 2013 - The European Conference on Language Learning Conference

Dates: 18-21 July 2013

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 1 March 2013

Conference Theme: "Shifting Paradigms: Informed Responses"

Location: Brighton, United Kingdom

Organization: IAFOR (International Academic Forum)

Publishing Opportunities: Authors of accepted abstracts will have the opportunity of publishing their associated paper in the official conference proceedings, and a selection of papers will be considered for inclusion in the IAFOR Journal of Language Learning. For more information about IAFOR journals, go to http://www.iafor.org/journal.html.

Website: http://ecll.iafor.org/index.html
Contact person: Mr Kiyoshi Mana

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   jourllt@gmail.com,
   agniirk@yahoo.com,
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   If required, the articles may be posted to:
   Vidya Bhawan Society, Fatehpura, Udaipur 313004, Rajasthan, India.

2. *Language and Language Teaching (LTT)* welcomes papers/ articles that have not been published elsewhere, or been submitted anywhere for publication at the time of being sent to *LLT*. Copies of letters granting permission to reproduce illustrations, tables, or lengthy quoted passages must be included with the manuscript.

3. Articles should be between 1500- 2000 words in length. Book reviews and annotated bibliographies should not exceed 800 and 400 words respectively.

4. The first page should mention the title of the article, the name of the author(s) and his/her affiliation(s). The contributor must provide his/her name, phone number, complete mailing address and email address for correspondence.

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8. Single quotes should be used throughout the article. Double quotes should be used only within single quotes.

9. All references must be cited in the text or endnotes, and must follow the APA style of referencing in the text.
   For example:
   (Chomsky, 2010, p. 27) or
   (Halliday, 2010, pp. 56-57).

10. A detailed list of references in alphabetical order must be provided at the end of the article, following the endnotes. All details should be provided: name of author, name of book/name of journal, issue number in the case of a journal, name of publisher, place of publication, year of publication and page number(s) (in the case of a chapter from an edited book, journal, or newspapers). For example:

    Agnihotri, R. K. & Khanna, A. L. (1977). *Problematizing English in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
    Gupta, A. (1991). The failing of English as a lingua franca in India. In R. S. Gupta & K. Kapoor, (Eds.). *English in India: Issues and problems* (pp. 58-80). Delhi: Academic Foundation.
    John, G. (1977, September 2). Is Indish the answer? *Youth Times*, pp. 44-45.
    National Council of Educational Research and Training (2005). *National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005)*. New Delhi: NCERT.

11. Page numbers for all direct quotations must be provided. Direct quotations of 45 words or more must be indented.

12. All tables and figures should be attached at the end of the manuscript following the list of references.

13. Book reviews must contain details such as the name of the author/editor, full title of the book, place of publication, name of publisher, year of publication, scanned copy of the cover page, total number of pages and price.

14. *LLT* is a refereed periodical. All manuscripts are subject to the usual process of anonymous review. Each contribution is also read by practising teachers for feedback. Any information that might identify the contributor should be avoided in the body of the article.

15. Avoid using complex symbols such as IPA. Please only broad Roman transcriptions.

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