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Teaching Linguistic Diversity through Linguistic Landscape[1]

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Introduction

While cultural, political, ethnic, and religious diversity of India is often highlighted in the school curricula, its linguistic diversity, as represented in the variety of languages, dialects, and scripts, and the presence of multilingualism—the ability to use more than one language—does not receive similar academic attention. India is home to thousands of languages and dialects belonging to the four major language families namely Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, and Austro-Asiatic. Many of these languages are so different that they are mutually unintelligible. For example, speakers of Hindi, Tamil, and Manipuri cannot understand each other.

In addition to Hindi, the official language of India and English, the associate official language, there are 22 languages that enjoy the constitutional status of scheduled languages. However, the number of languages used in the print and audio-visual media, and on the web is much higher than this number. For example, Bhojpuri which is spoken in Eastern UP and Bihar, does not enjoy an official status, but is widely used in film dialogues, songs, and on the web. In fact, there is some written literature in Bhojpuri as well.[2]

Furthermore, in the 2001 census, a large of number of speakers of different languages reported that in addition to their own mother tongues, they speak other "subsidiary" languages (Mallikarjun, 2010). This suggests that a significant number of people use multiple languages in their daily sociolinguistic encounters. This societal multilingualism has been incorporated into the educational system in the form of the three-language formula.[3]

We don't really need statistics to prove that India is characterized by multilingualism; it is a part of our sociolinguistic existence. It is common to find people who can speak up to two or three languages and / or dialects in addition to their mother tongues. For example, an educated speaker of Bhojpuri is also likely to know Hindi and possibly English. If they have lived in Patna, it is quite likely that they also know some Magahi. In Bihar, I have often heard people in trains and buses discussing politics in their dialects and then shifting to Hindi with the occasional use of words from English.[4]

The linguistic diversity of India is not limited to the use of languages and dialects in oral communication; it can also be seen in the use of different scripts and writing systems used across India. Books, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, etc. are printed in a large number of languages and scripts including those that are not part of the official scheduled languages. One robustly visible example of linguistic diversity is manifested in the use of various languages on public signage. In the globalized world of the 21st century, public signs have become ubiquitous; we are surrounded by them. They are unique in that they represent both languages and their scripts. These signs include those installed and managed by the central and state governments as well as those put up by individuals and private commercial businesses. Examples of the former include signs on roads and government buildings; the latter includes signs on private properties such as houses and commercial properties such as shops and hotels. In sociolinguistics literature, these linguistic objects that mark the public space are referred to as Linguistic Landscape (henceforth LL).

While the cultural diversity of India is highlighted in the school curricula, its linguistic diversity does not receive much attention. When it does, the instructor does not exploit the rich symphony that languages and dialects create in the day-to-day lives of students. Consequently, students are not able to establish the connections between the classroom and the real world of languages. In this paper, I will outline a methodology for using data gathered from public signs and billboards (known as linguistic landscape) by students and teachers, as a resource to connect to linguistic diversity and issues related to language. I will further argue that the use of such data and the involvement of students in gathering it can lead to active and enhanced learning.

Using Linguistic Landscape as a Teaching Resource

Linguistic diversity as evidenced in multilingualism, language mixing and switching, lexical borrowing, etc. has been an object of academic inquiry for sociolinguists for quite some time. In recent years however, scholars have started to study the use of language and scripts on public signage as a window to understanding the larger social and cultural aspects of languages and their speakers. Pioneered by Landry and Bouhris (1997) as a way to study the linguistic vitality of languages in Canada, the field has now grown and expanded to include various socio-cultural aspects of language, including issues of language policy, status and prestige of different languages and the social identity and power they symbolize (Ben-Rafel, Shohamy Amra & Trumper-Hecht, 2006). In other words, the study of LL encompasses the whole ecology of language including the social factors that make language a social phenomenon.

Viewed from this angle, the linguistic landscape of a city or town is a site of cultural representation using linguistic objects such as languages and scripts. Since all cultural representations are ideologically informed, signs are also cultural objects that index certain social identities and positions (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005). This is what makes signs a great entry point for students to explore the relationship between languages and their differing and often competing symbolic values among different groups. Signs are also interesting objects of inquiry as students are familiar with and surrounded by them. The recent controversy surrounding the renaming of Aurangzeb Road as A .P.J. Abdul Kalam Road is a testimony to the ideological power of signs.

In the rest of the paper, I will give examples of how teachers and students can bring signs from around their neighborhoods and use them in class as a resource for a meaningful and engaging discussion on language, multilingualism, social representation, language policies, and language rights. Both the method and the material I will discuss have been informed by recent studies on learning and teaching that favour a student-centered learning approach in which teachers are facilitators of the process of learning; they are not considered a repository of knowledge from which students automatically partake. This is not to say that teachers do not have to be knowledgeable. The point here is that the knowledge of teachers will not necessarily translate into students' learning unless teachers empower them to engage in active and meaningful learning.

Data Collection

An effective way to engage students in learning is to design teaching materials and activities that are novel and interesting. Collecting teaching materials for their own learning in class is something that students find interesting as well as empowering. To them, this shows that the teacher has confidence in them, and therefore they work on the project with greater interest. Students do not need expensive cameras to do this project. They can use their mobile phones to take pictures and then they can print them on ordinary paper. The pictures should be clear enough to see the languages on the signs. If cameras or phones are not available, students can be asked to take notes on the use of languages on public boards and describe them in class. In this way, students can learn to work as ethnographers and understand sociolinguistic objects.

The class can be split into groups, and each group can be assigned the task of collecting pictures of signs from the cities and towns around them. To ensure a comprehensive coverage of the data, individual groups may be assigned different tasks. For example, Group 1 can be assigned the task of collecting pictures of road signs; while group 2 can focus on signs on the government buildings. The next group can focus on commercial signs. Another group can take pictures of private signs put up by individuals on their homes. The teacher can also join in the activity and bring pictures of signs. He / she can ask the students to submit their portfolio of pictures with their names in advance so these can be used for lesson planning.

Data Analysis and Exploration

Given below are four signs taken from different parts of Delhi. I will attempt to demonstrate how these signs can be used to teach students the socio-cultural dimensions of language and script. This exercise will not only develop awareness about languages and scripts, but it will also help the students to think critically about the broader socio-cultural anchoring of a language. Although the study of linguistic landscape has now become quite vast and a number of issues can be examined using LL data, I will limit my study to four issues namely:

(1) Who decides which language to use on the signs and who is the target audience of such signs? Does this affect the choice of language on the signs?

(2) Which languages appear on the signs and what does that tell us about the language policy of the government or the institution[5]?

(3) What do the signs suggest about the social and political values of the speakers whose languages appear on the signs and those whose languages do not?

(4) In multilingual signs, does the order in which languages appear on the signs, from top to bottom or left to right, suggest a power hierarchy?

These questions are by no means exhaustive; they have been given here only as examples to get students thinking about the social issues surrounding language use. Instructors are encouraged to create their own questions based on the materials they are dealing with and the students in class. The questions may differ depending on whether the class is taking place in a small town or a village in Kerala or metropolitan Delhi.

Figure 1. Photograph of a road sign in Delhi.

Figure 2. Photograph of a sign on a building in Delhi.

Figures 1 and 2 show two types of government signs that constitute the linguistic landscape of Delhi. There are differences in the use of languages on these signs. In addition to Hindi and English, the two official languages of India, the road sign in Figure 1 contains two more languages—Urdu and Punjabi. This sign is representative of the vast majority of road signs in Delhi with four languages on them. The sign in the photograph in Figure 2 contains only two languages—Hindi and English.

These two signs can be used to generate discussions among students about the different socio-cultural aspects of language and its use in Delhi. Such a discussion could include the following pointers:

1. While it is understandable to have Hindi and English on the signs, why does the first photograph additionally have Urdu and Punjabi and why are these missing from the second one?
2. Who are the speakers of these languages? Are they linguistic minorities? Are there other languages, for example Bengali that should have been on the signs as well?

In order to answer the above questions, the class may need to think further about some more questions. These could be as follows:

1. Are there laws or policies that stipulate the use of Urdu and Punjabi on signs? Are these policies the result of a constitutional provision? Do the speakers of a language have a say in this?
2. Are these signs regulated by different departments of the government? Is the sign in the first photograph for example, within the jurisdiction of the Delhi government and the second one within the purview of the central government?

The above questions will lead to an engaging discussion on multilingualism, language policies, minority languages, constitutional provisions around languages, and so on. It is possible that the teacher may not have all the answers, which is fine. The goal is to have the class as a whole embark on a journey of exploration and discovery. Some answers will come forth more easily than others. But the critical thinking that this exercise will entail will become an advantage for the students for the rest of their lives.

Now I will discuss two examples of non-governmental commercial signs (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Photograph of a sign on a board in Zakir Nagar

Figure 4. Photograph of a sign on a shop in Vasant Vihar

The sign in Figure 3 taken from a clinic in Zakir Nagar, Delhi, has three languages, while the one in Figure 4, taken from a Vasant Vihar Mall has only English. In order to understand the differences between the two signs, the following questions can be used to generate a discussion.

1. How many languages does one see in the sign in figure 3 and how many in figure 4? Can you identify these languages?
2. Who are the potential customers for the medical clinic and for Tommy Hilfiger? Do they belong to a certain socio-economic class? Do these differences have anything to do with the language of the signs?
3. Are there any government policies that govern the use of languages in commercial signs?[6]

The instructor can lead the discussion, and help the class discover that languages convey meanings that are beyond the literal meanings of words. English, for example, conveys an upper middle class English speaking identity that Hindi does not (Gupta & Kapoor, 1991; Proctor, 2014). This is the reason that brands such as Tommy Hilfiger avoid the use of Hindi. The use of Urdu as well as Hindi on the clinic sign is motivated by the fact that while a large of number of their customers in Zakir Nagar are likely to be Urdu speakers, there may be those who do not speak Urdu or English. Therefore the choice of language in the clinic sign is largely determined by the purpose of communication.

The last sets of signs I will discuss have been taken from private houses located in Zakir Nagar, New Delhi**.**

Figure 5. Photograph of a house sign in Zakir Nagar

Figure 6. Photograph of a house sign in Zakir Nagar

While the photograph in Figure 5 has both Urdu and English, the one in Figure 6 has only English. It is worth noting that both these pictures are from the same neighbourhood. Again, students can be encouraged to discuss the conclusions that can be drawn by looking at these two signs. It will emerge that people have a lot of freedom in deciding what language they would like to use on their house names. However this choice is not free from ideologies. The use of Urdu and Arabic in the first photograph and only English in the second is suggestive of the owners' ideologies around the differing social values Urdu and English represent in modern India.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that mundane public signs gathered from streets, markets, and malls can be used to teach linguistic diversity and a host of other socio-cultural aspects of language including policies that govern language use, symbolic values of language, multilingualism, language and representation, and minority languages. I have shown that the use of such materials collected by students and teachers together will not only help them develop an understanding of our language and linguistic diversity, but it will also create a student-centered learning environment that will develop critical thinking abilities among students.

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Endnotes

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[2] See for example the website www.bhojpuria.com. It has a whole section on literature in Bhojpuri in addition to an online English into Bhojpuri dictionary.

[3] See the National Curriculum Framework position paper on Language (2006) for a critical review of the Formula and principles of the teaching of Indian languages.

[4] See Ahmad (2011) and Sharma (2001) for the loss of mother tongues among some minorities.
[5] Language policies refer to both explicitly written documents as well as unwritten conventions regarding language use in public (Schiffman, 2006).
[6] In Quebec, Canada, policies stipulate that French must be predominant on signs. Recently a company was fined because although their sign had French on top, the English and French lettering was of equal font size (Scott, 2015).

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Can Poetry be Taught?

R.W. Desai

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, n.d

The question in the title of this paper has been addressed in different ways (Perrine, 1963, pp. 3-246; Birk&Birk, 1965, pp. 366-88; Kramer, 1968, pp. i-xviii; Panda, 2014, pp. 149-89), so I do not expect the reader to find anything startlingly new in it except, perhaps, some points of interest from my own experience as a teacher. Students are often told at the beginning of the session that poetry cannot be "taught" like Commerce or Mathematics. However, since poetry is written using familiar words they need not be intimidated by the subject but rather, they can look forward to the pleasure they will feel while traversing a terrain that has no formidable obstacles. As they will probably discover, the poems in their syllabus will awaken their interest, sensitivity and self-awareness on account of the poets' adroit use of well-known words, while simultaneously creating a new kind of language to surprise, delight, and define areas of experience hitherto unsuspected to exist.

For example, the four opening lines of "Village Song" by Sarojini Naidu are skilfully woven together to form a composite whole: "Full are my pitchers and far to carry,/Lone is the way and long,/Why, O why was I tempted to tarry, / Lured by the boatmen's song?" (Naidu, 2007, p. 150). Deceptively simple and seemingly effortlessly composed in dactyl metre with the taut rhyme scheme of *abab*, these lines are actually a triumph of verbal legerdemain. The predicate in each of the first two lines precedes the subject—an unusual syntactical inversion—thus emphasizing the girl's anxiety as darkness falls. This is followed by the alliteration of "lone" "long" and "lured", and "tempted" and "tarry", the long vowels and repetitive sound effects suggestive of time passing. Further, perhaps"lured" and "tempted" subtly hint at the girl's awakening romantic yearnings. W.H. Auden remarked that the sign of a writer having "a genuine original talent is that he is more interested in playing with words than in saying something original" (Auden, 1962, p. 31). The earlier stanza by Sarojini Naidu is a fine instance of this observation.

A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.

(Yeats, 1958, p. 88)

The role of a teacher is to help a student analyse words and their combination while appreciating the poet's craftsmanship. Memorable poetry does not make any claims to absolute truth, as do the empirical subjects mentioned above, but rather, it alludes to human truth. Prose, not poetry, is the language of absolute truth. Sir Isaac Newton's *Three Laws of Motion,* the *Indian Constitution*, the *Penal Code*, or Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, among others, are in prose. Had they been in verse, they would long ago have been regarded as fossilized curiosities. Language is a complex vehicle of communication, more so in poetry than in prose, the reason being that poetry—through innuendo, metonymy, and other verbal devices—explores our feelings and emotions such as nostalgia, creeping age, frustration, ecstasy, and much else besides.

As Coleridge observes, "A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object proposed" (Coleridge, 1962, p. 171). An analogy from architecture will clarify this point. Imagine two stacks of identical bricks. Using the bricks from one stack, a mason builds a godown; from the other stack an architect constructs the Taj Mahal.

We constantly use words, but the poet uses them with studied effect and an extraordinary skill that may be likened to a master carpenter who, from a block of wood hewed from the stump of a tree, makes a Chippendale chair; or a sculptor who, out of shapeless marble, creates the statue of Apollo. As with the carpenter or sculptor whose source material is crude wood or marble, the poet's source is the most banal of all books—the dictionary.

Theseus : And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

(A Midsummer Night's Dream, 5.1.14-17)

We may well ask whether imagination and inspiration are not important features that go into the making of a poem. Certainly they are, but they should feature strictly within the domain of the poet's private mental landscape, conscious or subconscious, and not be easily accessible to the reader. All that we as readers have before us therefore is the "local habitation and a name" or, in other words, the poem as a language artefact. If the idea of "free verse" popularized by Walt Whitman meant for some poets, an emancipation from earlier restraints, there were others who had the skill to conform in a new way to the traditional framework by a deliberate dislocation of conventions, and thus achieve forceful utterance and felicitous expression, among them being Archibald MacLeish whose poem "You, Andrew Marvell" (MacLeish, 1963, p. 72) is an outstanding blend of the traditional with the experimental.

As a US member of the League of Nations posted in Persia (now Iran) in 1926, MacLeish was informed of his eighty-eight-year-old father's illness back home in Glencoe, Illinois, overlooking Lake Michigan. He immediately set out for home, travelling by rail, car, and ship—air travel was still in the future. "I saw my father," he writes, "and went to the edge of the bluff above Lake Michigan among the sunflowers and lay 'face down'":

And here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night:

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea:
And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on . . .

A reading of this poem aloud by the students will give them a sense of its mesmeric euphony. They should be asked to comment on the almost total absence of punctuation and on the syntactical liberties the poet takes to suggest the onset of dusk and night as the earth turns on its axis, and how this synchronizes with the poem's title; on the significance of the once great cities of the Middle East being swallowed up by history and the night; and on whether they feel that the last stanza hints at the USA too, despite its economic and military supremacy, being equally vulnerable.

To conclude, "If I read a book," Emily Dickinson observed, "[and] I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry" (Dickinson, 1976, p. xxiv). If we can succeed in alerting our students to the wizardry that words in unusual combinations can exercise so as to create new ways of looking at the world and at ourselves, we will have brought them to the portals of Keats' "magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn" (Keats, 1981, p. 324).

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Summary Writing: Part I

Yasmeen Lukmani

Introduction

The primary objective of this article is to introduce the readers to the nuances of writing a summary. It will be published in three parts in different issues of LLT.

Summary writing is not just a part of the language curriculum but is needed in our day to day activities as well. Students have traditionally been taught how to summarize or write a precis in their language classes. While doing this, the emphasis has been on condensing both information and language in order to provide a gist of the original. While it is important for summaries to be accurate, there is no clear-cut methodology for either teaching summary writing or for assessing the summaries produced. In addition, it is assumed that a complete and elegant statement is always required in a summary.

Objectives of Writing a Summary

Writing a summary clarifies its content and brings it into focus, regardless of whether it is the summary of a passage, an oral interaction or a situation. In fact engaging students in writing summaries is an excellent training for note-taking. It trains them in addressing the pitfalls of attempting to take down the words of the teacher verbatim and instead helps them concentrate on the main points being made. It is also an important mental skill necessary for success in many fields of life.

A summary has to include all the main points of what is being said or written and be well organized; it must be complete in itself, with a beginning, middle and an end. The essence of the argument must be developed in a logical fashion in the summary. This may be done by imposing a logical structure in a text which is loosely organized. In developing its structure, the summary has to link related features together and signal the relationship between them either by numbering the statements and / or using cohesive devices for linking the argument.

It has to be borne in mind that a real world summary is often quite different from that written for a language examination, which has restrictions of length, format and style. In addition, there may be personal and cultural differences relating to perceptions of the topic, and the rhetorical organization of the summary. Assessing the potential readership is therefore quite important when writing a summary.

The Three Articles

In this first article of a series of three, I shall look at an approach to summarization which is concerned with how to identify the main points expressed in an expository writing. I shall call this a "top-down" approach for it starts with the central ideas and works downwards to the minor ideas. In the second article, I will introduce a totally different approach which I call the "bottom-up" approach. In this approach, we begin with the building blocks of language—the clause structure—and understand how it helps in identifying the main ideas. In the third article, I will deal with the concept of schematic summaries which is related to itemized note-taking. In the same article, I will also address variable focus summaries, i.e., summaries written from the same material but for different purposes, with a different focus and for different readers. In the last article, I shall attempt to deal with the assessment of summaries for classroom purposes.

The Top-Down Approach

The Top-Down Approach is based on the rhetorical analysis of Winter (1976) and Hoey (1983), who follows the tradition of Winter. These writers are concerned with analyzing the patterns of rhetorical organization in the text. They identify "Problem-Solution" as the overriding pattern in an expository prose. As most summaries within the educational system are based on expository writing, such a pattern is obviously more relevant as a framework. This pattern can be explained by means of the following brief example:

Consider this highly simplified text (Winter, 1976; Hoey, 1983):

"I was on sentry duty. I saw the enemy approaching. I opened fire. I beat off the attack".

In the Winter-Hoey format, these statements can be categorized thus:

I was on sentry duty.	SITUATION
I saw the enemy approaching.	PROBLEM
I opened fire.	RESPONSE
I beat off the attack.	EVALUATION

The first sentence establishes the context or the situation in which the action takes place. This is followed by the problem which requires a solution or more neutrally, a response, and finally an evaluation of the success of the response to the problem.

This text is a simplistic example. It can however become complicated in several ways by varying the logical statement of its argument. For instance, the problem may be stated before the situation is presented:

"I saw the enemy approaching." (problem) "while I was on sentry duty" (situation);

or the evaluation before the response:

"I beat off the attack" (evaluation) "by opening fire" (response).

More stages can also be brought into the argument. The following example from Hoey (1983) illustrates this:

Situation	I was on sentry duty.
Problem	I saw the enemy approaching.
Response	I tried to open fire.
(inner problem)	The gun's bolt jammed.
Inner response	Staying calm, I applied a drop of oil.
Inner evaluation	That did the trick.
Response	I opened fire.
Evaluation/Result	I beat off the attack.

Many more variations are possible as explained in Winter (1976), Hoey (1983), and Jordan (1984). However, one need not get lost in the details of the variety in patterns. The basic four parts of the pattern alone can provide an elegantly simple framework for a summary. An example of a text is now given to demonstrate how the analysis can proceed.

Passage for summarization

The disturbing effects of the technological revolution may be felt in all fields. Oil tankers with unlimited capacities are built without considering the consequences of accidents. Detergents foam on our streams and lakes. Automobiles outrace safety standards, urban noises challenge our eardrums, and hidden eyes and ears invade our privacy.

Before answers can be found to these problems, it is necessary to understand two characteristics of the technological revolution—that it is mindless and that it is neutral. It is mindless because pure science is simply a desire to know, to uncover the facts, to unlock the secrets. A mind must be super-imposed onto it if it is to have any limitations. The technological developments described above are inevitable unless man actively decides to stop their development. Scientists will continue learning how to unwind the intricacies of DNA, transplant organs, and implant electrodes in the brain as long as there are unknown areas and as long as they are not specifically forbidden to do so.

It is neutral because the changes, in themselves, brought about by the technological revolution, are neither good nor bad. They acquire a value only by the way in which they are used. Science can tell us what we can do, but not what we should do. It can tell us how to do something, but not if we should do it. The possibilities for good and evil of many of the developments described above stagger the imagination and recall the use of atomic power.

Because the revolution challenging medicine and mankind is mindless and because it is neutral, mind must be imposed on it to control it and determine its values. The present failure to do this has created a wide gap between man's technological and humanistic imagination. Mindless technology threatens to become a monster, destroying its creator. The visions of the future could become ghosts. This is a warning being sounded increasingly often by thoughtful men, the warning asked editorially, by The New York Times on the morning after Hiroshima had been bombed: "Can mankind grow up quickly enough to win the race between civilization and disaster?"

(Passage and preliminary exercise taken from Lukmani et al., 1981)

A mode of analysis is now put forward following the problem-solution pattern discussed earlier, to build up to a summary. This kind of guidance, if provided to the student might make the task of summarization considerably easier.

Analysis

This passage is organized according to the following pattern:

1. Problem
2. Analysis of problem
3. Response /suggested solution

There are various ways in which the task of identifying this particular rhetorical pattern can be approached. The task can be made easier or more difficult depending on the class in which the student is studying.

One of the means of making the task simpler is to build up to it by asking the student to respond to pointed questions. A format for going through the stage of answering preliminary questions for the passage is provided as follows:

Procedures Leading to the Summary

First, answer the following questions in brief before attempting the outline of the summary. Consider the questions as rough work leading up to the actual summarization exercise.

1.a) Which concrete facts of daily life have made the writer anxious enough to probe the problem of technological revolution?

b) Are these examples of a more general trend or the only disturbing factors that exist?

c) Faced with these problems, what is the writer trying to do?

2. What are the characteristics of the technological revolution?

a) ______________________

b) ______________________

3. Reasons for characteristics

a) ______________________

b) ______________________

4.a) What is the solution suggested by the writer?

b) What is the reason for suggesting this solution?

c) What has the failure to achieve an appropriate solution resulted in?

The following instructions are given to the students for answering these questions:

a) List out each point separately. In the case of a sub-point use a new line.

b) Separate the ideas from the examples / ideas from the reasons for holding that idea.

The summary could then read as follows:

Statement of problem: The disturbing effects of the technological revolution may be felt in all fields.

Analysis: It is necessary to understand two characteristics of the technological revolution—that it is mindless and that it is neutral. It is mindless because pure science is simply a desire to know. It is neutral because the changes, in themselves, brought about by the technological revolution are neither good nor bad.

Suggested solution: Because the revolution challenging medicine and mankind is mindless and because it is neutral, the mind must be imposed on it to control it and determine its values.

It should now be clear from this illustration that an expository text can be divided into three main sections.

1. The statement of the problem
2. Analysis
3. Suggested solution

Students learn to analyse a discourse in this way and identify the different aspects of the situation: the problem, the response to the problem, and the evaluation of the response, along with several variations and elaborations of these. They can now use this pattern to formulate their summary. Thus, the use of this broad rhetorical pattern can facilitate analysis of the text and identification of the main points.

It has to be borne in mind that the order of the rhetorical patterns in the text may differ from what is required in the summary of that text. In the summary, a very logical type of organization is needed so that even if in the text, the problem is stated before the situation, in the summary, it has to be the situation which is presented first, and then the problem.

Again, in a summary, lifting chunks from the text is not bad in itself; indeed, it is a desirable state of affairs for learners, at least in the first stage of summary writing. Relief from the burden of the composition allows them to focus their entire attention on the ideas central to the text. Then once they have isolated the main ideas and perceived the logical structure of the text, they can turn their attention to polishing the expression and adding cohesive links, particularly if the major headings (such as the ones provided in the analysis) are to be removed.

Other broad classes of intersecting relations are also found to exist in a text within rhetorical patterns such as problem-solution (Winter, 1976, 1978; Hoey, 1983). There are two such major classes of intersecting relations—logical sequence relations and matching relations. Logical sequence relations are relations between successive events or ideas, whether actual or potential, the most basic form of this being time sequence. Examples of relations incorporated under the heading of logical sequence include condition-consequence, instrument-achievement and cause-consequence. Matching relations are those where statements are “matched” against each other in terms of the degrees of identicality of relations. However there is no space to illustrate these here. Interested readers may look up the works cited in the references for more information.

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Foundation Programme for Early Literacy and Learning - 2014-15: A Pilot Study

Keerti Jayaram

Introduction

In July 2014, the Organisation for Early Literacy Promotion (OELP) piloted a two-year foundation programme for early literacy and learning in 15 rural government primary schools situated in the Silora block of Ajmer district, Rajasthan. The programme covered 381 children from class 1 and 414 children from class 2. This report presents a brief overview of the first year of its implementation.

Conceptual Understanding Underlying the Programme

Becoming literate learners means:

- Being able to think independently
- Being able to make sense of what one sees, hears or reads
- Being able to share one's ideas, thoughts or feelings through spoken, pictorial, written or other forms

Program Focus

This foundation program addressed knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the foundation skills of schooling. These are:

1. The code of written language, i.e. phonological awareness, knowledge of phoneme-grapheme relationships, word knowledge and recognition including awareness of spellings.
2. Meaning-making from written texts through use of background knowledge, knowledge of vocabulary, language structure, print concepts and strategies to obtain or convey meaning through different forms of written texts.
3. Ability to analyse and respond to texts thoughtfully and with a critical awareness.

Teacher Preparedness

Through monthly review and planning meetings, teachers / OELP workers were equipped to:

- Understand the developmental processes and natural learning behaviours of the learners
- Be aware that learners construct meaning by drawing upon their socio-cultural and linguistic knowledge and daily life experiences at home and school.
- Recognize the importance of making connections with the skills and interests of individual learners.

Objectives

1. To equip young children for school-based learning
2. To develop enabling and responsive classroom learning conditions
3. To support young learners from diverse backgrounds to become active, thinking and engaged readers and writers
4. To develop an effective and developmentally appropriate framework for

early literacy and language learning towards strengthening the mainstream programme.

Focus

The program focused on three skill sets:

- Foundation skills for school based learning (home to school transitions)
- Foundation skills covering five aspects of language learning and literacy—speaking, listening, reading , writing and thinking
- Higher order thinking skills / cognitive processes

These were taken up simultaneously and not sequentially.

The Program Components

1. Responsive and Active Learning Environments inside Classrooms

   Planned spaces were created with low cost resources for using the classroom walls for meaningful learning. Children were encouraged to engage with all these spaces and print elements in a variety of natural ways through games and planned activities. Attention was paid to classroom management techniques and ways of addressing differences so that each child felt accepted and learning occurred in an environment of mutual trust and respect.

2. Classroom Pedagogies and Practices

   These included pedagogies for facilitating:

- Foundation skills for schooling.
- Meaningful conversations and classroom talk: Children were encouraged to question, predict, connect with their own experience, retell in their own words and use new words in a variety of planned ways. They learned to listen attentively and respond appropriately. Teachers were equipped to use open and closed questions to make conversations meaningful and motivate children to connect with the deeper aspects of books through read aloud or book talk.
- Reading: This included contextualized and adapted pedagogies for read aloud; guided, shared and independent reading; skill-building activities for building phonological awareness; word recognition and vocabulary; and lastly comprehension strategies such as retelling, reasoning, predicting, summarizing, etc.
- Writing and creative expression: This included linguistically controlled experience based writing, shared writing, guided writing; and skill-building through structured tasks and practice worksheets.

A chunk of time was made available on Saturdays for free reading and creative or outdoor activities such as making books; role play or puppet shows; and *akshara* walks or clay modelling based on stories.

3. Implementation Framework

   Four Blocks Framework was used as a delivery framework for classroom interventions across classes 1 and 2 while adhering to the MHRD "Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat" guidelines.

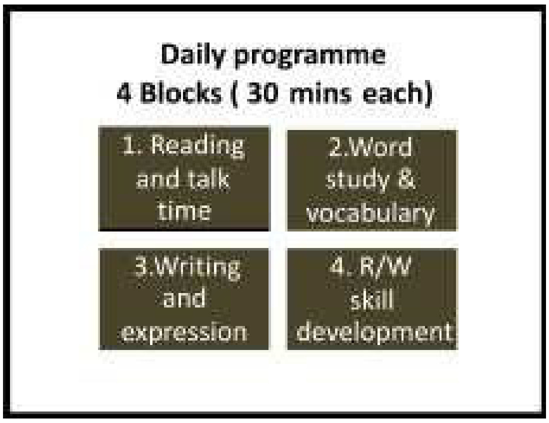

Figure 1. OELP's Four Block Framework

Class 1 program: This was based on thematic units which drew upon the children's experience, their literature and / or some curricular resources. In Class 1, the framework in Figure 1 was found to be suitable for mainstream schools as it provided a simple structure with adequate time for oral work, read aloud, word activities and vocabulary building, writing and creative expression, while addressing the developmental needs of young learners.

Class 2 program: This was based on a greater engagement with curricular materials, children's literature and experience-based learning. The reading and writing pedagogies attempted to involve learners with reading, writing, meaning-making and critical thinking at greater levels of complexity. Due to time constraints, a three block approach was found to be more feasible, and time was distributed between the textbook and use of children's literature and other reading materials.

4. Assessment and Learner Tracking

Competencies and Indicators

Learning indicators based on seven broad competencies were used for mapping children's learning progressions at six measurement points at the end of each trimester, spanning a two-year period.

Assessments included:

1. A baseline evaluation
2. Summative, competency based evaluations
3. Formative, observation based checklist
4. Individual profile folders

Summative Assessments

Learner progressions were mapped through summative assessments at six measurement points, i.e. at the end of each trimester. This enabled us to level each child based on his / her performance.

Formative Observation-based Checklist

A qualitative observation-based checklist based on a five point rating scale was developed to track the progression of competencies that were not being assessed within the summative assessment, every three months.

Profile Folders

A profile folder was maintained with the background of each learner. In addition, all the assessment sheets (from the summative and formative assessments) were filed along with one or two pieces of written work each week. This enabled us to track a child's progress over a period of time. A rubric was designed to assess each child's progress in different dimensions of learning.

Levelling

The children were grouped into three levels, i.e. A, B and C, with level 'A' being the lowest performance level. The learning progression and shift across levels were tracked over two academic years, and the data from the assessments was fed into the monthly planning and review meetings for identifying the focus areas for each trimester

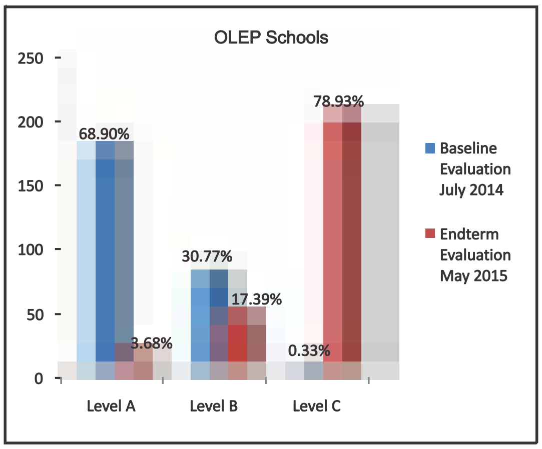

Figure 2. Percentage shift in Class 2 students' performance levels from baseline to end-term evaluations in OELP intervention schools in 2014

Figure 2 shows the shift in the performance levels of class 2 students in the 15 OELP intervention schools during the academic year 2014-15. The results of the end term evaluation for class 2 in May 2015 indicate that 96.32 % children had moved to a higher level as compared to the baseline evaluation in July 2014. Further, 78.33 % of these class 2 children were performing at proficiency level C. We are looking at these initial results as broadly indicative. Further, this group at the class 2 level had one year of exposure as against the intended two years.

Feedback and Challenges

The initial response from the government school teachers and the State Education Department was fairly positive. OELP was appointed as a resource organization in July 2014. Alignment with the changing demands of existing mainstream framework was challenging and required a fair amount of negotiations. The chronologically structured CCE framework also created challenges as we were not able to entirely engage the regular teachers and were compelled to fall back on our own education workers.

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Creating Dependent Readers and Writers: Our Complicated Simple Pedagogic Approach

Nidhi Kunwar

Recently, I met a mother who was trying to make her two-year-old child learn how to talk. The committed mother was trying to do this by using various techniques:

- She would not allow the child to use any equivalent of the word in question. For example, if the child wanted water, she had to say, "Mother, I want water". Approximations such as "mum" or "paanu" were not accepted by her mother.
- The dedicated mother responded to the child only when the child spoke correctly. Mistakes were not responded to. The purpose was to force the child to speak correctly.
- The mother thought that it was her responsibility to teach the child "how to speak". If she did not fulfil that responsibility, the child would never learn.
- She believed that if she did not focus on correct pronunciation and word selection right from a young age, her child would never learn it.

These responses of a mother (adult) might appear highly problematic to us. We may feel surprised about how the mother understands language learning. She probably does not understand the basis of language learning, for there is no child who speaks correctly and perfectly right from the first attempt.

If we had to explain her approach to language learning we might say the following to the mother:

- This approach is nonsensical.
- Children do use different equivalent words to express their needs. These words should be accepted and responded to.
- It is highly foolish to believe that if she does not correct the child, the child will continue to speak incorrectly even as an adult. In reality, children make mistakes, discover rules and correct themselves.
- Predictions or guesses are not failures. They are the ways by which children understand language.
- A child will learn to speak only by "speaking". The child should be allowed to use language freely.
- Young children do not learn to speak by instilling fear, or through drills and practice.

I feel that most of us will agree with these points. Learning to speak is a natural process and, most children will learn to speak by themselves in a fearless and supportive environment. The proof of this statement lies in the fact that millions of young children become proficient users of their language by the age of 3 years.

Surprisingly, this developmental understanding about language learning gets completely reversed when we talk about learning to read and write. Most of our kindergarten or early primary grades reflect the same "nonsensical understanding" of the mother (adult) that we have just criticized.

It is indeed unfortunate that adults, who are so supportive when children are learning to speak, become highly traditional when the same children learn to read and write. In fact, all our assumptions about learning get reversed when we focus on reading and writing. The reality is that we fail miserably in making children skilled readers and writers. Instead, we make them readers who decode without comprehension; and writers who can copy but cannot express themselves.

This article is written with the purpose of highlighting how in schools, we transform our children into dependent readers and writers. An attempt has been made to trace the journey of young children in the early grades of school. The article is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on how reading and writing is taught to young children in schools and in the second section there is a focused discussion with concrete suggestions.

The Beginning of School Life

Children are active and curious by nature. However, in classrooms, these active and energetic young minds are exposed to activities that hardly use their innate curiosity and willingness to learn. Till now, the child had engaged with different things in search of meaning; however, in school, the child is immersed in tasks where there is no focus on meaning.

This argument can be explored by examining three criteria: the general pedagogic approach, how reading is taught and how writing is taught.

General Pedagogic Approach

Most of the pre-service teacher preparation courses teach student teachers the general basis for pedagogy such as:

· Simple to complex

· Concrete to abstract

Let us explore the definition of "simple" with respect to reading and writing, i.e. which texts will be simpler for children to read or write? The answer is that the texts which they can understand and derive meaning from easily are simpler for young children and conversely, texts in which they cannot find any meaning will be difficult or abstract for them. Words that children use in daily life will be simpler to recognize rather than words they do not know. Meaningless texts will be more complicated for young children, because in the absence of meaning, they have to depend entirely on rote memorization.

Surprisingly this simple understanding takes on a different interpretation in classrooms. We follow the practice of breaking meaningful words into several isolated units and making young children memorize these units one by one and later combining these meaningless units to recreate that same word. This description might sound complicated, but we actually make our children learn through this complicated interpretation of "simple". It means that for teaching a word such as *kela* (banana), students first have to learn all the *varnas* (letters of the alphabet) first separately and then in combination with different *matras* and finally join the two to read or write *kela*.

With this "complicated simple pedagogic principle" in focus, we design reading and writing pedagogies for early grades. Let us now look at how children are taught to read and write.

Teaching Reading

Following the "Complicated simple pedagogic principle", students are introduced to reading with the help of separate *varnas*. These units are practiced in a dedicated manner until they have been rote memorized by all the young minds in the class. After that, different combinations of these *varnas* are presented to the children. So, students start practicing two-letter-words such as कल *kal* (tomorrow) or नल *nal* (tap), then three-letter-words such as कमल *kamal* (lotus) or मगर *magar* (crocodile), and finally four-letter-words such as थरमस *tharamas* (flask), बरगद *bargad* (banyan tree). Finally, in the same fashion, they practice and memorize different *matra* combinations. The language is therefore dissected as deeply as possible in the name of teaching reading in a simple way.

If we accept that abstract concepts are difficult for young children, then it must be accepted that there is nothing more abstract than our reading pedagogy style. What sense can a child draw from the *varna va* or *kha* or *la*? What meaning can the active mind of a child derive from these units? Nothing. However, unfortunately, this "nothing" becomes the basis of our reading pedagogy in the initial years.

Sinha (2000) analysed 10 Hindi primers used in the initial grades as reading material to understand the nature of early reading instruction. She highlighted their absurd nature. She found that these primers were loaded with absurd sentences, unnatural language, and boring and disconnected texts. These primers lacked "meaning" completely, and hence were difficult and uninteresting for children.

As our definition of "simple" means "breaking language to the smallest unit", such miserable primers still rule our classrooms in the early grades despite the introduction of the interesting *Rimjhim* series. Following is an example of a primer which I recently observed being religiously used in grade I by teachers:

'*kamal, kalam pakad kar tahal* (Kamal, hold a pen and walk)

kalash sadak par rakh (keep the pot on the road)

behen ki khabar rakh (keep track of your sister)

harad ragar kar chakh (rub *harad* and taste)

namak ragad kar rakh (rub salt and keep it)

bhadak mat,bhajan kar (don't get angry, take god's name)

shahar chal, namak chakh (go to the city, taste salt)

It is important to reflect about the meaning that a five-year-old child will derive from this text. If we believe that children are "active constructors", what construction or prediction can a child attempt in this artificial text? Sinha (2010) highlighted the inherent problems of such reading material as:

These texts actually teach 'not' to seek meaning while reading. If one reads these texts for comprehension, then the experience will be bizarre because there is no coherent text to comprehend in the first place. If a child depends on these texts exclusively to learn to read, she will get the message that reading is meaningless, mysterious and rather absurd process (p. 122).

However, these primers are religiously followed in grade I with a lot of dedication and rigour. In fact, our young children are taught reading through such restricted texts.

So our "complicated simple pedagogy principle" shapes readers like this:

- Introduction to absurd isolated units, i.e. *varnas* through rote memorization
- Learning the *varnas* in different combinations, i.e. two-letter, three-letter and four-letter combinations
- Memorizing different *matras*
- Learning the combinations of *varnas* and *matras*
- Focus - Decoding
- Result - A dependent reader

Teaching Writing

Writing is a skill that involves expressing one's feelings, emotions and ideas. It is a common sight to find preschool children leaving their writing imprints on the walls, notebooks and newspapers in the form of drawing or scribbling. It is also interesting to note that children can tell the meaning of their scribbles or drawings quite easily. In addition to that, they even manage to express what they want to convey through that attempt.

However, when these young expressive minds enter schools, their "expression" is expected to be left outside the rigid classroom space. This is because in the initial years, writing in classrooms is mainly limited to practicing meaningless patterns. The argument given in favour of such exercises is that it will help young children to hold their pencils properly and develop motor skills. Surprisingly, our teachers completely forget that these same children already have the required motor skills, which is why they have probably covered the walls at home with their writing imprints.

The strict patterns and forms of writing are focused and are practiced as a ritual. Different types of writing drills are given on standard five-line notebooks to give the students unlimited practice in isolated units. The sequence of writing practice is as follows: joining dots, standing and sleeping lines, various cursive strokes, isolated letters of the alphabet, two-letter words followed by three-letter words and so on. Mistakes are punished with more drill and practice worksheets and tasks. The little hands that required space and freedom are restricted within the boundaries of the four or five-line notebooks.

It is really unfortunate to see that children who earlier had something to share in every simple drawing or mark made by them, now get restricted within the framework of traditional writing where neither does the need for "sense" exist nor is it valued. The school clearly communicates that writing only involves following "standards'. Graves (1986), traced this conflict in the initial lines of his book as:

> Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school. This is no accident. Before they went to school they marked up walls, pavement, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens or pencils…anything that makes a mark. The child's marks say, "I am."
>
> "No, you aren't," say most schools' approaches to the teaching of writing (p. 3).

By restricting children with "rights" and "wrongs", we make them writers who are more fearful of mistakes than concerned about expression.

Hence, as per our "complicated simple writing pedagogy", steps for writing development are as follows:

- Practising "standing lines", "sleeping lines" and "joining dots"
- Practising all *varnas* one by one. The pattern to be followed is islolated *varnas*, then two-letter words, three-letter words, four-letter words and then sentences.
- Special focus on
  - Perfect drawing of *varnas* within lines
  - Beautiful handwriting
  - Sharpened pencils
  - Ability to copy accurately from blackboard
  - Reward for error-free work, i.e. perfect "copy"
- Result - A Dependent Writer

Discussion: A Reflection

We have looked at how our students are first introduced to literacy in formal schools. With our "complicated simple pedagogic approach", we convert literacy into a meaningless maze for young children. We make them undertake senseless drills and routines which carry no immediate meaning or purpose for them. Saxena (2010), describes this hopeless literacy introduction as, "this was their entry into the world of literacy—boring, unchallenging and much of it meaningless too". (p. 135). Kumar (1992), also highlights the status of our young learners in this traditional routine as:

> …we would know how frustrated the child must get after he has spent a few days at an average primary school. He would find out that the school is not the place where he can 'make sense' of the world (p. 59).

It is indeed a sad situation where we are making all possible attempts to convert our young minds into blind followers. The search for meaning is the basis for every act and surprisingly, all our efforts are directed to keeping this search outside of the boundaries of the classroom. It is worth reflecting on the value that such literacy experiences provide to children. Should the introduction to literacy be so boring and absurd?

We as teachers need to reflect on what we are teaching and what our students are learning. If we agree that language learning is a meaning making task, then there are no boundaries for the meaningful literacy activities we can design. Some suggestions are offered as follows:

- Reading material for young children has to be interesting and appropriate. Good story books are excellent teaching aids to introduce students to reading.
- Authentic activities such as journal writing, message boards, letter writing should be used in the class with a clear sense of purpose and audience. Experiences from their lives should be the biggest resource for teaching writing to students.
- Function/purpose should be the focus of language learning; form/structure can be acquired later.
- Errors are not failures. They are indicators that the child is attempting to learn. These attempts should be nurtured with sensible adult support.

These suggestions can be translated by the teacher into different creative practices for making literacy an engaging sphere for students and for changing our young minds from "dependent" readers and writers to "competent" readers and writers.

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Children Understimate how much Others Read: A Confirmation Using Chinese 7th Graders in Hefei, China

Sy-Ying Lee, Christy Lao and Stephen Krashen

Introduction

There is a common view that "kids these days" don't read as much as they used to. This view is so firmly held that discussion nearly always focusses on why children don't read, assuming that the decline in reading is real. For example, in a Good Reads blog, Lynette Sofras asked "*Why don't children read anymore*?"[1] Contributors gave a number of reasons such as poor quality of literature written for young people, lack of discipline, the Internet, and force feeding classics to children.

We hypothesize that one reason for this belief is because reading usually is private, we rarely see other people doing it. Evidence supporting this hypothesis comes from three sets of data, both showing that middle school children think they read more than their friends and their classmates do. One analysis is based on data from a previous study of a sample of children in the US. The second analysis is based on data from a sample of children in Hefei, China. The third is from Australia, from studies recently published that came to our attention after our analysis was complete.

Children themselves eagerly provide reasons for their own failure to read more. Teacher Ronald Maggiano asked his students "about the possible reasons why kids do not read"[2] Among the reasons given in the *The Classroom Post*, by Ronald Maggiano, are: not enough time or energy, demands of other activities (e.g. sports), appeal of the internet and video games, boring assigned reading ("One student said that she does not read because English class has butchered the fun in reading"), and parents don't "push their children to read." Finally, there was the "coolness factor" (*"They think it makes them* nerds*"* said one girl. Another student wrote, "Someone put in their minds when they were little that reading was not cool and boring*"*). The possbility that "kids these days" are reading just as much as children ever did is not even considered.

Why is this view so firmly held? One obvious reason is studies that purportedly demonstrate that the decline is real, especially the National Endowment for the Arts "To Read or Not to Read" (Iyengar and Ball, 2007), which resulted in a flurry of articles and reports in the media declaring that there is a "remarkable decline" in reading (National Public Radio, November 19, 2007), and "The young turn their back on books" (Dallas Morning News, November 20, 2007).

Contrary data and counter-arguments are not "news." When the National Endowment for the Humanities published "Reading on the Rise" one year later (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008), there was little comment in the media. A contrary analysis of the 2007 report (Krashen, 2008, 2011), as well as data showing that readers are clearly not "nerds" (Schatz, Panko, Pierce, and Krashen, 2010a) have not been widely reported.

Another plausible reason for the view that reading is on a decline is that reading is private: We are aware when we are doing it, but we don't often see others doing it, and we therefore underestimate how much others read.

Previous Research

Evidence supporting the second explanation for the belief in the decline in reading was reported by Schatz, Panko, Pierce, and Krashen (2010b). Fourth and fifth graders in different parts of the United States (Texas, California and Colorado) were asked how much they read, how much they thought their friends read, and how much they thought their classmates read. Table1 presents this data, included here in detail because of the remarkable similarity of the classes with each other as well as the remarkable similarity to our current results, described later.

Table 1: Report of Reading – USA sample

Class 1: grade 4. n = 91	a lot	kind of	not very much
I like to read	54 (59%)	34 (37%)	3 (3%)
My friends like to read	49 (54%)	38 (42%)	4 (4%)
Most of my class likes to read	46 (50%)	35 (39%)	10 (11%)

Self vs friends:
χ^2_{Yates} = .54, p = .23, d = .15
Self vs. classmates: $\chi2$ = 1.42, p =.11, d = .25
("kind of" and "not very much" combined for χ^2_{Yates} analyses)

Class 2: grade 5, n = 100	a lot	kind of	not very much
I like to read	43 (43%)	50 (50%)	7 (7%)
My friends like to read	35 (35%)	60 (60%)	5 (5%)
Most of my class likes to read	32 (32%)	50 (50%)	18 (18%)

Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 1.35, p .13, d = .23
Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 2.58, p = .054, d = .33

Class 3: grade 4, n = 96	a lot	kind of	not very much
I like to read	40 (42%)	49 (51%	7 (7%)
My friends like to read	30 (31%)	57 (59%)	9 (10%)
Most of my class likes to read	37 (38%)	46 (48%)	13 (14%)

Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 2.25. p = .07; d = .31;
Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = .2, p = .33; d = .09

Class 4: grade 5, n = 104	a lot	kind of	not very much
I like to read	40 (39%)	49 (47%)	15 (14%)
My friends like to read	25 (24%)	64 (62%)	15 (14%)
Most of my class likes to read	22 (21%)	64 (62%)	18 (17%)

Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 5.03, p = .012; d = .45;
Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 7.44, p = .003, d = .56
From: Schatz, Panko, Pierce, and Krashen (2010b).

Examining the first two rows of each table, we see that in each group children said that they felt that they read more than their friends did, e.g., in Table 1, 59% of the children said they liked to read a lot, but 54% said that their friends read a lot. The difference was largest in class four (39% saying they liked to read a lot, compared to 24% saying their friends liked to read a lot). The same pattern appears in all four classes consistently.

Subjects also reported that they read more than their classmates. In Table 1, for example, as noted earlier, 59% of the students said they liked to read a lot, compared with 32% saying their classmates liked to read a lot. Again, the same pattern appears in all four classes.

The China (Hefei) Study

To investigate the possible universality of this phenomenon, a very different group was used. Seventh graders in seven different schools in a middle class area in Hefei, China were asked about their reading habits in their first language, Mandarin and the findings are presented in Table 2. All children filled out questionnaires that included these questions (translated from Mandarin), which are nearly identical to those asked in Schatz et. al. (2010b):

- I like to read a) a lot b) kind of c) not at all
- My friends like reading a) a lot b) kind of c) not at all

Most of the students in my class like to read a) a lot b) kind of c) not at all

The Hefei results are remarkably similar to the data from the United States: In every comparison except one, subjects said they read more than their friends did and in every case they said they read more than their classmates did.

Data from Australia

After our study was completed, we discovered we might be able to confirm (or disconfirm) our findings using data from other studies. Merga (2014a, 2014b) conducted research with teenagers, aged 13 to 16, in Australia, on attitudes toward recreational reading and the impact of friends and peer group on the acceptability of reading.

A flaw in our study is that we did not do a separate analysis of girls and boys. Merga (2014a, 2014b) provided data that made it possible to do this analysis. As usually found in studies of this kind, girls reported more interest in reading than boys.

Merga's female subjects followed the same pattern as our American and Chinese subjects did, feeling that they read more than their close friends and their classmates, and the effect was larger for classmates (Table 3).

The boys agreed with the pattern we found in that they thought they read more than their friends did. They also thought they read more than their classmates, but not by much. In fact, the difference between how much the boys said they read and their classmates was not statistically significant, just failing to reach the .10 level, one tail, and the effect size was very small.

Comparison of Friends and Classmates

The use of effect sizes allows us to assign a number to the size of differences among groups (Wolf, 1986). Effect sizes are usually calculated by subtracting the mean of one group from the mean of the other, all divided by the pooled standard deviation. In this study, effect sizes were calculated from the ÷2 tests. Table 4 presents effect sizes for self-reports versus opinions about friends and classmates for all three samples.

Table 2: A Comparison of Self-reports and Opinions about Friends' Reading Habits - China (Hefei) Sample

Hefei Class		a lot	kind of	not at all	χ^2_{Yates} and P Values
class 1, n = 18	I like to read	16 (89%)	2 (11%)	0	Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 6.13, p = .006, d = 1.44; Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 4.71, p = .015 d = 1.19
	My friends like reading	8 (44%)	10 (56%)	0	
	Most of my class likes to read	9 (50%)	8 (44%)	1 (6%)	
class 2, n = 17	I like to read	10 (59%)	7 (41%)	0	Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 7.37. p = .0033; d = 1.75; Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 4.48, p = .017 d = 1.2
	My friends like reading	2 (6%)	15 (88%)	2 (6%)	
	Most of my class likes to read	3 (18%)	13 (17%)	1 (6%)	
class 3, n = 20	I like to read	15 (75%)	5 (25%)	0	Self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 4.95, p = .013, d = 1.15; Self vs classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 12.2, p = .00023, d = 2.5`
	My friends like reading	7 (35%)	13(55%)	0	
	Most of my class likes to read	3(15%)	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	
class 4, n = 19	I like to read	10 (53%)	1 (74%)	0	self vs. friends: Fisher exact test : p = .005, d = 1.43; Self vs. classmates: Fisher exact test = .00009, d = 3.1
	My friends like reading	7 (37%)	12 (63%)	0	
	Most of my class likes to read	3 (16%)	14 (74%)	2 (10%)	
class 5, n = 16	I like to read	9 (56%)	6 (38%)	1 (6%)	self vs . .friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 0, d = 0; Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 3.33, p = .034, d = 1.03
	My friends like reading	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)	
	Most of my class likes to read	3 (19%)	12 (75%)	1 (6%)	
class 6, n = 23	I like to read	14 (61%)	8 (35%)	1 (4%)	self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 4.33 p = .019, d = .96; Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 9.33, p = .0012, d= 1.65
	My friends like reading	6 (26%)	15 (65%)	2 (9%)	
	Most of my class likes to read	3 (13%).	18 (78%)	2 (9%)	
class 7, n = 19	I like to read	11 (58%)	6 (32%)	2 (10%)	self vs. friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 1.7, p = .10, d = .63; Self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 5.54, p = .009, d = 1.29
	My friends like reading	6 (32%)	10 (53%)	3 (16%)	
	Most of my class likes to read	3 (16%)	12 (63%)	4 (21%)	

"kind of" and "not at all" categories combined in Fisher Exact tests. All p-values one-tail.

Table 3: Responses of Girls and Boys to the Question : *Do you like to read in your spare time*?

Gender		Positive	Neutral	Negative	χ^2_{Yates} & P Values
Girls n=276	self	164 (59%)	62 (22%)	50 (18%)	self vs. close friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 27.89, p < .0001; d = .67 self vs classmates; χ^2_{Yates} = 79.60, p < .0001; d = 1.27
	close friends	102 (37%)	77 (28%)	97 (35%)	
	classmates	61 (22%)	127 (46%)	88 (32%)	
Boys n=242	self	86 (35%)	63 (26%)	93 (242)%	self vs. close friends: χ^2_{Yates} = 23.83, p < .0001; d = .66 self vs. classmates: χ^2_{Yates} = 1.025, p = .16, d = .13
	close friends	39 (16%)	76 (31%)	127 (52%)	
	classmates	56 (23%)	94 (39%)	92 (38%)	

Table 4: Comparison of Effect Sizes for Self –report versus Opinions about Friends and Classmates for the three Samples

Hefei			***USA***			***Australia***		
Class	vs. friends	vs. classmates	Class	vs. friends	vs. classmates	Gender	vs. friends	vs. classmates
1	1.44	1.19	1	0.15	0.25	Girls	0.67	1.27
2	1.75	1.2	2	0.23	0.33	Boys	0.66	0.13
3	1.15	2.5	3	0.31	0.09	*vs. classmates larger than vs.* friends: ½		
4	1.43	3.1	4	0.45	0.56			
5	0	1.03	*vs. classmates larger than vs. friends: 3/4*					
6	0.96	1.65						
7	0.63	1.29						
vs. classmates larger than vs. friends: 5/7								

For our original sample (USA), the effect sizes were larger for the perceptions of classmates' reading than for friends' reading in three out of four ccomparisons. For our Hefei sample, this was true in five out of seven ccomparisons, and in the Australian sample (Merga, 2014a, 2014b), it was true only of girls. In total, in 9 out of 13 cases, the effect sizes were larger for perceptions of classmates' reading than for friends' reading. This result, if it proves to be stable, would provide more evidence that we underestimate the reading habits of those we do not observe directly. It is plausible that children have more direct knowledge of their friends' reading habits than they do of their classmates' reading habits.

Discussion

Children consistently reported that they read more than their friends and classmates do, and the effect tended to be larger for classmates' reading than from friends' reading. Children in the US, China, and Australia think others read less than they do, which must be an illusion since subjects' classmates in all of the studies were also subjects in the study. We have demonstrated here that this effect occurs with children who speak different languages and belong to somewhat different cultures. We suspect that the effect will hold for adult readers as well as for children.

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Endnotes

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Exploring the Views of Teacher Educators and Pupil Teachers on Status of Reading in Pre-Service Programmes

Pooja Bahuguna

Introduction

The quality of reading instructions given in schools by teachers has always been a matter of concern. This is because the ability to read and write is valued not only in language curriculum, but it also influences the achievement of the students in other disciplines. Kumar (1992) stated that the majority of children drop out of school due to poor literacy instructions and lack of meaningful classroom interaction. The teacher remains an important character in the classroom in designing literacy instructions. The teachers' beliefs influence the nature of classroom interaction, literacy instructions and students' achievement. The teacher's pedagogy of reading influences the students' competency in it. However, it is important to understandthat the teachers' assumptions and competence in leading effective discussions in the classroom is in turn influenced by their training and education (Sinha, 2010). Indeed, teachers themselves are a product of teacher education programmes. The way reading is discussed in teacher education programmes influences how teachers deal with it in their classrooms. Thus, it makes one curious about teachers' views on reading and the reading instructions given in their training programmes. This paper aims to understand the opinions of teacher educators and pupil teachers by exploring their views on the component of reading and how it is dealt with in their training programmes. For this teacher educators and pupil teachers were selected from three types of programmes in Delhi, namely, Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.—a four-year Integrated Professional Degree Programme offered after Senior Secondary School Level) and Elementary Teacher Education (ETE—a two-year Diploma Course).

First, I will begin by discussing what reading involves in Indian classrooms. Then, I will present the opinion of teacher educators on the status of reading in their programmes. Finally, I will look at the problems faced by pupil teachers in the classroom while applying the knowledge gained in these programmes.

Reading in Indian Classrooms

In Indian classrooms, reading is mostly done in the form of decoding. In the early grades especially, the focus of literacy instructions is on sounds rather than meaning, parts rather than whole. My own teaching experience with primary grades has been no different. In the initial grades,language curriculum focuses only on strengthening the decoding skills such as learning the letters of the alphabet and fragmented words. Teachers believe that in the early grades,the focus cannot be on reading comprehension because children do not know all the letters of the alphabet and *maatraas*. In fact, teachers believe that the most important goal of early reading programmes is to develop sequential mastery of letters and to blend them to make words. Loud reading without any connection with reading for meaning is one of the most common practices in the classroom. Such classroom practices, which isolate skills from meaningful reading make learning to read difficult. Children are not taught to develop inner control and strategic functioning as readers. Even in the higher grades, teachers provide only an explanation of the text or difficult words, and students do not get a chance to engage with the text by expressing their emotions. Therefore, instead of becoming independent readers, students become dependent on teachers to read and make meaning of texts.

Reading in Teacher Education Programmes

As mentioned earlier, teachers are the major players in the classrooms. Their beliefs, views and opinions have a powerful impact on children's learning and achievement. However, teachers alone cannot be blamed for poor reading instructions in classrooms and children's lack of motivation for reading. One needs to examine the knowledge and expertise teachers bring to the field of reading as a consequence of teacher education programmes. Therefore, exploring teacher educators' views on the status of reading in the teacher education programmes is essential in order to understand the source of the teachers' knowledge about reading. In this paper, I have tried to understand what teacher educators think about the effectiveness of language curriculum in terms of the reading component, both in terms of theories and pedagogy of reading. Teacher educators are the best judges of their programmes since they are the ones who deal with the everyday concerns of pupil teachers.

The major focus of my study was on what teacher educators feel about the status of reading in the curriculum of language education; the extent to which the present curriculum is able to develop the essential skills and attitude towards reading in pupil teachers to be able to further develop it in their students; the purpose of including this component in the language education curriculum and how well this purpose is fulfilled through the prescribed curriculum for the reading component in language education; and lastly the extent to which they were aware of the theories of reading. The views of the teachers and pupil teachers were collected through interviewswith them. Analysis began, first by identifying the various themes and then classifying the responses of the teacher educators under them, for instance, views on the status of reading, the objective of reading in the language curriculum, the various reading theories, and so on. Data revealed two kinds of responses—those which indicated satisfaction among teacher educators and those which showed critical remarks on the reading component along with an urge for improvement. Based on their views,the teachers were classified into two groups, namely, those who expressed satisfaction with the current status of reading in their programme and those who felt that reading was neglected in their programmes. The differences in both views are discussed as follows.

Views of Teacher Educators who Expressed Satisfaction with Their Programmes

It is notable that all teacher educators showed concerns regarding the poor reading performance of children and believed that unmotivated teaching/learning context was one of the factors responsible for it. However, they discussed differences of opinion in the role of training in developing the knowledge base of the teachers.

The first group of teacher educators shared positive remarks on the status of reading in their respective programmes. A detailed discussion unfolded, in which the teachers talked about their understanding of the nature of reading and about their role in developing it. Surprisingly, these teacher educators did not have a theoretical understanding of reading. They were simply concerned about the mechanical aspects of reading and believed that the focus of the curriculum must be on developing the pupil teachers' ability to do fluent and loud reading with correct pronunciation and appropriate voice modulation. As a consequence, the pedagogy of reading as discussed by the pupil teachers also focused on reading aloud by teachers, explaining meanings of difficult words (mostly chosen by teachers) and finally, writing question-answers. This was a typical traditional approach of reading which has been frequently criticized for it regards reading as nothing beyond decoding or sounding out the words and completely neglects the complex and holistic nature of reading. According to this group of teachers, reading aloud was the only pedagogic tool a teacher needed to use to correct flaws in children's reading. Thus, according to them, teachers should read in an ideal manner which pupil teachers should imitate. Undoubtedly, this reading pedagogy is religiously followed by such teachers in the classrooms and it makes children believe that reading has nothing to do with meaning. The ETE teacher educators in particular, did not have any theoretical understanding of reading. For them, reading was merely a receptive skill.

When these teachers were asked about the objectives of the reading component in their programmes, they provided general statements such as, "Reading should help in developing the overall personality of the teacher". The teacher educators were not aware of what specific purpose reading should serve or perhaps they did not think about it at all. Similarly, the evaluation of reading pedagogy was also affected by how reading was perceived by teacher educators. Teacher educators did not mention any clear specific criteria for evaluating the pupil teachers' progress in the understanding of reading. Rather, they assessed the pupil teachers' reading in terms of whether they could read aloud with correct pronunciation and explain the text and difficult words. Their views revealed their lack of concern with whether pupil teachers provide children with opportunities to engage with the text.

Views of Teacher Educators who Felt Reading was Neglected in their Programmes

The second group of teacher educators was relatively better informed about current theories of the reading process and pedagogy. They shared two kinds of concerns: first, the lack of theoretical foundation of reading in teachersin their respective teacher education programmes; second, their inability to apply these theories in the classroom context. Their views on both these issues are shared here in detail.

All teacher educators in this group felt that reading is one of the neglected areas especially in the Elementary Teacher Education programmes. Furthermore, theories of reading either did not form part of the syllabus or were given a peripheral status. According to them, in the name of theories only a few approaches and types of reading were listed and discussed. These teacher educators were aware of the contemporary reading theories and expressed the view that these should be made part of the language curriculum. The current non-inclusion of these theories was attributed to time constraints.

Teachers also expressed concerns about the application of the theories in the classroom. They felt that in most cases, the teaching of theories of reading was reduced to a ritual. As a result, the gap between old practices and new developments forced the pupil teachers to rely on traditional methods. Teacher educators were aware of the gap between theory and practice and admitted that it needed a lot of deliberation between the teacher educators and pupil teachers. This problem was further aggravated due to insufficient time for a large number of pupil teachers. Even in the four year innovative B.El.Ed programme, this gap was inadequately addressed. In this programme, reading got an adequate emphasis in primary school experiences, but in middle school teaching/learning it was not addressed satisfactorily. Although, many innovative ideas such as maintaining reflective journals and response journals had been tried out by teacher educators and students in the B.El.Ed programme, there was a need for face to face discussion among them. As Sinha (2010) argued, it is important to explore what theories mean in the context of the classroom but the experiences and challenges faced by pupil teachers should be valued and should constitute the focus of the discussion.

The teacher educators of this group also expressed the view that reading should be made a compulsory paper where the primary focus should be first on building a theoretical understanding of reading. The gap between theory and practice would then be addressed properly with more focus on the pedagogical implications of the theories learnt in the programme. In fact, one of the teacher educators stressed that reading should be made a compulsory foundation paper in all undergraduate programmes.

Views of Pupil Teachers

This section explores the effectiveness of the reading component in teacher training programmes in resolving the challenges faced by pupil teachers during their school experience. An attempt was made to understand the viewpoints of pupil teachers; how they felt about the reading course they were studying; whether the reading component in their course equipped them with the required understanding and skills to deal with reading in their practicum and later in their career. Finally, the pupil teachers were asked whether they were satisfied with the reading programme or not.

Most of the pupil teachers agreed that the reading component of the training programme did not fully equip them with the expertise needed in the classroom. They shared a variety of concerns and challenges faced in the classroom context.

Firstly, they had a narrow understanding of reading as reflected in the way they defined reading and its pedagogical practices. They held the belief that reading is nothing more than sounding out words. They could not imagine reading as a field of study based on theories and research. They also shared their concerns regarding their inability, as pupil teachers, in generating interest in reading among their students. Moreover, they had no idea about how to handle this problem. Some of them commented on the flaws in the structure of teacher education programmes which placed pupil teachers in the classroom without equipping them with any theoretical understanding of reading. They illustrated their complaint by pointing to a widely known malaise in the system—practice teaching before teaching theory. This practice encouraged the pupil teachers to bank on what they had learnt in school rather than what they learnt in the reading programme.

There were some pupil teachers who felt that their teacher education programme was innovative for it created in them a sound knowledge base of reading. They shared how reading and writing was focused on meaning from time to time and helped them to move beyond traditional understanding of reading. Some of them wanted to pursue research in this field and desired that the programme address some of their concerns. One of these concerns was related to the challenges faced in the classroom while applying theoretical knowledge. They believed that such challenges were never part of the discussion while they were learning the theories and they actually got highlighted only during the school experience programme. They suggested that such challenges should constitute the core of every discussion and solutions should be explored collectively. They further recommended that a platform be created where teachers could be invited to share their experiences of how they resolve challenges in the everyday teaching context.

These suggestions are truly a reflection of the difficulties faced by pupil teachers in a classroom situation. Their suggestions need to be considered while reflecting on the objectives of the teacher education programmes.

Conclusion

It is clear from the views of the teacher educators that pre-service teacher education programmes require a lot of debate, deliberation and changes. Moreover, since the approach followed by the pupil teachers in an actual classroom is influenced by their experiences in the pre-service teacher education programme, the pre-service needs an overhauling. If this overhauling is not done, they will continue to teach according to the traditional understanding of reading and children in the classroom will continue to perceive and pursue reading as a meaningless mechanical process.

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Teaching Critical Reading at the Undergraduate Level

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Introduction

At the undergraduate level, most courses in language concentrate on communications skills and academic writing but not on critical reading which is an important prerequisite for writing critically and ultimately developing critical thinking. This paper argues that in academic contexts, it is not just enough to read texts and understand their content, but it is equally important to examine the claims and evidence presented, verify the results of an experiment and then decide whether to believe in the text or not. Further, using an example the paper illustrates how a text can be read critically in the classroom.

At the tertiary level, students are expected to write research reports, dissertations and research articles for their courses. They are expected to develop a given topic into a well-structured essay in their course exams and other international exams such as GRE or TOEFL. They could be asked to develop a central idea, take up a position in the context of an academic debate and put forward points for and against that particular position, adopt a perspective to analyse the given problem / situation, and link theory and evidence to draw a conclusion and critique the conclusions drawn. In their research articles, students are expected to show a clear understanding of the relevant literature and use that information to build their theses. Instead of blind acceptance of the matters presented, if students analyse it, they will develop professionally, and in the long run be able to participate in the larger academic debate in their areas of interest and contribute to the growth of the discipline.

Critical reading is a necessary prerequisite for critical writing and critical thinking skills. In contrast with general reading (where the reader aims at merely understanding the content), critical reading involves among others, a clear understanding of the structure of the text (which includes understanding the relationship between parts and rhetorical organization), interpreting it within the context and judging its credibility based on the strength of the arguments / evidence presented. Surprisingly, this skill is neglected in the curriculum as well as in classrooms. In this article, I will attempt to explain why critical reading is an important skill and illustrate how it can be taught.

What is Critical Reading?

Reading can be non-critical or critical. A non-critical (or pre-critical) reading is a linear activity whose goal is to make sense of the text as a sequence of thoughts, to understand the information, ideas and opinions stated in the text from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. As a result, the focus of reading is limited to a mere understanding of the content.

Critical reading on the other hand is an analytical activity where the reader reads and rereads a text to identify the patterns of organization; carefully examines language usage and consistency of arguments; understands implicit assumptions and theoretical frameworks chosen or not chosen; understands the context of the content and evaluates its current relevance; examines the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation for consistency and bias and finally arrives at the underlying meaning of the text as a whole. Critical reading thus involves bringing outside knowledge and values to evaluate the given text and decide what to ultimately accept as true.

Why do we Need to Read a Text Critically?

The next question is why we need to read texts critically. After all, in academic contexts authors mean to be honest, logical and objective. Still, as Wallace & Wry (2011) observe, sometimes it is possible that the authors have been misled by the evidence into concluding something that others might consider as untrue. Similarly, the logical arguments of the text may have some flaws or some preconceived notions or biases which may have influenced its arguments and conclusion. Therefore, when students read a particular text they need to be aware of its logical fallacies and preconceived notions or assumptions if any and develop a strong sense of what is research and what is not.

Strategies

Critical reading basically involves asking three types of questions while reading a text. They are: analysis asks, interpretation asks and evaluation asks (Duncan, n.d.). We will discuss each of these in detail with reference to a text. The text that I have chosen the excerpt from is an article written by Bill Thompson for BBC entitled "Open Societies Need Open Systems" (for the complete article see http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/8493006.stm). The article is a journalistic piece of writing. It was written in the context of a dispute between Apple and Adobe over Apple's iPhone not supporting Adobe's Flash system. It shows that the text can be an important source of information if you want your students to form an opinion about open access to systems, technology and products, an issue which is more relevant now than ever before.

Analysis Asks

When we analyse a text, we look at how it is organized and how the ideas are presented in it. Under analysis, the first question we should ask ourselves is: What is the thesis or overall theory of the text? This can be achieved by looking at its title, introductory and concluding paragraphs or abstract. If we look at the title "Open Societies Need Open Systems", we can guess that the article is about freedom of choices. The word "open", which occurs twice in the title, usually refers to freedom, free access, or no limitations or restrictions. The word "systems" could refer to socio-economic systems in a society (such as marriage, democracy), or computer systems. When we read the beginning and concluding paragraphs, it becomes clear that "open societies" refers to a democratic set up and "open systems" refers to computer systems. We can also infer that the author is against restricting their access to the common public in democratic societies. The next task is to identify what type of text it is. The word "need" in the title indicates that the text is probably an argumentative piece in favour of open systems. The by-line ("must be defended") confirms that it is an argumentative text and the phrase "must constantly be alert" in the concluding paragraph further supports that the text is argumentative. In an argumentative text we expect the author to take up a stance and argue strongly in favour of it.

The next question is: How is the text organized? By now, we know the text is argumentative in nature. So we can expect that in the text the author puts forth his argument in favour of free access to systems and backs his claims with reasons and examples. The thesis statement in the introductory paragraph amply hints at what we can expect in the remaining text: "…two skirmishes in a war that could define the future shape of the internet and may even have some impact on those societies…". We can also predict that the author is going to talk about "two skirmishes" in detail and explain why they are significant in the debate on free access to systems.

The next questions are: What are the supporting points? How do these supporting points create the argument? How do they relate to each other and to the thesis? If we read the body of the text critically, we can find these answers. The author discusses two disputes in the domain of computer systems as supporting details to strengthen the argument. Let us first understand the content of the text: paragraphs 2 and 3 are about a tussle between Amazon and Macmillan, whereas paragraphs 4 to 6 are about a dispute between Apple and Adobe. In the first case, there was a series of events: i) Amazon proposed some changes in e-pricing; ii) Macmillan was not happy about it and objected; iii) Macmillan's objection made Amazon unhappy and Amazon removed all Macmillan stocks from its website; iv) There was widespread criticism about Amazon's action; v) Amazon had to put Macmillan's stocks back on the site. In the second case, there was a series of arguments and counter-arguments over Apple's products not supporting Adobe's Flash: i) The iPad was launched without Flash support; ii) Apple argued that Flash was responsible for more crash reports in Mac OS X; iii) Adobe counter-argued that Flash is de facto standard for rich media content; iv) Apple did not agree; it said new standards are available. In both these events, as the author remarks in paragraph 13, there "lies an attempt to limit the ways in which the network and the computers connected to it can be used" and ultimately they "serve the interests of corporations." Both the events are related to computer systems and in both there was a threat to open access to systems.

If we read carefully, we observe that in addition to narrating two factual events (as described in the preceding paragraphs), the author makes statements that make his stance explicit: "Neither adversary in the current disputes clearly has right on its side", "I will not go gladly into a locked-down world". He uses two analogies to support his arguments: i) Just as religion was used as opium in the past (luring people away from questioning authorities with a false promise of a better world to come), today corporate interests are forcing closed systems, locked-down technologies and wholly-owned supply chains on the masses on the pretext of providing better services to them; ii) "Just as we must work to retain our democratic forms of government in the face of adversity, so we must constantly be alert for those who would remove open systems in the name of efficiency and effectiveness" (in the concluding paragraph).

The concluding paragraph links with the introductory paragraph: in the introduction the author mentions two events that could "define the future shape of the internet and may even have some impact on those societies". In the conclusion, the analogy ties together both societal systems and computer systems and the author argues that we must fight for openness in both.

Interpretation Asks

Once we have understood the content, structure and organization of the text, we move to its interpretation. Here we are basically concerned with the context in which the text was written and its current relevance. We first ask ourselves: In what context was it written? The text was written in February 2010, when the dispute between Apple and Adobe had escalated. Steve Jobs wrote an open letter defending Apple's actions in April 2010 (http://www.apple.com/hotnews/thoughts-on-flash/). His action was criticized and the entire episode drew a lot of media attention (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_and_Adobe_Flash_controversy for details). Since the issue was serious, one can understand the strong position taken up by the writer in the text.

The next question is: Is the text relevant now? How can it be interpreted in the light of new developments? We can say that the issue is still relevant. One can connect it with disputes between Apple and Samsung, Nokia and HTC, Microsoft and Kyocera, Oracle and Google, and Motorola and Microsoft among others in the technology domain. In the broader domain, one can connect it with the European Antitrust Law, the Indian Competition Act, etc. In fact it may also be relevant currently due to the raging controversy on 'net neutrality'.

Evaluation Asks

The final set of questions we will be asking are related to the credibility and the importance of the text.

Since the text is an argumentative piece, we need to ask: Does the evidence and reasoning adequately support the theory/theories presented? The writer uses two factual events as evidence to support the main thesis. This is more credible than imaginary events or examples. Also, the writer quotes experts in technology, well-known blog writers and thinkers. The analogy of democracy may appeal to people since in many countries there are strong clashes over democracy. Another related question is: Is the argument logically consistent and convincing? Are there any logical fallacies? One can see that from the very beginning the author's position is consistent. The conclusions are drawn on the basis of factual events and experts' opinions. However, the opium analogy is not very convincing. Here the writer seems to be overreacting. Also, he mentions democracy only in the end and does not adequately build the analogy.

Next we check the reliability of the author, sources and publisher. A check shows that the writer is well known in his area of expertise (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Thompson_(technology_writer) for details). Moreover, the text was published on BBC, which is a trustworthy entity. All these factors make the reader take the arguments in the text seriously before forming his / her position on the issue.

Conclusion

Critical reading helps in writing academic texts. In fact, there is a strong association between reading and writing. The key to successful writing is to anticipate what the audience expects from the text and how they would approach it. A critical reader will keep in mind all the above-mentioned aspects while writing a text.

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Motivational Interviewing: An Effective Tool for Teachers of Second and Foreign Language

A. Arunkumar

Introduction

Motivation in learning is a collective cognitive activity that focuses on the initiation and maintenance of learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Second language (L2) motivation has been a subject of study in the past few decades. Studies show that motivation to learn a second language overrides the aptitude factor and thereby makes up for the variability in the cognitive and environmental factors (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Until 1990, social psychological approach dominated the picture of second language learning with inspiration from Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert, Richard Clement and their associates. However, the approach to understanding motivation in second and foreign language learning has widened post 1990 with the focus on understanding the educational implications of L2 motivational research. Despite that, motivation in classrooms has not got much scholarly attention and that has forced the teachers to rely on unsystematic methods. According to Dornyei (1998), the amount of research devoted to motivating learners has been meager compared to the total research on L2 motivation.

The current paper discusses the various approaches in motivation to learn a second and foreign language, the technique of motivational interviewing and its implications in modern day classrooms.

Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning

The conceptualization of motivation in second and foreign language learning depends on the lines along which it is focused. The social psychological approach of Robert Gardner describes three components, namely motivational intensity; the desire to learn the language; and the attitude towards the act of learning the language. The correlation between attitude and behaviour is directly proportional to the correspondence between the attitudinal and correspondence targets (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Tremblay and Gardner (1995) extended this model by incorporating elements from expectancy value and goal theories.

The linguistic self-confidence concept of Richard Clément posits that the role of self-confidence is significant in foreign language learning. According to the self-determination theory, autonomous learning is a significant contributor to motivation. As per this theory, learners attribute success or failure to their own efforts and strategies rather than to external factors. Studies also show that intrinsic motivation is supported by democratic teaching style (Dickinson, 1995, pp. 173-174).

A study of Hungarian EFL learners revealed a tripartite motivation construct, namely, integratedness, linguistic self-confidence, and the appraisal of the classroom environment (Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994). Further studies classified the various components of the framework under the following dimensions:

language level, learner level and the learning situation level (Dörnyei, 1994). Williams and Burden developed a similar framework of motivational factors in 1997. However, both frameworks lack directional relationships between the various concepts listed in the framework. Recent studies concentrate on neurobiological models of language acquisition through sustained deep learning based on stimulus appraisal process (Schumann, 1998).

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a client-centred technique of counseling used to explore and resolve ambivalence through a collaborative decision-making approach (Rollnick & Miller, 1995). This technique is grounded in a trans-theoretical model of change according to which behaviour change evolves through six stages, namely, pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997).

Based on these concepts of motivation in second and foreign language learning and the novel technique of motivational interviewing, we attempted to develop a strategy to incorporate the technique of motivational interviewing in language classrooms using the trans-theoretical model of change. The following sections outline the methods used to develop the motivational interviewing strategy.

Methods

From July 2014 to December 2014, the technique of motivational interviewing was developed and pilot tested in the Spanish language classroom of a private institute in Chennai, India. There were 31 participants (14 males; 17 females) registered for Level 1 Spanish. Both group and individual interviewing techniques were used in this class. The technique was used thrice during the 100-hour class (baseline, midline and end lines). First, individual interviews were conducted to assess the importance given by the student to learning Spanish and their motivation for learning it. Mid way through the course, group motivational interviewing was done as an activity of 45 minutes in English. After the final exam, individual interviewing was done to assess the motivation level of the students. The assessment was based on two criteria: the desire to continue to the next level and the attrition rate of the students. Students were personally interviewed before, during and after the classroom. Field notes were taken and analysed separately.

Results

The results indicated high motivation levels among students to continue to their next level and the attrition rate was less than 5 per cent. The technique used in the testing is explained as following with examples.

1) Asking permission

The teacher communicates respect for the students by asking for their permission before questioning them and taking their verbal consent. The teacher as a facilitator does not focus on lecture or advice.

Example:

Do you mind if we discuss your reasons for studying Spanish? [Not all students have the same motivation to learn a language. Understanding the differences helps in customizing activities and exercises in class.]

2) Eliciting intrinsic motivation

Every student comes to the language classroom because of some intrinsic motivation. In successful motivational interviewing, the teacher focuses on eliciting this intrinsic motivation through effective conversations.

Examples:

What do you think you will be able to achieve through this course?

How do you think that learning Spanish will help you in future?

Can you think of any three things that would be beneficial to you as a result of learning Spanish?

Where do you see yourself in five years after learning Spanish?

Do you see any harm in learning Spanish?

3) Exploring the importance

The next step involves understanding the importance of learning the second language from the perspective of the learner. This can be used to understand how they prioritize learning the language and to assess if their priority has changed over a period of time.

How important is Spanish to you? Can you rate it in the following scale?

Very important

Important

Somewhat important

Not at all important

4) Asking open-ended questions

Asking open-ended questions engages the learner in a deeper conversation and also gives the teacher time for reflective listening. Storytelling patterns help in understanding the learner better and in building empathy in contrast to closed or dead-ended questions that make the learner feel as though they are being interrogated.

Example:

What was your previous language learning experience in school or college or anywhere?

5) Reflective listening

The teacher employs the technique of reflective listening wherein the teacher paraphrases what the learner states and does not state her/his own ideas or opinions. This builds empathy and allows more room for building rapport with the students.

Examples:

It seems like you were scared of learning languages.

It sounds like you want to create an alternate career by learning Spanish.

6) Normalizing

The strategy of normalizing is used to make the learner understand that many others also face certain language learning difficulties.

Example:

I understand that you are struggling to learn languages because of a low memory capacity. But this is not unusual. Lot of students face this issue.

7) Decisional balancing

This is an effective exercise where the students discuss their reasons for learning this language, its advantages and disadvantages, and their goals for the language course. Then they write down the deficiencies in their current learning behaviour in terms of reaching the goal. They also discuss how they can bridge this gap through various strategies. The students are the main participants of this activity where the teacher is only a facilitator. An approach called Columboesque approach is used to discuss the discrepancies without blaming or judging. This can be used anytime during the course.

Example:

Help me understand this, you want to work on learning the language at least for two hours a day but are not able to do it. What do you think can be done?

8) Statements supporting self-efficacy

Some of the students have low self-confidence in learning a language. Statements supporting self-efficacy help the student to learn better.

Example:

I can see that your Spanish has improved.

You seem to have understood this concept better.

Fifty hours back, you did not know much about Spanish, but now you seem to have learnt a lot of words.

9) Affirmations

The teacher makes positive affirmations in response to what the learner says, avoiding statements that exaggerate the response.

Example:

Your commitment to learning this language is good and it is nice to know that you spend one hour everyday learning Spanish.

10) Advice/feedback

The teacher frequently provides feedback to the student, which helps them to be on a continuous improvement path.

Discussion

Our observation of the students after using this technique of motivational interviewing showed that it helped the students make effective decisions related to language learning, hence leading to a purpose-driven learning system. Initial success in learning the language reinforced their intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, which proves the linguistic self-confidence concept of Richard Clément. The educational implications in the language learning classrooms are many and they can be used during various periods of time during the entire course. This technique can be used to motivate students of any language classroom irrespective of age, sex or other socio-cultural factors. Limitations of this study however are that this technique was developed with a very small sample size. A larger sample size would have yielded a wider perspective on the implications of this technique.

Conclusion

Motivational interviewing is effective in eliciting the intrinsic motivation of students to learn a language. However, further studies are required to understand its cross-cultural implications.

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Interview

Mahendra K. Mishra (MKM) talks to
Professor Debi Prasanna Pattanayak (DPP)

Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, Founder Director (retired) of the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, helped to place India on the international map of language studies. He is a highly respected sociolinguist and social scientist and has consistently fought for the cause of mother-tongue education. In his 1985 article he said:

Like air and water, language is indispensable for human society. When natural water is so parcelled out that a section of the people is deprived of even drinking water, or natural air is so polluted..., then this is the sign of an unequal society. Similarly when a society is denied full expression through the language which is used naturally and its needs are instead sought to be met through a regulated or imposed language, then inequality sets in.

Pattanayak was awarded the Padma Shri in 1987 for his contribution to formalizing Bodo and getting it added to the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. He also worked on the research documentation on Odia that led to Odia acquiring the "classical language" status. Pattanayak is a prolific writer and some of his widely read works include: Papers in Indian Sociolinguistics (1978), Multilingualism in India (1990) and Multilingualism and Mother–tongue Education (1981).

Mahendra Kumar Mishra (MKM): What led you to choose linguistics as a discipline for your profession? Who were your mentors? Could you name some eminent linguists of your time?

Debi Prasanna Pattanayak (DPP): During my childhood, we moved about a lot as my father was banished from the princely state of Tigiria (now a part of Odisha) when he was working with Gandhi. Because of this mobility, I was exposed to several dialects and was disturbed by the marginalization of people. I began to feel that language was a major barrier in accessing governance, legal processes and education. I also wanted to come closer to the language and culture of people and so decided to do my Masters in Odia. I attended four summer/winter schools to study Linguistics and acquired a Diploma in Linguistics from Deccan College, Poona. At that time, there were no postgraduate courses in Linguistics. The UGC took a decision to treat the two-year-diploma in Linguistics as equivalent to a Master's degree in Linguistics. I was selected for the Rockefeller scholarship for a one year course in Linguistics. Subsequently, I acquired a three year Diploma in French, a two year Diploma (M.A.) in Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Cornell University. Prabodh Bagchi, the Indologist, who invited me to Shantiniketan, was my first mentor. Other prominent mentors were S. K. Chatterjee, S. M. Katre Director of Deccan College (Poona) and Gordon H. Fairbanks. Fairbanks was my research guide at Cornell University and it was he who helped me with my transition from Shantiniketan to the American Institute of Indian Studies. Eminent linguists in India at that time were S. M. Katre, S. K. Chatterjee, T. P. M. Pillai, T. N. Srikantaiah, G. J. Someyaji, Babu Ram Saxena and Biswanath Prasad. Their supporting hands in India included A. M. Ghatage, Sukumar Sen, Agesthialingom, H. S. Biligiri, Bh Krishnamurti and Brajeswar Verma. Across the world, C. F. Hockett was the luminary and Chomsky was just beginning to be heard. J. R. Firth, Michael Halliday and John Lyons were rising to eminence in England.

MKM: After coming back from the USA how did you pursue linguistics?

DPP: On my return from the USA, I rejoined Shantiniketan with the hope of setting up a department of Linguistics that had been sanctioned by the UGC. Since this did not happen, I decided to quit. I got two offers—either to join as a Reader at IIT (Kanpur) or as the Chief Linguist at the American Institute of Indian Studies. I decided to join the latter.

MKM: When you took over as the Director, CIIL (Mysore), what was the status of linguistics as a discipline?

DPP: Modern linguistics was established by the training programmes instituted by the Rockefeller Foundation. The department at Delhi University was the first centre to be established with the support of the Ford Foundation. Osmania and Annamalai universities were soon established following it. The Departments of Linguistics in Kolkata, Delhi, Guwahati and the Hindi region started flourishing. Linguistics was introduced in the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (Delhi) and All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (Mysore). Linguistics was strengthened in Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (KHS) (Agra) and Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) now named English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) (Hyderabad). I had a positive and constructive role to play in all these institutions.

MKM: In what way was the role of CIIL (Mysore) different from the departments of linguistics elsewhere in India in the promotion of languages and linguistics?

DPP: CIIL was the apex institution in the country. Its role was to develop a coordinated language policy. To enable this, the Director of CIIL was a member of the Governing Boards of KHS and CIEFL. The CIIL started its branches across the country in different states. It coordinated and supported the language development policy activities in the states. The CIIL also supported and coordinated linguistic research in universities and UGC. It also advised NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) and directed their activities to be in consonance with the overall language policy of the country.

The other important role of CIIL was to foster national integration through language. To work towards this goal, CIIL took positive steps for the implementation of the Three-Language-Formula. A consequence of these efforts was that the Government of India took a proactive role in language planning and also came up with a new initiative for the study of endangered tribal languages. It initiated a new policy for preparing readers in the languages of the tribal groups. The publication *Towards a New Language Policy* received acclamation from the UN. After three years of the establishment of CIIL, the Government of Nigeria sent a high power delegation to study the CIIL, so that they could set-up a similar institution in their country. Linguistics started at the CIIL, gave a new perspective to language and literature. Unfortunately, today CIIL is reduced to a limited organization as it has removed itself from field work, whether it is from the study of endangered languages or the application of linguistics to the study of language use in education, administration and mass communication.

MKM: In what way is the language situation in India different from the rest of the world?

DPP: India is a multilingual and multicultural society. I have said in several places that there is a basic difference between the third world countries and developed countries. Linguistic diversity in India is deeper and wider than in any other country. Its sociolinguistic relations are more complex. Indian civilization has survived because of the complementary nature of its different units and domains; different languages may usually be associated with different domains of activity. Whenever this is challenged by hierarchization, language conflict ensues. To the Indians, using many languages is the norm. Any restriction in the choice of a language is a nuisance and very the idea of one language is uneconomical and absurd. For developed countries, one language is the norm, two languages are a nuisance, three languages are uneconomic and four languages absurd. While western societies have a contract-based life, Indian society is relation-based. In Indian society, languages are complementary to each other, whereas in monolingual countries languages are hierarchical in nature.

MKM: How do you respond to the hierarchy imposed on language by people in power who consequently ignore hundreds of mother tongues?

DPP: Hierarchy is imposed on the complementary nature of Indian languages from time to time due to ideological reasons. I believe that the complementary nature of Indian languages is well accepted by the people in power since they come from the same background and they know that language plays an important role in achieving power. It is true that the administration and judiciary continue to function in English even though English is not the language of the people. Since there is no language policy in the country or in any other state, the gap continues to be there. The Three-Language-Formula as a programme was an attempt to come closer to the Indian languages. It was not a policy but a programme. It does not say anything about the place of learning foreign, neighbouring or classical languages in the school curriculum.

MKM: What is your opinion about Hindi as a national language? Why do people in South India not accept Hindi as a national language?

DPP: I believe that all languages of India including English are national languages. None is anti-national. Hindi is the national official language. Major Modern Indian Languages (MILs) are state official languages. People of South India are not against Hindi. Even at the time of the strongest anti-Hindi movement, the largest number of registrants in the Hindi courses of Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha was from Tamil Nadu.

MKM: Why do you think the mother tongue is important from a larger social perspective and in the domain of education?

DPP: Mother tongue is a relative concept. Mother tongue and other languages are two different things. There is no wall or boundary between them. It is the monolingual and mono-cultural countries that have conceptualized the boundaries between languages. In multilingual contexts such as those of India, Africa and Asia, there are no boundaries among languages since everyone is a multilingual person. But in monolingual countries, language boundaries are created. In multilingual situations, one can move from one language to another without breaking the cognitive or communicative flows.

A mother tongue is the expression of the primary identity of a human being. It is the language through which a person perceives the surrounding world and through which initial concept formation takes place. Further, a mother tongue gives equal opportunity to the large majority of people to participate in national reconstruction. It also gives greater access to education to all those who are still deprived. It frees knowledge from the preserve of limited elites and enables a greater number of people to interact. The mother tongue also decentralizes information and ensures a free as opposed to a controlled media. It provides greater opportunity for political involvement to a greater number of diverse groups and defends democracy. In the name of standardization and globalization too we destroy our mother tongues. But the destruction of a mother tongue represents a situation of language inferiority where the dominance of the standard language of the privileged classes stigmatizes the mother tongues and acts as the passport to rank status at the end.

Mother tongue education is a matter of rights as well as a need for every child. It is established on sound educational principles. It is tested beyond doubt that a child well exposed to his / her mother tongue is good in other tongues also. Globalization is one kind of a mono-model.

MKM: What is the place of English in the Indian context?

DPP: Globalization has trimmed bio-cultural and linguistic diversities. That doesn't mean that we have lost our identity. People say that we should reject one language to learn the other. Another group of people says that English should be banished from India. This is where we go wrong. Rather we should say that English should be accepted as it comes from the linguistic realities of the country in the context of a modern spoken language or historically relevant languages. It is most unfortunate that English is seen as an instrument in the hands of the rich to exploit the poor; a sustained division of the society between the rich and the poor is visualized. English should be an instrument of connectivity rather than of division. I do not believe that English will replace the provincial languages. However, to what extent English will supplement and complement Indian languages would depend on a large number of non-linguistic factors.

MKM: What is your position on tribal education and language?

DPP: Tribal people have been isolated and not allowed to participate in mainstream activities. If education and development are a means to self-development, then that's the purpose or goal of tribal education. We need to make space for the tribal people to participate in and not merely be an associate of the developmental processes.

MKM: How do you see multilingual education in primary school education? In what ways has multilingual education in Odisha contributed to the learning of children? What are its strength and weaknesses?

DPP: It is unfortunate that multilingual education is seen as tribal education. It is hoped that the limited multilingual education will sustain the tribal cultures and break their inferiority complex. Hopefully, it will make them part of the multilingual India. Multilingual education is not tribal education. The entire education system of the country should come under multilingual education. In fact, just as we have accepted the Three-Language Formula nationally, we should have accepted multilingual education as a characteristic of our national education system. With the addition of mother tongue, it then becomes the Four-Language Formula. With the addition of classical and foreign languages another language is added. Our educational system in any way is multilingual.

MKM: What are your views about second language acquisition in school?

DPP: There is a great confusion about second language acquisition. No language by itself is a second or a foreign language. Languages are defined as first or second on the basis of their introduction in schools. If English is introduced first in the central schools or public schools, it becomes the first language. In government schools, it may be second, third or fourth language. So when we use the word second, it is in terms of its pedagogy. I would say that a language which is taught in the classroom and needs external resources is the second language. A language confined only to the classroom is a foreign language. Whether a language is a second or a foreign language depends on the kind of environment in which languages are being taught. It means in one case, the external resources are available and in the case of the other it is strictly confined to the classroom. That is the difference between the second and foreign language.

MKM: Do you mean to say that the pedagogy used in a particular locality should be based on the linguistic realities of the teaching-learning situation?

DPP: Yes, for instance, the tribal people of Odisha speak a tribal language at home and use the official language Odia outside, and there may be a third language—a "market" language—which they may be using for communication. So the language pedagogy of those localities may be based on the linguistic realities of the locality.

MKM: Do you think that the Euro-centric linguistics research has helped Indian linguistic studies when you know that Indian linguistics has thousands of years of scientific linguistic tradition established since the time of Panini.

DPP: Euro-centric linguistic research is necessary as an alternative theoretical and methodological base. Since all our research was text-oriented, an emphasis on all oral language reminds us of our glorious oral history.

MKM: What is your objective for promoting the *People's Linguistic Survey of India* (PSLI) when language theorists say that these collections are not at par with the linguistics discipline?

DPP: PSLI is the study of languages as understood and named by the people. It is different from a linguistic survey where languages are named by pundits and studied by linguists.

MKM: How do you see linguistics in maintaining the balance between human development and technologies in the current era of economic liberalisation?

DPP: When we were young, Marx was the gospel. It took almost generations to come out of Marxism, and think of an alternate socialism such as Euro-communism. Now economic liberalization and technology are the greatest challenge to social equity. I think that language is the best instrument for developing awareness. Indian society is a relation-based society. Western society is a contract-based society. Different economic strategies are used to break a relations-based society, one of them being foreign money in retail business. India is the largest retail society in the world, where for every eight Indians there is one retailer. By investing foreign money and building malls it is calculated to break the society. One study shows that Gujarati women prefer retail shops to malls to get a chance to talk to the shop keeper in their own language. Just as English is sought to replace Indian languages, malls are sought to replace small shops. This needs to be explained to all those who are working for development. This can be understood only through language use for social justice.

MKM: What was your dream for linguistic development in India? Has it been fulfilled? What are the aspects you feel have been neglected?

DPP: Linguistics has to become relevant for development in our country. To do this, it has to go beyond the confines of the classroom. India is a multilingual and multicultural country. Such a country can be sustained only by accepting that each unit is complementary to the other. Those who believe in a dominant monolingual and monocultural society in the West try to break this complementary nature. This leads to language conflicts. Asia, Africa, Latin America are multilingual and multicultural. I have tried to maintain sustained development and resist the mono-model of the West. I believe that this is a continuous process. The dream, therefore, remains to be fulfilled.

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Landmarks

Assessing and Testing Learners' Language Proficiency

Geetha Durairajan

As living social beings, we spend a large part of our lives either conversing with people, reading something written by others, or writing about something to someone. Every time we listen to what is said or read what has been written, we subconsciously evaluate what has been stated. This instinctive evaluation includes the language capability or proficiency of the person we are interacting with. We tell ourselves, at least in our minds: "good writer", "speaks well". We evaluate those we interact with, but such an evaluation is unconscious and instinctive; without it no conversation or correspondence between any two people would be possible. The evaluation of the language capability of a person is not mandatory, but the evaluation of what is said is essential.

As caregivers and parents, we also evaluate the language proficiency of our children, but without attaching a judgment to it; we do this to help them learn a language. This is the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS, see, Bruner, 1978). The interaction provided by parents, caregivers and more-abled peers enables language learning to happen. In the context of formal education however, we need to go beyond this informal evaluation; we need to test and assess the language proficiency of our learners/students.

In this short paper, I will focus only on the testing and assessment of English as a second language. I will first examine the differences between evaluation, testing and assessment, and then sketch a brief overview of the history of language testing, and finally end with a discussion of current trends; this will include the testing and assessment of language in multilingual contexts. However, the paper will not provide a comprehensive overview of the latest research trends or findings in the area. Instead, it will focus primarily either on aspects of recent work done or emerging focuses which are likely to be of interest to a language teacher in the classroom.

Evaluating, Assessing and Testing Learners' Language

Evaluation is and can be done by all human beings. In the context of education, it happens nearly all the time informally, and whenever the system requires it, in a formal manner. We evaluate our students when they talk to us, or ask us questions or answer our questions. When they write something and submit it to us either as homework or as answer papers, we move away from evaluation and assess their responses. Whenever required, we also administer tests or give them assignments to test or assess their language ability/capability/proficiency.

A test is a "procedure designed to elicit certain behaviour from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual" (Carroll, 1968, p. 46). Our language test paper is an instrument; students answer the paper and we make inferences based on these responses. If they get many answers correct, we infer that they have high proficiency or capability. We need to remember, however, that our 'inference' has been based only on that one test, or rather that sample of performance. As such, we need to take care to ensure that our test sample is representative so that our inference is a valid one.

All of us know that these samples need not always be representative or reflective of the actual ability of the individual. Our students may not have done that particular test very well and therefore, although they are capable of more, they may have got bad grades/marks. This is where assessments become valuable. An assessment of language capability could be through assignments, projects or term papers. In an assessment, students can think about what they have to write and do, and have time to revise their responses. In assessments of student performance, unlike informal evaluation which can happen through observation, one assumes that there is some grading involved. However, in the history of language testing, we have moved from just evaluating (which continues even today) to experimenting with different types of testing practices (and staying with some) to advocating alternative assessment practices.

Language Testing History

The history of language testing and assessment as we know it is less than a hundred years old. Universities have of course existed for many more centuries and in these, written and oral examinations have been conducted. But these examinations were in different disciplines or subjects and evaluated mastery in that area, whether Philosophy, Science or History. Language as a skill was never evaluated in these examinations. The earliest official documentation on the testing and assessment of language as a skill where language proficiency or ability or capability was evaluated can be traced to the period of the First World War. The testing of language, (in this case, English) as a skill, was divided into three phases. Spolsky (1975) identified these as the pre-scientific, the psychometric-structuralist, and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic (cited in Morrow, 1979, p. 144). In that seminal article, "Communicative language testing: revolution or evolution", Morrow renamed these three phases as the Garden of Eden, the Vale of Tears and the Promised Land.

These three phases echo and reflect the developments in two other disciplines—the assumptions about the nature of learning (psychology) and the nature of language (linguistics). When we look at the nature of learning we know that there were three paradigm shifts, from Behaviourism to Cognitivism and later to Social Constructivism. The mind was initially seen as a tabula rasa and systematic inputs along with positive and negative reinforcements were the only ways in which learning would happen. With the advent of Cognitivism, this changed and it was assumed that the mind was capable of perceiving patterns and would transform whatever was taught. Accommodation and assimilation of knowledge became important rather than the 'empty' output or repetition of transmitted knowledge by learners. However, by accepting the philosophy of social constructivism, we have gone far beyond the assimilation of knowledge. It is never just transmitted and not assimilated either. Today, all learners are perceived as co-constructors of knowledge. The focus therefore has shifted from understanding and comprehension of knowledge to its interpretation. These paradigm shifts can also be identified in the assumptions about the nature of language. Language was, at one point in time, seen as made up of only sentences and words. Later, the focus shifted to language as a cognitive tool. Today language as the primary tool of thinking is being fore-grounded. The use of language itself may show high degrees of variability depending on the varied understanding of users that is largely based on their backgrounds.

The three phases in English Language Testing, the pre-scientific, the psychometric-structuralist, and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic reflect these changes. To use the more cited Morrowian terms, the Garden of Eden was the period before the structuralist era. In this, the method of teaching English was mostly grammar translation and it was assumed that if students could write good essays, that capability could be equated with good language proficiency.

The problem with essay writing, however, was not what language learners and users could or could not do with the language but with the manner of evaluation. Long essays had to be evaluated subjectively and this meant that even if scoring criteria were specified, they could and would be interpreted differently by different evaluators. The reliability of such a marking system caused problems. When test creators, evaluators, and syllabus and curriculum designers (and other stake holders) realized that essays were good samples of capability but had problems with reliability, particularly scoring, the pendulum of testing swung to the other side.

This swing of the pendulum brought with it in-language testing, the Vale of Tears, or rather the psychometric-structuralist period. In this the method of teaching was largely audio-lingual, or structural, and testing was largely objective. Multiple choice tests of grammar, vocabulary, phonetic discrimination, and reading and listening comprehension were most common. The focus shifted from validity to reliability.

The third phase is what Morrow identified as the "Promised Land". This was the era of communicative language testing. There was a significant attempt to test real life language use, and to use tasks where skills were integrated. With a deeper understanding of the nature of language proficiency (as multi-dimensional and comprising many skills), the focus shifted to the validity of the test (authentic tasks that would also predict future performance) along with an attempt to evaluate these integrated 'performances' of students in a reliable manner. Thus, if the test creators and evaluators had to test tasks that required essays to be written in one section of the paper, they would balance it in another section with tasks that tested the aspects of grammar and vocabulary that such an essay demanded, through objective items. Different aspects of language proficiency were tested in a range of ways to ensure validity as well as reliability. An important justification for this shift to communicative language testing was positive washback.

Washback, or backwash refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Alderson and Wall, 1993). Tests and examinations impact teaching and learning (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). For example, if tests and examinations focus on reproduction of knowledge then the teaching and learning of such knowledge is given importance in classrooms. The move from objective multiple choice items to task-based testing, it was hoped, would positively influence language teaching and learning and enable better proficiency. The testing practices did influence teaching, and communicative language teaching became very popular. Even today, as far as standardized proficiency tests are concerned, the practice of testing integrated skills is advocated for this purpose. Most coaching institutes are forced to go beyond the mere teaching of accuracy and focus on tasks that enable fluency as well.

In educational contexts, there was a realization, however, that the beneficial washback of testing on teaching and learning alone was not sufficient. All summative tests and examinations (achievement tests) asked students to write essays, or respond to tasks, but they required the student to deliver timed one-shot written responses (Wiegle, 2002). Students, as test takers, when required to write essays in examinations, never had the time to go through the real-life writing cycle of thinking about what to write, jotting down ideas, planning and organizing, writing a draft version, revising what is written and then writing a final version of that essay. The decisions made about the language proficiency of students, based on such "instantaneous" writing would therefore lack predictive validity. Students may not do well on such examinations, but in reality, they were perhaps good writers.

This problematization of timed writing can be extended to other aspects of proficiency, namely, speaking, reading and listening. According to Cronbach (1970), under examination conditions that require maximum and not typical performances from a student, test takers would be tense and stressed and were not likely to perform to the best of their capability. Some form of tests and examinations are necessary for summative evaluation and certification and while these can be tweaked to provide positive washback they cannot be used as tools for teaching and learning. They can only inform or be the driving force behind them. Instruction driven by testing will become unavoidable in such situations.

Current Trends in Language Testing

A big step in the field of language testing in the twenty-first century was to separate large scale tests of language proficiency which are used for admission or stand alone certification from tests of language within educational contexts. Formative evaluation, along with alternative assessment practices are now given as much or even more importance than summative final examinations. This is in line with the idea of continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) which is being seen as important in educational contexts. Tests and assessments are seen as pedagogic tools, integral to teaching and learning. The shift is from system-oriented examinations to teacher-managed tests (Durairajan, 2015).

There is a parallel move from the assessment OF learning (whether students have successfully achieved their objectives) to assessment FOR learning, as a teaching and learning device. The focus has shifted to valuing student responses and the genuine pedagogic feedback provided by the teacher. Instead of worrying about reliability in marking in large scale public examinations, there is an attempt to see whether tests and examinations can genuinely be made learner-centred. Students are asked to reflect on their own capabilities through the use of 'can- do' descriptors. This has added a third preposition to the "of" and "for", assessment AS learning.

Another major trend of the twenty-first century is to move away from the thinking that only prescriptive timed examinations can be used for summative evaluation and certification. Alternative modes of assessment, particularly portfolios, assignments and projects are a part of most evaluation practices in schools today. When working on these assignments, students have the time to think, plan, write, edit, revise and submit their work. When making presentations, they also have the time to plan, compose and work with what they would like to state before hand.

Thus far, the discussion about language proficiency has been made from a monolingual perspective. But in many countries, and this is particularly true of English, it is either a second or foreign language. The testing and assessment of learners' language proficiency must take such bi/multilingual capabilities into account.

The Way Forward: Testing Proficiency Across Languages

In countries such as India, all language functions are never fulfilled through one language. More importantly, English is rarely the language of thinking, organization and planning for the majority of the population. There is no zero level of English in India; our students' receptive capability (read and understand English) is much higher than their productive capability (speak and write English). The language(s) capability of students in grassroots multilingual contexts must be tested and assessed together. It should be possible to get our students to read complex texts in their more enabled language and respond orally in English, or read complex texts in English but write an essay in their more enabled language.

Languages are communicative and cognitive tools; they do not exist in separate compartments or corners without contact with each other inside our minds. Learners may be better enabled in the higher order skills of analyzing, applying theory to practice, synthesizing and creating in their more enabled language. Our testing and assessing practices need to learn how to access these capabilities and evaluate them across languages.

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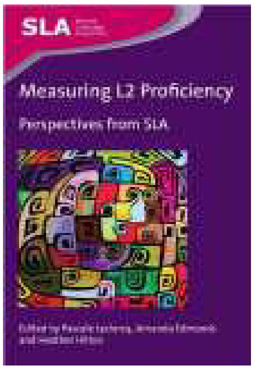
Book Reviews

Measuring L2 Proficiency: Perspectives from SLA



Pascale Leclercq, Amanda Edmonds & Heather Hilton (Eds) (2014). *Second Language Acquisition,* 78. Bristol: Multilingual Matters (229 pages).

ISBN 13: 978-1-78309-227-7 (pbk).

Reviewed by: Yasmeen Lukmani

The book, *Measuring L2 Proficiency: Perspectives from SLA* gets its distinctive flavour from being written in the context of language learning in France within the Common European Reference Framework. This gives a bilingual flavour to the book that is quite different from the Anglo-centric perspectives found in most books on language acquisition and measurement of its proficiency. In addition, the flavour of French comes out through two articles—one deals with the acquisition of the French subjunctive and the other with elicited imitation in French as a test of listening.

The book opens with an overview of research on proficiency acquisition and refers to the contrastive linguistic approach of Lado and Fries. The approach to analysis is basically that of structuralism without any connection with the cultural and social functioning or issues of text, which is such a strong European issue, beginning with the Prague School. This chapter could have been enriched by taking into consideration the Chomskyan revolution and the works generated under SLA.

An issue such as bilingual dominance (which of the two languages known by an individual is more dominant) is not often brought into proficiency studies. It is more of a European rather than an Anglo concern in psycholinguistics. The Anglo concern stems from (what is considered) a primarily monolingual society, while this book has the bilingual perspective clearly in mind. The issue of language dominance also brings out the importance of the brain rather than the mind, which is the focus in the Chomskyan tradition. Again, issues of mother tongue interference and of the inter-translatability of languages have also been dealt with in this book.

The aim of the eleven articles in this volume is to arrive at an understanding of L2 proficiency and ways of measuring it. Within this, the focus is on oral proficiency more than written production, and we get useful ways of measuring it. To give an example, Heather Hilton uses errors, hesitation and retractions as measures of proficiency. The retractions are taken to be simple repetitions, reformulations (only one element of the repeated statement is changed), restarts (more than one element changed) and false starts (utterance abandoned). Another useful approach called elicited imitation is provided by Tracy-Ventura, McManus, Norris and Ortega. In this approach, participants are required to listen to an utterance and repeat it as accurately as possible. Another set of tests provided by Peter Prince fall under the term "comprehension restitution" in which the test requires the spoken input to be jotted down by the student to demonstrate understanding. This can be done in several ways, but what is suggested is a summary of a news bulletin in terms of presenting the gist of what has been said, and a dictogloss or reporting the meaning in writing of what has been read aloud or spoken.

For each of these approaches, experimental studies have been reported and their results have been analysed and considered against the background of other such studies. The nature of listening comprehension has also been analysed. Prince talks of the linguistic, semantic and pragmatic processing of spoken input, of how bottom-up processing takes place during perceptual decoding, and top-down processing involves the learners making use of their knowledge of the world, the ongoing situation and even their knowledge of the language itself.

The nature of the beast—the listening comprehension construct—has also been analyzed in the studies dealing with listening; more particularly in the study by Zoghlami, who analyses test scores on two very different tests of listening, one which focuses on phonological decoding and the other which tests higher order abilities. The results of the two tests are quite different. Based on the findings, the authors conclude that what is being judged under the cover term of 'listening' is not the same phenomenon in the two tests considered. The study emphasizes the necessity of identifying the construct of the skill that is being tested before deciding on the use of a particular test.

The article on learner corpora for testing and assessing L2 proficiency by Callies, Dies-Bedmar and Zaytseva is interesting and useful. It shows how the corpora can be used to measure L2 written proficiency according to the widely accepted criteria of complexity, accuracy and fluency. They find that the use of corpora can help to make assessment more reliable, i.e. it can help to increase transparency, consistency and comparability in the test instrument and in the assessment that is meted out in subjective tests. In addition, such corpora can be used for reasons other than simply working out the parameters for assessment. They could help in narrowing down the concept of proficiency for a particular purpose / a particular group of students. It is indeed useful to compile corpora from the written production of one's students, and use this for a variety of purposes- defining levels of proficiency, the process of acquisition, and ways of determining what to test. Compilation of corpora is not something we do commonly in India.

Two articles on language dominance for bilinguals and the nature of the bilingual memory provide another perspective which might be useful in multilingual situations. These articles throw light on the means by which we can assess relative proficiency in two languages and on the ways in which the memory records and yields knowledge of different aspects of language.

Finally, the book provides useful insights on the testing of aspects of proficiency, which can be implemented in our classrooms. It also provides examples of experiments which could be helpful in planning our own research projects.

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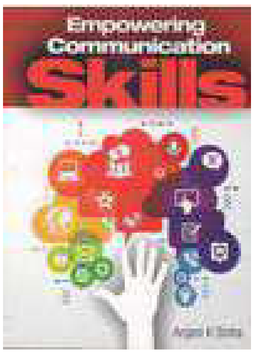
Empowering Communication Skills



Delhi: Shipra Books.
Anjani K. Sinha (2015)
ISBN: 9788175418158(pbk)
ISBN: 9788175418141(hb)

Reviewed by: Tista Bagchi

Empowering Communication Skills has the potential to entertain as well as educate. It is a book that one can "dip into" at random and find enjoyment in; it is also a book that merits attentive reading from cover to cover. Whichever way one approaches it, after reading this book one is forced to think and re-think not only about how communication works, but also about how a person's relationships with others in society are based on, and shaped by, the processes and abilities involved in communication. It is simultaneously enriched by a scholarly perspective and down-to-earth, practical advice for a range of people, especially young people who are seeking to improve their communication skills. However, it also has insights to offer to a readership more aware of issues relating to the use of English in communication, and to the use of language as a general matter in communication.

Empowering Communication Skills is organized into three major parts comprising twenty-one chapters. These are: "Oral Communication" (Part I), "Written Communication" (Part II), and "The Power of Correct Words and Phrases" (Part III). Part I of the book is especially noteworthy for its attention to the roles of silence and body language and non-verbal cues in oral communication in real-world situations such as job and grant interviews. However, parts II and III also have practical value for the user/reader.

What is also remarkable about this book is that it addresses fairly serious matters of language and communication in a carefully structured manner, but it does so with a light touch. It enlivens the text with wit and humour through the citation of literary quotes and communicative situations as portrayed in literary and popular texts and television series. For instance, in Chapter 1, entitled "To Speak or Not to Speak", the matter of silence and its role in existence (at a philosophical level) as well as in communication is introduced to the reader. While it is a matter of some significance, its introduction is accompanied by a quote from Thomas Carlyle: "Language is human; silence is divine, yet brutish and dead. Therefore, we must learn both the acts." (Carlyle, 1898, cited on p. 2)

In the book, pertinent dialogic exchanges are quoted from the popular British tele-serial and book *Yes, Prime Minister* to illustrate some of the key points that the author makes. For instance, in the context of a discussion on "hedging" in conversation as "verbal duelling" (according to Farb 1975), the following conversation is cited (on p. 11):

In *Yes, Prime Minister*, Hacker [the new Prime Minister] discusses the possible repercussions of cancelling Trident, the Polaris missile carrier [as a deterrent against the Russians]. [Sir] Humphrey [Appleby, the civil servant under him] tries to convince him that it is an effective deterrent.

Example

"But it is a bluff," Hacker tells him. "I probably would not use it."

"They [the Russians] do not know that you probably would not use it," Humphrey argues.

"They *probably* do," says Hacker.

Humphrey agrees. “Yes … they probably know that you *probably* wouldn’t. But they can’t *certainly* know.”

Humphrey is right about that. But they don’t have to certainly know.

“They *probably* certainly know that I *probably* wouldn’t,” Hacker says.

“Yes,” he [Humphrey] agrees, “they *probably certainly* know that you *probably* wouldn’t, but they wouldn’t *certainly* know that although you *probably* wouldn’t, there is [the] probability that you *certainly* would.”

[Cited from Lynn and Jay 1989 – *reviewer*]

A significant principle formulated in the branch of academic inquiry known as the philosophy of language, i.e., the Co-operative Principle as formulated by H. Paul Grice, is brought in by the author to foster greater understanding of communication in conversational settings. This is worked out in terms of four maxims of conversation—of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. These are carefully illustrated in the book by giving some more examples of dialogues from *Yes, Prime Minister*, but then the author goes on to discuss how these maxims are very often violated:

A speaker, especially a public figure, becomes verbose because he is afraid of being pinned down by his critics if he is precise and clear. A civil servant uses ambiguous language because he wants to remain non-committal. A lawyer violates the principle of quality [“Be truthful” – reviewer] if he is pleading the innocence of a criminal. … [H]edging and digression are the tools of many speakers (p. 18).

Chapter 7, “[The] Role of Politeness in Effective Communication”, and Chapter 8, “Speaking Intelligible Indian English”, are both of direct practical value to those among the readership who are interested in learning to communicate politely and effectively through the spoken medium. Such interested readers are likely to be students and young professionals, seeking to improve their spoken communicative skills in the job market as well as their professional career path later. This book thus has additional practical value in skill-building in India as well as in most other regions of the world in which skill-building has come to be valued.

Part II of the book, “Written Communication”, is of special value to students and young professionals in India who need help with developing better written communication skills. Of particular interest are Chapter 9 (“How do Sentences Grow?”), which illustrates practical applications of the author’s considerable experience with researching and teaching sentential syntax; Chapter 10 (“How to Develop a Coherent Paragraph”); Chapter 12 (“Comprehension, Summarising and Reporting”), which is of special value to both students and those aspiring to enter executive positions in their careers; Chapter 13 (“Arranging Paragraphs in an Essay”); and Chapter 14 (“Writing a Research Paper/ Thesis”), which is of special value to research students and more advanced-level researchers. Chapter 15 (“Communicating through E-Mail”) addresses an important issue especially in today’s digital world, that of sending clear, concise, and coherent e-mail messages, which are increasingly the communicative mode of choice in professional as well as certain kinds of personal communications. This chapter also contains a table of e-mail abbreviations and emoticons which are of practical value to users across all age groups! In my view, these chapters provide much-needed guidance to professionals who may be extremely competent in technical research and its implementation, but who are lacking in the necessary skills in written communication in the professional domain and who would therefore be strongly advised to work on improving on such skills.

Part III of the book comprises chapters that serve as ready references on a variety of language-related topics. These topics range from English morphology (the study of the internal make-up of words) to foreign phrases and slang expressions; from synonym and antonym groups of practical interest in communication to addressing problem areas of morphology and syntax for users of Indian English, in particular, subject-verb agreement, tense-forms and using the correct sequence of tense in a text. The final chapter, "Punctuating for Clarity", is on a theme rarely found in run-of-the-mill guide books for written communication, namely, the need for correct punctuation in writing. Here too, one finds the occasional witty gem, such as *Spunk and Bite*: *A writer's guide to bold, contemporary style*—a spoof on the decades-old, established guide to writing style that is now known simply by the last names of its authors Strunk and White!

The greatest value of this book lies, in my view, in its striking a fine balance between being a scholarly book and yet providing detailed advice on communication skills in a contextually sensitive and practical manner—a balance that not too many authors from an academic background in linguistics and language-related fields are able to achieve. It is also, happily, an affordable volume for both individual users, including students, as well as institutional libraries. As and when the remaining typographical errors get rectified, the book is going to be a must-have for academic readers and the educated lay users alike.

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Suggested Readings

Research on Second Language Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Perspective on Professional Development

Karen Johnson and Paula Golombek (Eds.) (2011).

ESL and Applied Linguistics Professional Series. New York: Routledge. (285 pages).

ISBN-10: 1873630441

ISBN-13: 978-1873630440

Professional development of second language teachers is extremely important for effective second language (L2) acquisition. This book fills the gap in our understanding of the complexities involved in the professional development of second language teachers in diverse socio-cultural, institutional and historical contexts in which second language teacher education takes place. It represents research from both native and non-native English speaking L2 teachers including those in pre-service, in-service, ESL, EFL, K-12 and higher education. It consists of fourteen empirical research studies that embrace a sociocultural theoretical perspective on diverse Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) programs around the world including North America, South America, Asia and Europe.

The book begins with an introduction to the sociocultural and theoretical perspectives of the professional development of teachers followed by five sections. Section one consists of three papers on cultural diversity and teacher identities. This section includes papers on how to become a culturally responsive teacher in an immersion experience abroad; empowering non-native English-speaking teachers to challenge the native speaker myth; and on working towards social inclusion through concept development. Section two consists of three papers related to concept development in L2 teacher education. It deals with topics such as the power of context in conceptualizing teaching; a longitudinal study on embracing literacy based teaching; and a conceptualization of literacy as developed by a Chinese teacher. Section three is about strategic mediation in L2 teacher education and consists of four papers on dynamic assessments in teacher education; Moodle as a mediational space; enriching informal knowledge in the grammar class; and strategic mediation in learning to teach. Section four focuses on teacher learning in inquiry-based professional development. This section has two papers on teacher learning—learning through a critical friends' group and through lesson study. The last section is about navigating educational policies and curricular mandates through ten years of efforts in curricular reform and on learning to teach within curricular reform. Both these papers are in the context of South Korea.

This book is an extremely important contribution to understanding how teachers think, and their practices, skills and tools across diverse sociocultural backgrounds and geographic locations. Such research in turn helps teacher trainers to understand ways in which deliberate and strategic means can help to create opportunities for teachers to move towards pedagogically and theoretically sound teaching practices.

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Vandana Puri has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Illinois, Uraban-Champaign. Her research interests include acoustic phonetics, intonation, prosody, bilingualism, New Englishes and sociolinguistics.

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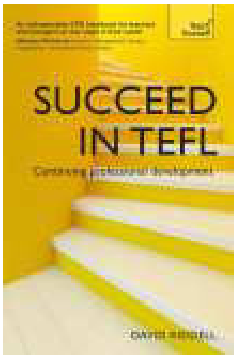
Succeed in TEFL - Continuing Professional Development: Teaching English as a Second Language.



London: Cambridge University Press.

Riddell, D. (2015).

Paperback | 320 pages

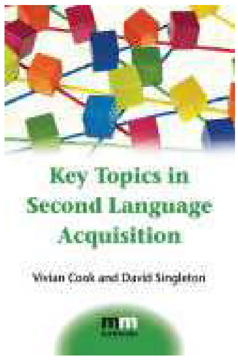
ISBN10 1444796062

ISBN13 9781444796063

Succeed in TEFL is an ideal document for teachers looking for innovative ways to develop expertise in teaching as well as academic managers wanting fresh ideas on how to foster continuing professional development. It is also a unique guide for English teachers. In this book, the author gives a lot of information on the role of observation in class. It also has a chapter on teaching exams. This book is very helpful for those who want to become a trainer, i.e. help others teach language. It has been designed on the basis of doing action research. This book emphasizes on using online resources and becoming a good academic manager which eventually helps organization and institutions in their placement strategies. It is indeed a significant book for all teachers of English as a foreign language as it presents innovatively designed teaching materials in a systematic fashion. Additionally, it also addresses key issues such as materials and testing. Through this book, the author presents a range of case studies and interviews from teachers who have the experience of working in different countries and contexts. In this sense, the hands on experience of practitioners makes it a unique document. Moreover, these case studies bring a fresh insight to the topics covered, which combined with various tasks, makes this an engaging and practical handbook.

Although this book addresses the role of communicative interaction in driving various dimensions of second language development, it does not include the regional and dialectical variations apparent in English. The author examines a wide range of topics to illustrate how individuals are part of the society and are united in their interactions. The role of first language use however has not been taken into account. Theoretical discussions and key concepts are reinforced and illustrated with detailed qualitative analyses of contexts. Each chapter includes pedagogical recommendations that may be tried out by the teacher in the classroom. This is therefore a relevant text for teachers of English or for that matter for teachers of any language since it has little or no theoretical presuppositions.

Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition



London: Multilingual Matters.

Cook, V. and Singleton, D. (2014).

Hardback - 168 pages,
ISBN: 9781783091805

Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition is a textbook that offers a generic overview of eight topics in second language acquisition research. It offers glimpses of how researchers studying second language acquisition have tried to answer common questions pertaining to it. Each chapter has an introductory discussion of the issues involved in second language acquisition and suggestions for further reading in the field of the topic. This volume offers a clear and engaging description of central topics in second language acquisition research and highlights the connection between research findings, formal and informal learning contexts, and teaching practices. Through this book, the authors have made an attempt to involve the reader as they ask them to consider the issues based on their own experience, thereby allowing them to compare their own intuitions and experiences with established research findings and gain an understanding of methodology of second language acquisition. The topics are treated independently within chapters and need not be read in any particular sequence. Therefore, readers may find the relevant topic of their choice without the prerequisite of the previous chapter. Some questions that have been discussed in the book include: how different languages are sequenced in the mind? (language and mind); whether there is a best age for learning a second language (language acquisition/existence of critical period hypothesis); the importance of grammar in acquiring and using a second language (the role of Universal Grammar); how the words of a second language are acquired (L2 vocabulary/cognition); how people learn to write in a second language (acquisition and script); how attitude and motivation help in learning a second language (socio-psychological factors); the usefulness of second language acquisition research for language teaching (language and language teaching); and finally the goals of language teaching. In short, Cook and Singleton's book succinctly addresses many pressing questions asked by both novices and experts in the field of second language acquisition and could be a useful tool in the understanding of second language research for language teachers.

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Classroom Activities

Activity 1 & 2: Shambhavi Singh

Activity 1: Initiating Writing in French as a Foreign Language (FL)

Note to Teacher

Elementary learners of a Foreign Language (FL) find writing in that language a challenging task. The purpose of the activities presented here is to make writing fun and interesting for elementary learners of FL. The activities are constructed so as to act as scaffolds to learning and help students to become independent writers. They are presented along with the English instructions and the English equivalents of the French expressions and words. The activities are contextualized in French as a FL but are applicable to developing writing skills in any FL.

Two activities are presented here: the first focuses on using words and the second on writing descriptive sentences and revising the draft.

Level: **Elementary Learners of French as FL**

Activity 1: Learning to use Words in Writing

This activity has two stages. In stage 1, students classify the given words that describe persons under physical and psychological categories and in stage 2 they use these words to complete the given sentences. Both activities emphasize on helping students connect the new learning with their background knowledge.

Learning Objectives

This activity enables students to:

- develop vocabulary to describe the physical and psychological characteristics of people and words related to sports and cultural activities.
- use verbs such as *aimer* (to like), *adorer* (to adore), *détester* (to hate), *admirer* (to admire), *être* (to be), *avoir* (to have) + noun/ verb appropriately while talking about the likes and dislikes of people
- write the outline of a description;

Stage 1

Instructions: Read the text and classify words that describe Rita and Peter under two categories: physical and psychological. Also, discuss and list words that describe their likes and dislikes.

Instructions: Lisez le texte suivant et trouvez des mots pour caractériser physiquement/ psychologiquement Rita et Peter. Parler aussi de leurs goûts, ce qu'ils aiment et ce qu'ils n'aiment pas.

Bonjour! Je m'appelle Nicolas et j'ai 45 ans. Je suis ingénieur (engineer). Je suis américain (American) mais j'habite (live) en France avec ma femme et mon fils (son). Ma femme s'appelle Rita et elle est professeur de hip-hop. Elle (she) est belle (beautiful), mince (slim), intelligente, sincère et généreuse. Elle a des yeux (eyes) bleus. Elle a des cheveux (hair) longs et noirs (black). Elle adore danser et chanter (sing). Elle aime aussi voyager. Elle n'aime pas (does not like) regarder la télévision.

Mon fils Peter est beau et très mignon (adorable). Il (he) est grand (tall), fort (strongly built) et sportif. Il a des cheveux frisés (curly) et bruns (brown). Il est étudiant (student). Peter aime jouer au foot (football) et adore faire du ski. Il aime regarder les films et admire Brad Pitt et Emma Watson. Il déteste faire du shopping.

Hello! My name is Nicolas and I am forty-five years old. I am an engineer. I am American but I live in France with my wife and son. My wife's name is Rita and she is a hip-hop dance instructor. She is beautiful, slim, intelligent, sincere and generous. She has blue eyes and long black hair. She loves to dance and sing. She also likes travelling. She does not like watching television.

My son Peter is handsome and very charming. He is tall, strongly built and a sports person. He has curly brown hair. He is a student. He likes to play football and loves skiing. He likes to watch movies and admires Brad Pitt and Emma Watson. He hates shopping.

Procedure (pair work)

- Students work in pairs.
- The teacher discusses the instructions with the students with a few examples.
- Each student pair reads the text and writes down words that describe Rita and Peter's physical and psychological characteristics in two separate columns.
- They also write down words that describe their likes and dislikes.
- Then the teacher makes four columns on the board as shown below.

Words that describe Rita		Words that describe Peter		Words that describe likes	Words that describe dislikes
Physical	Psychological	Physical	Psychological		

A volunteer from each pair writes at least two words / or orally presents these words.

When the words have been listed in their relevant columns, the teacher draws the attention of the students to the grammatical forms of the words—the masculine, feminine and plural forms of adjectives.

Stage 2

Instructions: Some verbs and adjectives have been given in the following box. These are followed by an incomplete description of Emma Watson. Complete the description of Emma Watson using the given verbs and adjectives.

Complétez la description d'Emma Watson en utilisant les mots suivants: est née (was born), travailleuse (hard-working), s'appellent (are called), aime (likes) , admire (admires) , est (is) , bruns (brown) , élégante (elegant), belle (beautiful) , mi-longs (shoulder-length) , a (troisfois) (has), adore jouer au (loves to play), mince (slim) , intelligente (intelligent), est (is), déteste (hates), sont (are).
Emma Watson ____ à Paris, en France. Elle ____ vingt-cinq ans. Ses parents ______ Jacqueline Luesby et Chris Watson. Ils___ avocats. Elle__ un frère. Emma a fait ses études en littérature anglaise à l'université Brown. Elle est anglaise. Elle parle un peu français. Elle____ actrice et mannequin. Elle est très____ et ______. Elle___ grande et ____. Elle __ des yeux ____. Elle a des cheveux_____ et bruns. Elle est_____ et _________. Elle _____ danser et chanter. Emma __________ hockey sur glace. Elle ______ le thé et le café. Elle _______ les acteurs Johnny Depp et Julia Roberts.

Procedure (Group Work)

- The teacher asks the students to divide themselves into groups of three.
- He/she discusses the instructions along with a few examples.
- The teacher monitors the group work and offers support to the groups as needed.
- Once all the groups complete the description of Emma Watson, it is discussed in the classroom.

Activity 2: Descriptive Writing Using Simple Sentences

Learning Objectives

To enable students to:

- Write meaningful sentences using the limited repertoire of words they have in a foreign language (FL);
- Revise drafts based on the feedback.

This activity has two stages. In stage 1, students describe a person and in stage 2 they are engaged in revising the drafts of their written descriptions.

Stage 1

Instruction: Describe a person using the information given in the following box.

Décrivez une personne que vous trouvez intéressante. Il/Elle...	
1) • né(e) (born) / a (has) / est (is) / sont (are) / parle (talk) / aime (like) / n'aime pas (does not like) / admire (admire) / adore (adore) / déteste (hates) Note: All these verbs are given in 3rd person singular as the description will be in 3rd person.	3) • grand(e) (tall) / petit(e) (short) / mince (slim) / gros(se) (fat) / fort(e) (strongly built) belle-beau (beautiful-handsome) • les cheveux (hair) • bruns (brown) / noirs (black) / roux (red) • longs (long) / mi-longs (shoulder-length) / courts (short) / frisés (curly) • intelligent(e) / sympathique (kind) / cultivé(e) (knowledgeable) / généreux-généreuse (generous) / sincère (sincere) Note: In French, adjectives agree with the noun in number and gender, therefore both masculine and feminine forms of the adjectives have been given, for example in grand(e) (tall) an extra 'e' is added in the feminine form. Also, hair (les cheveux) is plural in French, sothe colour of the hairbrown (bruns) is plural.
2) • acteur-actrice (male actor - female actor) / chanteur - chanteuse (singer) / journalist (e) / realisateur - realisatrice (film maker)/ écrivain(e) (writer) / poet(e) /sportif sportive (sports person)	4) • aller (to go) au cinéma (to the cinema hall) /au théâtre (to the theatre) / à la montagne (to the mountains) / à la mer (to the seaside) • regarder la télévision (to watch television) / écouter de la musique(to listen to music) / lire un roman (to read a novel) / écrire des poèmes (to write poems) • faire (to do/ to play): du sport (sports), -du ski (ski), -du basket (basketball), -la cuisine (cooking)

Note: To offer choices to students, a variety of words have been given in the table above. Learners have been introduced to words that describe a person's taste and interest (Box 1), words related to names of a few professions (Box 2), words that describe a person's physical and psychological characteristics (Box 3) and words related to sports and cultural activities (Box 4).

Procedure (Group work)

The teacher asks the students to divide themselves into groups of three.

He/she discusses the instructions along with a few examples.

The teacher monitors the group work and supports the groups that require help.

Once all the groups complete the description, the word and sentence features of the written descriptions are discussed.

Stage 2

Instruction: Imagine a person of your choice, describe his/her physical and psychological attributes and talk about his/her likes and dislikes.

Présentez une personne de votre choix. Décrivez son caractère physique et psychologique et ce qu'il/elle aime et ce qu'il/elle n'aime pas.

Procedure (Individual work)

- Each student writes a description.
- Students are free to refer to their previous work if they wish to.
- The teacher offers feedback to each student on their use of vocabulary and verbs.
- Students revise their drafts based on feedback.
- Ideally, students should be encouraged to write multiple drafts.

Outcome: This activity can be expected to promote writing, which is one of the most challenging skills to teach in an FL classroom. Guided instructions along with feedback-led multi-drafting is an effective way of developing descriptive writing skills in a FL. Similar activities can also be used to teach descriptions of things and places; the repertoire of students will thus gradually expand.

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Classroom Activities

Learning to Write Independently

Activity 3 & 4 : Richa Goswami

Background: Children often find writing an alien activity. However, if we engage them in challenging tasks, they may begin to enjoy writing.

Objective: Helping children write a story independently

Level: Class 4-5

Time: 30-40 minutes

Activity 3: Writing a Familiar Story

Procedure

- Choose a story that the students are familiar with; for example, the story of the lion and the mouse.
- Ask the students to narrate the story by adding one sentence each to the story.
- In this round of collective storytelling, language should not be a constraint and getting more and more students to participate would be desirable.
- Children should feel free to use any language they wish to.
- You may encourage them to add new details. These could be about the setting of the story or emotions of the characters, etc.
- Repeat the collective round of storytelling, but this time the students should try and add the sentence in English.
- Students who are unable to add a sentence in English should be allowed to use any other language they know. The teacher may help them with its English version.

- The teacher should write the story as it unfolds or is retold in English on the board.
- Once the story is finished, ask the students to copy it down in their notebooks.
- After a few days, the children go back to the same story and write a fresh version of it in their own words.

Activity 4

Descriptive Writing

Objectives: Helping children write short descriptions independently

Level: Class 4-5

Time: 30-40 minutes

Procedure

- Choose a place or a thing that the students are familiar with such as a classroom, school, home, etc.
- Think of some categories to help them describe it such as: things, colours, numbers, sounds, feelings, different kinds of smell and texture, etc.
- You can add or remove the categories as per the thing or place to be described.
- Write these categories on the board and for each of them ask questions that will help the students describe it. For example, what are the things you see in the class?
- You could ask questions like: What is the colour? What are the sounds that you hear? Do the sounds change as the day progresses? What are the smells that you often smell sitting here? Do they change as the day progresses?
- As the students respond, keep jotting some helping words on the board in front of each category. For example:

  Things and colours: Black dog, brown benches, grey shed, white walls etc.
- After this ask the students to write a few sentences about the topic on the board.
- Ask them to write a more elaborate version in their notebooks.

Richa Goswami worked in VBERC (Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre) for seven years and is associated with Language and Mathematics pedagogy, material development and teacher training. She is currently pursuing Ph D from Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

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Reports

Report of a Three-Day Workshop on the Orientation of a Course on Early Literacy Pedagogy for Teacher Educators

Nivedita Bedadur

A three-day orientation course was facilitated by Azim Premji Foundation at the Institute of Advanced Study in Education (IASE) Jabalpur as an introduction to a course on Early Literacy Pedagogy starting from November 2015. A total of 41 participants attended the orientation (3 IASE professors, 17 participants from District Resource Groups and 1 DRS, 10 B. Ed. students, and 10 DIET lecturers and Principals. It was conducted from 7 to 9 September 2015.

The objective of the orientation was to build an understanding of literacy as a semiotic system by looking at the following aspects of early literacy:

- How do children experience and understand the meanings of symbols and signs early in life,
- How the literacy experience involves both cognitive and affective meaning-making
- The history of literacy teaching practices, including adult literacy and the many meanings of literacy.

This was done through simulations, thought experiments, and discussions, with each one taking the participants closer to the meaning of literacy.

The orientation comprised six sessions. The first two sessions gave experiences of signs, symbols, pictures and music.

In the first session, the participants focused on how we give meaning to signs and symbols. They watched an advertisement that showed parts of a car. They interpreted the key communication from the advertisement to mean precision, relations, efficiency and related it to the process of education. This experience helped them understand that meaning-making happens through our prior knowledge, our sense experience and the faculty to interpret symbols. The participants were also given pictures and asked to construct a story. The stories were all different and lent meaning to the pictures and through an interesting discussion justified the various interpretations of the details. This experience established that we observe, interpret and give meaning to our experience. The participants were then shown some signs and symbols commonly used in our daily life. They used them to create sentences. The joining of the signs and symbols to create sentences resulted in an understanding of the process of reading. Reading is an integrated process of sense experience, meaning-making and interpretation. We understand signs and symbols in the world only if they connect with our interests, motivation and domain knowledge.

In the second and the third sessions, the participants explored the process of reading with a deeper exploration of the cognitive and affective processes involved in reading by listening to a *jugalbandi*, watching it and then reading about it. They applied the strategies of prediction, interpretation, questioning, visualization and discussion while all the time connecting with their prior experience as they went through the process of listening, then watching and finally reading on the same theme. An experience of thinking of the process of constructing an igloo through a reading led to the understanding that it is difficult to read if one does not have prior experience, and impossible to do anything with what we read (in this case constructing an igloo) if one does not have a multisensory way of meaning-making experience. This led to an articulation by the participants of the cognitive processes involved in meaning making.

In the fourth session, the participants dealt with the idea that reading is not a unitary process in the sense that how one reads depends on what one reads. Reading different kinds of texts requires different kinds of strategies or processes. Moreover they relate differently to our faculty of meaning-making: The text, its genre, context, prior knowledge, domain knowledge, interest and purpose, all play a part in meaning-making.

In the fifth session, the participants concentrated on the process of writing. They explored the present understanding of writing in classrooms as copy writing, or as the writing of dictation. The participants then went through an experience of writing and copy writing on the one hand and of creative writing on the other. The viewing of a video clip—*Gaon Chodab Nahi*, led to the emotional, and cognitive angle of understanding and responding to an issue and resulted in a session on expressive writing. They were then questioned as to which method they liked best and what according to them were the characteristics of both the methods. This brought about the understanding of writing as a process, rather than a product.

In the final session, the participants explored the sociocultural and critical context of literacy. Through "Sawal Karo", a poem by Rag Telang, they explored the meaning of literacy for children in different contexts. The contexts of rural, urban disadvantaged and migrant children are very different from that of urban children from literacy rich homes. The discussion centred around the thought that children's experiences should be made part of the curriculum; their literacy experiences should be non-discriminatory. The discussion then went on to the many meanings of literacy, whether functional literacy was adequate in the context of learning to read extended to reading to learn.

The course ended with a discussion on "Bhartiya Schoolon mein Saksharta Shiksha", an article by Shobha Sinha.

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A Workshop on Story-telling and Pedagogical Potential of Stories

Sharmila Rathee

The human essence is made of stories, and therefore, they are fundamental to one's sense of identity - Wright (2000)

Stories, in their different forms such as folk tales, fairy tales, myths, fables and legends, etc., appeal to individuals across the globe. This universal and powerful appeal of stories makes them an integral part of the world of inter and intra-human communication. Irrespective of the age group, stories have tremendous power to elicit emotions, evoke curiosity and sustain the attention of the audience. Researchers and practitioners across disciplines have acknowledged that stories serve different functions such as cognitive, emotional, social, cultural and epistemological. Ample proof has been provided concerning the effectiveness of this valuable form of human communication in different domains of human development. In the field of education specifically, there is a significant body of literature that highlights the importance of stories and storytelling in the teaching-learning process. Every day, researchers are making advancements in related fields, the most recent being relating stories to various domains of human cognition and neurological roots. However, ironically, despite significant theoretical advancements in the practical field of education, i.e. inside classrooms, the pedagogical potential of stories and storytelling is still highly underestimated by a significant section of the teachers' community. Hence, the status of stories being a mere leisure activity still dominates the arena of classrooms as only the fun element of stories and storytelling is considered in most instances.

In this context, a two-day workshop was organized for the teachers of Swami Balendue V. Primary School, Vrindavan, on 25-26 September 2015 at Vrindavan, U.P., India, with the intention of training teachers to capitalize on stories for curriculum transaction and encourage its use in classroom. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Explore stories holistically taking into account various aspects of language, science, mathematics, society, culture and identity, etc.
- Discuss the pedagogical potential of stories and storytelling
- Demonstrate the various modes of storytelling
- Discuss the subject of adaptation and improvization of stories according to the needs of the children

Participant Profile

The participants of the workshop included all the teachers of Swami Balendu V. Primary School, resource persons, the workshop coordinator and organizers**.** The teachers, who were the prime focus of the workshop, were from various disciplines such as mathematics, commerce, languages, science and social sciences. The workshop was coordinated by Sharmila Rathee (Assistant Professor, University of Delhi) who was also the resource person. The other resource persons Vijay Kumar, Yashika Chandna and Ria Gupta were affiliated to Katha Manch, (a registered trust comprising school teachers, teacher trainees, field facilitators, university professors and students associated with the field of education). Members of Katha Manch have a shared vision of making stories an integral part of the curriculum transaction and to accomplish this vision, Katha Manch regularly organizes workshops with teachers and students across schools in areas related to stories and storytelling.

Sessions

The workshop was divided into four sessions, with a pre-lunch and post-lunch session on each day. The pre-lunch session on day one started with introductions, where participants shared their qualifications and experience. The majority of the participant teachers expressed their inadequate understanding of the concepts related to stories and their pedagogical use. During this session, an attempt was made to overcome participant hesitation and encourage interaction between participants and resource persons. After the introductory session, the coordinator described the objectives of the workshop—focusing on the pedagogical potential of stories in classroom across subjects. This was followed by an activity by Ria Gupta, in which each participant was asked to think of a story she/he liked the most and share it with the other participants. Based on the interaction with the storyteller, participants were encouraged to envisage the possible factors that would prompt individuals to choose that particular story. Each participant shared their story and other members tried to predict the reasons for the selection of that story. This was followed by remarks from the storyteller. Through this session, it was emphasized that the choice of a particular story communicates the behavioural aspects of a person. Further, the selection of a story may depend on its connection with the context and may even be specific to the situation in the story, identification with the characters in the story or bonding with someone. A range of emotions were expressed by the participants during the narration of stories and through this experience, they discovered that stories have a strong potential for eliciting emotions of the storyteller as well as the audience. The participants also discussed that giving opportunities to students for sharing their stories on a regular basis would give them a chance to express their dominant emotion in that moment. This sharing of emotions through stories could even act as an emotional catharsis for students and by understanding their dilemmas and needs, appropriate support could be provided to them.

The post-lunch session focused on the modes of story-narration. Ria Gupta narrated a story entitled "Angry Witch", about a witch who was frustrated with her name "*Panch*" (five). The story describes the way *Panch* plans to take revenge on the other characters who were suspected of teasing the witch about her name. The participants were requested to volunteer for drawing a sketch of the witch on the blackboard according to their perception of the witch's image. While one participant volunteered to draw, others were requested to suggest additions and modifications to the sketch. The sketch revealed how we have stereotypical images of some characters in our mind, for example, the witch in this sketch was an ugly and evil looking woman. Ria emphasized that such exercises would be helpful in developing interest in the story among the audience when done before narrating the story. Moreover, by understanding what the audience thought about a particular character, the storyteller could make requisite modifications and adaptations to the story to break prevalent stereotypes. The participants enjoyed this activity and participated in it enthusiastically. The completion of the sketch was followed by a narration of the story. Through the narration, it was conveyed to the participants that gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, body language, variations in the tone of voice for different characters, silence and pauses make storytelling more interesting and powerful.

After the narration, teachers were asked to brainstorm about the kind of activities that could be planned for children after the narration of this story. Their responses were recorded and then some more activities along the same lines were suggested by the resource persons. Most of the activities suggested by teachers focused on language learning skills, grammatical structures, and development of vocabulary and pronunciation.

This was followed by a debate initiated by Yashika Chandna on correct pronunciation and cultural and regional differences in pronunciation. She recommended that putting too much stress on pronunciation, and especially interrupting young children to correct their pronunciation in the initial years when they are developing reading and speaking skills may result in their hesitating to take part in group reading and speaking activities. She added that pronunciation skills may be improved through exposure to various audio-visual resources.

On the second day, in the pre-lunch session, the tasks of the previous day were taken up. Teachers were asked to categorize the activities in terms of what kind of activities could be taken up for a particular grade. During the discussion, inappropriate categorization of activities by the teachers pointed to the need for an in-depth discussion with the teachers about the cognitive development perspective of skills. Thus, to help them sort out the skills at different levels and their sequencing, further discussions in this session were focused on the relation between activities, skills, strategies and objectives according to children's needs. With the help of some examples, it was demonstrated how some skills are prerequisite to consider particular activities. The cognitive developmental perspective of certain skills was also discussed.

The resource persons further emphasized the importance of stories in subjects such as mathematics, science and social sciences. Examples were taken up to highlight the use of stories in other disciplines. Yashika Chandna, narrated the story "*Appu-kuttan ko kaise tole*" which is about the problem of weighing an elephant Appu-Kuttan. There was a discussion around how this particular story could be used for teaching the concept of weight measurement, Archimedes principle and breaking the stereotype about girls not being good problem-solvers. Furthermore, stories could work as tools to build imagination, foster creativity and various cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective skills.

Next, there was a discussion on the prevalence of stereotypes in children's literature. Sharmila Rathee elaborated on the meaning, characteristics and impact of positive and negative stereotypes on children, the prevalence of stereotypes in society and its reflection in literature. She suggested that instead of taking up stories which consist of stereotypical images, the storyteller should make modifications in the story to avoid reinforcing stereotypes or to thwart them. Lastly, there was a discussion on how group work can be helpful in understanding the stereotypes in children's minds of the abilities of children belonging to other social identities.

The post-lunch session on day two consisted of an open session where participants voiced queries related to the discussions of the previous sessions. The main points that were thrown up through this exercise included: criteria for selecting stories and children's literature, different ways of adapting and improvising stories, creation of stories, components of stories and assessment through stories. Vijay Kumar shared some important readings related to stories and storytelling in education, and also suggested some books to broaden the understanding of the participants in related fields. These included: "*Prathamik Siksha ke Mudde*, volume II, issue I, January-April 2000 of *Kahaniyaan*", John Holt's "*Bacche Asaphal Kyun Hote Hain*", Chomsky-Piaget's debate, Arvind Gupta's website, etc. He further emphasized the importance of implementing the learning from this workshop in the respective classrooms and asked the teachers to reflect on the implementation of the same.

This was followed by feedback on the workshop and suggestions for the areas where participants wanted further discussion in future. Participants shared that they had found the workshop very useful and had enjoyed the activities thoroughly. They felt that the story narration had helped them understand that they could do much more with their voices and bodies while telling or even reading a story to the children. They also appreciated the teamwork of the resource persons. They further shared that they wanted the organizers to take up issues related to pedagogy, cognitive developmental perspective of skills and classroom management for future workshops. The resource persons requested the teachers to share with them their experiences of the use of stories and storytelling in the coming days. The workshop ended with a note of thanks.

We did a follow-up with the school after the workshop. We gathered that on implementing the ideas learnt in the workshop, the teachers felt that the stories had a strong pedagogical potential. Teachers shared that they found inclusion of stories in the classroom helpful in numerous ways: students took more interest in their work, enjoyed studying without any pressure, learnt to think for themselves and asked more questions than before. They further communicated that students seemed less shy to speak up and answer questions even if they were not sure about the answer. Also, they were less disappointed if they were not right about something. The school organizer, Ramona Goswami wrote saying that the use of stories was helping teachers significantly to reach out to the children and observed that story-related tasks were completed better than regular ones. She shared her contentment that after the workshop, the teachers had a lot of new ideas for activities surrounding the themes they were teaching.

Wright, A. 2000. 'Stories and their importance in language teaching', *Humanizing Language Teaching* Year 2, Issue 5, online at <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/sep00/mart2.htm>

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Forthcoming Events

International Conference on Social Science, Literature and Education

Conference Dates: 11 - 12 April 2016

Location: Boston, United States of America

Last date of abstract/proposal submission: 30 March 2016

Conference information page link*: http:// americanhealthcare.wix.com/soc-boston-2016*

3rd International Conference on Language, Literature and Culture in Education (LLCE) 2016

Dates: 12 - 14 July 2016

Location: Venice, Italy

Last date of abstract submission: 30 April 2016

Last date for notification of acceptance/rejection: 15 May 2016

Registration deadline: 15 May 2016

Last date of final paper submission (including virtual papers, video presentations and posters): 31 May 2016.

https://scholar.google.co.in/scholar?q=3rd+International+ Conference+on+Language, +Literature+and+Culture+in+Education

2016 International Symposium on Language, Linguistics, Literature and Education

Dates: 2 - 4 August 2016

Location: **Okinawa, Japan**

Last date of paper submission: 10 May 2016

Last date of participant registration: 10 May 2016

Conference information page link**:** *http:// www.isllle.org/*

Contact e-mail address: ***isllle@isllle.org***

Individuals in Contexts: Psychology of Language Learning 2 (or PLL2)

Dates: 22 - 24 August 2016

Location: University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Last date of submission of proposals (on line): 15 March 2016

Last date of presentation acceptance: Early May 2016

Enquiries*: pll2016@jyu.fi.*

Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language Policy and Planning

Dates: 1 - 3 September 2016

Last date of all submissions: 29 February 2016

Last date for sending final decisions to authors: **15 April 2016**

Conference submissions should be made through: online submission tool (ConfTool)

Enquiries: *lpp@ucalgary.ca*

JALT (Japan Association of Language Teachers) 2016

42nd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

Dates: 25 - 28 November 2016

Location: Aichi Industry & Labor Center - WINC Aichi, Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Theme: To Be Announced

AILA 2017: 18th World Congress of Applied Linguistic: Innovation and Epistemological Challenges in Applied Linguistics

Dates: 23 - 28 July 2017

Location: Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)

Conference information page link**:** *http:// www.aila2017.com.br*

EUROCALL 2016 - 23rd EUROCALL Conference for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Conference Dates: 24 - 27 August 2016

Venue: Limassol, Cyprus

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 15 February 2016

Conference information page link: *http:// eurocall2016.org/*

Announcement

Forthcoming
Special Issue on Disability
(Vol. 5 No. 2 Issue 10 July 2016)
Guest Edited by Tanmoy Bhattacharya

The 10th issue of the refereed journal *Language and Language Teaching* (ISSN:2277-307X) published by Azim Premji University, Bangalore and Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, will be guest edited by Tanmoy Bhattacharya. PDF versions of the past issues are available at the APU website (http://azimpremjifoundation.org/content/language-and-language-teaching-0).

Discussions with regards to disability and education often veer towards discussion of special education. Not surprisingly, special education itself has its own special vocabulary and perspective, not all of which are sensitive to the human rights issues arising in this context. The special issue of Language and Language Teaching stays away from such terminologies and perspectives. Instead, a critical view of special education as it is practised and as it is perceived are two of the issues that this issue hopes to address. Since special education has given rise to a live debate about teaching students with disability, we expect to include articles that argue from both sides of the divide. Within that broader philosophy however, the collection as a whole will specifically address issues and concerns arising out of language teaching in particular, including language and linguistic concerns that emerge in teaching of other subjects.

The 10th issue is devoted to the theme of disability issues and language teaching; it will be published in July, 2016. This issue has articles by leading scholars in the field of Disability and Education such as the following, among others: Sudesh Mukhopadhyay, Chairperson, RCI; Beth Ferri, School of Education, Syracuse University; Nirmala Erevelles, College of Education, University of Alabama.

It also has interviews with leading disability scholars and activists: Anita Ghai, University of Delhi and Madan Vashista, Gallaudet University, Washington DC.

There are reviews of such books as: *South Asia & Disability Studies: Redefining Boundaries and Extending Horizon.* (Disability Studies in Education) 2014. Ed. by Sridevi Rao and Maya Kalyanpur; *The End of Normal: Identity in Bicultural Era*, 2014, by Lennard Davis, University of Michigan Press; *Autism and Gender: From Refrigerator mothers to Computer Geeks* (2014) by Jordynn Jack, University of Illinois Press.; and *Rethinking Disability in India* by Anita Ghai, Routledge India.


Azim Premji
University

INSIDE

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