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### **From the Editor's Desk**

The Tulsiramji Gaikwad-Patil College of Engineering and Technology, run by the Gaikwad-Patil Group, is proud to be the first engineering college to hold the Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning of ESL, thus according the language its rightful place in technical education and acknowledging its role in professional development.

Considering the growing response to the Conference from within and outside the country and the increasing number of papers submitted for the same, we felt it necessary to launch a peer reviewed journal, so that we could provide an avenue devoted to the publication of only the best of the material received by us.

'The Journal for ESL Teachers and Learners' is being launched to fulfill that need. It gives me great pleasure to present this peer reviewed journal to the academic community, containing the best papers from among those we receive for Confluence. However, the journal will not be restricted to the papers received for Confluence only, but will also accept direct submissions.

This will be an open access journal in interest of wider circulation, so that the academic community all over the world could benefit from it. We are also bringing out a print version of the journal to enhance its accessibility.

It is my duty to thank our esteemed reviewers who devoted their valuable time and extended all cooperation to this venture. I also thank our technical team for their whole-hearted efforts to put the journal together, as also everybody else involved in materializing this project.

**Anjali Patil-Gaikwad**  
Chief Editor

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## A New Student-Centered Lesson Plan in Teaching English Vocabulary

Dr. Afsaneh Amini

**Abstract:** *Teaching English is not just teaching the linguistic aspect of language, but it is also teaching the discourse and communicative aspects of language. Focusing on these points, this paper introduces a new student-centered lesson plan in teaching vocabulary, consisting of a series of non-fixed order of phases. No matter if the instructor is teaching general vocabulary in a general English course or technical vocabulary in an ESP course, s/he needs to start with Pre-phase which is warming up and continue with the following phases in any order that best matches her/his students' needs and/or preferences: Phase I: Linguistic Focus, Phase II: Discourse Focus, Phase III: Communicative Focus, and Phase IV: Feedback and Evaluation. Each phase comprises different techniques, strategies, and activities that facilitate the application of a student-centered approach. To some extent, a learner-centered approach is contrasted with a teacher-centered approach.*

### I. Introduction

The learner-centered approach is a new approach in teaching and learning advocated in higher education since three decades ago (Blumberg 2004, 2008, Felder and Brent 1996, McCombs and Whistler 1997, Pillay 2002, Weimer 2002). The approach is rooted in the learning theories of constructivism which is based on the perception that learners have the ability to construct knowledge and generate meaning for themselves (Glaserfeld 1989, Hein 1991). To social constructivists, students are active constructors and architects of their own building ideas and knowledge and, thus, not only does the ownership of learning reside with them, but also sustaining motivation depend on how much they are confident in using their potential to learn (Glaserfeld 1989). To this end, the instructor has to let learners be in charge of their own learning, as his/her role has changed from an instructor to a facilitator (e.g., Bausersfeld 1995, Dwyer, Ringstaff, and Sandholtz 1991, Weimer 2002).

In the class management, being a facilitator and not a teacher requires a totally different set of skills and responsibility on the part of both the teacher and students (e.g., Cano 2003, Weimer 2002). As cases to the point are: a facilitator supports while a teacher lectures, a facilitator provides guidelines while a teacher provides answers, and a facilitator orients a dialogue while a teacher presents a monologue (e.g., see Cano 2003, Rhodes 1999.). In a similar line of thoughts, Weimer (2002) indicates that the job of the teacher is to create a dynamic learning environment with available options to increase students' engagement and motivate them intrinsically to accept responsibility for their own learning.

Practically speaking, in the instructor-centered approach to teaching and learning, university education loads students with a lot of information, policies, and rules and prepare them little for life. As the author has experienced, when university students graduate, they have gained little experience of life, interpersonal skills, social skills, time management skills, job management skills, etc. This is maybe due to the fact that students are given few meaningful opportunities to practice and experience what they need most while they are spending the best years of their life in university. After their graduation, the students learn those life and job management skills through trial and error, and most often it is too much frustrating not only for the graduates but also for the individuals involved. As Weimer (2002) indicates, the relevance of content to the needs of learners is important to be considered to produce intrinsically motivated learners. Weimer further states that various policies that we establish in our class do not bring about learners who are motivated, responsible, and intellectually grown-up, as these policies foster extrinsic motivation in students rather than intrinsic one. To efficiently manage the learning situation, she proposes to have additional approaches besides rules and policies.

Therefore, it is a necessity to equip the learning process with meaningful activities, strategies, and techniques so that the ground for 'intrinsic motivation and motivators' is created, and learners get encouraged to practice what they need most for their current and future endeavors. This is in line with Weimer's (2002) thoughts that there is a shift of focus in the function of content from 'covering' content to 'using' content in the sense that the content of the course needs to be linked to meaningful skills, strategies, techniques, and approaches to foster the meta-cognitive ability of learners, among others.

## II. Initial Setups for a Student-Centered Approach

The initial setups for a learner-centered class consist of: (a) knowing learners, (b) an introductory training, and (c) establishing negotiating rules and policies.

### 2.1 Knowing Learners

In a student-centered approach, the instructor needs to know his/her students in all aspects of their realization as much as possible. The instructor acts as a facilitator, an advisor, a consultant, a mentor, a supporter, a contributor, and/or a negotiator, but certainly not as an instructor in the traditional meaning of it. Knowing the students means knowing them not only in their language skills but also in their brain dominance (e.g., see Allmen 2009, Hannaford 1997, Sperry 1984, Vitale 1982, 1986), attitude (e.g., see Smith 1971), aptitude, intelligence (e.g., see Sattler 1982), personality, dreams, goals, hobbies, interests, style of learning (e.g., see Honey and Mumford 2006, Lawarence 1997), educational background, family background, ethnic background, health status, etc. This links up with social constructivism that considers each learner as a unique and multidimensional individual in addition to the importance given to his/her culture and background in the learning process (e.g., see Stahl 1992, Wertsch 1998). No doubt, the more the instructor knows his/her students, the better s/he is in a position to tailor a variety of activities, strategies, and techniques to suit them best (See Amini in progress.).

### 2.2 Introductory Training

In a learner-centered class, students need to take responsibility not only for their own learning but also for their peers (e.g., see Tuder 1996, Cano 2003, Weimer 2002). Thus, the students need to involve actively in the learning process: raise a question, solve a problem, think analytically, and learn cooperatively. This is in a sharp contrast with an instructor-centered approach where students have a passive role. This shift in the responsibility requires that students take an introductory training in the form of a workshop, a short training course, or a long training course depending on the cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities of students and their level of functioning, among others.

The introduction and introductory training to the learner-centered approach should encompass the following topics, among others: (a) collaborative learning, (b) observation skills, (c) analytical skills, (d) problem solving skills, (e) decision making skills, (f) negotiating skills (g) interpersonal skills, (h) evaluating self, (i) evaluating peers, (j) listening attentively, (k) speaking understandably, (l) speaking appropriately, (m) behaving appropriately, (n) thinking positively, (o) controlling emotions, (p) responsibility in learning, (q) responsibility in life, (r) life-long learning, (s) updating self-knowledge, and (t) updating self in using technology (see also Cooper 1990, Rau and Heyl 1990, Slavin 1980.).

### 2.3 Establishing Negotiating Rules and Policies

Unlike a teacher-centered approach, in a learner-centered approach, rules and policies are negotiated with students and finalized according to their preferences. These negotiating rules and policies include but not limited to: (a) self-working rules, (b) pair-working rules, (c) group-working rules, (d) assessment rules, and (e) class management rules. As an illustration, after negotiation among students as well as dialogue between the students and the facilitator, the deadline for group project is determined; it is also specified what action should be taken if the deadline is not met. Once the decisions have negotiated and made, the instructor needs to be consistent in the administration of rules and policies (Weimer 2002).

### III. A New Student-Centered Lesson Plan for Teaching Vocabulary

In a student-centered approach to teaching vocabulary, the lesson plan consists of a set of recursive stages through which students not only learn concepts of words, but they also learn to apply them to activities and experiences useful for and pertinent to their current and future endeavors. The order of stages in the lesson plan is not fixed and can be re-ordered based on the learning situation as well as students' strengths and preferences. A point of notice is that learning a list of words not only does mean knowing their linguistic concepts, but it also means how to build them up in meaningful contexts of past experiences as well as how to apply them in new meaningful discourse contexts and communicative situations.

In teaching vocabulary, students generate and/or the facilitator introduces a series of activities, strategies, and techniques satisfying the linguistic, discourse and communicative needs of students. The facilitator does not go through these activities and techniques; it is the responsibility of students to internalize them and connect them to other experiences they need. The students are in charge of their own learning and the facilitator guide them throughout the learning process.

#### 3.1 Initial Setups for a Student-Centered Lesson Plan

Before the instructor starts the actual lesson, s/he needs to specify: (a) objectives of teaching and learning vocabulary, (b) class situation, and (c) grouping of students.

##### 3.1.1 Objectives

The first essential in designing a lesson plan is to specify objectives, that is, measurable learning outcomes we expect students to achieve by the end of the learning process. It is important to note that the list of the vocabulary that students are supposed to master derived from their needs analysis. For example, students are supposed: To pronounce and spell the words accurately, understand their meanings correctly, apply them in text appropriately, and use them in different communicative situations pertinently.

##### 3.1.2 Class Situation

The class situation consists of: (a) course title, (b) course section, (c) class setting, (d) number of students, and (e) date/period. For example, Course: Eng301: Technical Vocabulary, Sec. 2, Time: Sun. and Tues., 9:00-10:30 p.m., Hall: 154, No of students: 30, Feb.14-Feb.28.

##### 3.1.3 Grouping

The traditional sitting in rows no longer exists in a learner-centered approach. It is very important to group students based on certain criteria and assign each group a name to facilitate communication. For example, a class of 30 students can be divided into 5 groups, each of which is allocated a name while considering students' preferences, in the first place. To facilitate further the communication, the individual students in each group can be assigned a numerical ID, starting with 1 as the ID for the head of the group and continue to other numbers up to 6, as there are six students in each group. The identical IDs are differentiated by adding their group's name to the ID number.

The grouping of students is important to be considered in a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning. In choosing the grouping criteria, the students' preferences are important to be considered. The grouping of students can be managed based on: (a) friendship, (b) academic skills, (c) cognitive skills, (d) meta-cognitive skills, (e) other skills, (f) field of study, (g) style of learning, (h) cultural background, and/or (i) a hybrid combination of two or more features/characteristics (see also Collier 1980, Connery 1988, Fiechtner and Davis 1992, Smith 1986).

In what follows, we go through phases of a learner-centered lesson plan for developing vocabulary commencing with the Pre-phase of warming up and ending up with the phase of feedback and evaluation.

#### 3.2 Pre-Phase: Warming Up

The warming up phase of the lesson plan serves two purposes: (a) creating a feeling of being at home for students, and (b) a review of past knowledge and experience.

##### 3.2.1 Creating a Feeling of Being at Home

The main purpose of warming up is to generate a feeling of 'being at home' in students so that they absorb

the input more efficiently and participate in class more willingly. Generating such a feeling is not difficult. It can be initiated with warm greetings and go forward with such activities as poetry, drama, games, and jokes depending on the age of students and their preferences, among others (See Rickey 2011, for other techniques in creating a warm class atmosphere.). It is worth noting that the use of L1 and chunks of L1 culture are recommended in the warming-up phase to reduce the tension of class atmosphere.

### **3.2.2 Review of the Previous Knowledge and Experience**

In the learner-centered approach, every lesson is carried out throughout a process consisting of a set of steps or phases. Thus it is important that students are called for incorporating their past knowledge and experience into the present knowledge and experience.

### **3.3 Phase I: Linguistic Focus**

The linguistic phase of the lesson plan for teaching vocabulary consists of two sub-phases: (a) form and (b) meaning. The form concerns the pronunciation and spelling of the word, and the meaning concerns its concept.

#### **3.3.1 Form of the Word**

As the teacher is a facilitator in the learner-centered approach, the long traditional lectures are replaced by mini-lectures, mini-model lectures, and mini-transitional lectures. The latter is used in between phases of the learning process while the first two are frequently used in initiating a new phase (See Amini in progress.).

For the accurate pronunciation and spelling, the teacher needs to provide a model, either by himself/herself, a video clip, a student, or a group of students. Student mini-modeling requires some sort of in-advance planning. That is, the teacher trains some volunteers on how to pronounce and spell words correctly, and they in turn model the pronunciation and spelling of the words in the classroom and/or in their group.

#### **3.3.2 Meaning of the Word**

In the learner-centered approach, the meaning of a word is learned using a variety of techniques. These techniques are generated by students and/or introduced by the facilitator. The students are responsible to extract the meaning of the word while utilizing different activities, strategies and/or techniques. These include using: (a) realia, (b) direct objects, (c) pictures, (d) drawings, (e) other visuals, (f) illustration, (g) description, (h) puzzles, (i) matching words, (j) matching words and pictures, (k) synonyms, (l) antonyms, (m) fill-in-blank phrases, (n) fill-in-blank sentences, (o) chunks of language, as well as (p) composing a phrase, and (q) composing a sentence (See Amini in progress.).

### **3.4 Phase II: Discourse Focus**

Phase II is beyond the sentence structure and it at the discourse level. The students are involved in using the same list of words in such discourse activities as composing a paragraph, discourse analysis of a paragraph, top-down and bottom-up processing of a text, etc.

The discourse activities, strategies, and techniques are generated by students and/or introduced by the facilitator. These include: (a) composing a paragraph, (b) specifying the main idea in a paragraph, (c) specifying supporting ideas in a paragraph, (d) specifying details in a paragraph, (e) bottom-up processing of a paragraph: re-ordering ideas from bottom-up, (f) top-down processing of a paragraph: re-writing ideas from top to bottom, (g) summarizing of a paragraph, (h) paraphrasing of a paragraph, (i) specifying situational clues in a paragraph, (j) specifying linguistic clues in a paragraph, (k) specifying non-linguistic clues in a paragraph, (l) determining a specific part of speech in a paragraph, (m) discourse synthesis of a paragraph: re-ordering a set of scrambled sentences to make a well-formed paragraph, and (n) journal writing of the day, (o) composing/using a cloze test: a text with fill-in-blanks, (p) writing a short group project, (q) writing a memory, (r) composing a short story, (s) generating a sketch, (t) compose a dialogue, (u) composing a drama, (v) writing a resume, (w) writing a CV, (x) applying for a scholarship, (y) applying for a visa credit card, and (z) applying for a job (See Amini in progress.).

**3.5 Phase III: Communicative Focus**

In the communicative phase of the lesson plan, students need to communicate the concepts already learned in meaningful activities and situations pertinent to their life as well as their current and future endeavors. There are many activities, situations, strategies, and techniques to choose from; the selection depends on available resources, students' level, their needs analysis and preferences.

The communicative phase is a verbal phase and assists students to go beyond linguistic and discourse levels in learning vocabulary. More specifically, the students use their English and vocabulary learned in the previous phases in meaningful activities and situations pertinent to their life experiences. The communicative activities, situations, strategies, and techniques are generated by students and/or introduced by the facilitator. These include:

- a) Summarizing a paragraph verbally
- b) Paraphrasing a paragraph verbally
- c) Analyzing different views in an essay verbally
- d) Analyzing the concluding remarks of an essay verbally
- e) Analyzing the situation of the main character in a story verbally.
- f) Analyzing the decision taken by the main character in a story verbally.
- g) Telling a short story
- h) Telling a memory
- i) Explaining how the equipment work
- j) Explaining the procedure of ---- (e.g., installing a software)
- k) Explaining the process of ---- (e.g., trouble shooting of the printer).
- l) Using drama
- m) Using role playing
- n) Playing the role as a/n ----- (e.g., mother, father, engineer, physician, manager, etc.)
- o) Acting out a dialogue
- p) Acting out a sketch
- q) Group discussion: expressing your voice and view
- r) Group discussion: evaluating other voices and views
- s) Group discussion: comparing and contrasting
- t) Group discussion: convincing the other party
- u) Using songs
- v) Using games
- w) Academic trip to ----- (e.g., a bank, factory, passport office, etc.)
- x) Modeling: speaking informally to ----- (e.g., friend, brother)
- y) Modeling: speaking formally to ----- (e.g., immediate manager at work)
- z) Making an interview with someone, etc.

**3.6 Phase IV: Feedback and Evaluation**

Obviously, changing in the practice of teaching requires changing in the evaluation and vice versa. According to Walvoord (2004), student learning is affected by changes in assessment methods. As the final phase of the lesson plan, feedback and evaluation consist of two subphases: (a) bidirectional feedback and (b) evaluation.

**3.6.1 Bidirectional Feedback**

Throughout the learning process, the facilitator should provide students with continuous feedback on their learning together with positive reinforcement. She also needs to be the recipient of students' on-going feedback not only on efficiency of his/her guiding role but also on that of different activities, situations, strategies and techniques used in the classroom.

**3.6.2 Evaluation**

The evaluation has three components: (a) type of evaluation, (b) evaluation techniques, and © scoring.

### **3.6.2.1 Type of Evaluation**

The evaluation can be done by the student, peer, facilitator and/or joint participants, as follows (See also Weimer 2002.).

- a) Student self evaluation
- b) Peer evaluation
- c) Facilitator evaluation
- d) Hybrid evaluation of the self and peer
- e) Hybrid evaluation of the self and facilitator
- f) Hybrid evaluation of the self, peer, and facilitator

### **3.6.2.2 Evaluation Techniques**

There are three types of evaluation techniques matching the phases of vocabulary acquisition exemplified above: (a) normal technique, (b) formative technique, and (c) authentic technique (See also Weimer 2002.).

The linguistic focus and discourse focus can be tested using the normal traditional technique or the formative technique. In the case of the former, the scoring can be done by the student, peer, facilitator, and/or joint participants. The formative technique is applied when the student work is not graded numerically though value grades may be assigned. The communicative focus is tested using authentic technique. Utilizing this technique, the learner put her knowledge into practice, that is, s/he performs a purposeful task, for example, how to upgrade the computer ram.

### **3.6.2.3 Scoring: Numerical Scoring and Value Scoring**

There are two types of scoring to use in the learner-centered approach to teaching and learning vocabulary: (a) numerical system and (b) value system. The numerical system is traditional, and students are given marks for their work. However, in the latter, value grades as 'excellent', 'fairly excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', etc. are assigned to the student work.

## **IV. Concluding Remarks and Implications**

The new learner-centered lesson plan in teaching vocabulary consists of a series of non-fixed order of recursive phases including warming up, linguistic focus, discourse focus, communicative focus as well as feedback and evaluation. In this order the phases are sequenced in linguistic complexity, but they can be re-ordered in any other sequence such as: warming up, communicative focus, discourse focus, linguistic focus, and feedback and evaluation, depending mainly on the needs of students. In addition, each phase comprises diverse activities, situations, strategies, and/or techniques varying in complexity, too. Thus, due to their diversity and complexity, the selection depends on the learning situation, available resources, needs analysis of students and their preferences. Interestingly, the proposed lesson plan is applicable not only to the acquisition of general English vocabulary but also to that of technical vocabulary in an ESP/EAP/EOP program.

Finally the pertinent question is: Are you planning to develop a learner-centered approach in your class or college curriculum? The safest transition would be a process planning. The process planning requires several steps to follow in a process. To this end here are some suggestions. The first step in this journey of transitional planning is to have a student-centered committee. Second, it is important to have control groups and experimental groups for some courses serving as pilot studies to assess learning outcomes in your educational context with regard to such variables as the number of students in class, undergraduate students, graduate students, low-level students, advanced-level students, young learners, old learners, etc. Third, there is a strong need to change the course syllabus from 'content' to 'processes'. Last but not least, the professional development for faculty members in the learner-centered approach to teaching and learning is highly recommended.

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## English for Specific Purposes: What does it mean and why is it Different from Teaching General English?

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**Abstract:** *In this present age of rapidly developing international scientific collaboration and business, courses of foreign language for specialist purposes are becoming more and more popular. These courses are conducted on the basis of the approach called English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This approach assumes that the language teaching will be adjusted to the specific linguistic and communicative needs of the particular learners with special attention being paid to the context in which they use, or will use, English language. In order to tailor the course to the learners' needs, the ESP course should be preceded by an analysis of the learners' needs as related to their future professional work and plans for the future, as well as to their preferred styles of learning. This needs analysis should also include within its scope some target situation analysis, which means the identifying of the features of the particular situations in which the students will use the foreign language, and also some discourse analysis, that is to say, the analysis of the language used in these situations. The source of information on the students' needs are students themselves, and both their teachers and their future employers. Methods of collecting the information include questionnaires, interviews and talks. All these procedures aim at maximization of the effectiveness of the teaching process.*

*The aim of this work is to present both a theoretical and a practical basis for the methodology which underpins courses of ESP, and explain what makes them different from courses of General English, as well as considering some of the methodological implications for language teachers.*

### 1. Introduction

After the collapse of communism in Poland in 1989, a great trend has been observed within the country in the learning of the English language, especially the English language necessary for academic or professional purposes. The reason for this has been related to the opportunities given to scholars and students to participate in international conferences and projects, as well as the opportunities for them to teach and to study at prominent universities abroad. The work market abroad has been opened up for Polish specialists in various professions. With the inclusion of Poland to the European Union in 2004, the borders were abolished and visa-free tourism developed rapidly. However, in order to be able to function actively in all these enterprises a good command not only of general English, but also specialist English, is required. This includes the knowledge of vocabulary and linguistic structures used in the target academic and work settings. Nowadays, in this era of global scientific and professional co-operation where English is the leading language both for communication and for the dissemination of knowledge, the need for the courses teaching of a specialist English language (ESP) is stronger than ever before. As a result of all this English for Specific Purposes has developed into being one of the most prominent branches of EFL.

There are two main areas in ESP: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which prepares students for studying in foreign universities, and English for Occupational/Professional Purposes (EOP/EPP), which prepares learners for functioning in a particular profession. It covers subjects ranging from engineering, law, medicine or computer science to tourism and business management. The general classification of ESP courses, according to the scientific disciplines or professional areas they cover, is shown in Figure 1.

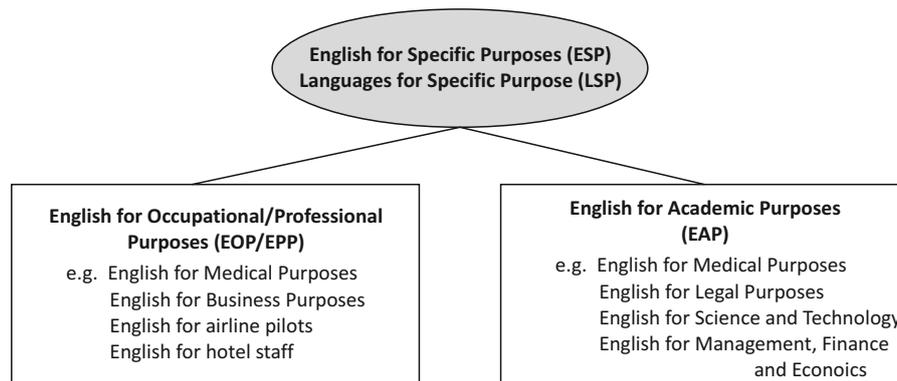


Fig 1. Classification of ESP courses

Preparing a student to function effectively in his/her present or future work depends on a well-designed and properly conducted course of ESP. Designing and conducting an ESP course for students at a university level is a challenge for English language teachers since they have to face a number of tasks related to the organization of ESP courses, such as: the determining of the aim of the course, the choice of the course content, as well as the choice of suitable teaching methods and techniques that will facilitate the acquisition of specialist vocabulary and language structures required for the target situations.

This paper presents a theoretical and practical basis for the methodology of teaching a foreign language for specific purposes. The specific aims of ESP courses and the features that differentiate them from courses of General English will be discussed and some methodological implications for language teachers which have arisen from these findings will be provided.

## 2. What is ESP?

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) define ESP as “an approach to language learning which is based on learner need. The foundation of all ESP is the simple question: Why does the learner need to learn a foreign language? ... ESP, then, is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning.”

Dudley Evans and St John (1998, p. 5) define ESP in terms of “absolute” and “variable” characteristics.

Absolute characteristics are as follows:

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners;
2. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
3. ESP is centred on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

Variable characteristics include the following:

1. ESP may be related to, or designed for, specific disciplines;
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English;
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
5. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system.

The above definition is the modified definition by Strevens (1988), from which the absolute characteristic that ESP “is in contrast with General English” was removed and some variable characteristics were added. The characteristic features of this approach as underlined by these authors are as follows: a learner needs analysis, a target situation analysis, which includes the identification of the features of the chosen discipline or occupation in which the students will use the foreign language, and discourse analysis,

which entails the analysis of the language used in situations which occur within the discipline. The use of these procedures aim at designing an ESP course that will prepare the learners for effective communication in situations which occur, or will occur, in their professional work and/or studies (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998, pp. 2-4; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, pp. 6-8; Johns and Price-Machado, 2001, p. 44).

### **What is the difference between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English?**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 53) answer this question quite simply, “in theory nothing, in practise a great deal”. In 1987 this view was quite true; teachers of General English courses rarely conducted needs analysis to find out what was their students' purpose for learning English. Nowadays, teachers are aware of the importance of needs analysis, and perhaps it is this that has been the greatest influence that the ESP approach has had on the teaching of General English. Through the choice of a suitable textbook or the choice to prepare one's own materials, either choice having been made on the basis of the assessment of their learners' needs, teachers can adjust the syllabus of their courses to their learners' aims.

The most important difference between ESP and General English lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English. ESP learners are usually adults who have already learnt some English language and possess some knowledge of the various content subjects which ESP teachers may not be familiar with. The ESP learners need the language in order to become equipped with professional communicative skills to be able to perform particular job-related tasks.

ESP focuses on language that is used in a real professional context rather than on teaching grammar structures and vocabulary unrelated to the students' mainstream subjects. Contrary to General English, which is frequently separated from the students' future situations, the content of ESP is integrated into an area of subject matter related to the students' present and future situations.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 4), ESP courses should reflect the methodology of the disciplines and professions for which they are designed. In relation to this, the designing of each ESP course should be preceded by an analysis of the students' needs concerning their future or present occupation or their plans for the future, as well as an analysis of the language used in their target situations. Methods of needs analysis suggested for language teachers by Johns and Price-Machado (2001, p. 49) include:

1. Questionnaires designed for students, academic teachers and employers, which should be filled in by them before the course, during the course and after finishing it.
2. Interviews of students, academic teachers and employers carried out by ESP teachers. Particularly useful are consultations with the academic teachers about the choice of syllabus, materials, students' tasks to be carried out, as well as the expectations of academic teachers and future employers from the language course.
3. “Job shadowing”, that is, the exploration by language teachers of the linguistic, cultural and pragmatic aspects of their students' present or future workplace.
4. Spoken or written notes made by the students before, during and after the ESP course. They can be used for revision of a current programme and for planning courses in the future.
5. Participation of language teachers in lectures, seminars and business meetings.

The preparation of an ESP course should also include an analysis of the students' linguistic situation and communicative skills at the beginning of the course (present situation analysis) and an analysis of their current needs which are related to their language learning process (learning needs analysis). The analysis of learning needs during the course may result in a changing of the teaching materials and a modification of the methods and techniques used by the teacher.

Having conducted the above mentioned analyses, the teacher must decide on:

- the teaching content, the texts and the various linguistic elements to be studied during the course;
- the syllabus;

- the teaching methods;
- the teaching materials;
- the extent to which particular skills should be acquired.

### 3. What is the role of the ESP teacher (practitioner)?

In teaching ESP the role of the teacher or ESP practitioner (Swales, 1988) is special, as he or she has to perform five important functions:

- teaching (didactics);
- designing the course, the choice and/or preparation of teaching materials;
- co-operation with academic teachers and/or employers;
- carrying out analyses of the students' needs, target situation and discourse;
- providing an evaluation of the students' progress and an evaluation of the course.

The number of tasks the ESP teachers have to perform also distinguish them from the General English teachers, who usually realize their programme on the basis of a chosen textbook. Dudley Evans and St John (1998) describe the role of the ESP teacher as being: 1) Teacher, 2) Collaborator, 3) Course designer and materials provider, 4) Researcher, and 5) Evaluator. The first role as “teacher” is the same as that of the General English teacher. It is the necessity for performing of the other four roles by the ESP teacher that makes for the difference between these two types of teaching. In order to meet the specific needs of the learners and adopt the methodology and functions of the target discipline, the ESP practitioner has to acquire the knowledge of the particular scientific discipline with which he or she is dealing, and understand the problems faced by the professions connected with that discipline. To achieve these goals, collaboration with field specialists and with those who are being taught on the course and who may well be more familiar with the specialized content of materials than the teacher, may well prove to be helpful. ESP teachers do not have to possess the specialist knowledge of the subject matter, but noticing that the students have already gained this knowledge, the teacher may ask them for clarification of some terminology and definitions of some concepts, creating, in this way, a real communicative situation.

ESP practitioners are often required to design courses and prepare teaching materials. One of the problems the ESP teachers face is the assessment and determination of how specific those materials should be. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 165) state that materials should cover a wide range of fields, arguing that the grammatical structures, functions, discourse structures, skills, and strategies of different disciplines are similar. However, some researchers (e.g. Hansen, 1988; Swales, 1990; Bhatia 1993, 2008; Hyland 2004; Paltridge, 2006) showed that this is not quite true, since not only the registers of various disciplines are different, but also the rhetoric organization and style of discourse are frequently unique for the given discipline. All these factors should be taken into account when selecting and evaluating the teaching materials (Tomlinson, 1998). Fortunately, in the field of medicine there are many textbooks which use the topics and the language directly related to this discipline. However, in order to teach the specificity of written academic discourse in this area, ESP teachers have to study the language of this type of discourse, and on the basis of it develop materials and design activities for students. It is this task where the ESP practitioner's role as “researcher” is fulfilled, which results in providing their students with appropriate materials.

The ESP practitioner's role as “evaluator” is related to his or her conducting an ongoing evaluation of the students' progress and the effectiveness of ESP courses.

### 4. What is the methodology of ESP?

In teaching ESP the choice of teaching methods and techniques depends primarily on the students' linguistic and communicative needs, on the specificity of the texts (discourse) used in the present and target situations, on the students' learning methods and strategies, and on the context of the specific language

teaching. From among the various contemporary didactic methods available, the choice of a content-based and a task-based language teaching approaches would seem to be the best ones for ESP courses, and exercises, such as those involving problem-solving, simulations, observations, role-plays, case studies, discourse analyses should reflect real situations and cases which the students encounter or will encounter in their everyday work (Richards and Rogers, 2001; Nunan, 2004). ESP methodology is presented in Figure 2.

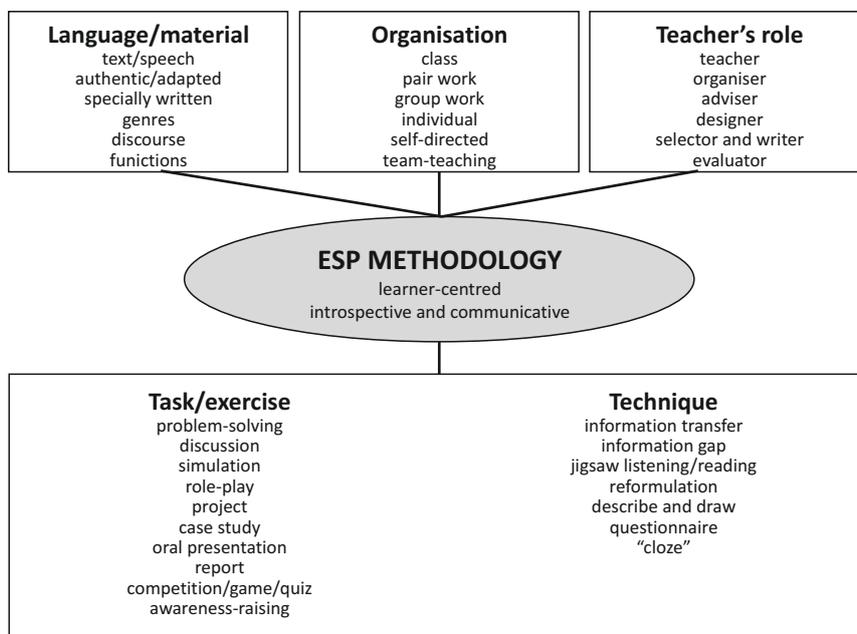


Fig. 2. ESP methodology

In ESP the most important goal for the student to achieve is the acquiring of the ability to produce texts which do not have to be totally free of grammar mistakes, but which should be, and this is, perhaps, more important, appropriate for each given situation. The teaching of grammar is not, therefore, the main aim of the language course. Teaching of grammar should be focused on the relationship between the form and function of the grammatical structures, and the criterion of their selection for teaching should be their sociolinguistic usability. Thus, ESP courses should be based on functional syllabuses which organize the teaching process around communicative functions or intentions expressed by, and prompted by, the various texts produced by the students (Richards, 2001).

In the teaching of vocabulary, better effects are achieved by the acquiring of whole lexical phrases (chunks) rather than individual words. The examples of these phrases are the ones commonly used in presentations, such as "*the table suggests that ...*"; "*as shown in the diagram ...*" (Dudley Evans and St John, 1998, p. 86).

ESP is also concerned with discourse analysis which deals with the analysis and description of stretches of speech or written texts, such as are found in conversations, paragraphs, or complete texts. Students analyze the subject-specific texts that they are required to read or to write, looking for the relationship between their function and structure, and also for their cohesion, for the pattern of the text's organization and for the use of discourse markers. Because of this, the teaching materials should provide appropriate patterns of discourse, such as reports, instructions, descriptions, formal letters, etc., the analysis of which will make the students aware of the features of these texts and will enable them to produce discourse adjusted to their own specific sociocultural context.

For the production of cohesive texts and for their perception, it is important to understand and use logical connectors such as *moreover*, *however*, *therefore*, structures of "cause and effect", and in spoken texts the use of discourse markers, such as "*well*", "*oh*", "*right*", "*I mean*" (Dudley Evans and St John, 1998,

p. 88).

“Hedging” or “vague” language are synonymous linguistic terms, which stand for the cautious expressing of the writer's or speaker's opinions, and also of cautious commitment to the statement he or she is making (Hyland, 2004, p. 109). This is a strategy that makes the utterance softer and, therefore, more polite and less exposed to criticism by a reader or an interlocutor. Hedging can be achieved by the use of some modals (*may, might, can, could*), some adjectives (*likely, probable*) and some verbs (*suggest, appear to, seem to, tend to*). For example, the sentence “*The ideal of building development is associated with the adherence to different policy ...*” is a definite statement, whereas the same sentence with the use of the verb “*tend to*”: “*The ideal of building development tends to be associated with the adherence to different policy goals ...*” is a cautious utterance (Jordan, 1997, p. 248).

## 5. Conclusions

The investigation of the characteristics of teaching of a foreign language for special purposes carried out in this paper, showed that its methodology is directly related to three factors, namely, to the learners' needs, to their target situation, and to the language used in this situation. An analysis of these factors enables the ESP teacher to establish teaching aims, choose an appropriate syllabus, make an appropriate choice of teaching content and employ suitable teaching methods and materials. Teaching ESP should be based on a functional syllabus, the purpose of which is to develop communicative competence in the area of the target profession. To achieve this, the best solution seems to be team teaching, that is, joint teaching by both the subject specialists and the English teachers. The specialists can be the source of information on matters concerned with the subject discipline, they can provide materials and be guest lecturers, while the language teachers can explain the linguistic problems to their students and train them in the various communicative skills in the foreign language which is being targeted.

Teaching ESP is a challenge to the teacher, who should possess the knowledge not only of language teaching methodology, but also of their students' specialist disciplines. Moreover, the ESP teacher should be flexible in undertaking decisions and remain open to the suggestions and opinions from the students.

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## Teaching English as a Second Language at the Primary level

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### Introduction to the Study

Public schools across India have experienced a rapid increase of English Language Learners (ELLs) with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and disparities in their educational background. Elementary and secondary teachers are presented with myriad challenges on how to meet the educational needs of ELLs using traditional methods of instruction such as lectures, worksheets, and paper-and-pencil tests. Public school educators also lack adequate professional development on working with a diverse population of students. For improving English proficiency and academic performance for these students Public school educators are experiencing difficulties when it comes to educating ELLs within the mainstream classrooms where there are limited resources to increase English-language acquisition drives a need for a more comprehensive understanding of students learning English as a second language and the effect upon their education of learning English as a second language. Many teachers are not equipped with adequate knowledge about ELLs or about what constitutes effective instruction for this population.

### Purpose of the Study

Teachers need to have a broad range of knowledge and skills to effectively create a classroom community that is supportive of learning for diverse students. If teachers are going to be successful in teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom, they need to understand the principles of second-language learning. Professional development on understanding SLA can improve the ability of mainstream teachers in serving culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Hamayan, 1995)<sup>1</sup>. Secondary purpose was to discover if there is a need for professional development in schools and colleges to teach rural back ground students of ELLs through observation of instructional practices and strategies used in the classroom.

### Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was, “How do ESL teachers perceive the inclusion of rural back ground students in the class room? This research question was followed by a series of secondary research questions.

1. How do educators perceive their preparation and knowledge about working with ELLs?
2. How do educators perceive professional development that is geared toward effectively teaching ELLs?
3. How do educators perceive the role of APSICHE/AICTE to support framing effective syllabus for ELLs?
4. How do educators perceive teaching English to low literary level rural back ground student?

### Significance of the Study

The identification and implementation of effective strategies, approaches and methods of second-language learning and successful program models are essential in preparing teachers to work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom. According to Commins and Miramontes<sup>2</sup>, teachers often used instructional strategies which are geared mainly to native English speakers oftentimes leaving second-language learners behind. Furthermore, some teachers tend to water-down the curriculum, have low expectations, English

language acquisition along with academic language for second-language learners. In order to prepare educators for continuous change, connect theory to practice, and make improvements in practice, professional development is essential for educators across the nation. This study supported the assumptions that educators need to become more culturally responsive by changing their attitudes, pedagogy, and continuously participate in professional development to support the learning of ELLs.

### **Definition of Terms**

**English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** Students who has English as second language.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)** A program used to teach English to students with limited English or no English speaking skills.

**English Language Learners (ELLs)** Students with limited English proficiency and who are receiving ESL services.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

#### Assumptions

There were two assumptions made in this research study. The first assumption was increased professional development for educators would lead to a better understanding of ELLs learning and acquiring a second language, further increasing teachers' awareness of intellectual differences would lead to using effective instructional strategies needed to successfully teach second-language learners. Second, it was assumed the educators who participated in the study would provide unbiased answers to the questions. This was also a limitation.

#### Limitations

Potential limitations of this study included the use of a small sample size, possible biased findings, and the use of one-on-one interviews. The sample size included 10 regular education teachers in one school and in one Engineering college. This limited the researcher's ability to make broad statements or generalizations.

### **Teacher's Perceptions and Beliefs about ELLs**

Gay<sup>3</sup> declared, "Culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration, or performance assessment; culture determines how we think, believe, and behave and in turn, can affect how we teach" (p. 8). Furthering this assertion, Spindler and Spindler<sup>4</sup> believed teachers bring their personal cultural backgrounds to the classroom as well as students, unconsciously constructing meanings of individuals or group behaviors of rejection, acceptance, conflict and alienation. Teachers with more experience in diversity training appeared to have a more positive viewpoint toward language diversity as represented by the four constructs in the study. Additionally, a combination of diversity training and language ability appeared to alter teacher attitudinal beliefs which suggested that all teachers need to be exposed to diversity issues and acquire some degree of second language proficiency. Another important finding of the study indicated a teacher's years of teaching experience did not guarantee positive behavior toward any of the constructs related to educating ELLs.

Ten teachers working in school, college and in one soft skills training institute had been surveyed and focus group interviews were used to determine teachers' perceived efficacy and preparedness for teaching ELLs, and their willingness to develop more skills to address ELLs learning needs. Interview results showed in regards to a teacher preparation course only 10% of teachers had language acquisition training. Teachers did not have a serious concern for teaching ELLs since they had received previous training, but reflected curriculum in teacher preparation programs needs to be updated. For ELLs lessons were geared toward the inclusion of all the major works in English literature.

### Challenges of Educating ELLs

(a) Lacking parent support due to work, language and academic barriers in supporting the children. (b) inability to communicate with parents and families about school standards, homework, or other pertinent information; (c) insufficient time to plan lesson or collaborate with other teachers, provide individualized help for ELLs, and time was taken away when students attend ESOL; (d) variability of students' academic skills, backgrounds, and English-language proficiency; and (e) lack of appropriate tools, materials and support from local, state, and federal policies. Teachers felt a need for professional development on how to improve their teaching for ELLs and the best format for their learning would be by observing skilled teachers. The findings also revealed the more preparation the teachers had; the more confident they were to effectively teach ELLs. The following suggestions are recommended. (a) Incorporate a theme-based curriculum; (b) build on students' background experiences, cultures, and languages; (c) build up confidence in students where they can have a significant role in their learning. Limited English students struggle academically in content areas and are not proficient in the English language. Therefore, many teachers underestimate ELLs' ability to learn in a regular academic mainstream setting. These students are often marginalized and given meaningless assignments. To better serve ELLs and help them build on their academic language and concepts, teachers can use a thematic instruction approach to teach ELLs content and academic language simultaneously. Thematic units can be designed and given to slow learners. Educators are able to use the students' experiences to create storytelling pieces, poems, and different genres of writing. This practice also creates a warm, positive of ELLs. Although student collaboration is an effective strategy used to increase learning for ELLs, collaboration among colleagues also has a profound impact on teaching, learning, and a student's academic success. Collaboration is often viewed negatively because teachers feel they do not have enough time to collaborate with colleagues and many prefer working alone. Research has shown that collaboration among teachers can be an influential instrument for professional development and institution's, improvement. Because many teachers today are not professionally trained to work with ELLs and do not have the proper skills to increase academic language or language proficiency for foreign language learners collaboration can be starting point to gain insight and learn teaching strategies. Cooperative learning is used by educators to allow students to engage interactively in the learning process with their peers. Students rely on each other for support of his or her ideas, learning, and understanding of a specific lesson. Students develop social and learning skills in classrooms where they are engaged in well-planned cooperative work by participating in cooperative groups. ELLs could pair up with peer buddies to help them learn English words, learn the rules and routines of the class syllabus for implifying information, providing a variety of leveled texts, and integrating technology. Teachers guide, model, reiterate, and paraphrase to support instruction as students reach independence and mastery of a given skill. Teachers strengthen and enrich linguistics so that ELLs can successfully complete a given task.

Administrators, teachers, and community members must participate in shared decision making on how to serve the population of their schools and identify the needs of the children. Year after year, many schools are attempting to implement new instructional programs that have proven to be effective, but many of the programs are not used long enough to evaluate its efficacy. Listed below are a few exemplars of how educators and schools from different states have effectively incorporated cooperative learning, collaboration (team teaching), and the use of an integrated thematic approach within the curriculum. The colleges and schools must employ a new paradigm through the use of integrated thematic units. There will be implementation of a one year standards-based integrated thematic arts pilot program where content subjects were integrated through music, drama, visual arts, and creative movement. After continuous and consistent collegiality, planning, organizing, and building community relationships, the program will be a success resulting in improvements in teacher enthusiasm, increased parental involvement, a boost in student socialization skills.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the significance of knowledge and understanding of SLA in addition to how ELLs acquire the English language and academic content language. Language acquisition theories vary in scope particularly having distinctions centered on the realm of nature or nurture. According to Long<sup>5</sup> (1990), “Second language acquisition is a multidimensional phenomenon with many learner and environmental variables determining variation in developmental processes and product; theories that attempt to explain language acquisition by recourse to a single factor lack face validity” (p. 661).

**Stage 1: The silent/receptive or preproduction stage.** During this stage, students experience a “silent period” in which conversation is minimal and gesturing, pointing, or simple yes or no responses are given to communicate. This stage can last up to 6 months.

**Stage 2: The beginning production stage.** Students are able to use and understand receptive words. Students are also able to provide short answers or phrases and comprehend new material.

**Stage 3: The speech emergence stage.** At this stage, students are able to speak about 3,000 words, use simple sentences and ask simple questions with some grammatical errors.

**Stage 4: The intermediate language proficiency stage.** Students begin to develop close to 6,000 words, share their thoughts, produce more conversation, and make complex sentences.

**Stage 5: The advanced language proficiency stage.** It usually takes students 5–7 years to reach this level of proficiency. During this stage, students have developed academic language proficiency and are completing grade-level assignments with occasional support. When teachers of English understand the stages of language development, they are able to assist and monitor a student's progress along with providing instructional supports that are favorable to the ELLs' developmental stage. Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill. Real language acquisition develops slowly, and speaking skills emerge significantly later than listening skills, even when conditions are perfect. The best methods are therefore those that supply “comprehensible input” in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are “ready,” recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. Krashen's<sup>6</sup> theory of SLA consisted of five main hypotheses: acquisition–learning hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. The acquisition–learning hypothesis incorporates two fundamental theories of how individuals learn languages that are independent but related. The acquired system is the unconscious aspect of language acquisition. Within this system are natural communication, where speakers use utterances and less structured communication. The learned system is a more formal, conscious process to learning. For example, learning the rules of syntax and grammar would be a part of the learned system.

The second aspect of Vygotsky's<sup>7</sup> theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where learners create the new language through social interaction. This concept explains the distance between the actual development level of independent problem solving for a child and the level of potential problem solving under guidance of an adult or collaboration with peers.

According to Jameson<sup>8</sup>, language acquisition theories have disclosed four key principles that can be directly applied to the mainstream classroom for ELLs as well as native English speakers: (a) increase comprehensibility—make academic content more understandable by providing cues, prompts, visuals, hands on activities and cooperative learning experiences; (b) increase interaction—allow students to develop their language skills through direct communication via peer learning, teacher/student conferences, or project based learning; (c) increase thinking/study skills and develop learners' higher order thinking skills through modeling, reinforcing study skills, and setting high expectations; and (d) use a students' native language to increase comprehensibility.

Although various instructional models are used in schools across India and bilingual education is not a common method of instruction, students should be given an opportunity to listen to books on audio, use bilingual dictionaries to support the academic language. There has been a vast amount of research on the best practices of educating ELLs, but there are still many remaining questions on how to educate the increasing number of second-language learners coming into schools. Through substantive professional development teachers must be properly trained, provided with resources, and given opportunities to collaborate with ESL teachers, coaches, or have a chance to view a model classroom using techniques to teach ELLs academic language; this is the only way to leave no child behind.

### **Methodology**

It describes the selected research design and method of study focusing on the experiences of English teachers instructing ELLs of rural back ground in the mainstream classroom and whether teachers are being provided adequate professional development to effectively teach the growing population of ELLs. The study addressed teachers' experiences, issues relating to their preparation, skills, and knowledge of working with ELLs of rural back ground sought to find how teachers perceive professional development geared toward effectively preparing ELLs, and whether professional development affected teacher's perceptions of ELLs and the instructional strategies used in the mainstream classroom.

### **Research Questions**

#### Primary Research Question

How do school and college teachers perceive the inclusion of English language learners in the mainstream classroom?

#### Secondary Research Questions

1. How do educators perceive their preparation and knowledge of working with English language learners?
2. How do educators perceive professional development that is geared toward effectively teaching ELLs?
3. How do educators perceive the role of the school district or the school administrator to support improving instructional strategies to teach ELLs?
4. How do educators perceive collaboration efforts with the ESL teacher?

This qualitative study was the best means for exploring the experiences of teachers and their experiences of educating ELLs of rural back ground in the mainstream classroom. The following questionnaire is framed to integrate the opinions of teachers.

1. What are the perceptions of regular education teachers on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom?
2. How has professional development impacted your ability to support the academic achievement of ELLs?
3. How do you perceive professional development geared toward instructional strategies for ELLs?
4. How has school/college administration, the education system, or the ESOL teacher contributed in supporting you with instructional strategies for ELLs?

Formal one-on-one interviews were conducted using four open-ended questions in order to obtain an understanding of the lived experience of teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Second, observations were conducted in the mainstream classrooms. Observation data was recorded using descriptive field notes describing how the teacher interacted with the ELLs, how or if the students were grouped by their language proficiency, describing the resources or interventions used to assist ELLs with vocabulary or academic language, and describe the atmosphere of the classroom whether it was a caring environment with

multicultural books or pictures displayed.

### **Limitations**

A limitation to this study was it was conducted in one school which has limited strength. There was no attempt to compare findings from the other schools with a low population of ELLs. Another limitation to the study was the small sample of participants. With a larger sample of participants, there was an opportunity to explore more views and experiences of educators teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The results of the study provided a generalized interpretation based on small scale research and results are particular to only the participants' perceptions and experiences of educating ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this study indicated there is a need for professional development for educators teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom. It is recommended that the study be conducted at other schools with low density population of ELLs to determine if the themes are supported with a larger number of participants.

Another recommendation is the development of consistent collaboration between the ESOL teacher and the regular education teacher. Chenoweth<sup>9</sup> posited, "Teachers who work collaboratively help guard the quality of the teaching force in ways that are impossible when teachers work in isolation" (p. 39). Furthermore, successful schools reduce teacher isolation by providing time for teachers to work and learn together. Collaborative teams of teachers help strengthen the quality of teaching and ensure greater consistency across grade levels.

### **Future Implications**

This study does not offer simple solutions to problems, but it does enlighten the need for more substantial professional development for educators and increased flexibility when it comes to policy implementation. The purpose of this research was to explicitly bring about change in federal and state policies, illuminate the need for curricular flexibility, and promote teacher training to teach ELLs through iterations of policy reform. A further implication for future study is a qualitative study of principal preparedness geared toward increasing academic achievement for ELLs. There is a wealth of research studies on perceptions and perspectives of elementary and secondary educators teaching ELLs. More research on the principals' roles, ideas, and beliefs concerning the education of ELLs would inform schools if their administrators were in need of training to support ELLs. A final implication for further study would be a comparative analysis of language assistance programs used. The growth of demand for English language in the context of globalization in various schools/colleges in India may be using to support their ELLs.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the experiences of English teachers who work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Additionally, the study examined whether there was a need for professional development to provide teachers with effective instructional strategies to teach ELLs.

The projected increase of ELLs schools/colleges combined with educational reforms and lack of teacher training will bring about more challenges for educators. All stakeholders must take a stand for social change. Educators must be committed to improving educational outcomes for all students, and must expand their thinking about the indicators of success as more than standardized tests.

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## Relevance of Using Culture-based Texts in English Language Classroom

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**Abstract:** *Learning a language does not mean learning to memorize the inventory of lexical items of the language, or mastering the rules governing the grammar. It involves using a language in communicating effectively and appropriately in a given socio-cultural setting. Introduction of culture and instruction through different aspects of culture are found to be very effective in a language class room. This could be achieved using materials based on different socio-cultural aspects, at different levels and with all the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The study investigates the influence of language through its culture, where it exposes the learner to the culture. It is also one of the challenges faced by teachers of language in a multilingual and multicultural setting, where exposure to different cultures is a powerful tool in a class room. The success of learning a language in an immersion setting has long been acknowledged by sociolinguists and researchers on Language Teaching alike. The study analyzes the advantages and the problems in using culture-based material in learning English as a second language (ESL) class-room, and the influence of such an instruction on the learners.*

**Key words:** immersion, instruction, monocultural, motivation, multilingual.

### Introduction

One of the properties of language is **Cultural transmission**. Children learn to speak language or languages used in the environment in which they are reared. They do not inherit their language from their parents as they inherit their physical features. Languages are passed on by cultural transmission. Many of the world's languages are endangered due partly to interruptions in transmission across the generations. Animal communication systems by contrast, are largely instinctive. The sounds produced by domesticated animals are exactly similar to those which are produced by the untamed ones, regardless of whether they are reared at home in Europe or in New Zealand. (Mc.Gregor, 2004).

Wardhaugh (2006) defines language thus: "...a language is what the members of a particular society speak" and that, ".....speech is almost any society can take many different forms,..." He believes that language and society are not independent and the definition of language includes in it, a reference to society. Sapir (1929) opined that the relationship between language and culture as close so one couldn't be appreciated without knowledge of the other. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf brought attention to the relationship between language, thought, and culture. Their hypothesis, though not supported with empirical evidence, lead to two main ideas. First, a theory of linguistic determinism that states that the language you speak determines the way that you will interpret the world around you. Second, a weaker theory of linguistic relativism that states that language merely influences your thoughts about the real world.

Culture is a belief ingrained in people. Everyone identifies himself with one culture or another. The connection between culture and language dates back to the classical period, to the ancient Greeks. Language is a vehicle for transmitting culture from one region to another in the world. People speaking different languages can be brought together as in a multicultural-monolingual situation (as in UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand), multilingual-monocultural countries (like certain regions of Oman) or a multicultural-multilingual setting (as in a few East Asian countries). It is maintained that language is the most important carrier of a culture. Therefore, understanding a language implies understanding its culture

and both these domains are independent of each other in acquisition. Some scholars suggest that language involves a few specific cultural traits like register and dialect, reflecting regional and social traits, depending on the individual choice of the variety to be employed. The complexity of different cultures can be observed in the complexity of varieties of a language used by individuals or groups of speakers within the same society.

Nevertheless, one disadvantage of a monolingual situation is the lack of exposure to the concepts of language, structure and patterns, in the target language. Mother Tongue is acquired and a Second Language (L2) is learnt through formal instruction. So, first the concepts and then the patterns and structures of L2 need to be learnt, which is a new learning experience in a monolingual and monocultural setting. The difficulty is doubled in a non-immersion set up. A multilingual set up, on the other hand, has the advantage of exposing the learner to varied lexicon and patterns of more than one language simultaneously, apart from the learners' Mother Tongue. As a result, there are clearer concepts and compared structures or the patterns in the new language being learnt formally, either as an additional or a foreign language. On the contrary, a non-immersion setting in a multilingual-multicultural situation makes language learning exercise an easier task to accomplish.

### **Culture and Language learning**

Many studies on language and linguistics have shown that English is no longer a foreign language, nor is it an exponent of the British culture (Y.Kachru: 1989). Studies have also proved that English has been accepted as a native language in many countries and has been adapted to suit their needs in the system of speech and writing. English has gained the place as the global language of communication, of technology and of different fields of education, of society and commerce and has thus integrated itself into the culture and life of people. There is no denying the fact that, the culture of learning itself has been modified with the introduction of English as the language of instruction among the non-native speakers.

The learner of a language has to imbibe its culture so that he could belong to the social group in which the language is spoken. A language is learnt better through its culture, where the focus is more on the 'how' than the 'what' that is being learnt. In other words, when the 'content' of learning is familiar to the learner, the medium becomes easier to acquire. Therefore, instruction of language can be brought about more effectively in a class-room through different socio-cultural aspects of the learners' language, through a careful selection of instructional material. The pedagogic implications of culture and civilizations in a language learning situation have long been emphasized by sociolinguists (Gumperz, 1996).

Among the important variables in learners, Gardner and Macintyre (1992) quote motivation as the key variable. Every individual has the innate ability to acquire and learn a language through different modes of instruction. One of the major factors contributing to learning is motivation. Motivation can be intrinsic, depending on the personal needs or interests of the learner (Ellis, 1994). Again, intrinsic motivation can arise out of the learner's desire to be identified as a part of the language community. This could arise from the fact that the learner wishes to imbibe the culture, particularly, if the learner is living in the same country where the target language is being used. The motivation can also be extrinsic, resulting from the learning situation, and the learning environment. Motivation, thus, plays an important role in bringing about either extremely positive or extremely negative results in language learning

### **Language and Culture**

Culture is defined on the basis of a set of beliefs connected to religion, tradition, values and societal practices. Intercultural and ethnic differences are bridged by educating on common principles of language and linguistic 'commonality' i.e., for bridging cultural gaps. The link between language and culture dates back to the Greek civilization, where people spoke a language which was completely different and unintelligible. In a way we can consider these languages as the beginnings or the rudiments of several languages which are operating today in our society, and the much diversity which exist among them.

Historians and anthropologists have evidence for these languages. How these came to be used in the present forms in different parts of the world today is beyond the scope of the present study. What is understood is that the culture and language are inter-related, although they are not dependent on each other. That is, even within the same culture, people speak different languages and it is also possible that people, who share a common language, follow different cultures.

### **Effectiveness of using culture-based material in a class-room**

Ramna Tang (2004) talks about the place of culture in the Foreign Language (FL) Class room and investigates the motivation to language learning. Tang's reflections about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in FL curriculum, leads us to consider the importance and implications of 'culture' in language learning, either as FL or SL. In this article, I have attempted to present the results of an analysis of authentic teaching material as an evidence of relevance of using culture-based texts in a language class, with particular reference to multilingual-monocultural setting.

When we discuss language learning at the tertiary level, the learners are predominantly adults learning English for different purposes. The most challenging factor for teachers is the selection of instructional material to be used in adult learners' classroom, especially when the learners are a mixed-gender group. A few problems that we would face in this situation is the necessity of knowing the cultural background of the learners and the cultural domain in which the learning is being imparted.

There is a marked difference in the situation of a FL classroom and a Second Language (SL) classroom in terms of 'culture'. In an FL situation, the learner has to be introduced to the new culture and this knowledge of the culture, along with language instruction, familiarizes one with the basics of the language, vocabulary, expressions and usage. While, in a Second Language situation, the learner has to be exposed to the varieties of language and the variables of dialect, style, register and so on because, using a language entails using it appropriately in the new culture. The learner should be able to integrate himself with the language and culture, by identifying the variables in language and selecting carefully what is most suitable for his needs and fulfills his purpose of learning the language. Culture based material does not refer to samples of music and dance or arts alone, but it includes the aspects of customs and cultural practices.

When we talk about language variation, differences between uses and users do not consist only of difference in pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, but also in 'cultures of speaking'. Some cultures follow a set system of linguistic norms. In some cultures, for instance, addressing by the title or the surname distances the communicators from each other. Some other cultures find it a symbol of formal address. One could say that using the first name indicates closeness between the individuals. In most languages in India and some languages in Asia, there are distinct pronouns to be used with social ranks, age and gender, either to show respect or formality. Such linguistic specifications are extremely important to acquire as a part of acquiring a new language, for the purpose of communication. Another dimension of learning culture through language is the use of 'taboos' and 'euphemisms'. There are certain taboos that are viewed with awe, when used in common situations. There are special ways of speaking to people of lower social class, children, youngsters and the people of the older generations. Some languages require using particular address forms with the opposite gender. These are linguistic variables that the learner must familiarize himself with, along with the vocabulary and grammar.

The most effective method of doing this is by exposing the learners to varied culture-based texts at the advanced levels of learning. A major role is played by the selection of texts used based on the social structure, principles and the values practiced in the language learning situation. While extreme caution is required in choosing the texts based on the same culture as the learner in a 'monocultural-monolingual' situation, at the preliminary stages of learning, it is equally important to generate interest in exploring new cultures by exposing the advanced levels of learners, or the monocultural-monolingual' situation of learners. If there is a freedom to choose the material to suit the learners' needs and interests, it is equally important not to intimidate them with unfamiliar cultures in the early stages of language learning. This is

important because, if we are learning a new language, it might be useful to learn about the culture as well, as language cannot be dissociated from its culture.

Contemporary studies on language and linguistics are using different methods and disciplines from sciences and sociology and anthropology and are being applied widely in language learning/teaching as well. Teaching language through race, religion, culture or ethnic aspects is uncomfortable for the teachers if the text contains the references to certain cultural practices. In such cases, it is quite a challenge for the teachers to draw the learners' attention away from the content and towards the language of the reading text. The age, gender and the sociocultural environment brings in a few limitations into the class room. With the result, it becomes risky to discuss sensitive topics if the context so demands, needless to say, if the learners are from a monocultural and traditional social background.

The learners can either be too curious about the new cultural details to focus on the language, or, resent the cultural differences reflected in the texts. Consequently, both the situations lead to diverting the learners' attention away from language. Thus, the instructional material to be chosen texts has to take into consideration the expected learning outcomes of the language pedagogy, the socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the class. With the practice of interactive class room methods, the balance between teaching and guiding or facilitating needs to be maintained. Therefore, the learners' activities would be a discussion on the topics related to the text used for instruction, integrating the learners' culture with the language elements would be the most effective method. Some languages have two pronouns corresponding to 'you' singular and plural, where the plural has both plurality and honorific usage, unlike in the case of English. Similar is the case with several Indian languages. In the absence of a neutral term, the noun has to fall into one of the two categories of natural general, regardless of whether the noun refers to a living or a non-living object.

Educationists and researchers on language teaching (Nunan, 1999) have often emphasized the fact that a reading text must be culturally appropriate for use in a class-room, even if the focus is on learning the languages skills and not on the content. What is appropriate and acceptable in one culture could be completely forbidden in another. With the result that, there is resistance among the learners to use the vocabulary and expressions introduced in the class-room. This attitude becomes increasingly difficult in the case of a mixed group of learners, in terms of social groups, gender and age.

Use of texts based on the same culture as the learner's social milieu, with which the learner is familiar, has its own advantages in teaching/learning the language skills. It assures, to a large extent, a positive learning atmosphere, a congenial learning environment, interactive, responsive and a lively session, leading to successful learning. Texts based on the different socio-cultural aspects of the learner can bring about a better learning of the language skills. This is because, being equipped with the knowledge of the 'what' of the lesson, the learner 'needs' to find the relevant vocabulary and expressions. This stems out of the urge of the learner to be able to communicate all the ideas that are present in his mother tongue. This need to express one's views is the motivating factor in a class room, which would bring about better output and with a positive attitude. On the other hand, introducing texts based on different cultures progressively and comparatively can also help search for new vocabulary and new terms for unfamiliar cultures and social practices. This can increase the power of their expression in the target language. In this sense, text materials based on other cultures can be of immense use in teaching/learning new vocabulary items.

The benefit of using culture-based texts in a language class room can be two-fold.

- (i) It makes an effective tool to bridge cultural differences in the class-room of heterogeneous group.
- (ii) It can add to learning new linguistic features at the lexical, morphological and syntactic levels whatever be the skill aimed at.

For instance, a sample text used in the Arabic learners of English as L2 class, can find the content objectionable because it is culturally inappropriate. But the text, if adapted to suite the socio-cultural setting

of the learners, can be an interesting Reading passage as a dialogue form, Grammar and lexical items. The activities that are administered in the classroom depend on the planning, the level of the group, the aptitude of the learners, the language proficiency level of the learners, size of the class, the background knowledge, learning objectives, attitude and motivation of the learners, need of the learners, the time availability, authenticity of the material, teacher's ability to facilitate the learning and finally the learning outcomes and so on. The activities have to be selected and planned appropriately and effectively to suit the level and the needs of the learners.

### Objective of the present study

The objective of the present study is to analyze the importance of selecting instructional material in a language class in terms of how much or how little of culture needs to be used in language learning. It examines the advantages and the disadvantages of using a few cultural issues based on a study of a sample group of non-English speaking learners.

### Data, Subjects and Methodology

The data for the investigation consists of samples from five texts drawn from the material used for the Beginners, Pre-intermediate and Intermediate levels of the Foundation Program in English language. The subjects are three groups of Arabic speaking ESL learners, who belong to the Southern region of the Sultanate of Oman. Each group has twenty-five learners).

The study extended over a period of two semesters and the three tests, viz., Test One (A), Test Two (A) and the Final Exam (A), consisted of culture-based passages and different tasks at the end of the first semester. This was followed by a second session of three tests, viz., Test One (B), Test Two (B) and the Final Exam (B), consisted of culture-based passages and tasks, at the end of the second semester. Every semester is a program of 26-30 credit hours allotted for English language skills, including the study skills.

### Results and Discussion

**Text 1:** An extract from *Bridging Cultures - Modernization, women's rights, traditional dress...ask any question you like at the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding's weekly breakfast, as Kathryn Roberts discovers* (An interview) (For Intermediate level)

1. A lot of young western men wear the red and white scarf around their neck as a fashion statement.  
Do Muslims find this offensive?  
A. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you think it's fair that women can't have more than one husband?  
B. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When you see foreign women with their arms and legs exposed, do you find it immodest, even offensive?  
C. We do think it's a little immodest, but it depends on how much flesh is being shown.

#### Tasks:

- Read the questions and match the responses.
- Gap filling.
- Comprehension questions.

Ex: Do you feel that women should \_\_\_\_\_ ?

**Comments:** The above text is best suited for skill-based language learning rather than the content. For instance, vocabulary like *scarf, fashion, offensive, fair, expose, immodest* and so on with different connotations. However, Task 1 is considered culturally inappropriate being content-based, while Task 2

vocabulary and expressions like gap-filling, finding the synonyms and antonyms can prove to be effective.

**Text 2:** An extract from *Breakfast like a King*

(For Beginners' Level)

There is an old saying: "Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dine like a poor man." In most countries, dinner is the biggest meal of the day. So why does this saying tell us to eat a large breakfast instead? The answer is in the word "breakfast" itself. It means the "breaking" of a "fast", or a long period without eating. The time between dinner and breakfast can be more than twelve hours, so the meal that breaks your fast is very important. It should be healthy and nutritious. Also, unlike your evening meal, the food you consume for breakfast gives you the energy you need during the most active part of your day. Researchers have found evidence that eating a big breakfast can improve your **concentration** and **mood**, and **boost** your energy level.

Experts agree that it's important to eat a good breakfast, and to have your main meal earlier in the day. However, not enough people are **heeding** their advice. In the U.S., for example, many people skip breakfast or have only a cup of coffee in the morning. About two-thirds of the population still has their main meal in the evening. Many popular dinner foods, such as steak and French fries, are heavy in fat, which makes people feel **lethargic**.

Other countries follow healthier patterns of eating. In Mexico, families generally have a light breakfast, and eat their largest meal at 2 p.m. It might include an appetizer, soup, pasta, fish, meat with a salad, dessert and finally tea or coffee. In Switzerland, the main meal is also eaten in the middle of the day, and usually contains a lot of fresh vegetables and fruits; the Swiss **generally** eat meat only two or three times a week.

The best breakfast is one that contains plenty of protein and carbohydrates to give you the energy for your daily activities. Two examples of such a breakfast are eggs and whole wheat toast, or cereal with milk. Of course, there are many different kinds of healthy breakfasts. In Japan, people like to have rice, soup, and an egg in the morning; a typical Arab breakfast is bread, cheese and olives. There are many **wholesome** foods you can choose—the important thing is to start your day with breakfast, and get the nutrition you need.

### Tasks:

#### **1. Reading Comprehension**

##### **A. Circle the correct word or phrase to complete each statement.**

Ex: The most important meal of the day is (breakfast/lunch/dinner).

##### **B. Answer True (T) or False (F).**

Ex: Breakfasts in countries around the world are very similar.

##### **C. Critical Thinking: Look at these breakfasts. Which ones are healthy, according to the article?**

1. a ham sandwich and a glass of milk.
2. toast and coffee
3. a banana and an orange
4. soup and tea
5. yogurt, bread and an apple.

#### **2. Vocabulary Comprehension**

##### **A. For each group, circle the word that does not belong. The words in *italics* are vocabulary items from the reading.**

Ex: 1. concentration          attention          focus          daydreaming

##### **B. Complete each sentence using a word in *italics* from A. Be sure to use the correct form of the word.**

Ex: 1. It takes a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ and skill to translate from one language to another as people are speaking.

**3. Vocabulary Skill**

- A. Complete the chart with the appropriate noun, verb and adjective forms. (Word families).  
 B. Now complete the article below with the appropriate word from the chart.  
 C. Do you drink coffee? Do you think it's bad for your health? Discuss your opinion with a partner. Use the words from the chart to help you.

**Comments:** The preceding text, when used with a mixed group of Arabic learners of English as L2 can prove to be interesting for the learners, due to the familiarity of the cultural aspects discussed, in addition to being culturally acceptable. Such a text can be used comfortably for the content-based material and for the linguistic value it carries in a language class. Thus, the text can be used to teach adjectives, adverbs and other culture-related vocabulary to the tune of at least 10% of the content.

**Text 3: Let us celebrate Weddings -Wedding Traditions and Customs around the world**

(Images followed by a text in the form of a few points).

Example:

- What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'weddings'?
- Why are weddings important?
- Do you think people like weddings?
- Do you think it's easy or difficult to plan your wedding?
- What's the best and worst wedding you've ever been to?
- Do you think weddings in other countries are better than those in your country?

Tasks: Answer the following questions:

Ex: What is special about weddings in your city/country?

**Comments:** The third text can use two cultures simultaneously to show the richness of the learners' culture at the same time familiarizing one with a new culture. In terms of content, the text can make the learners uncomfortable to respond to the task under example (Q.1-6) in a predominantly monocultural setting like the situation being studied. But the passage can bring about learning of a new culture in a multicultural and multilingual situation. Linguistically viewed, the text can be used effectively for teaching comparison of adjectives and adverbs.

**Text 4:** An extract from *No word for anxiety* by Psychologists Aruna Mahtani and Afreen Huq look back with mixed feelings on their special project for Bangladeshi women in Britain.

(For Intermediate level)

We decided to pilot a project involving Bangladeshi women from Tower Hamlets in the East end of London. The largest Bangladeshi community in Britain lives in Tower Hamlets---at least 40,000 people. Most **migrated** in the 1970s. **Adjustment** was difficult and the **transition** from a **rural** to an inner-city setting was hardest for women. They found themselves confined indoors, **isolated** and without the **networks** of **social support** they were used to in Bangladesh.

... We wanted to see how normal Western approaches to **anxiety** problems might work when applied across cultures. Our first step was to get an anxiety management package translated. No easy task: there is no colloquial expression in Bangla for 'anxiety'. We used two approximations, dushchinta 'undue worries' and udhbeg 'a word generally used only in its written form. We found that a Western model across cultures has potential. But it needs **political**, **financial** and personal **commitment**. And the lack of response by the

authorities in Tower Hamlets leads us to conclude that 'institutional' **racism** is very much alive and kicking. ...But the rapport between us and the women in the group was instantaneous, probably because we share not just a language and culture but a common experience of racism. The importance of having bilingual and ethnic staff is clear.

(Aruna Mahtani and Afreen Huq are clinical psychologists. Aruna Mahtani is co-author of *Transcultural Counselling in Action*).

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**Task:** Complete the summary of the following text choosing the words from the list.

**Text 5: (a) Festival of Lights** (An extract)

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“During Tihar,.....On the day of the festival, people worship cows. “.....The cow is the symbol of wealth and is the most holy animal for Hindus.”

**(b) Turning Fifteen: Ceremony and Celebration**

“.....This birthday is special because it celebrates that a girl is not a child anymore and has become a woman. It is a very important day for many young girls, a day they dream about for a long time.”

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### **Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Do you think a girl becomes a woman at age 15? Why or why not? In your culture, at what age does a girl become an adult? At what age does a boy become an adult? Do you think people actually reach adulthood at different times? When do you know that a boy or girl has matured to adulthood?
2. Turning a certain age and becoming an adult is an important passage, or time of change, in life. What are some other important passages in life? Which ones have you already experienced? How did they change your life?

**Comments:** A text of the type presented above, can be culturally inappropriate in group of mixed gender, particularly with adult learners. Such a topic can create problems of interaction between the teacher and the learners, as a class room activity. It can thus lead to a mental block among the learners, who can find it difficult to respond to the Critical Thinking Questions 1 and 2 above, as was the case with the groups studied.

Considering all the texts together, we can say that Text 1 was found to be unsuitable for the Pre-intermediate level of learners, while Text 2 can be an example for motivating the learners at the Beginners' level, and Pre-intermediate levels. On the other hand, Text 3 can cause a bit of a discomfort in a monocultural-monolingual situation of a mixed-gender group. Therefore, it can certainly be avoided. Text 5 is inappropriate even at the Advanced level, considering a monocultural group of mixed-gender of learners, particularly, if the learning is in a new cultural environment.

Let us look at the results of the study shown in Table 1.

Group	Test 1(A) Result %	Test 2(A) Result %	Final Exam (A)Result %	Type of text used
Group I	50	87.5	81.25	Non-culture based
Group II	68.7	81.25	25	-do-
Group III	72.2	70.5	76.4	-do-
Semester II	Test 1(B) Result %	Test 2 (B) Result %	Final Exam(B) Result %	Type of text used
Group I	100	100	91.2	Culture-based
Group II	82	93	94	-do-
Group III	97.1	95.7	100	-do-

The Table shows that the learners are very comfortable with culture-based texts in a language class and the percentage of successful learners, where non-culture based texts has been found to be comparatively lower. Although the study has been conducted on a homogeneous group of learners, in terms of age and entry levels, individual variables need to be accounted for the variation in the percentage of successful learners in all the three groups.

Fig.1 gives a graphic representation of the performance of the three groups in the two semesters. It provides evidence that the learners show a preference to learning a language through culture-based texts over non-culture based texts. Learning a new culture along with the new language, could be interesting for a learner, which provides the motivation needed to express ideas through a comparison of one's own culture with different aspects of the new culture, in the new language being learnt.

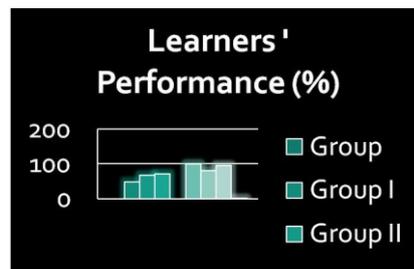


Fig 1: Graphic representation of the results of the study

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## Conclusion

Franz Boas, “.....was the first anthropologist who considered it unimaginable to study the culture of a foreign people without also becoming acquainted with their language. For Boas, the fact that the intellectual culture of a people was largely constructed, shared and maintained through the use of language, meant that understanding the language of a cultural group was the key to understanding its culture.”(*Language and Culture*, Wikipedia).

A close observation and a detailed analysis of the proceedings of a language learning situation of Arabic learners of English as a Second Language reveals that apart from motivating the learners to acquire all the skills of the target language effectively, its important to concentrate on familiarity and comfort of the material being used in the class room. This can be achieved to a large extent by using culture based texts for imparting reading and listening skills, vocabulary and grammar, while writing and speaking skills can be brought about by discussing and exposing the learners to the texts of different socio-cultural issues.

As a language teacher, I have found language and culture inseparable and so I am in agreement with those who argue for the acquisition of language through its culture. Because, it is very unlikely that an individual who is instrumentally motivated (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) does not get drawn into the cultural aspects associated with the language being learnt, even with materialistic objectives. It is observed very often that once the ability to communicate in a language is acquired; there is a natural tendency to learn the socio-cultural aspects as well.

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## Role of Proper English Pronunciation in Projecting a Better Personality

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**Abstract:** *Good pronunciation has always been insisted on by the language scholars and educated people of every cultured society as an integral part of good oral language. The educated English were very particular about it. A successful and charismatic personality among them has generally been the one who pronounced English well. Good pronunciation has been thought to be a sign of good culture in any language community and so held in high esteem. Hence it adds to the charisma of an individual's personality. Since English is the major international language, standard pronunciation facilitates greater international intelligibility and acceptability. Language is an art and so has its own artistic aspects. Proper pronunciation is an indispensable aspect of that art ideally fusing correct articulation of sounds, right accentuation, proper rhythm, correct intonation patterns, and other finer nuances. All these give a charming musical quality to the English language and that is the artistic aspect about it. It adds to fluency and communicative skills and creates a better impression about a person. Therefore, one who pronounces English properly is like a good artist. Mastery of pronunciation necessitates considerable perceptive listening to standard models of oral English presentations and an equal degree of strenuous practice to emulate them. But many are lured by the one or the other aspect of English, like its literature or its grammar or its vocabulary, and overlook the phonetic side and in effect seriously handicapping themselves linguistically. Those who pronounce well are thought to be the true masters of the language. In short, proper pronunciation plays a crucial role in projecting a better personality.*

*This paper examines the various aspects of this issue and proffers the ESL/EFL students some suggestions for improving their pronunciation.*

### Introduction:

One of the pre-requisites of an attractive and successful personality is the ability to pronounce a language well. This ability is more rewarding in the case of an international language like English. The mastery of its pronunciation turns out to be a glittering gem on the crown of a successful personality. Whatever may be the controversies centering round the universal adoption of English, or its colonial stigma, it has been an integral part of the education in a large number of countries of the world for long. The world language status accorded to English is grounded on this universal use of the language in the interactional and knowledge dissemination areas for which no suitable substitute language has so far been singled out. And it is highly unlikely that any other language will replace it in the imminent future. Hence no wonder the educated and the uneducated alike view knowledge of English as an enviable asset that enhances the academic quality of an individual's personality and its market value. Further, a large number of people consider English as the key to open the doors of the mighty, mysterious treasure-vault of knowledge itself, because English is the major library language, the language of the internet, of the natural sciences, of technology, and that of many others. Precisely because of this people hanker after sound knowledge of English, and many millions view its working-knowledge as an invaluable asset. It is not merely written English (that uses the graphic substance) which is widely used, but spoken English (that uses the phonic substance) as well. If a good style and syntactically impeccable expression is at the core of the written form, the beauty and the lure of the spoken form are conditional upon standard pronunciation and an acceptable style. However, many ESL/ EFL aspirants overlook the importance of pronunciation for one reason or another. This neglect deprives them of many possible benefits since proper pronunciation always helps to project a better personality.

The spoken form, as is well-known, is used much more frequently than the written form. Therefore,

it is not a person who is proficient in writing but one who is proficient in speaking who has the greater chance to shine and to be in the limelight. If a person has a sensible mastery of practical phonology and pronounces English well, then s/he will no doubt be the centre of attention and will be listened to with rapt attention and admired wherever s/he goes. This implies that her/his good pronunciation has added to the charisma of the personality. S/he will be thought of as a well-refined, well-educated person trained in some standard institutions. This impression augments the chances of her/his employability. In today's globalized era when communication (particularly oral communication) has assumed serious significance, it is natural that a person who speaks English with a fine pronunciation is highly looked up to as an important personality. It creates for her/him an aura of importance, for it suggests an intellectual, academic, cultured background behind such a person. Numerous are the institutions that are looking for such candidates. They are ideally thought of as the best to handle situations which require communication skills, particularly oral communication. Standard educational institutions, travel and tourism industry, medical profession, management profession, legal profession, the entire business world, the export-import sectors, telephone operators' job, that of receptionists and computer operator's job, scientific profession, engineering profession, diplomatic and ambassadors' profession, the public administration arena—all expect personnel of proper English pronunciation. But mastery of good pronunciation is not all that easy. It is hemmed in by numerous problems or difficulties and so is generally dismissed as something inaccessible and superfluous by the frustrated aspirants. A proper examination of these problems and an attempt to devise some effective steps will be quite rewarding to the aspiring students of English.

### **Problems/Difficulties in Mastering Pronunciation:**

Although there are two dominant models of pronunciation to be emulated in the global situation, namely, the English R.P and the American Pronunciation, most people in the world are more acquainted with the R.P model which is the pronunciation of that variety of English known as the Standard English/King's/Queen's English/ BBC English etc. Rather than revolting with the existing models, it would be wiser to follow that model which is widely used, and excel in it because it has great currency, acceptability, and intelligibility. In this regard, English RP has an upper hand over the American variety. Some of the more important problems related to mastering English pronunciation can be identified as the following:-

#### **1. Phonological Problems:**

Of the phonological problems, the most thwarting one is what is generally known as the “Mother Tongue Interference”. For the ESL/EFL students, the constant use of, and exposure to, their own native language cause the limited sounds of their own mother tongue to be deeply engrained on their minds to the extent that they are unable to realize the existence of any sounds which are at variance with the sounds of their own mother tongue. When they later learn another language like English, they naturally tend to find equivalents of the sounds of such a language in their own mother tongue. Instead of learning the new sounds of English as they are, they substitute the mother tongue equivalents and wrongly believe them to be correct. This deprives their speech of “Englishness” which is the peculiar beauty of English. This “Englishness” is what every foreign learner should strive to achieve. “The main problem of English pronunciation is to build a new set of boxes (in the mind) corresponding to the sounds of English, and to break down the arrangement of boxes which the habits of our native language have so strongly built up.”(J. D. O'Connor, 2008). Majority of ESL/EFL learners find it difficult to articulate certain consonants and several vowels, particularly the diphthongs. They are ignorant of the correct 'points of articulation', 'manner of articulation', proper 'lip positions' to be assumed, the 'tongue heights' to be effected, the 'part of the tongue' to be used etc, during articulation of these consonant and vowel sounds. This ignorance and lack of training mar their prospects of achieving fine English pronunciation.

## 2. Articulation Problems:

Some of the main articulation problems are: a). **Lack of resonance**, b). **Nasality**, c) **indistinct Articulation**, and d). **Haste and Indifference**. The quality of the voice is very much dependent on **resonance**. Voice is produced by the vibration of the vocal cords, but it is enriched and amplified by the cavities of the chest, pockets of larynx, the pharynx, the mouth, the nasal cavity, and the sinuses. This amplification is called resonance, but this is not effectively done by many foreign speakers of English to the extent required for the English sounds. **Nasality** is speaking through the nose. Though some nasal resonance is tolerated, too much nasality spoils the beauty of articulation. Nasal sounds do need nasality but if nasality is applied to vowels unconsciously, as is done by many foreign speakers of English, the beauty of English is adversely affected. **Indistinct articulation** is the offshoot of inadequate use of the movements of jaw, lips, and tongue. If speech muscles move sluggishly, then articulation is blurred and indistinct. This might be either the outcome of laziness or inability. Another articulation problem is caused by **haste and indifference**. Many foreign speakers of English, both students and grown-ups, speak very fast, tripping and slurring over words making the listeners strain for the messages being communicated, and making them weary of listening. There are also good many people who are simply non-chalant about pronouncing words well and correctly. Laziness is at the root of their utterances. This results in several speech blemishes and repels the listeners from such people. All these create a bad impression on the personality of the speaker.

## 3. Lack of proper Phonation:

Our voice signals a good or bad personality. It reveals our personality hinting at our prevailing mood, our elation or blues. At best, our voice sounds pleasant and melodious, and produces the finest music; at worst, it sounds raucous, raspy, harsh, muffled, husky, metallic, squeaky, monotonous, shrill, jerky, and gruff. It can attract people towards us or repel them from us. Under healthy conditions, a little care shown, sounds can be properly 'voiced' whenever they have to be. Of the 44 speech sounds/phonemes of the sound system of the English R. P., only nine sounds are voiceless (produced without any vibration of the vocal cords) and the rest, i.e. 35 sounds are voiced (produced with the vibration of the vocal cords). In other words, 15 consonants and all the 20 vowels are voiced, forming a large majority of voiced sounds in English requiring proper voicing/phonation and the accompanying resonance. But most foreign learners do not properly voice the sounds resulting in lack of phonation highly affecting the quality of English sounds.

## 4. Ignorance of Proper Intonation Patterns:

Intonation refers to the pattern of changes in the pitch of the voice when we speak and the terminal contour. The use of proper intonation is an integral part of good oral communication in English. The use of wrong intonation can change the meaning of the speaker's words and larger utterances. Intonation is determined by the pitch of the voice and pitch itself is determined by the frequency of the vibration of the vocal cords. A high pitch is the result of a high frequency of the vibration of the vocal cords and a low pitch that of a low frequency. A rising intonation is a change in the pitch of the voice from a low to a high pitch; a falling intonation is one from a high to a low pitch. Other intonation patterns like fall-rise and rise-fall etc are also occasionally used by the English people. Knowledge of the contexts and kinds of sentences in which these are varyingly used is quite inadequate on the part of the ESL/EFL students of English. It is imperative that one should know, for effective communication, the type of intonation pattern used in statements, Yes-No questions, Wh-questions, Tag-questions, exclamatory sentences, commands and polite requests. Again, one should know the type of intonation to be used for incomplete utterances, counting numbers, listing items, clause-final positions, and the sentence-terminal positions. These are the common contexts and types of utterances we usually come across, although numerous other variations are also possible. But many are unsure as to the type of intonation to be used in diverse contexts. Tonality, tonicity, and tonic have also to be decided for proper intonation use.

### 5. Spelling-Sound Disparity:

English is one of the least phonetic languages. In English, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the spellings and the sounds representing them. Although there are only 26 letters in the English Alphabet, there are as many as 44 sounds used while speaking English. In order to remedy this defect English phoneticians have devised 44 phonemic symbols representing the 44 speech sounds or phonemes, on a one-symbol one-sound basis. These phonemes are defined as the smallest distinctive units of speech sounds in the sound system of the English language. A single letter in English has often more than one phonetic realization, too. For example, the letter 'a' is differently pronounced in such words as—*an*, *art*, *all*, *ate*, *aim*, *passage*, *away*, etc. Occasionally, we come across some words with one or more letters silent or not pronounced at all. Double letters are to be pronounced as a single letter. When a given sound is represented by different letters the matter becomes all the more complex. All these pose great difficulties to the ESL/EFL students. Generally the learners of English pronounce English as it is graphically represented through spellings, unless they are fortunate to get some excellent English teachers who pronounce English well, and have considerable knowledge of Phonetics to nip their errors in the bud.

### 6. Allophonic, Morpho-Phonemic and Phonotactic Problems:

Many ESL students are unaware of the allophonic variations. They are in no way to make a difference between the /p/ in *president* and *couple*, or the /t/ in *touch* and *cattle*, or the /k/ in *kite* and *sky*, etc. Further, they can not in some cases, at least, make any distinction between the /l/ in *love* and *help* where there are clear-cut allophonic differences. Although phonemic realizations of the past tense morpheme *-ed* in the words like *jumped*, *faded*, and *robbed* are all different, not many are aware of such differences because graphically they look alike. Further, the plural morpheme *-s/es* of nouns, and the third person singular morpheme *-s/-es* of verbs are differently realized in different phonetic environments such as *cats*, *girls*, *buses* (all plural nouns), and *looks*, *begs*, and *realizes* (all third person singular verbs). In the same way, the distributional or Phonotactic problems of some consonants and a few vowels also vex the ESL students, to a great extent. Those who do not know that /w/ is not phonetically realizable at word-final position even when spelling permits it, are likely to pronounce it at word-final position. Similarly, /j/, /r/, /e/, /o/, /u/, etc, have similar problems of which many learners are not conscious. These are Phonotactic problems that adversely affect good pronunciation.

### 7. Accentuation/ Stress Related Problems:

Most ESL students lack knowledge of syllable structure of words and are equally at a loss as to which all monosyllabic words are stressed. Most of them do not know that content/form class words are normally stressed and that function class words are not. Another problem faced by them is the inability to decide which syllable of disyllabic, tri-syllabic and poly-syllabic words are stressed. English, which is a stress-timed language, gets the characteristic rhythm in larger utterances from the fact that stressed syllables tend to occur at regular intervals of time and irrespective of the number of unstressed syllables occurring between two stressed syllables. The time taken between any two stressed syllables is approximately the same. This feature is isochronous, but many are ignorant of such aspects and as a result unable to capture the musical quality of English. Stress, rhythm, and intonation are supra-segmental/prosodic features and are highly inter-dependent. Mastery of one thing necessitates the mastery of another. Even those who know about these can not considerably improve their pronunciation in the absence of strenuous practice, and that itself is another problem for the indolent and the less-aspiring.

### 8. Strong & Weak Forms:

Many functional words in English have one or more weak forms in addition to their normal strong forms. In connected speech, when these function class words which are unstressed are uttered

rapidly to bring about the rhythm of sentences, only their weak forms are used. Personal pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, auxiliaries, etc have these strong and one or more weak forms. Many learners neither know about it nor take pains to master them so that speedier, fluent and typically English pronunciation becomes possible.

### 9. Assimilation and Elision:

Sounds are affected by their phonetic environments. “The shape of a word may also be altered by nearby sounds” (J. D. O'Connor, 2008). 'Assimilation' refers to the way sounds influence each other in given phonetic environments. A given sound under the influence of another sound may become an entirely different sound. For example, in the phrase, 'that girl' the second /t/ becomes /k/ under the influence of the next /g/. Imitation of such assimilatory changes is not easy for foreign learners of English, nor necessary. But knowledge of such changing word shapes helps understand the native speakers of English when they speak. In the absence of this knowledge it is difficult to make out what an Englishman says. Omission of sounds in certain phrases or word combinations is called **elision**. Knowledge of elision is good to improve pronunciation. For instance, the first /t/ in the combination 'last time' is dropped. The ESL learners should learn such instances, though not an easy task.

### Suggestions for Improving Pronunciation:

1. The most important phonological problem, namely, the habit of substituting the phonemes of one's own mother tongue for the English phonemes, can be overcome by rigorous practice of repeating several times the correct sounds of the RP either under the guidance of an expert English language teacher or by constant listening to the sounds and longer utterances from a standard CD. By careful listening, the 'Englishness' of the sounds should be captured and repeated as many times as required till one is fully sure that the sound produced approximates to the sound heard.
2. Through proper breathing exercises, particularly, breathing from the diaphragm and also considerable breath control, the drawbacks related to Breathing, Phonation, Resonance and Articulation can be overcome. Pranayama, the well-known yogic breathing practice, is excellent for this purpose. Nasal resonance can be gained through light humming. Similarly, nasality can be reduced by sending more air through the mouth rather than the nose. Proper exercises of the tongue, lips, and jaws help distinct articulation. Similarly speaking quite deliberately in moderate speed helps overcoming the problem of haste. *The Power of Spoken English*, by Cedric M. Kenny (2006) is an ideal book that mentions several such exercises.
3. There are numerous books available currently that contain various intonation patterns and plenty of exercises to master them. Such books can help solve the problems related to inadequate knowledge of intonation patterns. The series of three books published by the CIEFL (Hyderabad) titled '*Spoken English*' deal practically with most problems related to pronunciation. Numerous exercises are given in book-I on different intonation patterns. Also *Better English Pronunciation* by J. D. O'Connor is of considerable help in this regard. Another useful book is '*A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English*' by J. Sethi & P. V. Dhamija. Since such books contain plenty of practical work, doing the exercises mentioned in them will be immense help.
4. Learning the phonetic symbols of English R.P and looking up either Daniel Jones' *English Pronouncing Dictionary* or *The Advanced Learners' Oxford Dictionary* to find out the pronunciation of each and every word, when in doubt, will remedy the confusion caused by the spelling-sounds disparity. Everyday some time should be spent with the dictionary to acquaint oneself with the pronunciation of words, and that too, rigorous practice!
5. Learning “tongue twisters” is both a useful and interesting activity for learners. Since these are difficult to pronounce fast, with repetition of some difficult sounds, practising them is a good exercise for the flexibility of the tongue. The following are some such samples: 1. *Peter Piper*

*picked a peck of pickled pepper. 2. She sells sea-shells on the sea shore. 3. Around the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran. 4. Bettie bought some butter which was bitter, and to make the bitter butter better she bought some better butter. 5. A big black bug bit a big black bear. 6. I saw a sawyer sawing with a saw. 7. How much wood would a wood-chuck chuck if a wood-chuck could chuck wood? 8. How high holds his highness' haughty head!*

6. For all the rest of the problems, studying a good phonetic text book like *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* will be of invaluable help and any English learner committed to learning the language well should have a try at it. Then, practise the sounds as loudly as possible for maximum effect!

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## Use of L1 in Classroom

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**Abstract:** *Many Institutions in the UAE have prohibited the use of L1 in the classroom which is commonly perceived to be an impediment to EFL learning. This pedagogical decision however, is not fully supported by research findings (Auerbach 1993, Atkinson 1993, Storch & Wigglesworth 2003), which suggest that L1 reduces learner anxiety (Atkinson 1993), plays a scaffolding role in collaborative tasks (Anton & DiCamilla 1998), and can be a source of 'cognitive support' for students language analysis and performing higher level work (Storch and Wigglesworth 2003).*

*This paper problematizes the exclusion of L1 from the classroom and explores students' perceptions of this policy and their own learning preferences at a tertiary institution in the UAE. It also examines students' prior learning experiences in the secondary school contexts. Furthermore, it also provides an insight into the administrative bodies' rationales for the English only policy. This process of problematising unquestioned assumptions is one of the fundamental tenets of Critical Applied Linguistics (Pennycook 2001); and was also adopted in Phillipson's (1992) exploration of the EFL profession's failure to question the following dominant fallacies of the EFL world:*

*English is best taught monolingually  
The ideal teacher of English is a native like speaker  
The earlier English is taught, the better the results  
The more English is taught the better the results  
If other languages are used much standards of English will drop (p.185)*

*After surveying a total 124 students from three levels of English proficiency at a foundations English program in a UAE tertiary institution, various findings emerged. Firstly, level 1 students indicated a higher level of support for L1 (mean: 2.05) use compared to Level 3 students (mean: 3.03). Secondly, students' reported experiences with learning English at the secondary school level indicated that teachers relied heavily on the use of L1 in their ESL teaching. Furthermore, most students saw potential benefits for their own use of L1 in their learning, with level one students (2.3) demonstrating more support for this than level three students (3.29). Also addressing the policies used by the institution indicates that the rationale used when deciding on this policy was not a pedagogical one rather one based on the history and perceived frustrations with the secondary school system.*

*The study supports the notion of incorporating students' input into pedagogical decision making processes. Students displayed a relative need for L1 support depending on their levels of proficiency, with less proficiency requiring more L1 support. Students also displayed an awareness that over-reliance on L1 would be a barrier to their learning as it had been for some in their secondary school experiences.*

### Introduction

The place of the first language in the acquisition of the second language has been the subject of much research. There have been various shifts to and from the utilization of the first language in EFL over the past few decades, depending on the accompanying political contexts and trends in EFL methods. Auerbach (1993) highlights that there seems to be an all or nothing approach to L1 use, with the translation method incorporating excessive amounts of L1 input, while many classrooms today discourage its use altogether (p.15).

The use of the learners' mother tongue is a controversial pedagogical issue in many EFL programs in the UAE. Prior to teaching in the UAE, I would have thought that being an Arabic speaking ESL teacher would be an asset to an institution whose main clientele were native Arabic speakers. My previous TESOL position was at an Australian technical college, where educators were encouraged to acknowledge the

cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the classroom. I am aware that the dynamics of EFL and ESL in English speaking countries vary, as ESL students are immersed in English outside the ESL classroom, while EFL students predominantly gain exposure to English in the EFL classroom. However, L1 can be an efficient tool for achieving student comprehension of vocabulary and of difficult concepts and instructions. Hence, since teaching in the UAE, the issue of L1 use has proven to be a central pedagogical concern for me, and I have admittedly gradually moved away from no utilization of L1, to allowing the use of minimal amount which I have found valuable in maximizing my students' learning especially with lower level learners.

Generally, I can see the value of approaching L1 as a constructive EFL pedagogical tool for students but I am also aware that its use creates potential pitfalls that can undermine students' L2 learning. This piece of research attempts to explore the pedagogical issue of L1 use in the classroom.

### **Contextual Background and Current Practice**

Within Higher education institutions in the UAE, English is the medium of instruction, which is also the case in the EFL program with which I am currently employed. Most other EFL programs in the UAE also support the notion of an English only environment, based on the assumption that L1 use impedes learning. Prior to 2006, the instructor evaluation system for the program was designed to prohibit Arabic use. For example, the student Evaluation of the instructor document included 'Always uses English for instruction'; to which students responded to what extent they agreed or disagreed in relation to their instructor. More recently, this statement has been removed from the document, which demonstrates a more realistic stance toward limited L1 use although it is still highly discouraged.

Many students demonstrate a degree of animosity to the completion of their studies in the English medium, and struggle a great deal in the English foundations program. One of the ways to minimise this level of antagonism that is a source of impediment to their performance is to challenge the notion that English is superior to students' mother tongue, through emphasising to students the significance and contribution of the mother tongue. One of the biggest challenges for teachers in attempting to do this is the institution's policy of not using Arabic in the English classroom.

Furthermore, the exclusion of L1 from the EFL classroom has been made with some input from teachers, but no input from the learners themselves, on whose behalf these pedagogical decisions are made. Auerbach (1993) suggests that whether or not to use L1 in the EFL classroom should be a shared decision between the teacher and the students in the classroom. This study will explore the position held by students towards the use of Arabic in EFL learning, which has been somewhat neglected in the body of literature.

### **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

In Linguistic Imperialism, Phillipson's explores the constituent fallacies that underlie the ELT profession, and which contribute to English linguistic hegemony, which he defines as "the explicit and implicit values, beliefs, purposes, and activities which characterize the ELT profession and which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language" (p.73). One these 'fallacies' is the monolingual fallacy which is the belief that English is best taught monolingually.

This relatively unquestioned fallacy has underpinned the English only policy, where L1 is considered a hindrance to EFL learning. To problematise this unquestioned tenet is characteristic of critical theory, and Critical Applied Linguistics' insistence upon problematizing givens (Pennycook, 2001, p. 7), where no aspect of our reality can be taken for granted in order to identify 'naturalised' assumptions (Dean, 1994, quoted in Pennycook, 2001, p. 7). It follows that CAL highlights this problematisation of givens for the EFL teacher, for pedagogical decisions made in the classroom, or those made at the administration level. Critical theory provides a sound theoretical framework for this study.

Another crucial tenet of CAL is an emphasis on preferred futures (Pennycook, 2001, p. 8), where CAL

researchers express “‘utopian’ visions of alternative realities, by stressing the ‘transformative mission of critical work or the potential for change through awareness and emancipation’” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 8). This is to counteract the notion that critical work is often pessimistic and does not offer solutions or alternative. The current study is a process of problematizing the monolingual policy to provide an ‘alternative reality’ where students’ L1 is seen as a valuable tool for learning, rather than a hindrance that is banished from the classroom.

Phillipson (1992) also highlights that this fallacy comes hand in hand with the misconception that native speaking teachers are better than their non- native counterparts, and aids in further undermining potential equality between the two groups. Auerbach further adds that “‘insistence on the irrelevance of teachers’ knowing the learners’ languages may be de facto a justification for maintaining the status of native English speakers’” (p. 29). Phillipson: ‘the ethos of mono-lingualism implies the rejection of the experiences of other languages, meaning the exclusion of the child’s most intense existential experience’. That is ‘Prohibiting the native language within the context of ESL instruction may impede language acquisition precisely because it mirrors disempowering relations’ (Auerbach 1999, p. 16).

According to Phillipson (1992), the notion that L2 is best learned monolingually dates back to Gatenby who developed the tenet, in an article summarising ELT principles (Gatenby 1965, p.14 cited in Phillipson 1992, p. 185). More recently, this fallacy is supported with reference to the work of Krashen’s (1983) Monitor model which emphasises a natural approach to language acquisition, where L2 is believed to be acquired through the same process as L1, and where immense exposure to the L2 is required and consequently requires limited use of L1. Other researchers have also stressed the importance of L2 use in EFL, with L1 considered to be a hindrance to the learning process. Despite this, other researchers, including Cook (2001) argue that L1 can be useful in EFL learning, particularly in collaborative learning (p.234). Various studies have illustrated the learning benefits for students of utilising some L1 in the classroom (Auerbach 1993, Atkinson 1993, Storch & Wigglesworth 2003). According to Auerbach, “‘evidence from research and practice is presented which suggests that the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound.’” Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) argue that L1 can give students ‘cognitive support’ that provides them with the ability to explore language and produce work that is of higher standard (p.760). They suggest that “‘teachers should not prohibit the use of some L1 altogether in group and pair work but should acknowledge that the use of the L1 may be a normal psychological process that allows learners to initiate and sustain verbal interaction’” (p.768, 2003).

Anton and DiCamilla’s (1998) study demonstrated the role of L1 in scaffolding learners, and in optimizing learner interest in cognitively demanding tasks. These significant findings are mirrored in Scott De La Fuente’s (2008) study that explored the role of L1 in consciousness raising tasks, who concluded that the “‘use of L1 for these kinds of tasks may reduce cognitive overload, sustain collaborative interaction, foster the development of metalinguistic terminology’” (p.111). Auerbach (1993) also describes various US based conclusive studies that support a role for L1 in the EFL classroom.

Studies which explore the attitudes perceptions of EFL teachers or students towards the use of L1 are limited however, with Auerbach referring to a small- scale questionnaire she distributed during a conference, where 80% of teachers responded that they sometimes allowed the use of L1. To this finding, she concludes “‘the English- only axiom is so strong that they didn’t trust their own practice: They assigned a negative value to ‘lapses’ into the L1, seeing them as failures or aberrations, a cause of guilt (p. 14).’” On the other hand, the beliefs and perceptions of learners towards the role of L1 in L2 learning, which is the main focus of this study has been a neglected topic in the body of literature. This study aims to explore students’ perceptions of the place of L1 in the EFL classroom, who as autonomous learners should reflect on the potential benefits of various learning tools and methods at their disposal. The research question aim to address the following:

### **1) Students’ perceptions of the role of L1 in the EFL classroom**

- What are students' perceptions of the potential benefit of the use of L1 in the classroom?
- Do the opinions of students at the different English levels vary?
- To what extent do the students support the notion that the EFL classroom should be an English only environment for maximize their learning? What reasons did students use to support their viewpoints?

## 2) Experiences with L1 use in the secondary school context

- What were students' previous experiences of L1 use in the secondary school classroom?
- Were these experiences generally positive or negative and why?

## 3) Administration's rationales for English only policy

- What is the policy regarding the use of L1 in the classroom and what is their rationale?

## Methodology

The study is primarily based on the data gathered from a survey that contained a combination of closed and open ended questions. The survey was initially piloted with a smaller sample of student respondents, which was then edited prior to a larger scale distribution. The survey was also bilingual (Arabic and English) to accommodate the needs of the lower level students.

Students were asked a series of questions through the 5 point likert scale with one being strongly agree, to strongly disagree for five. The likert scale limited the generalisability of the results, however, due to the absence of an initial hypothesis it was appropriate for the exploratory nature of the study. The incorporation of open ended questions invited honest personal comments from the respondents, and their use was aimed at capturing authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty which is the primary asset of qualitative data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison p. 255). Open ended questions also provided qualitative data that added depth to the study.

After piloting and various edits, the final survey contained a total of twenty- one questions. Questions 1 and 2 asked students about their opinion of Arabic use in English learning. Questions 3 - 5 were related to Arabic use in the English classes in the secondary school context, while question six was a checklist of various ways that Arabic could be used in the classroom. The first and final questions were almost identical and were used to determine any deviations in students' responses from the beginning for the survey to the end.

The sample of students to whom this survey was distributed were two higher level classes in each of the 3 levels namely beginner (level 1), intermediate (level 2) and advanced (level 3) , which correspond to a beginner CEPA <165 intermediate 165-175 advances CEPA >175, respectively. The rationales for nominating these classes was that they were all new enrollments to the university with approximately six weeks of instruction and have just completed their secondary education in private and government schools.

Class teachers were instructed to inform students that the survey was voluntary and they were free to not participate in the study without consequences. Informed consent was sought from all participants in the study. Students were provided with information about the research, and were given the opportunity to seek clarification of any issues related the research. Students were also reassured that their anonymity in the research would be maintained.

The second method of data collection was through a semi-structured interview with the head of EFL program. This part of the research was aimed at gaining more insight into the administration's rationale for the English only policy in the EFL classroom. During the interview, the program head was asked to expand on the policies of the university regarding the use of L1 in the classroom and to determine what his personal thoughts are on the topic and where the policy originated from. Furthermore, documentations were sought detailing university policy and they didn't seem to exist. The interview with the head of the English program was used to complement the mixed method approach. This combination of the survey data collection method and the interview implies that the study adopted a mixed method approach.

There is some opposition to this mixed method approach with the justification based on the notion that research can either be scientific or constructivist, but not simultaneously both. In response to this opposition, Brewer and Hunter (1989) state:

“Social science methods should not be treated as mutually exclusive alternatives among which we must choose... Our individual methods may be flawed, but fortunately the flaws are not identical. A diversity of imperfection allows us to combine methods... to compensate for their particular faults and imperfections” (cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, p.16-17).

### Findings and Analysis

For data analysis, the SPSS program was used to undertake a statistical analysis of the results. The independent t test was sought and hence the results were analyzed to determine if a significant difference was the outcome. The open-ended responses were treated as qualitative data, and a content analysis was undertaken which allowed the researcher to access more in-depth data. According to Cohen et al, the use of a combination of statistical and qualitative data provides the researcher with the “the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality” (p.253), which adds a more illustrative dimension to the statistical information.

Question 1 and question 11 (the final question), which were intentionally almost identical did not display any discrepancies in students' responses, as the means were consistent and showed no significant change. For level 1 students, the mean was 2.05 to 1.73, level 2 was 3.13 and 2.60, while for level 3, it was 3.03 and 2.71, which indicate a slight but not so significant deviation. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.64 and since it was over 0.5, there was no indication that the surveys were answered unfairly or randomly.

#### i) Experiences with L1 use in the secondary school context

Questions 3 to 5 addressed the topic about students' previous experiences with the use of L1 in the secondary school classroom. When asked whether or not Arabic was used in the classroom, out of 124 students, 111 answered yes and the remaining 13 answered no. Those who responded no may have attended a private school system or may have studied abroad. Amongst the lower level students, there was a higher prevalence in the comments made about more Arabic use in the secondary as compared to university, and that teaching styles varied. Students' comments suggested that the use of L1 in the secondary EFL classroom served the two main purposes of translating unfamiliar vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. For example, the following comments were written:

*“At the secondary level, the teacher explained in English, and then re-explained by translating some of the words into Arabic, so that we would gain a better understanding.”*

*“When the teacher used to explain English grammar through the Arabic language we were able to understand but now we are 'Deaf, dumb and blind.'”*

Students' comments also highlighted a difference in the teaching styles of secondary school teachers and the teachers in the tertiary EFL program. This finding was significant as students' responses displayed a high degree of frustration with this sudden transition from an Arabic environment to an English environment. The policy is one where the L1 is prohibited is one that may seem extreme particularly when their secondary school experiences are taken into consideration. Students expressed frustration with these differences, and the fact that they were required to adapt quickly to the different teacher expectations. These differences adversely affected students' levels of motivation, which for many resulted in academic failure.

The comments reflected different styles adopted in the secondary school in comparison to the university environment and these differences seemed to cause feelings of anxiety and stress, particularly with the lower level learners. The different learning styles reflected the different policies around the use of the Arabic language, where the secondary schools heavily used this pedagogical tool, and students had become accustomed to this. One student said, “English is required more in the university than the school.”

This was a typical comment made by many of the students, who had moved quite suddenly from a primarily Arabic speaking environment at the secondary school, to an essentially English only environment at the university.

Students also commented on the predominance of native speaking teachers at the university in comparison to secondary school. For example, one student stated, “because in the university the teacher is native and has a high degree, but in the school he is a learner like us”. Students' comments indicated that their perceptions of the relative competencies and qualifications were different, with the university teachers identified as being better qualified, and were native speakers, while the secondary teachers were merely learners of English because they were non- native.

These findings reflect the realities of the UAE's education system, which is characterized by the presence of two main education authorities, one which controls primary and secondary education, and the other controlling the tertiary sector. Findlow highlights the realities of state education as implying that

*“throughout childhood, Arabic supplies all or most communication needs, while the transition at age 18 to learning in English requires a substantially changed cultural mindset requires a substantially changed cultural mindset. In the UAE, the traditionalist, largely Egyptian- run 'Ministry of Education and Youth' produces most of its literature in Arabic, and emphasizes the importance of fostering Islamic and Arabic culture. The distinct 'Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research', which oversees tertiary education, research... operates in English” (Findlow 2006, p. 27)*

The school system in the UAE is government run and the predominant language used is Arabic and is taught predominantly by Arab expatriate teachers. The divisions in the control of the state education systems mean that there is a tendency for monolingual EFL teachers to be teaching in the higher education institutions, and the expatriate Arabic teachers in the primary and secondary school setting. This situation has been described by Karmani (2005) as 'a grotesque form of "linguistic apartheid" which is

*“based almost entirely around a series of social privileges (e.g. native speaker privilege, White privilege, American privilege, British privilege, etc.) whereon the one hand a community of largely white, Western, “native- speakers” of English is employed in the lucrative tertiary sector and the other is the vast number of bilingual Arab teachers of English who work in the substantially underinvested secondary and primary school systems.” (Karmani 2005, p. 94).*

These realities reflected the findings of the study which indicated that teachers in the secondary setting were predominantly native Arabic speakers. Blame for low levels of attainment in English has often been blamed on the expatriate Arabic teachers' use of Arabic in the classroom, including by students and the tertiary education system. However, this assumption ignores other fundamental factors including lack of funding provided to the primary and secondary schooling sectors, and differences in the managements of the two sectors of education.

### **ii) Students' perceptions of the role of L1 in the EFL classroom**

Questions 1, 2, 8 and 9 addressed students' perceptions of the role of L1 in the classroom. In question 1, where students were asked if they believed that Arabic helped them to learn English, a significant difference between the Level 1 (n=2.05) and Level 2 (n=3.13) was found, and also a significant difference between level 1 (n=2.05) and level 3 (n=3.03). The independent T- test showed a significant difference (sig. 2-tailed less than 0.01). In other words, a higher proportion of lower level students indicated that more students believed that Arabic in the classroom helped them to learn English.

When students were asked whether they supported teacher use of Arabic in the English classroom, the level 1 students' mean was 2.38, level 2 was 2.93, and level 3 was 3.11, which again indicated that lower level students supported more Arabic use by teachers in comparison to the higher levels. For instance, one level 3 students made the following comment:

*“I disagree with talking in Arabic English classes because we came to the university to improve our English, but in secondary school we still learn and the technique is different”.*

Question 8 asked students to rate the percentage of time teachers should spend using Arabic in the English classroom, with choices from 0% to more than 50%. In a similar vein to the responses of the two previously mentioned question, the level 1 students (mean: 3.67) demonstrated a higher preference for Arabic use in comparison to level 2 (3.07) and 3 (2.79). This would suggest that the students needed more of the scaffolding at lower levels and as this dependence was less needed there was an understanding to move away from the L1

Question 9 was an open- ended question, and various comments were written by students, with level three students' comments demonstrating less support of Arabic use in the classroom. For example, a level three student responded "I feel like I am in Arabic class and to use Arabic will not help us to learn English", while a typical level 1 response was the following: "Easily describe what I want to talk about and understand what the teacher wants". The students at the higher levels were more aware of the potential pitfalls of L1 use in the classroom, which were reflected in their responses. The students seemed to respond more like the Arabic language was a scaffolding technique and it was relied on more when needed

### **iii) Exploring Administration's English only policy**

The head of the tertiary EFL program was interviewed about the policy of the department towards the use of Arabic and the rationales for this policy. The policy for the use of L1 was that it was expected that teachers exclusively used English in the classroom, which had been enforced a few years prior. Teachers were unofficially aware of the policy of the institution and the students had the power to complain to administration about teachers' use of L1 in the EFL classroom. Prior to 2007, the student evaluation of instructors form asked students to comment about the instructors' use of Arabic, but more recently, this question has been omitted from the document.

The English only policy was rationalized through the following response:

*"It stems from the history of this place. Students in the public school system spent a few years struggling with English and the vast majority of the teachers come from the Middle East. The teachers' inadequate training and the main problem is that they use a lot of Arabic in the classroom."*

In other words, the administration's main rationale for excluding the use of L1 was based on secondary school teachers' over-reliance on the L1 in teaching English, which was considered to be one of the underlying reasons for students' low proficiency in English when they had reached the tertiary level. This was the main rationale for the policy, with the program head acknowledging that the administration's concern about the potential over-use of L1 in EFL learning, which would be a hindrance to students' learning over-rode consideration for educational research findings related to this issue.

*"The university made that decision thinking that the use of L1 in the classroom is bad because of the frustration with the experience in the primary and secondary school. This frustration has resulted in them making such decisions that can be extreme without thinking about the pedagogic implications so it's not the linguist or applied linguist who has decreed this but it's the local administration who believe that Arabic is the problem."*

Thus the English only policy of the university and the over-use of the Arabic in the school demonstrates Auerbach's 'all or nothing' approach to the use of L1 in the EFL classroom, who asserts that because 'the grammar- translation method has been widely discredited and concurrent translation shown to be ineffective, no alternative except the complete exclusion of the L1 in the ESL classroom is seen as valid' (p. 15). These two extreme positions towards the potential role of L1 either undermine English language acquisition, or deny the use of an important linguistic resource for language learning.

### **Reflection and Conclusion**

Despite the obvious limitations of the study, including the relatively small sample of respondents, which only reflects the experiences of students from one tertiary EFL institution, there are some salient findings that can be drawn from the research. The most important finding for teachers and for administrative bodies of EFL institutions is that lower level students' higher demand for L1 use indicates a

need to sensibly incorporate this pedagogical tool for learning particularly at the lower levels. Students in the study were generally able to identify the relative importance of L1 based on their own specific learning needs. The finding that lower level students who were more likely to support L1 use as a scaffolding tool indicated that students identified this as an important part of effective learning.

Atkinson (1987) recommends a 'profitable' use of only 5% L1 in the EFL classroom. If fostering autonomous learners is one of the aims of the tertiary institutions, consideration for students' perceptions of their learning needs should be taken into account when pedagogical decisions are made on their behalf. Rather than being only an administration policy, students' opinions regarding this pedagogical tool should also be taken into account in a collaborative decision making process. Teachers should encourage critical reflection and discussion around the role of L1 in EFL learning, a process which is encouraged by Auerbach (1993) and Mee-ling (1996).

Another secondary finding that emerged from the findings was the secondary school's reliance on the L1 to teach English. Although the literature supports the use of L1, various researchers have warned of the detrimental effects of over-using the L1 in EFL (Wilkins 1974, Atkinson 1987). Mai-ling's (1996) study into the L1 use of English teachers who native speakers of Cantonese who taught a group of students with the same linguistic background, highlighted that teachers needed to ensure that there was critical reflection around the 'sensible' use of L1 in the EFL classroom. Mai-ling (1996) concludes:

*'Speaking English in class with little regard to whether the students understand or not will result only in "meaningless exposure'. On the other hand, using Cantonese arbitrarily will easily lead to the overuse of it, which is equally harmful to language learning. It would perhaps be 'profitable' if teachers could use Cantonese sensibly as an effective supplementary teaching medium, but not as a float that they grasp for survival" (p. 98).*

These findings entail implications both for the secondary school which seem to have over-used L1 to what some believe is the detriment of the students' learning, and for the tertiary EFL sector which has completely banished L1 use from their program. Secondary schools need to critically reflect upon sensible uses of the L1 which need to be limited to amounts which do not deprive students of L2 exposure. Perhaps more funding of curriculum and professional development for teachers at the primary and secondary level could minimize this problem. This issue may be addressed with current measures by the ministry of education to develop and implement new curricular measures to improve the English language teaching in the schools, which has included 'an evaluation of the objectives, methodology, materials, assessment, and teacher qualifications and evaluation" (Troudi 2007, p.7).

On the other hand, tertiary EFL institutions need to accept the need for and adopt a more realistic policy for L1 use. For the EFL programs, a more accommodating policy of L1 use, particularly for the low level learners would ease the transition for the students into the tertiary setting which requires them to adapt to a very different culture of learning to the one they left behind in the secondary school. The current shift from Arabic medium to one of no Arabic at all is very abrupt and causes high levels of anxiety and contributes to higher rates of academic failure with many students, as it fails to take into consideration the background and learning experiences of the students. The first step in getting tertiary EFL institutions to reflect upon this policy of total exclusion of L1, is to raise awareness of the issue and provide the stakeholders, particularly teachers and administration with a context in which to discuss this issue. To initiate this process, I posted a discussion question in the tertiary institution's online discussion board. A tertiary teacher who is not a native speaker of Arabic added her thoughts on a discussion board:

"I think there are some positive reasons for using Arabic (L1) in an English (L2) learning classroom. However, I also think unless used very deliberately and/or for very specific purposes, (e.g. a word or concept that just isn't easily translated), then the L1 can be over-used and consequently the student(s) denied the struggle they very much need to really learn and eventually acquire English".

One way to do this would be to adopt a transition phase to overcome this issue for students by

discouraging the over-reliance upon L1 in the secondary school level, and also by assigning bilingual teachers to lower level classes at the tertiary level.

This would also reduce levels of anxiety and provide much needed scaffolding with new cognitively demanding tasks such as academic writing.

Much needed research around this pedagogical issue is some systematic action research studies through audio-recording of teacher talk and student discussions during collaborative peer work, which can determine effective or ineffective L1 use. Similar studies have been conducted, but not at systematic level, and not in the Middle Eastern / Arabian Gulf context.

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## Exploring Thai EFL Teachers' Reflections on Teaching English Pronunciation at a Primary School Level

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to explore Thai EFL teachers' reflections on their English pronunciation teaching to students at a primary school level in the district of Sai Yok, Kanchanaburi province, Thailand. Drawing upon fifteen Thai EFL teachers' self-reflection notes regarding their attitudes and problems towards teaching English pronunciation, the findings reveal two main issues. Firstly, teachers strongly believe that it is necessary to teach standard English pronunciation in order to promote students' effective communication. Some teachers are, however, reluctant to teach pronunciation because they did not graduate with an English major, and thus they are not sure how to pronounce some words or expressions appropriately like native speakers. Secondly, these teachers experience difficulties in teaching young learners English pronunciation due to their language learning behaviors, inhibitions, young age, parental dependence, and ethnic and linguistic differences. The pedagogical implication of this study is to develop intelligible communication by raising teachers' awareness of English as a lingua franca. It is thus important to develop their positive attitudes towards non-native varieties of English by employing educational technology and different media as teaching materials that potentially enable these primary school teachers and students to be exposed to varieties of English pronunciation.*

**Keywords:** *English as a lingua franca, English pronunciation, Primary School, Thai EFL teachers, young learners*

### Introduction:

Teaching English pronunciation has long been one of the most important aspects of English language teaching (ELT) methodology because it not only enables students to develop communicative competence, but also their identity and status (Rogerson-Revell, 2011). Derwing & Munro (2005), however, argue that studies regarding English pronunciation pedagogy has been marginalized in the field of TESOL and applied linguistics, and thus English as a Second / Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) teachers usually depend on their personal intuitions, which often result in their reluctance to teach English pronunciation. In addition, Kirkpatrick (2009) states that the status of English has recently been viewed as an international language (EIL, also called ELF, English as a *lingua franca*) since more than one billion people currently use English as second or additional language, particularly in Asia due to unification of ASEAN in 2015. As a result, there is a growing demand for English for Young Learners (EYL) with regard to the increased interests in the varieties of spoken English in various Asian contexts (Mackenzie, 2008). Syahrial (2010), for example, points out that English-Indonesian pronunciation can confuse young Indonesian primary school learners because Indonesian language embraces an alphabetical system whereas English has a phonetic system, and thus teachers are required to have high level of English proficiency, comprehensive knowledge, rich vocabulary, and accurate pronunciation of English.

In case of ELT in Thailand, English is considered as a foreign language (EFL), which has been instructed in public schools for decades (Potcharapanpong & Thongthew, 2010). Although the teaching of grammar, reading and writing skills are more emphasized than speaking and listening skills, Thai EFL teachers are urged to shift from a grammar-translation method to a mix of communicative approach including the direct, audio-lingua, and lexical approach to improve effective communication (Khanarat & Nomura, 2008).

Despite the growing interests in research on teaching English speaking skills, studies regarding teaching English pronunciation to young learners in Thailand have always been neglected (Khamkhien, 2010). This study regarding Thai teachers' reflections on teaching English pronunciation to young learners at a primary school level in the district of Sai Yok, Kanchanaburi province is significant because it can potentially provide a platform for scholars and teachers in ELT to investigate this issue in-depth, so that it can provide us with some pedagogical implications being relevant and applicable to develop English language teacher education in Thailand.

### Literature Review

This section critically discusses the perceptions of English varieties and English pronunciation pedagogy in various educational contexts and levels. For more than two decades, Harmer (1991) argues that students need to be exposed not only to one variety of English (e.g. British English) but also to varieties (e.g. Caribbean English, Australian English, or Indian English), which will enable students to understand speakers of English from other countries. However, there have also been a number of published materials that acknowledge the significance of particular standard pronunciations, namely, British and American (Avery & Ehrlich, 1994; Baker, 2006; Gilbert, 1993). Jones (1999) defines standard English in Britain is associated with spoken correct English, which is also known as Queen's English or BBC English, reflecting its prestige and high status. Jenkins (2000), nevertheless, introduces alternative models, norms and goals of the phonology of English as an international language (EIL) that broadens how and the extent to which English pronunciation among non-native speakers can be comprehensible and intelligible without achieving native-like pronunciation. Davies (2003) notes the fundamental opposition of these native and non-native terms concerns power and membership, which are determined by non-native speakers' assumptions regarding confidence and identity.

Although there are a number of studies in many countries that reveal the much teachers' preference on correct or native-like pronunciation, McKay (2002) points out that educators in many countries would support the use of native English-speaker cultural content in ELT materials and express a lack of self-confidence in their own teaching in relation to native speakers. Language, therefore, carries a symbolic power that is linked to the ability to gain access to and exercise power, and thus understanding language practices requires an examination of how conventions of language choice and use are created, maintained, and changed; how language ideologies legitimize and validate particular practices; and the extent to which these language practices impact on individuals' identities (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). As a result, individuals who do not speak the official languages or standard varieties may not be regarded as legitimate speakers or as having as great a moral and intellectual worth as speakers of official languages or standard varieties (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). This issue will be examined with regard to empirical-based studies as follows.

Tsu (2000), for example, surveys Hong Kong primary school teachers' beliefs about English pronunciation teaching and their teaching practice and has found that there are some misconceptions about the teaching of English pronunciation, which requires the refinement of the current syllabus, but they are very enthusiastic to further their professional development. Drawing upon the survey, McKay's (2003) study also reveals that Chilean teachers of English in private language schools prefer to hire native English teachers who are claimed to be able to teach pronunciation correctly. Qiang (2002) also emphasizes the change of the Basic Requirement for Primary School English in China, which include developing pupils' interests, self confidence, and positive attitude towards learning English; cultivating the pupils' language use and enable good pronunciation and intonation; and developing the pupils' preliminary ability to use English in daily exchanges and lay a good basis for further study. This emergent need to develop students' English pronunciation at a primary school education also takes place in Japan. Honna & Takeshita (2005), for instance, conduct a survey of primary school teachers with regard to the goal of English activities and

reveal that some teachers stated that English activities should aim for acquiring native English speakers' pronunciation, which will be beneficial for increased multicultural contact and multinational communication. Like Japanese teachers' attitudes, Sifakis & Sougari's (2005) survey suggests that Greek EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards English pronunciation are based on a native-speaker model. As a result of the need to acquire native English pronunciation, schools and universities tend to hire native speakers of English because it is believed that these teachers can develop students' ability to pronounce English correctly like native speakers of English.

There are, on the contrary, studies regarding the need for students to be exposed to varieties of English. Yang (2004), for instance, suggests that Chinese students should be acknowledged with different varieties of English by using teaching materials that reflect these varieties, and thus they will be able to communicate effectively. Deterding (2005) also observes that Singaporean students should be given an opportunity to be exposed to non-standard accents such as Estuary English since they are likely to encounter in their social settings. Kirkpatrick (2009) strongly argues for the move from a monolingual restrictive ideology to a multilingual liberating ideology by promoting highly qualified multilingual English language teachers instead of recruiting native speakers who have no teaching qualifications.

To sum up, this section draws on studies that provide current views of EFL teachers from different educational contexts. Although some studies are likely to suggest that EFL/ESL teachers prefer to teach English pronunciation according to a native-speaker and monolingual model, a few studies attempt to address new directions in teaching English pronunciation from a non-native-speaker and multilingual approach. This study not only aims to examine whether and to what extent Thai primary school teachers of English are influenced by the native speaker norm, but also to raise these teachers' awareness towards the changing approach of English pronunciation pedagogy.

### **Research Methodology**

This section explains the rationale of the study, research setting and participants, and data collection and analysis.

#### ***Rationale of the study***

Case study is employed in this study because it can explore a particular unit of interest in depth (Denscombe, 2003), which in this case a group of Thai EFL teachers attending a two-day seminar at Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) in a local primary school in the district of Sai Yok, Kanchanaburi province, Thailand. Merriam (1998) also values a case study for not only dealing with critical problems of practice, but also extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education. Stoyhoff (2004) notes that by adopting a case study to TESOL practices, teachers and researchers could contribute to the knowledge base of the ELT profession. I am, however, aware that case study cannot be generalizable as Drever (1995) suggests that researchers cannot assume that the results of one case will be the same as the other. Adopting a case study approach, however, could not be justified unless the study has clear aims and objectives being relevant to the direction and planning of the investigation.

#### ***Research setting and participants***

This study took place at a two-day teacher training workshop at ERIC located in an education area 3 at a local primary school in Kanchanaburi province, Thailand. The participants were fifteen primary school teachers of English from local schools. They all were female. The average age of these teachers were 35 years old with the average years of teaching experience of 10 years. Most of them earned a Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English, whereas some graduated with a major in counselling, social sciences, and sports sciences. They attended this workshop because they wanted to improve their teaching professions.

**Data collection and analysis**

This study draws upon fifteen EFL primary school teachers' self-reflection notes regarding their attitudes and problems towards English pronunciation pedagogy. Each teacher was given a piece of paper to write about their ideas regarding teaching English pronunciation and problems they encountered. They were informed that their reflections would be analyzed in order to find out ways to improve the pronunciation teaching of Thai EFL primary school teachers. The questions posed to the teachers were as follows: 1) *what do you think about your teaching English pronunciation?* 2) *How do you teach English pronunciation?* 3) *What are the problems you encounter when teaching English pronunciation?* and 4) *How do you see the status of English pronunciation nowadays?* The self-reflection notes were written in Thai, translated into English, and then analyzed by using content analysis to search for common issues, which are presented in the next section.

**Findings**

The findings reveal two main issues, namely, the importance of teaching standard English pronunciation and the students' reluctance to pronounce English, which are discussed as the following.

**1) Teachers' difficulties of teaching English pronunciation**

Most teachers strongly believe that it is necessary to teach standard English pronunciation in order to promote students' effective communication.

**Extract 1**

*Teaching Standard English pronunciation is important for language learning and usage because, without correct pronunciation, speakers can be misunderstood when they communicate.*

Some teachers also correct students' English pronunciation mistakes because they think that it is useful for students to know the correct pronunciation.

**Extract 2**

*When students say 'goods morning', I will advise them say 'good morning'. Correct pronunciation is beneficial to students.*

This extract suggests that teachers are aware of students' incorrect pronunciation even the common greeting and attempt to provide the correct one. Teachers, however, admit that they are not certain how to pronounce some words or sentences correctly.

**Extract 3**

*I sometimes do not know how to pronounce some words or the stress and intonation of particular sentences. As a result, I don't dare teaching pronunciation because I'm afraid of pronouncing them incorrectly.*

Due to teachers' lack of the correct English pronunciation knowledge, they become discouraged to teach and pronounce English words. One of the reasons for some teachers' discouragement may stem from their non-English-major educational background.

**Extract 4**

*I didn't major in English, so that I can't read phonetic symbols, thus I'm afraid of pronouncing words differently.*

Some teachers have not been trained to read English phonetic symbols and phonology being relevant to understand how English words and sentences should be pronounced correctly. Consequently, some teachers perceive themselves negatively.

**Extract 5**

*I'm not a good English teacher because I didn't graduate with English major. I'm not confident in my pronunciation.*

Besides being discouraged to teach pronunciation, some teachers become so self-conscious that they do not

position themselves as good and confident English teachers. Some cannot pronounce English with a native-English-speaker accent.

**Extract 6**

*I don't possess an English-native-speaker accent and have materials such as tapes based on native speakers.*

This extract suggests that some teachers' attitudes towards English pronunciation are underlined by native-speaker ideology; as a result, they would like to use native-speaker materials. Unfortunately, they do not have these materials as they teach in rural primary schools and may find it difficult to gain financial supports from local authorities. Some of them, therefore, are self-trained and attend workshops.

**Extract 7**

*I normally attend teacher training, listen to English songs, watch movies, and practice with English tapes.*

This extract suggests that teachers would like to improve their English proficiency through autonomous language learning. This section can be concluded that teachers in this study have encountered difficulties in English pronunciation in terms of recognizing correct pronunciation, understanding phonetics, and acquiring a native-speaker accent due to their lack of relevant educational background. These issues lead to pessimism towards themselves, and thus they avoid teaching English pronunciation. The following section reveals the other significant issue of teaching English pronunciation regarding young primary school students.

**2) Teaching English to young primary school students**

These Thai teachers recognize that it is important to use repetitions when teaching English pronunciation to young learners.

**Extract 8**

*Teaching pronunciation requires repetitions because young students can't pronounce English words clearly.*

This extract suggests that young learners take time to practice English pronunciation by listening to and repeating their teachers several times.

**Extract 9**

*Students will imitate their teachers' pronunciation, and thus teachers must study about correct English pronunciation.*

Due to students' repetition of their teachers' pronunciation, teachers must learn how to pronounce English correctly. They also feel that their students are unsure to pronounce some words or expressions.

**Extract 10**

*Students are not confident in speaking, and thus they are discouraged to speak and pronounce words and sentences.*

Although teachers attempt to help students to improve their pronunciation, it is difficult to find native-speaker materials.

**Extract 11**

*I don't have materials based on English native speakers. Students never have a chance to talk to native speakers either.*

Despite the fact that students live in a tourist attraction area, they do not normally encounter foreign tourists due to their young age and dependence on their parents. As a result, they are not exposed to native-speaker pronunciation.

It is interesting to note that Kanchanaburi province is neighbored to Myanmar; and, thus, some of their students are from ethnic and linguistic minority groups such as Karen, Burmese, Laotian, and Mon, who find English pronunciation highly difficult.

**Extract 12**

*Linguistic minority students from Myanmar, Lao, Mon, and Karen ethnic groups also find English pronunciation problematic and difficult because they can't even pronounce Thai clearly.*

In case of these groups of students, Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison (2009) note that some could not read or write sufficiently in Thai, which leads to their inability to learn English well.

To sum up, this section reveals that these EFL teachers in this study have experienced difficulties in teaching young learners English pronunciation due to their language learning behaviours, inhibitions, young age, parental dependence, and ethnic and linguistic differences.

**Discussion**

Drawing upon the findings, this section critically discuss pedagogical implications with regard to English pronunciation and The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) issued by The Ministry of Education (2008), Thailand in order to provide some suggestions towards English language teacher education at a primary level.

According to Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) regarding foreign languages, students at Primary School Level 3 (Prathom 3) are expected to be able to pronounce the alphabet, words, groups of words, simple sentences and simple chants by observing the principles of pronunciation, whereas students at Primary School Level 6 (Prathom 6) must be able to tell similarities and differences between the pronunciation of various kinds of sentences, use of punctuation marks and word order regarding structures of sentences in foreign languages and in Thai language. Derwing & Munro (2005), however, claim that although students are expected to achieve the native English pronunciation goal, teachers are still confused about what is possible and what is desirable in pronunciation pedagogy. Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison (2009), for instance, reveal that primary school teachers are concerned whether correcting all pronunciation errors may discourage students; they strongly believe that the error correction can avoid repeated pronunciation mistakes. The findings from this study clearly suggest that these Thai EFL teachers are quite reluctant and not confident to teach English pronunciation. The current state of pronunciation pedagogy in Thailand is influenced by globalization especially ASEAN that will be effective in 2015, and thus, according to Mauranen (2006: 147), "English as a *lingua franca* must be one of the central concerns in this line of research if we want to understand the use of English in today's world." To improve better attitudes towards English pronunciation of Asian teachers, Kirkpatrick (2010a) suggests they must be well-trained to reach a high level of English proficiency in order to diminish the authority of native speakers of English by raising their awareness of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) to be included in Thailand ELT education.

According to Baker (2009: 569), "*lingua franca* languages are traditionally associated with communication between people who have different first languages from the language being used to communicate". English as a *lingua franca* can be viewed as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages (Seidlhofer, 2001). However, despite the fact that there are more than 1,000 spoken languages such as Bahasa Indonesia, Burmese, Cambodian, Javanese, Laotian, Malay, and Thai in Southeast Asia, English has become the official regional *lingua franca* based on Article 34 of The ASEAN Charter ratified in February 2009, which reads, "The working language of ASEAN shall be English". McArthur (2002) claims that since 1967 English has been employed as an ASEAN working language and increasingly become important in communications with China, Japan, and other Asian nations, and thus English is currently the *lingua franca* in Asia. Consequently, according to Bolton (2008), English is spoken by more than 800 million people in Asia, of who 6.5 million are Thai.

Graddol (2006) states that English as *lingua franca* speakers need to emphasize international intelligibility rather than a specific variety, maintain L1 characteristics as well as national identity, and develop receptive skills in a range of international varieties. Jenkins (2007) suggests that English as a

*lingua franca* reflect the identities of its *lingua franca* speakers, which are also critically affected by their language attitudes. Kirkpatrick (2007: 8), for example, points out that in the ASEAN community, a Thai and an Indonesian may employ English as their *lingua franca* or common language to communicate with each other. Graddol (2006: 87) claims that English as a *lingua franca* requires non-native speakers to develop pragmatic strategies for intercultural communication, to retain their national identities in terms of accents, and to negotiate themselves for mutual understanding with other non-native speakers.

Drawing upon the multilingual model of English language teaching, Kirkpatrick (2010b: 6) announces that it is the time that ASEAN citizens to recognize the legitimacy of English as the ASEAN *lingua franca* validate local varieties of English, appreciate local languages, and acknowledge learners to become proficient multilingual, but idealized native-like, speakers. In order to promote intelligible communication of English as a *lingua franca*, Seidlhofer (2001) suggests the use of information technology (IT) offers important opportunities to teach English pronunciation in terms of different varieties of spoken corpora of both native and non-native speech, which have been recorded in electronic dictionaries, encyclopedias, and sound files. Graham (2010) also states that the Internet is readily available as teaching materials that enable primary school students to be exposed to the varieties of English. This educational technology allows primary school students to be autonomous in their language learning; and, thus Thai primary school teachers of English, especially who teach in a remote area, can make utilize these media and change their roles from an instructor to be a facilitator in order to enhance young learners' English pronunciation.

### Conclusion

This study reveals Thai EFL primary school teachers' self reflections towards teaching English pronunciation not only focus on correct pronunciation and would like to acquire a native-speaker accent of English due to their lack of relevant educational background, but they also have encounter difficulties in teaching young learners English pronunciation due to their language learning behaviors, inhibitions, young age, dependence, and ethnic differences. The use of educational technology in pronunciation pedagogy can potentially enable Thai EFL teachers and young learners to be exposed to a wide variety of English pronunciation, and teachers can help to facilitate them with these different media. As a result, these Thai teachers of English are likely to avoid feeling the pressure of teaching English pronunciation, and learners are able to develop the capacity of learner autonomy in their language learning and practicing English pronunciation through the assistance of their teachers who will feel less pressured to teach English pronunciation. The results of this study can potentially provide a stepping stone for teachers, academic staff, researchers, and scholars in Thai primary schools to recognize the issues regarding English as the ASEAN *lingua franca* that can vitally contribute to the development of the appropriate English language teaching implications to engage in this foreseeable future of ASEAN community in 2015.

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## Impact of e-texting on Conventional English: A Challenge to Teachers 'Cimply Difi-“cult” 2 Cure Lang'age Habits: Impact of e-txtin

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**Abstract:** *Text messaging is ubiquitous and all pervasive. It is used for varied purposes, by students and oldies like. The language of these text messages is different from Standard English. Standard English follows norms and rules laid down by grammar where as the language of e-texting is above all grammatical considerations. The impact of text messaging on students' language component could be either positive or negative or it could be without any impact. This paper is a humble effort to study the negative impact of text messaging on the English of the learners.*

**Key Words:** Mobile, SMS, Text Messaging, e-texting, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Sociolinguistic Study

### Text of the Paper

It is a common scene to see people fiddling with mobile phones everywhere-at schools/colleges, bus stops/railway stations, malls and theatres, and hospitals and dispensaries, etc. Sending messages has become the quickest, easiest and most reasonable way to communicate with people effortlessly. Brevity and economy comprise the very essence of text messaging. The service providers, to begin with, provide various message packages free of cost as an incentive to attract customers. Youths usually opt for such packages as it facilitates their communication with their friends. Another interesting fact is that almost all those who send/ forward these text messages use English language for this purpose. Messages in regional languages too are spelt out in the Roman script. People and students (EFL and ESL learners too), who do not have adequate mastery over the language, do not hesitate to employ it, in spite of lack of adequate vocabulary and proper communication skills. The mobile users initially don't think of the consequences of sending messages frequently. Predictive text is used by newcomers and elderly people to forward these messages as typing the text is time consuming. But later on frequent usage acquaints the users with its various 'techniques' and to appear 'message-savvy' these 'cults' are adopted by all and sundry indiscriminately.

The primary motive behind the use of text messages is that of relationship building, sustenance, enrichment and social interaction. Text messaging is used as a source of information and reminders. Mobile service providers, banks, insurance companies, credit card providers, etc use text messaging. In its most pragmatic usage, a text message to Google can be sent to find out directions, weather, flight status, sports scores, etc. Services like ChaCha provide answer to any question. A live person will send a reply/ a message back, within a few minutes, with the answer to the question. Most often used for person-to-person communication, text messages are also increasingly being used to interact with automated systems (e.g. buying products, participating in television contests, recruiting voters, etc). However, these convenient services, as well as general text messaging, are a boon and curse at the same time. Text messaging is the practice whereby users of mobile and portable devices exchange brief written messages via cellular networks. While the act of sending a text message is termed “texting”, the sender is called a “texter.” It is used in place of voice calls in circumstances where it may be impossible or inexpedient (Dansieh). The terms 'text messaging' or just 'texting' refer to the brief typed messages sent using the SMS ('short message service') of mobile/cell phones, PDAs ('personal digital assistants'), smart phones or web browsers. It therefore affords most texters a cost effective and fast means of communication. At the same time, text

messaging is also technically and practically restricted, allowing only a certain number of characters per message. (Set by a worldwide industry standard, the limit is almost always 160 characters per message). Now days, it contains image, video, and sound. It involves the use of pictograms and logograms.

Text messaging has brought a great deal of convenience, quickness, and a new language to the society. Many researchers have studied the language of the text messages and pointed out its positive and negative aspects. Linguists like David Crystal are of the opinion that the more students write, the more they improve upon their writing skills. Therefore, its increased use rather enhances the literacy of users, especially the youth instead of harming it (Crystal, 2008).

This paper is a humble attempt to study the adverse effects of text messaging on the language of the texters. Some of these can be enlisted as-

### **Pragmalinguistic Contexts**

E-texting, in spite of individual variations, possesses certain common lexical and stylistic characteristics. These can be listed as:

- Use of abbreviations
- Letter Number Homophones-Gr8
- Non standard spelling-Luv
- Phonetic spellings
- Splitting of compounds
- Vowel/s omission
- Using conventional and unconventional abbreviations
- Writing in either all caps or all lower case and exchanging longer words for shorter ones (Hård af

Segerstad 2002)

- Use of acronyms
- Employing Emoticons
- Use of innovative spellings
- Practice of reduction techniques
- Phonetic reductions
- Syllabograms or rebus writing (e.g. as with the English b4 for 'before')
- Unambiguous abbreviations (e.g. u for 'you'; r for 'are'),
- Vowel deletions
- Lexical shortenings (e.g. Sun for 'Sunday')
- Use of Capitalization
- Use of punctuation marks
- Blank spaces are often omitted
- Apostrophes and sentence-final punctuation are omitted

### **Syntactic Features**

- One-sentence text messages
- The omission of auxiliary verbs
- Omission of personal pronouns and function words
- The subject pronoun is deleted (syntactical reduction)
- Openings and closings are frequently dropped
- Nouns being used as verbs-messaged, googled, texted,
- Sentences without verbs,
- Parts of speech being made redundant,

- Single word sentences,
- Violations in concord-no subject verb-agreement,

### Sociolinguistic Aspect

- Code Switching
- Use of English with other regional language/s- For example: “Arre, na, not now” and “Movie *mast songs bekar*”,
- Culture Related terms
- Appellations
- Honorifics
- Social Deixis
- *Devnagari* being written in Roman Script
- There is a hybrid of speech and writing styles in terms of format, grammar and style,
- Hybridization of languages,
- Use of slangs, etc

### The Pragmatic Aspect:

Text messages are characterized by brevity. Usually these text messages are very short. As a consequence, the sentences are short and choppy. They contain, right from a single word to a single sentence, and at times, few sentences. Sentences containing multiple clauses are rare. Most of the times, in lengthy text messages, the option of predictive text is employed. Various distinct, unique, novel and unorthodox linguistic forms are employed. These are noticed in missing end letters, contractions (middle letters are missing), in G-clippings and others as in dropping the final letter, in the use of acronyms, missing end letters, contractions (i.e. missing middle letters) acronyms and initialisms, letter/number homophones, 'misspellings' and typographical variations, non-conventional spellings, and accent stylizations. The use of consonant clusters (as in THX) is also peculiar. David Crystal has already pointed out (2008) examples of the use of z as in girlz, the k in skool, as well as phonological approximations such as Americanized forms like gonna, bin, and coz, as well as g-clippings like jumpin, havin, etc. There are relatively few examples of letter-number homophones (e.g. Gr8, “to date” could be rendered as 2d8; “for you”, as 4 U; and “before” as b4) were found. Minimum uses of capitalization, variations introduced in grammatical punctuation (e.g. commas and spaces between words) are other features to attract attention. Other aspects that can be pointed out are onomatopoeic, exclamatory spellings (e.g. haha!, arrrh!, aarrreee!, Ouch!, WOOHOO!, ahhh, etc) and a handful of other typographical-cum-linguistic devices for adding prosodic impact (e.g. fast, fast, run, run, no, no, quick quick,), etc. Indeed, as researchers like Shortis (e.g., 2007b) have shown, the non-standard orthography of texting almost always expresses the generally creative, playful, chatty, and friendly tone intended by texters. Use of humour and chain messaging is also seen in some instances. Messages are sent to share PJs.

Style is the essence of man. Style is *mentis character*, the image of a man. In spite of the commonalities pointed above, there are many personal variations seen in text messages. Local stylistic norms, colour and culture creeps into the text messages. In the paralinguistic aspect, capitalization (SEE, WAIT, COME, etc) and multiple punctuation (what???!!!) too are used by texters. Lexical items such as ello ('hello'), goin ('going'), and bin ('been') are used as abbreviations and phonological approximation. On one hand, a school of critics points out the death of the punctuation marks and on the other hand, some texters indulge in the overuse of punctuation marks, such as question marks (multiple), exclamation marks, commas and full stops. The loss of typographic contrastivity, italics, bold, underlined, etc is noteworthy.

### Metalinguistic Aspect:

E-texting is basically social in nature and fosters interpersonal relationships. This coin too has got two sides. What is the effect of the language of e-texting on Standard English? Does it have a positive or negative effect? A lot of research has been carried out on this particular aspect and linguists like David Crystal speak of its positive impact. There are others who believe that texting has a negative influence on standard writing, spelling and grammar (Siraj and Ullah 2007). Experience reveals that it does affect the spellings (orthography) of the texters, especially of the young learners. ) Neography has emerged as an alternative orthography.

The ubiquity and pervasiveness of SMS text lingo among the students is obvious. There are three different schools of thoughts prevalent today. The first two are obvious (positive and negative). A third school of thought contends that it has no effect on grammar. They argue that SMS texting should be considered as another language, and since learning a new language does not affect students' ability to use English grammar, it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging can affect their grammar. They point out that slang words have no effect on English grammar, and that even though each generation has its own jargon, English grammar has not been changed. All students need to do, they claim, is learn the basics in English class and they will be able to distinguish between "slang, texting lingo and correct English" (Russell, 2010). Rosen et al (2009, wiki) is of the view that regular use of the service can impact negatively on the everyday language of "texters." Academicians and educators became concerned about the decline in the quality of written communication. It was also reported that teachers and Professors had started having difficulty in keeping the trend in check (Wikipedia, 2010).

Whatever may be the opinion of the experts and linguists, the effect of text messaging on English has to be judged in the light of experience. Interactions with educators and academicians, thinkers and parents reveal texting is harming students' writing skills and grammar. The fact that in exams, grammatical correctness is given due weightage and marks only for the subject English and not for other subjects like social sciences, grammatical mistakes don't matter. Text messaging is harming students' writing and grammar. The spellings of the students have become atrocious. The ample use of abbreviations used in text messaging is negatively affecting written English. Lack of proper punctuation, shoddy grammar, and other aspects of e-texting adversely affect the reading and writing habits of the students. A decline in the grammar and writing skills of students are major negative aspects of text messaging. A definite language change and stylistic diffusion is noticed in their writing. It also affects their vocabulary. Thus, it affects their English usage in class work, assignment work and examinations. It takes its toll on their lexis and structure and results in non-conformity with grammatical rules.

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## Logorrhoea is not Loquacity 'Decision' precedes 'Precision' in one's Choice of Vocabulary

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**Abstract:** *This paper adumbrates a few workable approaches to ameliorate the vocabulary of Indian students, especially students from rural backgrounds, who are the majority. In the absence of a frisky, natural ambience wherein the subconscious structures of language usage are laid, the Indian students and their English teachers wade through the weeds of MTI and stifling pedagogical paradigms. Hence, to make students get a fuller grasp of words, the English teacher must draw them to the kinesics of vocabulary, not the static lexical forms.*

*Teeming words in a dictionary are like sleeping men in a dormitory. The former provide merely abstractions of meaning as the latter exhibit only forms and features. The nature of a word is well illustrated when it functions in sentences within a broad range of contexts, like the character of a person is fully revealed when engaged in acts of real life situations. Thus, exposing students to 'words in action' that figure in brief dialogues, anecdotes, film clips, expert presentations, ads, interviews, oral reports, etc., of native speakers of English go a long way in forming the right structures of language. But resorting to hackneyed prescriptions like 'reading the news papers' may mar the very cause, as the language used in them is often riddled with the 'Commercialese' & 'Officialese' clutter of the East India Company legacy and other scourges of redundancy.*

*The English teacher can woo his/ her students into the finer relishes by lading them with bloopers, palindromes, chronograms, spoonerisms, schizoids, antikangaroo words and the like. Growing rich in vocabulary in the right way is like becoming affluent by rightful means.*

*Against this canvas, the English teacher is required to meticulously choose and pickup relevant material and then prepare the cuisine for serving his puckish subjects, with a full understanding of their needs, deficiencies as well as digestive abilities.*

### Introduction

'Communication gap' was the lead story of yesterday but 'Communication jam' is the hard reality today. While on one side there is a cornucopia of training programmes, workshops, talks, articles, books, brochures and software about English communication skills, the rural Indian student communities, who are the majority, are grappling with futile learning methods and slipshod techniques to gain standard vocabulary that can enrich their language and make their speech more impressive. In this context, the Engineering student bloc poses a typical paradigm. In their consternation to enhance the vocabulary of their students so that they can fare well in GRE, TOEFL, CAT, etc., as well as the campus selection rigmarole, the English teachers and trainers are making them memorize the tiresomely long lists of 'extremely remote words', which they call 'high frequency words'. Professional students today, no doubt, must acquire a high level of vocabulary, for, all knowledge is embedded in language and all expression boils down to the basic constituents, the words. But the hackneyed prescriptions like 'reading the news papers' and mugging up the hordes of synonyms and antonyms would not make our students duly professional as we expect them to be. This is because we lack a frisky, natural ambience wherein the right foundations of language are naturally laid. Hence, the teacher of ESL has to simulate an ecosphere of English and expose his/her students to the wide-ranging avenues of its usage.

### 'Words in action' vis-à-vis 'words in suspended animation'

Teeming words in a dictionary are like sleeping men in a dormitory. The former provide merely abstractions of meaning as the latter exhibit only forms and features. The nature of a word is well illustrated

when it functions in sentences within a broad range of contexts, like the character of a person is fully revealed when engaged in acts of real life situations. Thus, exposing students to 'words in action' that figure in brief dialogues, anecdotes, film clips, expert presentations, ads, interviews, oral reports, etc., of native speakers of English go a long way in forming the right structures of language. Showing 'words in motion' but not 'words in suspended animation', to the learners, is the right way of making them grasp the real import of language. John Reads apply puts this:

“More generally, Anderson & Nagy (1991) argue strongly for a clear distinction to be made between knowing a meaning of a word and knowing its definition. In their view, functional vocabulary knowledge typically builds up through multiple exposures to word in different contexts and thus an abstract, general statement of meaning does not adequately represent the knowledge that proficient language users have of most of the words they know, even when we confine our attention to readily accessible declarative knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

The majority of words in English are polysemous and all synonyms of a word would not fit in with all situations. In this regard, the more exposures to word-sightings that the learner has in novels, reports, films etc., the better would be his understanding of them. To spot a word in several situations of language usage, the learner has got to be a seasonal reader and also a watchful listener. The English teacher should exactly work towards achieving this end.

The ambient, suggestive contexts that contain appropriate English usage make the reader 'feel', 'presume' and at once 'understand' the 'full import' – not just 'meanings' – of words. Here are a few excerpts from the mainstream English writing.

Let us start with Chetan Bhagat's *'five point someone'*:

“Sasi's was a **ramshackle**, illegal roadside establishment right outside the IIT gates. Using tents and stools, the **alfresco** dining menu included paranthas, lemonade and cigarettes.”<sup>2</sup>

One can easily guess what the words in bold connote as the very situation that they depict makes it obvious to the reader that the eat-shop described is a dirty and an open air one. The words get imprinted in the reader's mind, not as individual entities but contextual terms, and would reappear with their associated situational airs whenever he / she stumbles upon them the next time.

From Dan Brown's *'Deception Point'*:

The senator smiled, **dabbing** his mouth with a napkin...<sup>3</sup>

The situation almost 'shows' the act of dabbing and this graphic reference remains with the reader as a readymade unit for future use.

One nugget from Amish's *'The Immortals of Meluha'*:

“A little ahead of him walked a **hooded figure**. With his head bowed, his eyes **scrunched**, he took slow **methodical steps**, his mind lost in **unfathomable thoughts**.”<sup>4</sup>

The phrases **hooded figure**, **methodical steps** and **unfathomable thoughts** are used here in a non-conventional way giving the reader the great flexibility that English words have and the adaptability that they exhibit. The extremely remote word **scrunch** is also used in a connotative way but the reader can easily figure out the meaning as the mood itself illustrates it with utmost clarity.

P. Sainath, the winner of the prestigious European Commission's journalism award, the Lorenzo Natali Prize, writes figuratively fluid English which is self-revelatory to its reader:

“The Government surely does: there are some basics without which all the **tinkering** in the world remains a farce...”<sup>5</sup>

“**Fly-by-night** operators have **milked the incentives** offered by the state for setting up industries in backward areas...”<sup>6</sup>

While the **tinkering** and **milking the incentives** are self-explanatory, they are stripped of their conventional meanings and familiarize the reader with unforeseen liberties that could be taken with the words. Even the adjectival phrase, **fly-by-night**, will enthuse the reader to coin neologisms that make his

language captivating.

The snippets adduced here portray the need of situational connectivity that the words require in order to remember them, as the reader is, in turn, a user.

Michael Mc Carthey and Felicity O'Dell drive home this point in their supremely popular book '*English Vocabulary in Use*':

“Research studies show that we remember new words much more easily if we think about them in relation to our own experience and use them in a context that is meaningful to us as individuals”.<sup>7</sup>

### Kindred Vocabulary, the key to comprehension

Another useful technique is to group words in terms of their usage. Sometimes, for the same feeling or need, there are different words that depict different degrees or levels of intensity. For example, to be '**ravenous**' is to be 'extremely hungry' and to be '**peckish**' is to be 'slightly hungry'. While '**insipid**' means tasteless or flavourless, '**vapid**' means to be dull or lacking interest or intelligence. 'Drab' denotes something without interest or colour and 'pallid' means 'pale' (of a person, their face, etc.).

Verbs could also be taught in groups. Some 'legal' words are given here:

to **contravene** a law; to **impeach** a president/governor; to **abrogate** a treaty/ law; to **infringe** someone's rights; to **embezzle** with funds; to **launder** money; to **quash** a decision / conviction; to **lodge** an appeal/complaint; to **annul** a marriage/agreement / law; to **set a precedent**; to uphold/ **overrun** a verdict; to **doctor** the facts and figures, etc.

These kindred word-groups appeal a lot to the learner and give him a comprehensive picture of the right usage.

### Warn learners against clutter

Another disastrous yet very common prescription given to English learners in India is, “Read newspapers regularly!” This will land the sincere learner into the lurch of bad English. Why 'wee hours' for the simple 'early hours'? ... Why the 'alleged' criminal? What is 'Deputy CM livid with Mr. X'? What is 'jeopardizing the judiciary'? Where is the need for such bombast in reporting the bare facts?

As Jyoti Sanyal<sup>8</sup> rightly comments, the Indian newspaper English is a combination of *Commercialese* and *Officialese*, the outdated legacy of the Raj days. It is still clouding the Indian English. He says, the Indian Press clutters the English language with four patterns of wordiness, viz.,

#### \* Circumlocution

#### \* Pleonasm

#### \* Redundancy

#### \* Tautolog

**Circumlocution** means *talking around*. Our English newspapers always use roundabout Victorian expressions, for each of which a single word (here in brackets) would do:

a large proportion/percentage of	(many)
during the time that	(while)
give rise to	(cause)
in a hasty manner	(hastily)
in view of the fact that	(because)
owing to the fact that	(since/because)

**Pleonasm** is unnecessary repetition of an idea with a word or phrase. Here are some very frequent Pleonasm. Each word italicised in the very common newspaper terms only repeats the idea in the word next to it:

<i>final</i> outcome	<i>original</i> source	<i>future</i> prospects
<i>end</i> product	<i>past</i> history	<i>general</i> public
<i>proposed</i> plan	<i>sum</i> total	<i>still</i> continue/persist
<i>top</i> priority	<i>usual</i> custom	a p p e a r o n t h e s c e n e
temporary <i>respite</i>	<i>grand</i> total	<i>advance</i> planning
	rise up	<i>total</i> destruction
<i>joint</i> collaboration	merge together	<i>root</i> cause

**Redundancy** is the repetition of information, or the use of more words than are necessary. Our daily newspapers serve redundancies by fixing the dead load of words such as *issue, problem, position, condition, purpose, situation, question*, etc. They report the weather *condition*, instead of the weather; the crime *situation*, instead of crime; the famine *problem*, instead of famine, and so on.

**Tautology** is also pleonasm but it repeats an idea anywhere in a sentence or a passage, like '... it will weaken *the strength of* our society ...'

Growing rich in vocabulary is like becoming affluent by rightful means. Haphazardly hoarded vocabulary would result in logorrhea and affect the learner's English adversely. Hence, the English teacher should warn his students against the aforementioned clutter and hackneyed expressions before while exposing them to the right kind of English.

### Woo your subjects with scrumptious verbal dishes

Some students evince a natural flair for language but majority are not interested in it. The teacher must have the knack of wooing his subjects into the process of savouring English by serving them with intriguing and magical expressions in English language. Here are some mouth-watering examples from O. Abootty's 'A Joyride through English':

### Kangaroo and Antikangaroo words

A Kangaroo word conceals a small word inside it. For example, 'deceased' is a Kangaroo word because it conceals its own synonym inside it, i.e., 'dead'.

Illuminated	:	Lit	Appropriate	:	Apt
Destruction	:	Ruin	Utilise	:	Use
Instructor	:	Tutor	Container	:	Can
Container	:	Tin	Recline	:	Lie
Indolent	:	Idle	Catacomb	:	Tomb
Precipitation	:	Rain			

An Antikangaroo word conceals, on the contrary, its own opposite inside itself.

Communicative	:	Mute
Wonderful	:	Woeful
Friend	:	Fiend

### Palindromes

A word or phrase or sentence that reads the same forward and backward is a *palindrome*. While the common palindromes are MADAM, NURSES RUN, etc., more interesting ones await us:

MURDRUM	:	a secret murder
KAZAK	:	Turkish people of Central Asia

GIPSY'S PIG	:	the hedgehog
LEMEL	:	metal filings
XOLOX	:	a locality in central Mexico
NAURUAN	:	an inhabitant of Nauru, a nation in Pacific Island
VELLEV	:	a town in Denmark
TUNG NUT	:	the seed of the tung tree
FINNIF	:	a five-dollar bill

### Semordnilaps

This is different from a palindrome. This word reads backward and forward differently. For example LIVED becomes DEVIL when we read it from right to left. Semordnilaps are also called 'backwords', 'bacronyms', 'mirror words' and 'reversals'. Here is a list of them:

Animal	:	lamina	Leper	:	repel
Liar	:	rail	Brag	:	garb
Loop	:	pool	Loot	:	tool
Bad	:	dab	Loots	:	stool
Bat	:	tab	Meet	:	teem
Bats	:	stab	Parts	:	strap
Dew	:	wed	Rats	:	star
Redraw	:	warden			

### Capitonyms

In English, the same word gives two different meanings in its capitalized and uncapitalized forms. Such words are 'capitonyms'. Here is a list of them:

begin (start)	-	Begin (the former leader of Israel)
concord (agreement)	-	Concord (the capital of New Hampshire)
ewe (a female sheep)	-	Ewe (an African language)
guy (man)	-	Guy (a Flemish ruler)
herb (a plant)	-	Herb (short for Herbert)
ill (sick)	-	Ill (a river in Austria)
job (work)	-	Job (a character in the Bible)

### Words and Histories

Words in English, as in any other language, reveal chapters of history. The long evolution of a word to its present form over centuries could be compared to the course of a perennial river. By giving a peep into the hoary histories of words, now and then, the English teacher can ignite a spark in his students to go for a rewarding word-hunt. Who is not awe-struck to know that a very common word in English, 'abyss', has a 5,000 year old history? Here is the origin:

“**Abyss** is one of the few English words that derive from Sumerian, the world's first written language, which evolved some 5,000 years ago in the lower Tigris and Euphrates Valley of what is now called Iraq. The word came into English in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century from the Latin word *abyssus*, meaning “bottomless, the deep,” but has been traced ultimately to the primordial sea that the Sumerians called the **Abzu**. Another word with Sumerian roots is Eden, the word for the lost paradise that came into English from a Hebrew word.”<sup>10</sup>

The English teacher can make use of the goldmine of vocabulary available today in the form of

books and web content. He/she can also take the help of etymology to create a healthy appetite in his students for vocabulary.

### Peroration

The English teacher, especially the one who teaches ESL, should play the roles of a creator, a facilitator as well as a catalyst in the language classroom. He / she can carefully pick samples from numerous sources and expose students to the present day global English. The learners will achieve precision in their expression when they reach high levels of exposure to a range of vocabulary. Then only can they exercise their discretion or decision in their choice of it.

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## Key Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary: A Classroom Experience

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**Abstract:** *In India, certainly, English is used much more for higher order communication than for day-to-day social interaction. However, students entering college are expected to possess enough word knowledge and proficiency in English to cope with the demands arising from having to handle it as a medium of higher learning. Sometimes, the learner needs to go to another state or to other parts of the country for educational or occupational purposes. A student is usually required to take an examination on competitive basis, for entry into a specialist field of study or a job or face an interview. In such cases, the learner has to master English words to communicate and meet the demands of the present day society. For these reasons, it becomes necessary for the language teachers, to teach the core aspects of basic vocabulary such as meaning, spelling and pronunciation which lead to proficiency in English language. Allen (1999) claimed that “experienced teachers of English as a Second Language know very well how important vocabulary is. They know their students must learn thousands of words that speakers and writers of English use.”*

*Hence, teaching vocabulary to ESL learners is essential as it plays a dominant role in creating understanding of language. Vocabulary should be taught to the learners as proficiency in vocabulary lead to proficiency in language. New words have to be introduced in such a way as to capture the students' attention and place the words in their memories. Vocabulary learning can often be seen as a laborious process of memorizing lists of unrelated terms. If vocabulary is taught in an uninteresting way such as by drilling, simple repetition and learning lists, then the words are likely to be forgotten. Teachers need to teach vocabulary innovatively so that the learners may store them in their memory and use the words appropriately in real contexts.*

*The research shows that teaching vocabulary in an explicit manner is very essential for various reasons such as:*

- *vocabulary is the basis of any language learning.*
- *language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar (Lewis, 1993).*
- *continuous enriching and expanding vocabulary enhances learners' knowledge of comprehension of texts in L2.*
- *vocabulary plays an active role in both receptive and productive language skills.*
- *vocabulary is crucial for achieving academic success and for seeking better employment opportunities.*
- *it is essential for communicating and expressing ideas and feelings.*

*Success in this competitive world often depends on the candidates' effective use of words in context. According to Wilkins (1972: 111) without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Thus, it signifies that a language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the application of methodologies pertaining to teaching vocabulary items in a classroom situation. A crucial component of learning a second language is the acquisition of vocabulary. Hence, vocabulary should be placed in the centre of language teaching as it plays an important role in creating understanding of language through what a student hears, sees and reads in the classroom. This article describes various methods which include brainstorming, visual aid, dramatization, and drawing pictures etc. can be incorporated in the teaching of vocabulary in a language classroom. These methods are rather limited, yet this provides some insight for teachers to realize the benefits of using creative activities to teach vocabulary in ESL classroom. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight some of the innovative activities of learning English vocabulary inside and outside the classroom.*

*A crucial component of learning a second language is the acquisition of vocabulary. Hence, vocabulary should be placed in the centre of language teaching as it plays an important role in creating understanding of language through what a student hears, sees and reads in the classroom. This article describes various methods which include brainstorming, visual aid, dramatization, and drawing pictures etc. can be incorporated in the teaching of*

*vocabulary in a language classroom. These methods are rather limited, yet this provides some insight for teachers to realize the benefits of using creative activities to teach vocabulary in ESL classroom.*

## **Introduction**

In India, certainly, English is used much more for higher order communication than for day-to-day social interaction. However, students entering college are expected to possess enough word knowledge and proficiency in English to cope with the demands arising from having to handle it as a medium of higher learning. Sometimes, the learner needs to go to another state or to other parts of the country for educational or occupational purposes. A student is usually required to take an examination on competitive basis, for entry into a specialist field of study or a job or face an interview. In such cases, the learner has to master English words to communicate and meet the demands of the present day society. For these reasons, it becomes necessary for the language teachers, to teach the core aspects of basic vocabulary such as meaning, spelling and pronunciation which lead to proficiency in English language. Allen (1999) claimed that “experienced teachers of English as a Second Language know very well how important vocabulary is. They know their students must learn thousands of words that speakers and writers of English use.”

Hence, teaching vocabulary to ESL learners is essential as it plays a dominant role in creating understanding of language. Vocabulary should be taught to the learners as proficiency in vocabulary lead to proficiency in language. New words have to be introduced in such a way as to capture the students' attention and place the words in their memories. Vocabulary learning can often be seen as a laborious process of memorizing lists of unrelated terms. If vocabulary is taught in an uninteresting way such as by drilling, simple repetition and learning lists, then the words are likely to be forgotten. Teachers need to teach vocabulary innovatively so that the learners may store them in their memory and use the words appropriately in real contexts.

The research shows that teaching vocabulary in an explicit manner is very essential for various reasons such as:

- vocabulary is the basis of any language learning.
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Success in this competitive world often depends on the candidates' effective use of words in context. According to Wilkins (1972: 111) without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Thus, it signifies that a language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the application of methodologies pertaining to teaching vocabulary items in a classroom situation.

Vocabulary is the first and foremost important step in language acquisition. In a classroom where students are not finding themselves comfortable with L2, language learning can be made interactive and interesting with the introduction of appropriate vocabulary exercises. This paper is an attempt to study and explore the various methodologies that can be incorporated in the teaching of vocabulary items in a language classroom.

## **Patterns of Difficulty in Vocabulary**

Robert Lado (1955) talked about patterns of difficulty in vocabulary teaching. He highlighted key

issues related to words, the native language factor and about patterns. He even analyzed Spanish, French and Mexican patterns of difficulty in their respective vocabulary items. He stated that while dealing with vocabulary one should take into account three important aspects of words - their form, their meaning and their distribution - and one should consider various kinds of classes of words in the function of the language. He said that the forms, meaning distribution and classification of words are different in different languages. He revealed that these differences might lead to vocabulary problems

### **Vocabulary and Anatomy**

Visnja Pavicic (2003) dealt with a way to improve students' abilities to explore, store and usage of vocabulary items. He determined the role of vocabulary teaching and how a teacher could help their learners. He laid emphasis on self initiated independent learning with strategies, in which formal practices, functional practices and memorizing could be included. He said that the teacher should create activities and tasks to help students to build their vocabulary and develop strategies to learn the vocabulary on their own.

### **Teaching Vocabulary in English Language: Effective Methodologies**

It is noteworthy to mention here that vocabulary items are imparted mostly by translation: either a list of words with their translation at the beginning of the lesson or the translation of the content having new words or glossaries at the very end. This is an erroneous practice as it leads to a state of confusion for the learners. On the teaching skills of vocabulary items, Frisby (1957) commented that "While the teacher is not, himself, concerned with the actual selection of vocabulary for text book purposes since practically all the books we use are based on limited vocabularies, it is important that he/she (the teacher) should know the principles, which underlie vocabulary selection". Thus it signifies that a language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the application of methodologies pertaining to teaching vocabulary items in a classroom situation. Following are the main methodologies for teaching vocabulary items in an English language classroom.

### **Listening Carefully**

Careful listening to the words may be a good option in teaching vocabulary items in a heterogenic classroom. "Let the students hear the word in isolation and in a sentence. If the sounds of the word have been mastered, the students will hear it correctly with two or three repetitions." (Robert Lado: 121) Slow pronunciation without distortion will help. Breaking the word into parts and building up to the whole word will also be helpful.

### **Pronouncing the Word**

Pronouncing the word enables the students to remember it longer and identify it more readily when they hear or see it.

### **Methods of Grasping the Meaning**

The teacher should try to get the meaning to the class without using translation. This is not preferable on the ground that translation may or may not provide the meaning of the word accurately and precisely. It is advocated as it enables the class to go without grasping the meaning of a word that they have learned to pronounce rather than to depend upon the translation.

### **Key Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary**

Some of the key strategies to unfold the information and meaning of a new word to a class are as follows:

#### Definitions

Definitions in the target language may be very handy if they are expressed in terms that are better known or more easily guessed than the word that is defined. In this direction teachers and students can refer to

authentic and reliable dictionaries.

#### Self-defining Context

The context makes the situation clear, and this in turn illuminates the meaning of the new word. This practice saves time and develops an intensive reading habit and better understanding.

#### Antonyms

When one member of a pair of opposites is understood, the meaning of the other can be easily comprehended. This helps the student to understand the different shades of meanings of a word.

#### Synonyms

A synonym may be used to help the student to understand the different shades of meaning if the synonym is better known than the word being taught. Synonyms help to enrich a student's vocabulary bank and provide alternative words instantly.

#### Dramatization

This method can be practiced at ease. It can win the favour of the students as learners like dramatizations and can easily learn through them. Many situations can be dramatized or demonstrated.

#### Examples

- Sing [Sing a song]
- Open [Open a book]
- Close [Close the book]

#### Pictures and Drawings

Pictures of many types and colours can be used successfully to show the meaning of words and sentence. Handmade pictures can also be used as there is no need to be very artistic.

#### Examples

- into [Raj goes into the circle.]
- in [Rahman is in the circle.]

Drawings can be used to explain the meaning of things, actions, qualities, and relations. A line drawing of a head, for example, provides many useful nouns and verbs.

#### Realia

Real objects or models of real objects are very effective and meaningful in showing meanings but in handling of real objects, a teacher must be practical and should not be superfluous.

#### Series, Scales, Systems

The meaning of words such as the months of the year, the days of the week, the parts of the day, seasons of the year, ordinal numbers, cardinal numbers, etc. that form part of well-known series can be made clear by placing them in their natural order in the series.

#### Parts of Words

The parts of complex and compound words may be more common than the words themselves. Separating such words into their component parts generally elaborates the meaning.

#### Illustrative Sentences

Most words have a variety of restrictions on their use. Systematic descriptions of these restrictions and idiomatic uses would be laborious and not very effective in teaching. It is better to give appropriate examples that elucidate the range and variation of usage.

#### Practice from Meaning to Expression

This is controlled practice in which the class does not create new uses or new contexts but simply recalls the ones presented. There are many types of practices for this purpose. Pictures, realia, context, and

dramatization can be used. Series and systems can also be used.

#### Reading the Word

Reading words aloud is also very beneficial. It makes a learner familiar with the word and also improves pronunciations of the learners.

#### Writing the Word

It will enable the class to write the new word while the auditory memory is fresh, even if the objective is only to read. Writing or copying the word from the blackboard will give the student a chance to understand the grammatical aspect of the word such as noun, verb, adverb, adjective etc.

#### Shift of Attention

Under this practice, the teacher provides a context by description or through reading which elicits the use of the word. The learners should be asked to pay attention to and develop an attitude or a point of view which he defends or attacks.

#### Strategy for Special Types of Words

Specific techniques or special combinations of the above techniques may be applicable for particular groups of words.

#### Words That Are Easy to Learn

It has been seen that the words that are similar in form and meaning to the first language are easy to understand and comprehend. They should be taught for listening and reading rather than for speaking and writing.

#### Words of Normal Difficulty

Words of normal difficulty are best taught in contextual realms, such as food, clothing, sports, work, and so on. There are advantages to using a connected context illustrating the words that are to be taught. Additional words can be taught as alternatives to those chosen in the connected context. Practice can be controlled in varying situations by changing a key word or phrase.

#### Difficult Words

Some words and sets of words are especially difficult to understand. They have to be taught as special problems with the strategy determined by the particular problem in each case.

#### Teaching Active and Passive Vocabulary

Learners need to have both active and passive vocabulary knowledge. That is, the learners need to use some English words for oral communication and those they will merely have to recognize when they hear them or see them written down by others. Teaching passive vocabulary is important for comprehension, that is, enough knowledge of words used by others to comprehend their meaning. This is also called receptive knowledge of English. Teaching active vocabulary is important for advanced students' in order to create their own sentences. Active vocabulary contains the words a student can understand and manipulate in order to use for their own personal expression. This is called productive knowledge. Thus, teaching the learners both active and passive vocabulary is important for developing their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Following are a few methods that can be adapted to teach vocabulary in an ESL classroom:

#### Brainstorming

When teaching new vocabulary, the method of delivery needs to be fresh and interesting for the students or else they will not remember the words. A key word can be written up in the middle of the board and the new vocabulary relating to it can be written around it.

#### Visual aids

It means the use of pictures, diagrams and paintings in the classroom to teach vocabulary. In this way, words are remembered by their colour or position on a page or their association with other words, pictures or phrases. Images can link to a word; words can also be linked to other words, for example, a student might link the word 'car' with 'garage' and with mechanic. This idea of engaging the other sense can also help with developing a kind of semantic map where words are listed which relate to each other, which create a

situation where one word reminds the student of another.

#### Dramatization

Through this method, the teacher can win the favour of the students as they like dramatizations and can easily learn the words. The teacher can provide authentic materials that are taken from the realities of life to dramatize or to demonstrate.

#### Drawing Pictures

This is another interesting and interactive method. The teacher can divide the class into two groups and provide each one a list of vocabulary words. The teacher asks the first group to draw the picture on the black board with the help of the given words so that the students in the other group can guess the words or expressions they are trying to represent. This is a fun way to break up the class routine.

#### Playing with Words

Teachers can motivate the learners to play Scrabble, Boggle and do crossword puzzles as building one's vocabulary is a lifelong proposition.

#### Word Cards

Teachers can use devices for vocabulary teaching such as simple flash-cards or word-cards. The teacher writes the English language word on one side of the card and a sentence containing the word, its definition, its synonyms and pronunciation on the other. Word cards can be excellent method of memory aid. This is also a handy way for students to carry their new vocabulary around with them to look at whenever they have the opportunity.

#### Word Association

Another successful method of vocabulary teaching is the word association technique. If words are stored individually, they are more difficult to remember as they have no context. But if the words are stored together in commonly used phrases and sentences, they are more readily absorbed. Putting words with collocation partners in this way helps the students to relate connected words together.

#### Collocations

Grammatical collocations are when a noun, verb or adjective occur (usually) alongside a preposition. For example: 'on purpose', 'by accident', 'in case'. Lexical collocations are made up of combinations of lexical items such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Examples of lexical collocations are: dripping tap, hopelessly addicted, cook dinner. Teaching lexical phrases is another way of improving the natural sound of the students in speaking the language. Phrases such as 'thanks very much', 'don't mention it', 'have a nice day', 'sorry about that', are useful in conversation.

#### Connotations and Appropriateness

Teaching connotations are important in vocabulary teaching in order for students to feel confident using the new vocabulary in new situations. The connotations of a word are the feelings it strikes up such as positive or negative, and more specific ones for certain words. Therefore, it is very essential that the learners' should know the connotations of a word and its appropriate usage Idioms

Alongside chunks of language and fixed phrases and expressions, teachers may include in their vocabulary teaching, idioms of the English language. Idioms are common features of everyday language and are an important part of advanced language use and a major step towards fluency. Idioms can be introduced to the ESL classroom through authentic reading materials such as informal text from magazines, newspapers, letters, comic-strips, dialogue from radio or television dramas etc.

#### Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes can make a word negative, for example, adding 'un-', 'a-' or 'dis-'. These inflections are vital for students' understanding of words and can increase their vocabulary substantially simply by inflecting words they already know. Suffixes work in this same vocabulary enhancing way, by adding such as 'ing', 'less' and 'ly'. Teaching the prefixes and suffixes appropriate to new vocabulary can help students to guess what a new word might mean by reference to words they already know. In this way, prefixes and suffixes can help to introduce many new words easily. For example, knowledge of the word 'fiend' can help a student

to guess the meanings of the words 'friendly', 'unfriendly' or 'friendless'.

#### Polysemy and Homonymy

When teaching vocabulary, there are subtle differences between similar words that need to be communicated to the students' in order to avoid causing confusion. Teaching polysemy enables the student to distinguish between the different meanings of a word with closely related meanings; e.g. head of a person, of an organization. Teaching homonym distinguishes between the different meanings of a word with distinct meanings. For example, the noun 'bear' and the verb 'bear' are homonyms.

#### Matching Columns

Once the new vocabulary has been taught, a useful way to test if students have understood the meanings of this new vocabulary is to ask them to match new words from one column with definitions from another column. The new words are numbered in column one and the definitions are mixed up and lettered in column two. Students can also make up sentences using this technique, matching the beginning of the sentence or phrase from column 1 with the end of the sentence or phrase from column 2.

### **Conclusion**

It is indeed very necessary to help our learners to acquire sufficient vocabulary for communication in the second language. The use of creative methods in teaching vocabulary enable the students improve their word knowledge and continue to acquire more words outside formal classroom instruction. An efficient language teacher can use selected vocabulary activities according to the level of understanding and interest of the learners. There is no fixed or sure method to enhance the vocabulary of the L2 learners.

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## Innovative Techniques in English Language Teaching for Enhancing Learner Ability Integrated Module to teach English at Under Graduate level

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**Abstract:** *“There is no single acceptable way to go about teaching language today”.* This quote from Diane Larsen-Freeman's writings on language teaching methods sums up a major trend away from unity to diversity. People learn in different ways. A good lesson will therefore be the one in which you use a smorgasbord of activities taken from a variety of sources by varying your technique. Language skills are taught in the natural order of acquisition: listening, speaking, reading & writing. In the Indian education system emphasis on teaching reading & writing of English is more as compared to listening & speaking. As a result the learners of English as a foreign language can read and write but fail miserably when it comes to expression of their thoughts in a spoken form.

The authors of this study with their experience of teaching English at Undergraduate level in Engineering College have come up with the integrated module to teach English.

This model incorporates the practical approach to acquaint the learners with learning of language skills. The activity based methodology is used to understand, retain and express language. This not only enables the acquisition of the language easier but also fosters interest & curiosity among learners.

The study at length would discuss various methods and activities which are the part of this integrated module. The application of this model would prove to be of a great help to experts instrumental in framing the syllabi at the Undergraduate level.

### Keywords & their meanings:

- Undergraduate-Someone studying for a first degree in a higher education establishment.
- Teaching method-Something that is taught, especially guidance or doctrine.
- Language skills-A specified style of speech or verbal expression.
- Technical college- A college of further education that teaches practical skills & applied sciences necessary to the industry and business.
- Integrated module-To fit parts together to form a whole.
- Smorgasbord-[1920s: Swedish, from *smorgas* open sandwich + *bord* table] A Swedish- style assortment of hot and cold savoury dishes served as a buffet

### Integrated Module to teach communicative English at Undergraduate level

#### Introduction:

Language skills are taught in the natural order of acquisition: listening, speaking, reading & writing. As a teacher one would gradually get to know her/his students, and will be able to sense when the class is tired or confused or in need of quiet time, or particularly interested. And then they can switch over to activities/ games & exercises.

Creating the opportunity to talk to students before the first class will enable a teacher to get an idea of the students' level of English. And one does not need a detailed analysis at this point, but it would be good to know how much they understand when a teacher talks to them. This will help the teacher to pitch her/his language at an appropriate level in the classes. These talks will also be a useful way for a teacher to gauge his/her students' attitudes towards learning English and to explore their perceptions of what they need from a teacher. If past records of students' performance in English are available, these will also help a teacher

build a picture of what to expect in the classroom.

It is to be appreciated that no teaching technique or methodology can be regarded as a final word in this regard. Teaching and learning of language is a dynamic process. Based on the teachers own experiences and situations every teacher can contribute to the process in his or her unique way. The authors of this study on the basis of their long experience of teaching undergraduate students have come up with an integrated module of teaching English.

**Aim:**

The aim of this paper is to present an amalgamation of various activity based techniques for communicative English in an integrated module for teachers and learners of English using informal assessments.

An informal assessment of current levels of English should be as non-threatening as possible. A simple conversation with students about their needs and about the times and frequency of classes will help teachers ascertain their level of comprehension and ability to communicate. The teachers may also want to structure the conversation by using a self-assessment scale. This technique has been found to be very effective. Basically, in self-assessment the teacher has to ask the students to judge for themselves their abilities in English. Apart from the other tools of assessment the teacher can also use the students' native language as tool to assess.

**Assessment for all four language skills:**

The informal assessment scale given below is a tentative one. Teachers can frame questions as per their needs in a given situation.

A. Speaking and Listening

Please read the following and decide which statement best describes your ability to speak and understand spoken English.

1. My speech in English is limited to a few words. I have difficulty in understanding English, even when it is spoken very slowly.
2. My vocabulary is limited to basic needs, such as food, asking directions, greeting people, etc. I think I make many grammatical mistakes, but people can understand me.
3. I can talk about myself, my family, my job and current events. I can understand the main ideas in most conversations, except when speech is fast. I make mistakes with complicated constructions.
4. I speak English with an accent because I have done my schooling in Marathi/ Hindi medium.
5. I can understand the news in the news channels by native speakers, even when they are speaking quickly. My vocabulary is extensive even for technical matters. I make very few grammatical errors, and my pronunciation is good but not completely native.

B. Reading and Writing

Reading

1. I can recognize the letters of the alphabet. I can read names of places, street signs, shop names, numbers and some words.
2. I really cannot read anything in English, or can read only a few words I have memorized.
3. I need to use a dictionary sometimes to get the general sense of business letters, news items and articles on subjects with which I am familiar
4. I understand the basic meaning of most newspaper articles, routine correspondence, reports, and

technical material in fields with which I am familiar, without using a dictionary. However I need to refer to a dictionary to get the exact meaning of the entire text. I sometimes have difficulty with complex sentences.

5. With only the occasional use of a dictionary, I can read without difficulty any prose directed at the general reader, and all materials in fields with which I am familiar.

#### Writing

1. I cannot write in English.
2. I can write a few sentences in English, using very basic vocabulary and grammar.
3. I can write relatively simple items, such as a short note to a friend, that communicate basic messages, but usually containing lots of misspellings and grammatical errors.
4. I can write fairly long personal letters, as well as uncomplicated business letters and simple technical reports, which contain relatively few errors.
5. I can write personal letters, reports and business letters.

#### **Different approaches to learning a language:**

##### a) Natural Acquisition of a language:

Natural Acquisition of language focuses on the importance of listening comprehensions on the basis of acquisition. This approach believes that language is acquired, not learned. Learners acquire a language through an unconscious process which involves using the language for meaning communication.

Learning, on the other hand involves a conscious process which results in knowledge about the rules of a language but not necessarily in an ability to use the language. The Mother Tongue is seldom used. Meaning is made clear by mime, drawing etc. The Natural Approach stresses that self-confident learners' high motivation is a key in being successful learner and teachers should create a learning environment which promotes self-confidence with the help of different games & activities.

##### b) Quiet Way:

Teacher should talk as little as possible & should encourage the learner to speak as much as possible. Mistakes are considered part of the process of discovering the rules, & the teacher should not interfere in this process by correcting the learners' mistakes. Instead the teacher should mark or write down the mistakes and should go ahead with it after the students have completed their conversation assignment. This approach will not only boost the confidence but will also provide a sense of self-respect.

##### c) Communicative Approach:

Communicative approach emphasises the use of language in realistic ways. Alert the students about the ways in which you use English to carry out simple tasks for e.g. taking a phone message for a friend or interpreting for someone who speaks English but doesn't know the local language. Adapting these tasks for classroom activities will motivate students & allow them to demonstrate their use of English in real life tasks.

##### d) Total Physical Response:

Introduce new vocabulary to students. Using this method proves effective in enhancing communication skills with learners. Teach directions, have students acted them out [body language]. Providing an opportunity to use all the available resources and making the students aware of the dormant potentials using

various activities improves comprehension & retention.

e) Natural Approach:

All the approaches together can make a difference especially when you deal with students of engineering colleges & professionals. The approach of the students especially in technical fields is often logical & rational. Keeping this in mind if the classroom activities are planned, learning becomes fun and boosts confidence in the expression in a natural way.

For e.g.

- Is it a verb whose meaning you can act out?
- Can you show a picture to illustrate the meaning?
- Accumulate files of pictures specifically for this purpose.
- Compare & Contrast the meaning of the new word to that of words which the students already know?

f) Competency based Approach:

To help students see how much they are learning, introduce real tasks & ask them to complete these. Draw or read the bus schedule or read out the description of the college premises (The teacher should make some mistakes while reading, and the students should be able to point out the number of mistakes the teacher makes.)

The objective behind such competency based activity is to make the students more focused to effective listening.

### **Development of language skills**

a) Speaking Skills:

*'Mend your speech a little, Lest it may mar your fortune.'*

-William Shakespeare

Like listening, speaking is crucial to effective communication. Students need to interact with their teachers and classmates, make explanations during tutorials and practical sessions, take part in seminars and workshops, technical presentations, academic discussions, academic interactions, viva voce tests, and so on. Speaking is the purposeful process by which people, using audible and visible symbols, communicate meaning in the minds of their listeners. The function of oral communication is creating messages that stimulate in listeners' meanings that bring about the desired change in their understanding or opinions. As conversation is a tool of social interaction, it is essential to be able to converse well in both informal as well as formal situations. The students should be prepared to start a conversation, pick a topic for conversation, help others to start, keep a conversation going, move smoothly from one topic to another, and conclude a conversation naturally.

To improve speaking skills the following activities can be tried out in the classroom:

#### **Activity-1 Icebreakers**

With the help of International Phonetic Chart drill the students with the pronunciation of long and short vowel sounds. This followed by words from which they can identify long and short ones and accordingly classify them into a table.

#### **Activity-II Primary stress and Secondary Stress**

The aim of this activity is to understand the concept of English pronunciation by identifying the speech sounds of English. It teaches to identify the primary stress & secondary stress given on words of two syllables and more than two. The duality of English spelling and pronunciation may confuse a beginner and make English pronunciation difficult to master. In the following word *student* the first syllable 'stu' is more prominent than the second syllable 'dent' and thus the first syllable is accented. Learning appropriate pronunciation techniques gives one the confidence to avoid common lapses and errors in speaking. A truly acceptable pronunciation is one that allows the listener to understand the content of a message without being distracted by its form. Through this activity self-expression & fluency can be improved by applying appropriate speaking techniques.

#### Progress Check:

To know whether the students have understood, a small exercise can be given to classify the long and short vowels. For example:

1. Read the following sentences aloud, identify words containing long vowel sounds, and insert these words in the appropriate column in the table below.
  - *Good morning, sir*
  - *Good evening, teacher*
  - *I am glad to meet you*
2. Bring to class a few examples of headlines. Avoid headlines which consist of long sequences of words used as modifiers, such as *ACCUSED FELON IN MYSTERY BLAZE*. Choose instead simple headlines such as *FIRE KILLS SEVEN*, *PARENTS ANGRY OVER SCHOOL CLOSURE*, and *CRIME VICTIMS FIGHT BACK*.
3. Present the headlines to the class and ask them what words have been left out. Discuss why these words were not important. Contrast reading aloud the headline, where the teacher will stress every word, with reading aloud a full version, where the same words are stressed, but the others are unstressed.
4. Ask the students to write headlines for news stories and events, and then to expand the headlines and to read them aloud to the class. In commenting on the students' readings, remind them of the link between importance and stress.

Review the problem sounds and provide students with practice in a new context.

#### b) Listening Skills

"You are not listening to me," says the teacher. "Sir, I am listening to you," the student replies. "No you are not," the teacher emphatically says. The problem is simple. The student is not able to focus 100 percent on what the teacher is speaking, and the teacher is able to sense it. It is important to be a good listener and to be perceived as one. Listening is a process of receiving and interpreting the spoken word. Listening begins with physical hearing of the message and taking note of it. A clear distinction should be made between listening and hearing. Hearing happens automatically as it is an involuntary physical act. It doesn't require the conscious involvement of the listener.

To enhance listening skills the following activities can be given in the classroom which will rouse the curiosity and thus interests the students in picking up skills easily.

#### **Activity-I**

Ask one of the students to read out a passage and ask the others to answer the question that follow. There may be some words which may be difficult to comprehend or due to some factors, (accent of the student who reads a passage) there is a possibility to misinterpret the words. Here the teacher can discuss the different reasons of poor listening skills. This activity can boost confidence and work as an icebreaker to get the students into the mode of learning.

#### **Activity-II**

The above activity can be followed by describing a photograph ( with unusual features ) using adjectives

and asking the students to listen and draw. After the students have drawn the picture, compare the original photo with the ones the students have drawn. The next step is to analyse what went wrong with their listening skills. A detailed discussion with feedback from the teacher will enable the students to enhance their listening skills.

The student has to listen to the information and draw accordingly. A teacher can try out the example given below:

#### Original Message

“My neighbour is a very tall thin woman. She wears a t-shirt. She wears narrow trousers. She has big feet, very big feet and she wears big black boots. She has a square face and a long pointed nose. She has two small eyes in the middle of her face. She is always miserable and has a long miserable mouth. She has a lot of hair. It's full of birds. She has long thin arms and always carries her little cat in her arms.”

Compare the original picture with the picture the students have drawn. It's amazing to see a variety of pictures giving a feedback of how poor listening skills they have. Such activities make them enjoy learning skills important for a professional life but with a difference.

#### Activity-III

Or another activity suggested is as given below, if it is the beginning of the session this activity will work out well. In an exercise of this sort a teacher should include approximately ten informational mistakes. Do not include grammatical mistakes in this exercise. The aim is to teach students to listen for information.

Yesterday was Tuesday (mistake no 1, it was Wednesday) and I decided to go and visit my friend Mrs Patki the physics teacher (mistake no 2), Mrs Patki teaches maths. I walked out of the staff room and turned right down the corridor past the physical education room and walked out of G block. On my way to meet Mrs Patki I passed by the industrial workshop building. There I saw our college principal talking to some of the student. I thought it was his office very close by. I met my friends in the premises who teach in MCA Department. I walked with them to the canteen which opposite the bank. We all had coffee and I went to issue some books from the library. The library seemed to be very far, I think it is opposite the Principals office.

A teacher could build an English lesson around giving instructions for the students to follow on changing a tire, building a level wall, making a chair, or making a flashlight. To conduct these lessons a teacher might need to coordinate your choice of topic with the teachers giving courses in basic sciences, civil department, E D T, Industrial or auto maintenance. Indigenous and comprehensive study materials related to teaching of all the four skills can be created and applied in the classroom keeping in mind the changing needs of the industry and the learners. Checking with colleagues that how technical instructions should be in line with those taught in particular subjects and making learning multidisciplinary.

#### c) Reading skills

Reading is an important communicative process and reading skills are probably the most important language skills required for academic and professional purposes. Quick, efficient and imaginative reading techniques are essential in order to achieve academic success, because academic performance depends on the quantity and quality of reading. Reading is concerned with four factors: decoding, comprehension, text analysis, and response. Response is our action or reaction to the written message. An engineering student has to read and interpret textbooks, research papers and articles in technical journals, teaching notes, notices, web materials, directories, encyclopaedias, laboratory instruction sheets safety manuals and regulations, technical reports and reference materials. The basic purpose of reading is to extract information from various sources.

Suggested activity for reading comprehension:

Ask the students to make some simple and some complex sentences. (Divide the class into groups). Two members from each group have to mime a simple sentence and a complex one they have selected. The

other groups have to guess what the sentence means. Here the important aspect that comes to the fore is that only nouns and verbs can be mimed. Even then the students can comprehend the simple and complex sentences without connectors. This helps the students to comprehend texts which are lengthy and thus fastening their pace of reading with understanding.

Progress check:

Analyze the following reading materials and identify the various reading practices that you may use to ensure reading effectiveness:

- a. An e-mail message
- b. An enquiry letter
- c. A technical report
- d. A proposal
- e. A chapter in a text book
- f. A journal article
- g. A short story
- h. A trip report

d) Writing Skills

The ability to write effective sentences is essential for success in technical communication because writing anything primarily involves writing sentences. Whether it is a technical report or a brief e-mail message, sentences have to be written and the effectiveness of the writing will depend on the effectiveness of the sentence. It's important to learn to write correct and effective sentences before learning to compose serious messages.

**Activity**

In this activity students are presented with the context in the task rubric. This explains the role of the student must take in to write a note, message, memo, or email of around 40 to 50 words using a written prompt. It also identifies whom the message is to be written to. The prompt is included in the instructions, in the form of bullet points clearly stating the pieces of information that must be incorporated into the answer.

- a. You are a regional sales manager for an international company. You have been asked to go to a meeting at your company's head office. You cannot go, so somebody else will go in your place.

Write an e-mail to XYZ organizing the meeting:

- Apologizing for not being able to go to the meeting
- Explaining why you cannot go
- Saying who will go.
- Write 40-50 words.

Similarly such exercises can be given in the form of a message to a friend, neighbours, and a telephone message for some members of the family, a teacher's message to the students etc

**Limitations:**

Some of the limitations which were noted by authors while using this integrated module are discussed below. The Integrated Communicative Approach will challenge a teacher's creativity to set up situations in which students can demonstrate their competency in the four language skills. The teacher and the learner may face difficulties in the logistics of organizing groups. Lack of space, or complaints from other teachers about the noisy moving of desks, might feature in your first few weeks of asking the class to get divided into groups. If there are options available the teacher should consider those for the smooth conduction of the classes, mainly due to the activities involved.

A teacher may also encounter resistance to group work from students. Some of the better students may

resent having to "share" their skills and grades. Some of the less motivated students may take the opportunity to do even less work. Parameters for evaluation should be framed and policy for group work will have to be spelled out and the teacher will need to monitor that everyone is contributing to the group effort.

Although this study has suggested an integrated module to teach communicative module that incorporates various approaches and skills to facilitate easy and learning of English, it cannot be said that nothing lies beyond this so far as the tips and techniques of communicative English are concerned. There can tens and hundreds of techniques and methods which can be adopted and used by the innovative teachers of English.

### **Conclusion:**

A fundamental principle in teaching is moving from the known to the unknown. In this case, it means taking into account your students' previous experience and using some of the activities from methodologies they feel comfortable with, at least in the initial stages. Learners usually work in pairs or groups for role play, information sharing, or problem solving.

Group work is basic to all the above demonstration. All four language skills are taught from the beginning. In speaking skills the aim is to be understood, not to speak like a native. In the sequencing of lessons, priority is given to learners' interests and needs. The role of the teacher is to generate comprehensible input. This means that when presenting new materials the teacher has to be prepared to speak, mime, draw, or use real objects to get the meaning across. Only when the teacher is satisfied that students understand and are ready to speak and do as asked to do so.

To sum up the integrated module of teaching communicative English has tried to amalgamate some of the new ICT based approaches with the use of modern technical gadgets now a days available with the students. It makes use of the internet to explore information when the above mentioned activities are carried out. It's just a matter of asking the students to include the teacher as one amongst them and then slowly making them follow you. Activities can always be tried and tested in a free environment and so are we trying them. It gives full freedom to the teachers to enrich this model by including other relevant and useful techniques and approaches to make this model integrated in true sense of the term.

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## The Significance of 'P' in ESP

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**Abstract:** *The emergence of English for specific purpose (ESP) in the late 1960s had its origins in new world demands for an international language following the unprecedented expansion in technological and commercial activities internationally (cf. Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The new demands have required a different approach to a new branch in language teaching profession, or ESP, the most distinguishing feature of which is simply purpose oriented—the purpose plays the most significant role in ESP teaching and learning. In fact, the success or failure of ESP courses at all stages from the beginning to the end depends on the degree to which the dynamic cycle of the need analysis, curriculum development, course design, implementation, evaluation of courses and the following modifications are compatible with the specific purpose. In this presentation, I shall elaborate on the significance of 'P', or purpose that leads to a new approach to the ESP teaching/learning profession by illustrating the procedures for the need analysis, design of courses in terms of the learners, the teachers, the methodology, and the evaluation as well as the upcoming revisions.*

### The Emergence of ESP

The emergence of ESP has, more or less, been a phenomenon in the late 1960s, growing out of some converging trends that operated in different ways around the world (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). These trends contributed to the emergence of ESP for three main reasons: (1) the world demands, (2) a revolution in linguistics and (3) a focus on the learner (Cf. *ibid*: 6-8).

### The World Demands

In fact there was a huge expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity worldwide after the Second World War. Therefore, Technology and commerce began to act as the two unifying and dominating forces in the world, which generated a need for an international language. For different reasons, especially the US economic power, English assumed such a role.

Obviously, a great number of people felt the need to know English. This was why English then attracted a newly growing number of learners who knew why they were learning English. So a whole range of learners in various jobs and different disciplines who knew the reasons for their need turned to learn English. It was then that the need for cost-effective courses with clearly defined goals became very obvious.

The development obviously led to the exertion of pressure on the language teaching profession to satisfy the required need. English had been subject to the examination of a wider world population. Therefore it has to face the harsh realities of the market place.

### New Ideas in Linguistics

Parallel with this new demand for English courses tailored to special needs, new ideas in the study of language came to the fore. While linguistics had traditionally dealt with the rules of English usage, i.e. the grammar, the new studies shifted its attention from the formal features of language usage towards the ways language is used in real communication, i.e. language use (Widdowson, 1978). One of the major research findings was the significant variation in spoken and written from one context to another in a wide range of different ways (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In ELT this led to the view that the English of Engineering, say, is different from that of business.

These ideas naturally motivated the development of English courses for specific group of learners. In fact there was a simple idea that if language varies from one context to another, then the determination of specific features of specific contexts can form the basis of the learners' course.

The greatest development in the nature of particular varieties of written scientific and technical

English took place within late 1960s and early 1970s when the majority of research works concentrated on English for Science and Technology (EST). But there were some studies in other fields including the analysis of doctor-patient communication (Cf. Candlin, Bruton and Leather, 1976). Briefly, the guiding principle of ESP which took momentum was: "Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English you need." (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 8)

### **Educational Psychology**

Still another contribution to the rise of ESP was made by new developments in educational psychology that emphasized the role of the learners and their attitudes to learning (Cf. Rodgers, 1969). In simple terms, learners have different needs and interests that affect their motivation to learn and their learning to be effective. This led to the development of courses in line with learners' needs and interests. Therefore this was translated into developing texts relevant to what students wanted, e.g. texts about Engineering for students of Engineering etc. The basic idea was that the relevant English course motivates the learners; hence, they learn better and quicker.

All these three factors, i.e. demand for English for specific needs and developments in linguistics and educational psychology, seemed to require the increased specialization in language learning.

### **Register Analysis**

Noticeably the development of ESP has always been associated with EST (English for Science & Technology). As Swales (1985) maintains:

'With one or two exceptions ... English for Science and Technology has always set and continues to set the trend in theoretical discussion, in ways of analyzing language, and in the variety of actual teaching materials.' (Cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 9)

The works by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964) and Swales (1971) concentrated on the basic principle that the English of Electronics, say, formed a specific register different from that of, say, Nursing (Cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 9). The aim of the analysis was to specify the lexical and grammatical features of the particular registers. These linguistic features then formed the teaching materials (Cf. an example of such a syllabus is that of *A Course in Basic Scientific English* by Ewer and Latorre (1969) below.

1. Simple Present Active
2. Simple Present Passive
3. Simple Present Active & Passive
- 
4. ing forms
5. Present Perfect; Present Continuous
6. Infinitives
7. Modal Verbs
8. Past Perfect; Conditionals

It should be noted that register analysis of this type showed that there was not much difference between grammar of scientific English and that of General English beyond a tendency towards particular forms including the present simple tense, the passive voice and nominal compounds. However, the aim of the ESP syllabus was to give priority to the language forms learners would meet in their science studies. Ewer and Hughes-Davies (1971), for example, found that the language of the texts their Science students had to read widely differed from that of the school textbooks. In fact, the language forms such as compound nouns, passives, conditionals and modal verbs commonly used in Science texts.

### **Rhetorical or Discourse Analysis**

As there was serious flaws with register analysis, ESP then became associated with the emerging field of discourse or rhetorical analysis. Allen and Widdowson (1974) maintained that the difficulties students

face are not mainly because of the insufficient knowledge of the system of English, but because of their unfamiliarity with English use. Briefly they suggested that a course needs to address the way sentences are used in different communicative acts. So the organizational patterns in texts were identified. The patterns would then constitute the ESP course syllabus.

### **Skills and Strategies**

As the mentioned developments in ESP were mainly concerned with the surface forms and functions of language, an attempt was made to consider not the language itself but the thinking processes underlying the language use. For instance, the work of Christine Nuttall (1982) and Charles Anderson and Sandy Urquhart (1984) made significant contribution to research on reading skills (Cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 13). However most of the research works in the area of skills and strategies were done on the schema theory within two ESP Projects: the National ESP Project in Brazil and the University of Malaya ESP Project. In both these projects the medium of instruction for the students is their mother tongue but they need to read specialized texts available only in English.

The main point to be highlighted in the skills and strategies approach is that there are common reasoning and interpreting processes that underlie all language use regardless of the surface forms. Accordingly there is no need to concentrate on language forms in different contexts. Instead the underlying interpretive strategies including guessing the meaning of words from context, using visual layout to determine the text type, etc. would be emphasized. The language learners are thus thinking being who can verbalize the interpretive processes they employ in language use.

### **A Learning-centered Approach**

However it then became clear that language use might not be the most important feature of ESP because the main concern is undoubtedly with language learning. The description of communicative use of language in a syllabus and its exemplification in the subsequently developed materials might not enable learners to learn. But an approach to ESP based on an understanding of the processes of language learning can best serve learners' needs.

In fact, communication and learning as the building blocks of ELT can also form the approach to ESP. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 18-19) convincingly argue that ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology. It is actually an approach to language learning to serve the learners' need. In the nutshell, the key term 'P' (Purpose) in ESP determines the approach to language teaching in which all decisions concerning content and method originates from the learners' reason for learning.

### **General English Threshold for ESP**

Dudley –Evans and St. John (1998: 5) state that ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students because most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system. This can be translated into ensuring a general English threshold level for ESP courses. In other words, the basic micro language skills need to be developed by the learners before they take any ESP course. For instance, a General English test can be administered to ensure whether learners meet the threshold level essentially needed for any ESP course. This is, in fact, confirmed by some research works. For instance, Mahdavi Zafarghandi (2005) reported that the research carried out by Mahdavi Zafarghandi and Jahandideh on the assessment of reading skills of the dentistry students at Guilan University of Medical Sciences showed that the minority of the participants who seemed to have relatively met the objectives of the EST courses had all had the opportunity either to study in an English speaking country for some years or attend regular English classes at different language institutes during their secondary school education.

### **ESP Practitioners**

ESP practitioners need to develop a high degree of flexibility and cooperative skills both inside and

outside their classes. As ESP practitioners are considered mainly as counselors rather than language teachers, they should not only be aware of the latest trends in language teaching methodology, syllabus design, material developments and assessment, but also be ready to cooperate fully with program administrators, content teachers and experts in different disciplines.

ESP practitioners are almost always not the 'primary knower' of the carrier content of the material. For example, when an ESP practitioner offers English for technical English, the students engaged in technical education know more about the content than the teacher (Cf. Duddley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Under such circumstances some argue that the ESP teacher has the opportunity to draw on students' knowledge of the content in order to encourage the students to communicate in the classroom. Although this seems logical, the real situation might be much more complicated than what is said. Let's look into a short extract from *Technical English for Professionals* by Mark Ibbotson (2009: 80)

Pumps, fans and turbines

Liquids can be forced to flow (move) along pipes by mechanical devices called pumps. For example, in cars, fuel is pumped from the fuel tank to the engine by a fuel pump. The flow of fluids can be controlled by valves (see Appendix IX on page 111). A pump used to increase the pressure of gas is called a compressor.

A device powered by a motor which rotates in order to move air or gas – for example, along a duct – is called a fan. A turbine has the opposite function to a fan – it is designed to be moved by a flow of air or gas. For example, a wind turbine revolves due to the wind, and can be used to drive a generator (to generate electricity).

Here the ESP teacher can, at best, act as the consultant having knowledge of communication practices, but carefully listen to the students' views on how best to use these practices to meet the objectives of their communication in terms of the mechanisms through which pumps, fans and turbines function. Consequently, the relationship between the teacher and students is basically one of partnership.

Since ESP practitioners need to meet a great number of characteristics, it is obvious that they should be professionally trained and then start working on ideally one ESP area such as technical education so as to become a fully experienced practitioner who teaches ESP in a specific area, design the ESP courses, write and prepare stimulating materials, cooperate with the discipline experts and teachers, evaluate the ESP courses, organize class discussions, assume the role of consultant and negotiate with students, do research on ESP, get the necessary feedback and finally revise and modify all the learning /teaching activities, materials, etc.

### **Dynamic Cycle for ESP Courses**

As discussed so far, since the purpose in ESP is paramount, there is a dynamic cycle for ESP courses. To put it briefly, the purpose is the major guide for all the decisions made on designing ESP courses, need analysis, syllabus, materials, learners, teachers, tests, course duration, and facilities available for teaching, assessments and evaluation of courses, methodology revisions and modifications. As all these are subject to change every now and then, there is a dynamic cycle for any ESP course so as to serve the learners' needs.

### **Conclusion**

The emergence of ESP as a phenomenon is basically because of the advancement in Science and Technology and increasing level of Commerce across the world through English as an international language. Learners have felt and feel the need to learn English to meet their various needs. That is why the 'P' in ESP plays the most significant role in all decisions made on all stages of development of ESP courses from needs analysis, syllabus design, materials development and preparation, methodology, learners, teachers and the class communication, tests and assessment, evaluation process and the subsequent dynamic cycle of modifications, and revision.

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