An affiliate of

tesol
international
association

iatefl

An associate of
International Association of
Teachers of English as a
Foreign Language, U.K.

fortell

A Journal of Teaching English Language and Literature

In this issue:

www.fortell.org

THE BOOKS THAT INSPIRE YOUNG MINDS

Kohinoor Publications is a renowned publishing house in India. It was founded in 1992 in New Delhi. Since its inception it has been bringing out books that are used exclusively in schools at the pre- primary, primary and post- primary levels. However, it specializes in books connected with English Language Teaching (ELT). The books are geared towards shaping the young minds in keeping with the latest research in the educational pedagogy.

For the past 21 years Kohinoor has been viewed as a symbol of high-quality school books. The market response across the country has been excellent.

With best compliments from:

KOHINOOR PUBLICATIONS
A Progressive Schools Publication

Email: me@kohinoorpublications.com
Website: www.kohinoorpublications.com

11099, F/F, Doriwalan, East Park Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005
Tel: +91 11 2353 6333, 6503 9462 | Fax: +91 11 2354 1852

Wings
CCE COMPLIANT

A Course in English for Schools (FOR CLASSES 1-8)

It has been written strictly according to the objectives and guidelines of the National Curriculum Framework **(NCF)** for School Education 2005. The course consists of 22 books (8 Main Course Books, 8 Workbooks and 6 Supplementary Readers).

The course

- Has a wide range of reading materials relating to neighbourhood, science, technology, environment, sports etc.
- Has a variety of exercises that will engage the learner in pair work, group work and individual work.
- Promotes all language skills, including the skills of listening and speaking.
- Makes teaching and learning of English an exciting task.
- Relates learning of English to real-life situations.
- Provides a rich variety of supplementary reading materials (for classes 3-8) to generate interest in reading beyond the textbook.

Is accompanied by a **Teacher's Book** for each class that provides the key to most of the exercises and suggests activities that could be done in class.

Listening Skills
CD
Available

Splash
REVISED

A course in art & craft for schools

It is an exciting and innovative Art and Craft series of 8 books for pre-primary and primary classes. This innovative series lays equal emphasis on drawing, sketching, colouring and creativity. The content in each book has been designed keeping in mind the learning capabilities and attention span of kids at each level. The following features make the series unique and special for the learners.
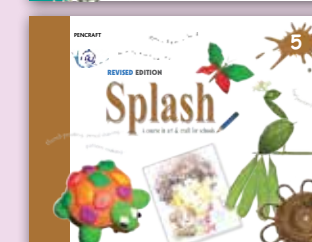
- large variety of drawing exercises
- graded colouring exercises
- graded and easy to follow craft activities
- step by step instructions
- techniques graded according to the learners' level
- boosts the children's curiosity, imagination and creativity

PENCRAFT PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.

M-28, 2nd Floor, Main Market, Greater Kailash Part-1, New Delhi - 110048
Tel.: 011-29236968, 29233538, 9810097562 | Fax : 011-29237792
Email: pencraftpublications@yahoo.com | Web: www.pencraftpublications.com

© FORTELL

CONTENTS
Editorial

© FORTELL

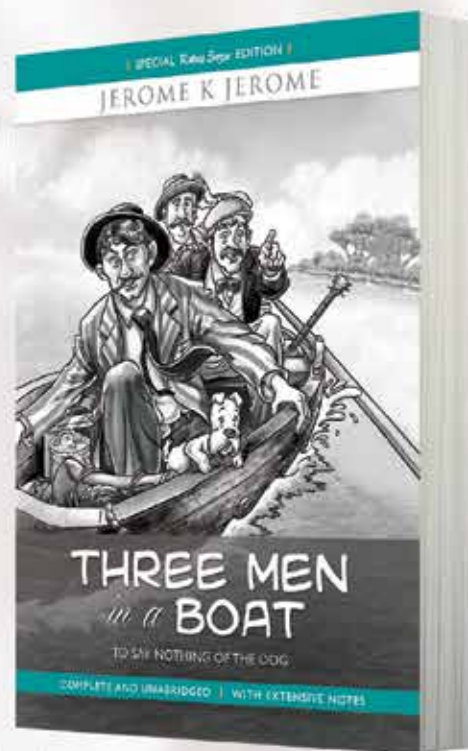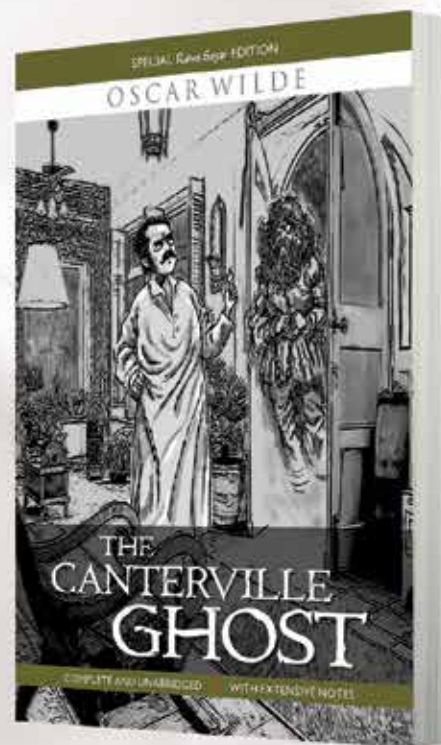In this issue of FORTELL we focus on the theme of interdisciplinarity in the English classroom. Though not a new area, interdisciplinarity has been gaining popularity in recent years in policy formation, syallabi designing, teaching methodologies, research and publications. In seeking to combine skills and methods from more than two disciplines, metaphors of crossing over, creating bridges and having dialogues are often associated with the area. There is no doubt that bringing in perspectives from different disciplines widens the horizon for novel possibilities of research; fields like biotechnology, biochemistry and women's studies engage both theoreticians and practitioners from multiple disciplines. In interdisciplinary pedagogical practices, the role of the teacher is even more significant as Prof. GJV Prasad points out in the interview; the teacher should equip the students with a tool kit drawn from different disciplines and teach them the various uses of these tools. In this area, as disciplines attempt to converse with each other and have a meaningful dialogue by pooling in skills and methodologies, they aim to move towards a synthesis of perspectives in approaching a particular problem, research question or project. Although the existence of interdisciplinarity on interstices of disciplines is liberating yet we need to be cautious about superficial interventions considering its position of liminality.

In the specific context of English Studies, one perspective on interdisciplianity is that it is 'old hat', this is the position that Nidhi Verma explores in her paper. History, sociology and psychology have never been too far from teaching a literary text in class. Perhaps now that the concept is gaining currency, we need to create more opportunities for formal exchanges that would allow various disciplines to exchange ideas. Teacher's

orientation and training can make a sea of difference in such approaches in the classroom. Santosh Kumar Mahapatra discusses his experiments of teaching academic language skills to B.Tech students by drawing on their knowledge and understanding of science. Deepti Bhardwaj discusses her research which explores the lacunae that exists in depiction of families of Chandni Chowk from 1911 to 1947. While different disciplines like history, sociology and literature have dealt with it, gaps need to be filled with archival studies, family histories and life stories.

Even as our three feature articles concern themselves with issues of interdisciplinarity in higher education, the basic problems related to English Language acquisition form the core of the other articles in this issue. We hope that by bringing these concerns related to English language learning and teaching at different levels to the fore, we will be able to actively engage with them and find ways that will ensure better and more meaningful interactions in language classrooms!

Wish you all a happy new year!

Ruchi and Rachna, Guest Editors

ruchikaushik01@gmail.com

Ruchi Kaushik is Associate Professor of English at Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Materials Development in ESP

rachnasethi7@yahoo.com

Rachna Sethi is Assistant Professor of English at Rajdhani College, University of Delhi.

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Academic Speaking Skills

An Experiment with Engineering Students

Santosh Kumar Mahapatra

santosheflu@gmail.com

Santosh Kumar Mahapatra is a Ph.D (Language Testing) Student in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad. His research interests include Language Testing, Research Methodology and Teacher Education.

Introduction

As the current study concerns teaching of academic speaking skills, I find it necessary to define what they are and how they are different from speaking skills in general. Academic speaking skills have the following features:

- They are used in academic contexts.

- They can be general as well as specific in nature.

- They can vary from one specialized area like engineering or business management or literature to another.

Though it is necessary to teach academic language skills to students specializing in disciplines like the ones mentioned above, many researchers have reported that academic language skills are often neglected in technical institutions in India. Furthermore, speaking has been found to be one of the most ignored areas (Indira, 2003; Neelaveni, 2005; Venkatraman & Prema, 2007; Pradhan, 2010). This is precisely why I have chosen to experiment with speaking. Then, there is very little research on the lack of transfer of language skills from the language to the subject classroom. More than other areas, ELT in engineering colleges has been a matter of great worry. It has been reported that engineering students and engineers lack basic EL skills required to function effectively in their respective fields (24 September, 2012, *Aspiring Minds*; 27 Aug., 2012, *The Times of India*; 2011, *NASSCOM*). Questions have been asked about teachers' ability to teach language for specific purposes (LSP) and make use of students' academic contexts, i.e. contexts of science, for teaching English language skills. Somehow, teachers find it difficult to break the disciplinary boundaries and venture into using scientific contexts for classroom instructional purposes.

In the light of the above background, this study

tries to examine the impact of a content-based approach to teaching of academic presentation skills to engineering students on their ability to make academic presentations.

Brief Review of Relevant Theories

The integration of content and language across curriculum is not new to ELT. Mohan's (1986) 'knowledge framework' was one of the earliest attempts to systematically integrate subject knowledge with language skills. This interdisciplinary approach gained in popularity in the field of ESP. This kind of approach balances the power relation between the teacher and the learner really well. It lets the student lead in content areas whereas the language teacher is required to play a second fiddle. It is good for learning and supported by constructivists like Vygotsky and Bruner. According to them, learning should be an act of knowledge construction to be jointly done by the student and the teacher. However, the teacher can always decide the level at which the mixing of content and language should happen (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, 2011).

Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions:

- How effective is a content-based approach to teaching academic presentation skills to B. Tech. students?

- How do students respond to such an approach?

Research Design

The study follows a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design. It has two groups of students: one experimental and the other, control group. The following diagram presents the design:
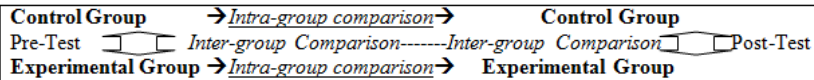
Control Group	→*Intra-group comparison*→	Control Group
Pre-Test	□□ □ *Inter-group Comparison*-------*Inter-group Comparison*□ □	□Post-Test
Experimental Group	→*Intra-group comparison*→	Experimental Group

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I/we would like to subscribe to 2 issues (January and July) per year of FORTELL for a period as indicated below:

Please put a tick (✓).

STUDENT

☐ Annual Subscription: Rs.250

INDIVIDUAL

☐ Annual Subscription: Rs 500

☐ 5 years Subscription: Rs. 2000

INSTITUTIONS

☐ Annual Subscription: Rs. 750

☐ 5 years Subscription: Rs. 3000

Details of the subscriber

Name: _____   Designation: _____   Qualification: _____

Institution: _____

Postal Address: _____

City/State: _____   Pin Code: _____   Mobile: _____

Phone: _____   Email Address: _____

Details of the cheque/draft

Name of the Bank: _____   Cheque/DD no: _____   Date: _____

Amount: _____   Signature : _____

Participants

A group of sixty B. Tech. (first year) students studying in a women's college in Hyderabad participated in the study. The age group of students was between 18 to 22 years and almost all of them belonged to lower middle class social backgrounds. They were randomly divided into two groups with students with even roll numbers forming the experimental group and those with odd roll numbers comprising the control group.

Data Collection Methods

- Pre- and post-tests
- Interview schedule

Procedure of Data Collection

The process of data collection started with the pre-test. The kind of questions asked in the pre- and post-tests were very similar in nature. Also, one set of assessment criteria was used during both the stages of data collection. It is presented below:

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Less than average	Needs a lot of improvement
	5	4	3	2	1	0
Content (C) (30%)						
Organization (O) (20%)						
Fluency (F) (20%)						
Vocabulary (V) (20%)						

$$[(C \times 3/5) + (O \times 2/5) + (F \times 2/5) + (V \times 2/5) + (G \times 1/5)] \times 10 = \text{Score in percentage}$$

A content-teacher (engineering) was trained to evaluate 'content' and the rest was evaluated by the researcher. The topics which were used for assessment and teaching purposes were related to students' core course areas and included AEROPLANE, DYNAMO, TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWTON'S LAWS, COMPUTER, MOBILE PHONE, GRAVITY, SUN, DESERT, BLACK HOLE, SOAPS, MOTOR, etc.

Pre-test

The students had been familiar with the teacher before the pre-test as he had been their English teacher for a while. Though they did not know that they were being tested, they were promised some prizes in the form of songs, movies and free study materials for developing spoken English. Thus, almost all of them took interest in making presentations. Each student was allowed 1 hour to prepare on one of the above-mentioned topics and 5 minutes to make the presentation. They prepared for the pre-test together in the library.

Intervention

During the intervention, which lasted for twelve hours spread over 45 days, the researcher used science related topics known to and often suggested by students to teach different linguistic aspects of academic presentation skills to the experimental group students. Video-clips containing good academic presentations were also used for providing sample to students. The researcher invited some of the engineering faculty to the class and took their help in preparing students. Apart from providing individual feedback to students, he encouraged peer-feedback during all the sessions.

In the control group, the prescribed textbook was used for teaching presentation skills. The suggested topics were mostly very general in nature. Though video-clips and peer-feedback were part of the teaching, science-related topics were never part of the discussion during the sessions.

Post-test

The post-test was very similar to the pre-test and followed a similar course. The content-related difficulty-level was kept similar for questions used during both the tests.

Interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule comprising open-ended questions was used to elicit information from students about their response to the content-based approach to teaching academic presentation skills. Five randomly chosen students from the experimental group were interviewed in a group. Most of them reported that they had fun making presentations on their 'own topics'. They found it easy and interesting. However, they were not sure whether their spoken language could actually improve if such an approach was continued.

Data Analysis

The pre-test data were analyzed statistically and intergroup comparison was made. The mean score for the control group was 31% and for the experimental was 31.133%. As shown below, the difference was not significant.

Groups	df = 58	Mean (%)	Standard deviation	t = 0.0401	P = 0.968
Control		31	12.87633		
Experimental		31.13333	12.87564		

In the post-test, however, the difference was statistically significant.

Groups	df = 58	Mean (%)	Standard deviation	t = 3.0854	P = 0.0031
Control		36.13333	14.50456		
Experimental		47.46667	13.9421		

For the control group, the development was around 5%. In contrast, the experimental group recorded an average increase of around 16%.

Findings and Discussions

Although the content-based approach to teaching was found to be more effective than a general approach in the ESP setting, it was also found that the students who had better language skills at the entry level liked this approach more than others. The students with low proficiency level had some difficulty in handling the dual challenges of content and language in a single class. However, had the researcher followed the students' (experimental) presentations in their content classrooms, the effectiveness of this approach could have been found out even more clearly and stronger generalizations could have been made. It was also realized that the language teacher has to be ready to accept the challenges involved in taking up this approach. Some amount of basic understanding of scientific concepts and interest in the field of science can certainly help the teacher use this approach successfully in ESP classrooms.

References

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2007). *Discourse in content and language integrated learning (clil) classrooms*. Amsterdam : Bejamins.

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011). Content and language integrated learning: From practice to principles? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 1-23.

Indira, M. (2003). The suitability of coursebooks in engineering colleges for developing communication skills: A study. M. Phil. Dissertation, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.

Mohan, B. A. (1986). *Language and content*. Addison: Wesley.

Neelaveni, K. (2005). Redefining issues in syllabus and materials design: An analytical study of the first year JNTU English course. M. Phil. Dissertation, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.

Pradhan, A. (2010). A study of the course book in the engineering colleges in Odisha. M. Phil. Dissertation, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

Venkatraman, G. and Prema, D. (2007). Developing a set of competencies for teachers of English in engineering colleges, *English for Specific Purposes World*. Issue 3 (16), Vol. 6, 2007. Retrieved from http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_14/India.htm.

Interdisciplinarity in Research

Deepti Bhardwaj

deepti.b12@gmail.com
Deepti Bhardwaj is currently teaching at Ram Lal Anand College and is also pursuing her Ph.d from the Department of English, University of Delhi. She is an Indian Literature and Culture enthusiast.

As comparative literature once was, it is currently 'fashionable' to delve into interdisciplinary areas of study in teaching and research by exploring and pushing at boundaries. Despite the fact that it is quite difficult to do justice without the required expertise of different disciplines, more and more people are getting attracted to such an approach. This essay is an attempt at self exploration with regard to interdisciplinary studies wherein I try to enumerate the reasons why there is a love-hate relationship with interdisciplinarity, especially in spheres of language and literature.

Widens the horizon: Interdisiciplinarity is liberating as it widens our horizon and allows us to experiment with techniques that were earlier 'taboo'. By breaking the stereotypical expectations of a disciplinary approach, right from the selection of study area to the methodology of research, the output can be the most original concoction. However this extraordinary freedom requires constant self-checks so as to maintain depth of study.

Promise of some new findings: What attracts a researcher the most to this approach is the end of the tunnel, a search towards creation of new knowledge. For the literature scholar, analyzing and critiquing texts is not the easiest of tasks and yet parting with one's grounding is not easy. Most interdisciplinary studies require a departure from one's training to self groom towards the vision of a new territory.

Connects to the real world: One of the arguments I would like to furnish in favour of interdisciplinarity is that it connects us to the

real world. It is not a realist depiction, nor a discussion on reality but a real time engagement that inspires and demands interdisciplinary approaches. For without literature there is no reflection, but without statistics there is no need for reflection. Literature enhances, replays, and immortalizes reality but it arises from archives.

Bridges the gap between criticism and activism: Interdisciplinary studies bridge the gap between criticism and activism. By giving a different definition to productivity and job satisfaction, such approaches tend to touch concrete issues and problems. Since many literary and critical works result from activism, it is interesting to see the two working in tandem with each other.

My Research

I am currently researching on Chandni Chowk in Delhi in the transition period between 1912 and 1947. The time period and the area covered in my research provides me scope to explore the following: communities and families, old and new Delhi, spaces that transformed over these years and the collectibles I will try to gather from people and places.

As I looked up literature produced about Delhi I noticed that the city has been studied from different disciplines like history, geography, sociology and literature. Historical works like *Historic Delhi: An Anthology* (Kaul, 2004) and *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth* (Gupta, 1981) are devoted to historical narration of Delhi as a place of power creation and the narratives use the standard resources for historic retelling. Kaul anthologizes essays from the ancient to the Mughal Delhi. Narayani Gupta charts out the growth of Delhi from just another city conquered by the British to the inauguration of their vision of it. Her historical purview allows a panoramic understanding of the city's evolution.

However I wish to problematize and explore the areas of 'historical deficit', by exploring family histories and life writings. Let me briefly talk about the works of Chatterjee and Burton as my research problem is located at the intersection of their points of view. Indrani Chatterjee's *Unfamiliar Relations: Family and History in South Asia* (2004) takes up the cause of introducing family as a quotient poorly related as opposed to many others like peasants, women and environment in the study of colonialism. As a historian, her analysis identifies lacunae as she traces the cursory attention that might have been shed on family history as a subject of scrutiny. Antoinette Burton's *Dwelling in Archive: Women*

*Writing, House, Home and History in Late Colonial India (*2003) can be taken juxtaposed to Chatterjee's problem to exact a solution for it. While interrogating the very definition of an archive Burton suggests life writing from the private sphere. She picks up three women writers as a crucial medium to determine an alternate historical viewpoint. Her book suggests that 'in addition to serving as evidence of individual lives, the memories of home that each of these woman enshrined in narrative act—for us—as an archive from which a variety of counter histories of colonial modernity can be discerned. I want to emphasize, in other words, the importance of home as both a material archive for history and a very real political figure in an extended moment of historical crisis'(Burton, 2003, p.5). Her study suggests that the archive, like the home, is always in the process of vanishing.

The historical deficit pertaining to family history as Chatterjee points out can hence be filled in by life writing. Family archives can explore certain not so explored contexts better. Some of the more gripping works like Malvika Singh and Rudrangshu Mukherjee's *New Delhi: Making of a Capital* (2009) bring to the readers a view of Delhi as it took its present form over the years. Backed by a serious documentation research and pictorial representation it is a study in the architectural and archeological treasures of Delhi. Singh and Mukherjee's 'splendid volume enables the reader not just to understand but to witness almost the transition of a hot, dusty plain, through the vicissitudes of concepts, drawings, timetables, clearances and construction embellished into a majestic living reality'(Verghese, 2012). Similar studies that depend on visual representations are Naryani Gupta and Dilip Bobb's *Delhi Then and Now* (2007) and Vijay Goel's *Delhi: The Emperor's City- Rediscovering Chandni Chowk and Its Environs* (2003). In these works Delhi is captured in various photographic moods and frames to drive home the essence of Delhi. While the former performs a study in temporal shift, the latter brings together the grandeur of the city. Serving more like coffee table books they enamour pictorially rather than intrigue thematically.

With regard to sociological studies on Delhi, I may say that they are not just limited but also dated. B. R. Ghosh in 'Changes in the Size and Composition of the Household Brought About by Urbanisation in Delhi Area' (1974) picks Naraina as his subject of scrutiny and statistically depicts the changes in the area. Saroj Kapoor's *Family and Kinship Groups Among The Khatris of Delhi*

(1965) is a small study focused on Delhi region and the caste Khatri. These rare studies come very close to what my project might touch upon in aim but not in manner. As a unique sample of a book that deals with family at its core while it recovers a historical period is Durba Ghosh's *Sex and The Family in Colonial India: Making of Empire* (2006). Ghosh focuses on the relationships between the white men and native women of India by examining the familial dynamics of interracial contacts. It helps me understand the contours of a research that has to be set in a particular historical period, is about familial relations and relies on resources of various types.

Some of the recent works like *Haram In the Harem: Domestic Narratives in India and Algeria* (Rajkumar, 2009), *The Family and The Nation* (Mahapragya and Kalam, 2008) and *The Great Indian Family* (Prasad, 2006) again come from different disciplinary zones and are also not necessarily focused on Delhi but it is their urge to break through the strict categorizations based on disciplinary divide that inspires me in this direction. Prasad uses surveys, interviews and published articles to elaborate on her subject. She charts one and a half centuries of family life that women endured. She places her understanding of the evolving Indian family within the Indian feminist movement. At the cusp of being part literary, part journalistic and opinion driven book, it successfully challenges set perceptions and notions about writing. Above instances reaffirm my sense of contemporaneity of the subject under consideration.

From the field of literature, novels titled *Chandni Chowk* and *Connaught Place* by Lakshmi Narayan Lal are interesting; the titular locations are used to juxtapose tradition and modernity. *Chandni Chowk* is the story of a marriage that must fail if family traditions have to be upheld and how the only ray of hope, however bleak, comes from the oldest woman of the family out of sheer affection. *Connaught Place* is the next generation's forked shift to the novelty of modern times. While two brothers become professional adversaries, their value system is a constant subject of scrutiny. Focusing on family systems in Delhi old and new in the late colonial period, this set of texts becomes a case for me to work with in this area.

Apart from approaching my research question from disciplines of history, sociology and literature, I have been trying to locate as many old families in Chandni Chowk that have lived there for the past hundred or more years and have some written, visual or recorded documentation of the time period when Delhi underwent the

most rapid transformation. I focus on Chandni Chowk between 1911 and 1947 in order to discuss what happens to the most exquisite sites of Delhi over its most crucial historical changes. I attempt to study Chandni Chowk as a witness of Delhi becoming the capital of colonial India and independent India, as an exceptional wholesale market and as a residential area that is referred to as a slum in several studies.

I wish to suggest that studies based on late colonial Chandni Chowk are scarce; none scrutinizes Chandni Chowk's families as a lead into a study of the context and related texts. The proposed work will strive to bring together resources and sources that can be referred to in our understanding of this particular time period which is seen as an overwhelming political time zone where the personal has been ignored. It is only a literary study of this period that can allow space to a critique of the private actions, thoughts and existence. Very often this private was complacent and comfortable; the proposed study is a possible measure to come closer to what seems like a distant romanticized past that can be best retrieved from a literary cultural perspective. The objective of this study is as follows:

1. To study archives of life writing and personal documents, preferably, undiscovered, unrecognized, unpublished family records that can help formulate respective family histories of families that have lived in the city for at least a hundred years. These archives exist as form as diaries, biographies, religious chronicles, calendars, and account books supplemented by oral records, visual material: portraits, photographs, albums, songbooks that I have begun to examine in detail.

2. To study Chandni Chowk, its past and present state of being, through the prism of these family histories that can narrate a world order concealed in the contested loyalties of households and private experiences. This will work as the major site of critical enquiry to open up my research problem.

3. To take cue from the family histories and try to uncover micro narratives and texts (literary and non-literary) and contexts that might also reflect on the alteration in community loyalties, structures and therefore the alteration in this part of Delhi of various stages of Delhi's current facet.

4. Bring together multiple kinds of memory, impressions and reflections with archival detailed information and read into the properties of a people and places that we inhabit.

In my PhD research I am seeking to explore the lacunae that exists in the study of Chandni Chowk in the late colonial period. Most existing studies are from 'strict' disciplinary perspectives of history, sociology or literature. I attempt to draw from skills and findings of different disciplines and also bring in the crucial missing area of family histories. In trying to uncover micro narratives of family documents, my study not only helps me to widen the scope of my discipline but also connect research with the real world.

References

Burton, Antoinette. (2003). *Dwelling in the archive: Women writing house, home and history in late colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Chatterjee, Indrani (Ed.) (2004). *Unfamiliar relations: Family and history in South Asia*. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Ghosh, B.R. (1974). Changes in the size and composition of the household brought about by urbanisation in Delhi area. In Kurian, George (Ed.) *Family in India: A regional view*. Paris: The Hague.

Ghosh, Durba. (2006). *Sex and the family in colonial India: Making of empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goel, Vijay. (2003). *Delhi: The emperor's city- rediscovering Chandni Chowk and its environs*. Delhi: Roli.

Gupta, Narayani. (1981). *Delhi between two empires 1803-1931: Society, government and urban growth*. Delhi: Oxford University Press

---and Dilip Bobb. (2007). *Delhi then and now*. New Delhi: Roli Books.

Kapoor, Saroj.(1965). Family and kinship groups among the khatris of Delhi. *Sociological Bulletin*, 14, 54-63.

Kaul, H.K. (2004). *Historic Delhi: An anthology*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Lal, LakshmiNarayan. (1986). *Chandni Chowk*. Delhi: Kitabghar

---(1986). *Connaught Place*. Delhi: Kitabghar.

Mahapragya, Acharya and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. (2008). *The family and the nation*. New Delhi: Harper Collins.

Prasad, Gitanjali. (2006). *The great Indian family*. Delhi: Penguin.

RajKumar, Mohanlakshmi. (2009). *Haram in the harem: Domestic narratives in India and Algeria*. New York: Peter Lang.

Singh, Malavika and Rudrangshu Mukherjee. (2009). *New Delhi: Making of a capital*. New Delhi: Roli Books.

Verghese, B.G. (2012). *Rhapsody in stone*. Delhi: The Book Review Trust Vol. XXXVI No. 1, Jan. 2012.

Interdisciplinary Teaching
in English Literature
Old Hat or New Perspectives?

Nidhi Verma

nidverma@gmail.com

NidhiVerma is Assistant Professor at Mata Sundri College, University of Delhi. Apart from studying literature, she has done MPWE(Management Programme for Women Enterpreneurs) from IIM, Bangalore and is the founder of the online book library, www. bookmea book.com.

In recent times, there has been a lot of academic brouhaha about interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinary pedagogical practice allows the teacher to cross the traditional boundaries of discipline centred teaching by drawing from two or more academic disciplines to approach the text. Though the term has been in currency for a long time, in the Indian context it has gained popularity only recently.

The very discipline of English literature demands an active awareness of other disciplines. Fiction, however removed from the real world, takes its basis from the author's background and sensibilities. No study of literature can be done in isolation and relies heavily on other disciplines, especially social sciences to heighten the understanding of the text. So even before the concept and theories of interdisciplinarity gained currency, literature teaching meant integrating academic disciplines.

Bringing a literary text to class involves contexualising it in view of its author, the time period it was set in, the socio-political climate and the philosophical thoughts of the age. Depending on the dominant themes in the text, the literature teacher delves into aspects of history, philosophy, psychology and science. The realms of theatre, dance, music and art are closely associated with the Humanities, different branches of arts drawing upon each other for inspiration. Film studies is another area that cannot be ignored when studying texts which have been adapted into feature films. In that sense, an interdisciplinary study is old hat for English teachers. They have to take a holistic approach to the text—which means that they have been using this method of teaching much before it became popular as a new method of pedagogy.

The commonest example of interdisciplinary study in English teaching can be seen in the complex and interrelated relationship between history and literature. Understanding of history is fundamental to the analysis of literary texts. Literature reflects history, and history shapes literature. Several literary texts can be interpreted in parts or entirety, and the implicit ideological concerns of the author better understood, only when placed against the backdrop of a particular historical context. In the teaching of one of the most popular novels of Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, the English teacher must bring the French Revolution to life before the students. The novel is set in the period between 1757 and 1794, and no understanding of the novel would be complete without a comprehensive knowledge of the turbulent history of France during the time of the revolution. Dickens researched the revolution extensively before writing his novel, and this shows in the remarkable historical accuracy of various events in the novel. The Fall of the Bastille, on June 14, 1789 is depicted with a chilling veracity in the text. Dickens' *Hard Times* is best understood when equipped with the reading of Industrial Revolution and the social changes it brought about.

Closer home the teaching of Partition literature in an English classroom necessarily involves an interdisciplinary approach. The Partition has had a huge impact on an entire generation of Indians, and it would be difficult to teach any text set during the period without bringing in obvious references to history, geography, politics, sociology and even psychology. Saadat Hassan Manto's story, 'Toba Tek Singh', published in 1955, is part of the syllabus at University of Delhi. It is the tale of the inmates of an asylum in Lahore who are to be shifted to India following the decision of Partition. Bishen Singh, one of the inmates, is perturbed by the move, since he is unable to come to terms with leaving his own town. The story ends with him choosing to just lie between the two countries' boundaries, in the no-man's-land, saying that he would accept this neutral area as his village.

In a largely North Indian milieu, lot of students have at least one grandparent or great grandparent who has a personal partition story. In teaching the text, class discussions often move beyond the macro politics of formation of nation(s) to individual life stories, of history from above and below. A realisation of the pain of leaving one's homeland, of suddenly being plucked from your roots and being transplanted to a new country, are all seminal to understanding Bishen Singh's pain. It is difficult, if not impossible to delve into disciplines that go beyond mere appreciation of language or idiom.

In dealing with Partition, the teacher brings in an interdisciplinary approach and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is often evoked. The text gives a detailed historical and cultural account so that even a person unfamiliar with the Partition would be able to understand the text. The rituals of the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims are presented as part of the narrative. It is almost as if history were being brought alive through the human characters depicted in the novel. Political events, and their effects on the common people form the basis of the novel. Politics, sociology, geography and history form the bedrock of any interpretation of the novel and the text cannot be treated solely in terms of its literary aesthetics.

Train to Pakistan depicts the human aspect of the political and historical event. The human angle presents a very compassionate picture of the horrors of partition. The story revolves around a Sikh village goon, Jugga who loves a Muslim girl, Nooran. The tensions between the Sikhs and Muslim are pointed out early in the novel, 'According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped.' (Singh, 2012, p.1)

Khushwant Singh does not allow the reader to blame the violence on any particular ethnic group. He makes it clear that all were affected by the situation they found themselves in. The residents of Mano Majra lived a peaceful existence until the village money-lender Ramlal is killed, and Jugga is held as a prime suspect. Whether it is the regional magistrate Hukum Chand, Jugga or Iqbal, the social reformer, Singh shows how each is entrapped in a web of circumstances. When in the end the Muslim families are to be transported in a train to Pakistan, Jugga discovers the plan to attack the train and kill them. Nooran too is to be on this train and Jugga, a common 'goonda' upto now emerges as the hero of the piece when he sacrifices his own life to save the people.

Like 'Toba Tek Singh', *Train to Pakistan* raises issues of displacement and migration. The Partition is the hugest and saddest episode of mass migration in the history of the Indian subcontinent, and interesting debates stirred in class. Most Muslim students, several of whom come from the walled city, still have relatives in Pakistan. They shared experiences of meeting relatives from across the border and the problems faced by families due to political differences among the two countries. Sikh and Hindu students too had stories of their grandparents' experiences to narrate. Multiple and contrasting histories emerged in class from students due to their differing religious sensibilities. A student interestingly compared Jugga's selfless sacrifice to Meenakshi Iyer's decision to save Raja Choudhary in the movie *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer* by claiming that he was her husband, and therefore a Hindu.

Thus the oral telling of personal histories became an integral part of the classroom experience for this text. Oral narratives recalled through memory complimented the historical and literary texts reiterating a complex relationship between culture and memory. The memory of the dislocation caused by the Partition continues to shape the psyche of the people. The drawing from different disciplines and recounting of life histories gave the students a greater insight into the text as well as the historical period it is set in.

Although hackneyed, it is true that all literature is a product of its age. With this in mind, it is of utmost importance that teachers of English literature contextualise the literary text within its historical, social and political milieu. Most teachers at University of Delhi employ interdisciplinary pedagogical practices in their classrooms, however this does not happen in a structured fashion and the onus seems to lie solely in the hands of the individual teacher. Perhaps it would be useful to have workshops or seminars at intra-college level to begin with to allow students

and teachers from different disciplines to exchange ideas and readings to help them synthesise insights from across disciplines. Such platforms would provide opportunities to discuss and analyse areas from beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and perspectives to a wider holistic approach that will help dissolve boundaries between different academic streams of study.

References

Chakraborty, Basudeb. The essentials of Indianness: Tolerance and sacrifice in Indian partition fiction in English and in English translation. Retrieved October 20, 2013 from http://rupkatha.com/indian-partition-fiction/#more-291

Cowasjee, Saros & Vasant A. Shahane(Eds.). (1981). *Modern Indian fiction*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

Dickens, Charles (1859). *A tale of two cities*. Retrieved October 20, 2013 from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/98/98-h/98-h. htm

Dickens, Charles (1905). *Hard times*. Retrieved October20, 2013 from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/786/786-h/786-h.htm

Griffin, Gabriele (2005). *Research methods for English studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna. (2008). *A concise history of Indian literature in English*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Manto, Saadat Hassan. (1997). *Mottledd: Fifty sketches of partition*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Nayyar, Pramod K.(2008). *An introduction to cultural studies*. New Delhi: Viva Books.

Singh, Khushwant. (2012). *Train to Pakistan*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal. (Original work published 1956)

sanjuktask@gmail.com

Sanjukta Sivakumar is an English teacher, researcher and ELT specialist and is currently the Principal of Delhi Public School Tapi, Surat

Teacher Development from Materials to Method

Sanjukta Sivakumar

The Indian ELT picture

Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was made mandatory in all CBSE schools in 2009 to ensure a diagnostic focus on learning. Teachers

unequipped for the prescribed corrective action, however, impair the implementation of CCE. This problem is correlated with the professional development of elementary and secondary

teachers through learner-centric 'pedagogies that develop reflective teachers with adequate skills' (NCF, 2005, p.25), and 'improved curriculum and materials'(NCFTE, 2009, p.6).Teacher education for CCE in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) requires 'critically engaging with theory' to 'bring practice within its perspective' (NCFTE, 2009, p.9). The role of the teacher is envisaged as '...developing capacities to think with educational theories and applying concepts in concrete teaching-learning situations' (NCFTE, 2009, p.41). Teacher Education in CLT, hence,is focused primarily on method. This emphasis on pedagogical theory to improve teaching methods as the guiding policy of teacher education, however, has not bridged the perceived hiatus between theory and its classroom application.

Perspective shift from method to materials-in-process

It is reasonable to suppose that the disconnect between theory and application exists because the 'methods' perspective overlooks the unilateral role of materials along with methods in teaching skills (Fig. 1). A three-page schema of 'Teacher Education Curricular Areas' (NCFTE, 2009, pp.43-45), for instance, mentions the 'creation of alternative learning materials' only once.

Fig. 1
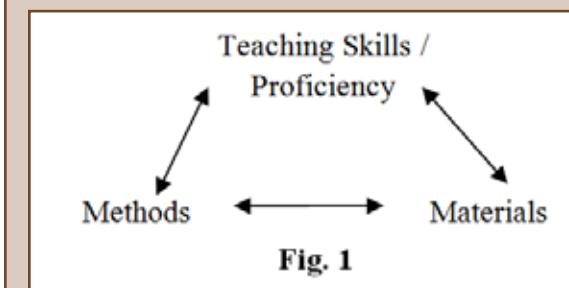
Method overshadows materials because the latter is seen as an outcome of the former. Developing 'textual and related materials by commissioning eminent scholars in the disciplines of knowledge' (NCFTE, 2009, p.91) is the established policy. The continuing inefficacy of the 'methods perspective' in SLTE, however, opens the way for a new perspective on materials, not as the product of methodical expertise, but as a process directly correlated with it. This radical 'materials perspective' enables a new critical focus on lesson-planning. The traditional plan-practice-reflect focus on method is restructured to include reflection on materials, or more precisely, on method through materials-in-process, as outlined in the present paper.

Autonomous, learner-centric teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) first envisaged the 'self-directed teacher' who, instead of passively receiving and implementing methods, actively develops materials, classroom activities and assessment procedures (Nunan and Lamb, 1996; Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Nunan, 2004). This self-directed approach moved away from the 'methods concept' as its ineffectuality became evident (Richards, 1998).

Many teachers trained in innovative pedagogical methods in workshops revert to their pre-training teaching method almost immediately afterwards. Few participants actually implement new methods and materials in their classroom practice, and with varying degrees of success. This is mainly because the generic structure of training workshops does not replicate specific classroom conditions (Richards, 1998). Instead of 'importing ideas from elsewhere', it is better to directly study the classroom scenario for methods and materials that work in common for good teachers everywhere (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1989). The methods bias of action research in the CLT era, hence, shifted to materials with the advent of TBLT (Ellis, 2003).

Language skills for life

English language skills and life skills education may be integrated across the CBSE curriculum through TBLT focussing on self-awareness, empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, effective communication, interpersonal relations, creative thinking, critical thinking, coping with emotions and coping with stress (NCF, 2005). It should be noted, however, that the average teacher still teaches the Communicative English text through lecture method instead of focusing on language skills.

Task-framing for teacher development

In this prevalent grassroots scenario, the text-as-product could gradually be replaced with TBLT or the task-as-process in the 'materials perspective'. This hypothesis is based on frequent teacher statements that textual syllabus (materials) decides their method. TBLT materials created by experts indicate that professional development is causatively linked with effective materials. The present paper, however, reverses this causative link from materials to professional development, by focusing on teachers framing language tasks

to understand how this process can structure their teaching method and enhance their teaching skills. Innovation in method or TBLT is thus expected as an outcome of task-framing.

Case study on MI-RBT-TBLT

The basic guidelines for framing learner-centric language tasks are provided by three major theoretical sources:

1. TBLT (Ellis & Ellis, 2007)
2. Howard Gardner's (1995) Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI)
3. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT) (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

In the present study, a group of seven primary level English teachers of a CBSE school were oriented in the application aspect of MI, RBT and TBLT. MI inputs stimulate various learner intelligences, thus catering to individual differences (Armstrong, 1994). The five cognitive levels of RBT: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation and Creativity, set the learning objectives in language tasks (Armstrong, 1994). These teachers framed language tasks with MI-RBT inputs complementing the NCERT textual units.

One such task, framed by a participant teacher during the study, is analysed here vis-à-vis the teaching method and skills and learner strategies observed in its implementation. The implementation of TBLT in the first version of the task (Fig. 2) is compared with that in the final version of the same task (Fig 3), focussing on learning strategies observed and fulfilment of the learning objective by the task outcome.

Tasty Tiffins for Class 5 (Version 1)
1. What's your favourite snack for tiffin at school? Does it balance nourishment with taste and calories? Try to prepare this snack at home with help from an adult.
2. Write out a fair copy of the recipe under the headings of **Ingredients** (in correct quantity) and **Method**.
3. Rubric:
- ✫✫✫ (Three Stars): The Ingredients and Method are complete, with all the steps written in correct order. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
- ✫✫ (Two Stars and a Wish): The Ingredients are complete and in correct amount. The Method is complete, but one or two steps are not in sequence. There are one or two spelling and grammatical errors.

- ✫ (One star and Two Wishes): The Ingredients are incomplete or the amount is not specified. The Method is confusing and incomplete. There are more than five spelling and grammar errors.

[MI: Logical, Verbal, Kinesthetic, Interpersonal; RBT: Application, Evaluation]
Fig. 2

An interview with the teacher who framed this task (Fig. 2) revealed four stages of task-framing:
a. She first diagnosed the need for her learners to improve their writing skills through rough drafts, revision and editing, which they usually avoided. This formed the learning objective.
b. She next linked writing with physical-kinesthetic Intelligence, as young learners love physical activity. The writing theme of 'Tasty, yet healthy tiffin' was borrowed from 'Nutrition' in their Environmental Science syllabus, thus linking learning with real-life and enabling vocabulary development in another subject.
c. The initial draft of the task (Fig. 2) required learners to try out the snack and write down the recipe. The learners however, copied out the first draft of the recipe without revision or editing. Observation and reflection helped identify and correct the mismatch in RBT level between task-outcome (Application) and planned learning objective (Evaluation) in the first implementation of the task.
d. The improved version of the task (Fig. 3) included MI-RBT inputs for note-making, revision, editing and peer-feedback.

Tasty Tiffins for Class 5 (Version 2)
1. What's your favourite snack for tiffin at school? Does it balance nourishment with taste and calories?
2. Try to prepare this snack at home with help from an adult. While in the kitchen, make a few notes on ingredients, measures and method of preparation under the header, ***Messy Notes in the Kitchen***.
3. Write out a fair copy of the recipe under the headings of **Ingredients** (in correct quantity) and **Method**. Add a few tips on **Garnishing** the dish for appearance. Lastly, add your own remarks under: **Hot Tips from the Cook,** on special touches to enhance its taste/appearance, its food value, etc.
4. Exchange your recipe with a friend, try the new one out at home – and return it with a 'star' rating from one to three stars for the recipe as in the rubric.

5. Rubric:
- ✫✫✫ (Three Stars): The Ingredients are complete and in correct amount. The Method is complete, with all the steps written in correct order. The Garnishing adds to taste and visual effect. The Hot Tips are interesting, amusing and useful. There are no spelling or grammatical errors.
- ✫✫ (Two Stars and a Wish): The Ingredients are complete and in correct amount. The Method is complete, but one or two steps are not in sequence. The Garnishing only adds to visual effect, not taste. The Hot Tips are interesting, amusing and useful. There are one or two spelling and grammatical errors.
- ✫ (One star and Two Wishes): The Ingredients are incomplete or the specified amount is incorrect. The Method is confusing, as the steps are not in sequence. The Garnishing does not add to visual effect or taste. The Hot Tips are misleading. There are more than five spelling and grammatical errors.
6. Collect the 3-star recipes in your class to compile your own ***Tasty Tiffins for Class 5*** book.

[MI: Logical, Verbal, Kinesthetic, Interpersonal; RBT: Application, Evaluation]
Fig. 3

The sections *Messy Notes in the Kitchen; Ingredients; Method; Garnishing* and *Hot Tips from the Cook* enabled note-taking, revision, redrafting and editing through the Verbal-linguistic and Logical Intelligences of learners. The 'stars-and-a-wish' system enabled constructive peer-feedback, as suggestions for improvement (wishes) were balanced by appreciation of effort and achievement (stars). The addition of sub-tasks like comparing and grading recipes also raised the final task-outcome to the cognitive RBT level of Evaluation. The task process thus elicited all the sub-skills of writing and the task-outcome met its learning objective.

Indirect (video) observations of the two lessons, examining the written products, administering a strategy inventory of 62 items (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995), and teacher and learner interviews provided quantitative and qualitative data for the comparison of strategies elicited by the two versions of task performance (Table 1).

Strategy type	Instanceof Strategy Use	
	Task Version 1	Task Version 2
Direct Strategies		
Memory (4 items)	25	17
Cognitive (35 items)	3	36
Compensation (12 items)	15	34
Total Direct Strategies	**43**	**87**
Indirect Strategies		
Metacognitive (7 items)	2	19
Affective (1 item)	0	27
Social (3 items)	0	32
Total Indirect Strategies	**2**	**78**
Total Strategies Used	45	**165**

Table 1

This comparison indicates that the incidence of strategies deployed by learners increases from 45 in the first version to 215 in the improved version of the task. Rewriting from memory led to 25 instances of memory strategies in the first version but only 17 instances in the second version of the task. Affective and Social strategies, not observed in the first version, increase to 27 and 32 respectively in the second version, due to collaborative-learning. Cognitive strategies associated with writing sub-skills increase in the second version of the task. More Metacognitive and Compensation strategies are also deployed in the second version.

In this case study, a distinct improvement in learning outcome or method results from task restructuring proving that teaching method may evolve through reflection on material. The MI-RBT-TBLT framework enables reflection on individual needs and task-outcomes to fulfil learning objectives. Accessing content from across the curriculum, moreover, can incorporate domain-specific language and life skills and motivate teacher-collaboration. MI-RBT-TBLT thus increases professional efficacy.

Conclusion: method in materials

The MI-RBT-TBLT method may be outlined in a **Cycle of Noticing** where teachers**:**

- Identify learner needs that decide the language-learning objective
- Plan MI inputs to suit the learning objective
- Set the RBT level of the cognitive task-outcome
- Observe incidences of learning skills and strategies during task implementation

- Reflect on observed task-outcome vis-à-vis learning objective

- Reformulate tasks, modifying MI-RBT inputs to fulfil learning objectives

- Track the affective experience of teacher and learner growth

Ongoing teacher development with positive learning outcomes thus becomes possible within the classroom in the materials to methods perspective.

References

Allwright, D. & K. Bailey. (1991). *Focus on the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, L. & D. Krathwohl. (2001). *A Taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Addison, Wesley Longman.

Armstrong, T. (1994). *Multiple intelligences in the classroom*. Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Bailey, K.M., A. Curtis & D. Nunan. (2001). *Pursuing professional development: The self as source*. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle and Heinle.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching and learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

---& J. Ellis. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, H. (1995). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach*. New York: Basic Books. Rpt. 2004.

NCF. (2005). National Curriculum Framework. New Delhi: Secretary, Publication Department (NCERT).

NCFTE. (2009). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education. New Delhi: NCFTE.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

--- & C. Lamb. (1996). *The self-directed teacher: Managing the learning process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Rpt. 2000.

Oxford, R.L. & J.A. Burry-Stock. (1995). Assessing the use of language learning strategies worldwide with the ESL/EFL version of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). *System* 23: 1-23.

Richards, J.C. (1998). *Beyond training*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

English for Rural Development: Providing Proficiency in English to Rural Youth

khurana.sarika1@gmail.com

Sarika Khurana is Assistant Professor at Shivaji College, University of Delhi.

Sarika Khurana

India is one of the developing countries that has been contributing in large measure to migration of people to foreign countries, particularly the developed West, and Punjab is one of the States that stands ahead of others in this respect. It is estimated that there are about 1.5 million Punjabis in Europe and North America from Punjab's *Doaba* region alone. Among these, many are now well-off in business and other professions and have earned a name for themselves in the host country. A large majority of these migrants is from the rural areas. In fact, migration from rural areas of Punjab to West goes on vigorously if the number of candidates from rural areas appearing

in International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and in similar other tests of English, is any indication.[1] Cambridge IELTS is conducted by the British Council and the IDP Australia for the benefit of those seeking to go abroad. As proficiency in English happens to be an essential requirement for issue of visa, even a student visa, a large number of candidates appear in these tests of English with a view of going abroad.

There are many reasons why people from developing countries seek to migrate to developed countries but for the majority the biggest motivation is economic and social benefit that

such a move brings to the individuals and their families. Most of these migrants happen to be young people who have just finished schooling or are pursuing graduation. But amongst them are also a sizeable number of youngsters who are degree holders in the Humanities, Commerce, Sciences and Social Sciences. Some also have technical and vocational qualifications such as pharmacists, bio-technologists, nurses, teachers, tutors, accountants, engineers, I.T. professionals, beauticians, hotel management graduates and dentists. These are people who wish to migrate to improve their future and so they all apply for a student visa ostensibly to get admission to some kind of professional course from a European country as a convenient route to migrate. Back home, quality professional education is beyond their reach and moreover it is difficult to get admission in government institutions and private institutions are very expensive.

Migration sometimes causes hardships to the individuals and their families, yet it also benefits them, their families, community and ancestral village, as is evident from studies done on the contribution of the NRIs to the rural Punjab.[2] Migrating to the developed West perhaps had never been easy for the rural youth but it is much more difficult now with increased competition from urban youth in India and in other developing countries and also from the European Union. Moreover, a certain level of proficiency in English language is now required by almost all western countries as a pre-requisite for issuing visa, even a student visa. This is an added obstacle; an average youth from rural India who has had schooling and vocational training through the regional/vernacular medium finds it an uphill task. This lack of communicative English also proves an obstacle in their migration to other cities within India to take up better paid jobs. A large number of coaching institutes have sprung up in all parts of the country, more so Punjab, and coaching for IELTS preparation has become a big industry. But even after months of coaching and training and repeated attempts, the band score of rural youth in English proficiency remains low.

The plight of students from regional medium rural schools in other parts of the country is no different and unfortunately these young men and women happen to be those who cannot afford expensive private English-medium schools. In many states over the past few decades, many projects for teaching of English even with foreign collaborations have been taken up in addition to the efforts of English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad (formerly CIEFL) and

various Regional Institutes of English without much perceptible improvement in the teaching of English in our rural areas. This is evident from the band scores obtained by the candidates from these areas. The present system of teaching English in government schools in rural areas holds no ray of hope even in the near future. We must therefore devise new ways of giving our rural youth proficiency in English language if we want to help them benefit themselves and their communities.

We can think of two solutions. One is to devise ways and means to impart English Language Proficiency to adults seeking to migrate abroad for jobs or for further education. This will require training rural youth in skills and strategies to tackle tests of English. This coaching can be in the nature of 'training' rather than 'education' as the two terms are distinguished by Widdowson (1983). Centres for this kind of coaching having specialised faculty for this purpose need to be set up around cluster of villages outside the regular school system for achieving this objective. These ELT coaching centres must be properly regulated and monitored to maintain quality.

The second solution pertains to effective planning to improve the teaching-learning of English in schools in rural India as a long-term solution. For this purpose the socio-economic background of these learners must be taken into account while planning a syllabus for them. Besides being first generation learners of English, they have poor facilities of learning English inside the class and none at all outside the classroom. Moreover, majority of the rural youth remain predominantly monolingual not only in their formative years but also till secondary school unless they move out of the village to nearby towns and cities where people of other communities also reside. In rural Punjab, for example, most of the learners' mother tongue is Punjabi which also happens to be the regional language and is used profusely in their community. They speak, read, write and listen to this single language day in and day out – road signs, signboards, radio and television programmes, advertisements, newspapers – in fact Punjabi is the sole linguistic medium that they come in contact with throughout their formative years. They have little experience or exposure to social interaction in real life situations in any other language. Not a single word or phrase from English– except a few words such as tractor, TV, radio, car or cricket for which there are no equivalent words in Punjabi - is used in the target language by people around them unlike those living or studying in towns and cities. Punjabis,

particularly the rural Punjabis, feel a deep sense of pride in using their regional language and this virtue of theirs consciously or unconsciously becomes a de-motivating factor in their learning of the target language. Research has also shown that monolingual learners have difficulty in learning a new language and so this has an important bearing on their learning of English language effectively. It is only when we have a clear understanding of these learners and their learning environment, the objectives we want to achieve, and the challenges that hinder the attainment of these objectives that we can devise a suitable curriculum for these learners.

The materials for teaching English produced for students studying in city schools and belonging to a different social environment cannot be suitable for these learners. 'One solution fits all' will not serve the purpose. Each state or region perhaps needs to bring out a different set of instructional materials and adopt instructional techniques using their culture and traditions and a judicious use of their own regional language for its learners of English in the countryside. The emphasis must also shift from teaching and testing of content to imparting skills in the target language. One thing is clear that any English language syllabus will have to provide for teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills, in addition to reading and writing skills, which at present are neither taught nor tested in our schools.

Investment in giving English language proficiency to young students in the rural areas of the country can go a long way in empowering them to acquire gainful employment and thus help them bring prosperity not only to themselves and their families but also their community and the village

at large as the examples of Kharaudi, Brahampura and other such efforts in villages in Punjab show 'Gurmail Singh and Swaran Singh, 2007). We need initiative and will to create an English-speaking 'talent pool' to reap socio-economic benefits of giving adequate proficiency in English language. Those young men and women from rural parts who fail to migrate or do not want to migrate can easily participate in the opportunities being thrown up by the emerging economy in urban India and thus develop themselves and their society.

Notes

[1] Out of the nine test centres that the British Council has in North India, five are located in the Punjab region and more than 85 per cent of the candidates who appear at these centres are from rural areas. In addition, IDP Australia also conducts this test.

[2] See Gurmail Singh and Swaran Singh (2007) and Shipra Saxena (2005).

References

Gurmail Singh and Swaran Singh (2007). Diaspora philanthropy in action : An evaluation of modernization in Punjab villages. *JPS* 14:2, 225ff.

Saxena, Shipra (2005). *Kharoudi village of Panjab : A model of cleanliness*. New Delhi: Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India.

Widdowson, H.G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

nidhikunwar80@
gmail.com

Nidhi Kunwar is currently Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi. She is pursuing her Ph.D in Writing Research from Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi.

Competence in English: Struggles and Alternatives

Nidhi Kunwar

National Curriculum Framework (2005) quotes, 'English in India is a global language in a multilingual country' (p. 38). Today no one can deny the reality of this statement. Whether it is the corporate world or the government sector, the value and importance of English language is widely acknowledged. Due to its increasing importance every person aspires to be fluent in English.

English proficiency is important but it is also true that every year hundreds of students struggle to achieve mastery in this language. People do not hesitate to spend money and invest time for gaining competence in the English language. The proof of this is the continuous increase in the number of institutes which offer to train

proficiency in English in just magical 90 or 120 days! A lot of help books are sold as well in the name of making students competent English language users. Several schools claim 'English enriched environment' as one of the main components of their school curriculum. Parents too struggle hard to admit their children in those schools which can make their children masters of this language.

This scenario makes us think why attaining competence in English is so difficult for our students. Is it true that language proficiency is only a 'privilege' for students studying in high class English medium schools or can we also make it available to all students equally? English is offered from primary classes in several schools and yet lot of students feel incompetent in comprehending simple texts or conversing fluently in the language. They can decode the literal translation of the text but for the meaning they prefer to use guidebooks or key books. Writing, reading, speaking or listening in English is considered a burden by the students and all attempts are made to escape from it. Is there some problem in our approach or pedagogy? The Position Paper on Teaching of English reflects on this problem and states, 'The "burden of languages" is the burden of incomprehension. This happens when language is taught for its own sake as a set of forms or rules, and not introduced as the carrier of coherent textual meaning; it becomes another "subject" to be passed' (p. 5). This statement makes us think about our second language pedagogy. It is true that till now our classrooms have been dominated solely by 'grammar translation' method. We prefer to translate every sentence and present it before the students in a readymade form. No attempt is done to make students understand the language and use it in a functional way.

If that is true to a large extent, then we need to look for a solution. How should we introduce English language to students? Do we need to think anew about the aim of second language teaching? What level of proficiency do we expect our students to achieve? National Curriculum Framework 2005 provides answers to these questions as it states that 'the goals for a second –language curriculum are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning, and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through literacy' (p.39). The document emphasizes that in second

language, a child must become as fluent as he/she is in his/her first language. The child must be able to use this acquired second language for thinking, expressing, reading and writing freely. As the comparison is done with the first language, therefore, we need to think, how do we learn our first language? Cambourne (1984) suggested seven conditions of language learning namely immersion, demonstration, employment, feedback, approximation, responsibility and expectation. He suggested that when a child is introduced to his/her first language through these conditions, they easily become fluent speakers of language. In the classroom context, Kumar (1996) focuses on the importance of providing freedom, opportunities and meaningful feedback as the essential requirements for developing literacy skills in the first language. He argues that when these conditions are provided in the class, then students learn to use language in a functional way.

It is a point worth reflection that if such conditions and ideas can help a person in acquiring the first language easily, then these conditions must assist a person to acquire the second language too. With this understanding, following suggestions are proposed for fostering second language learning in the class:

- **Print–rich environment**
  This is the basic condition for learning any language. The child must be presented with an environment which offers him/her to interact with the language freely. One can provide in the class inputs such as story books, charts and message boards. For young children, one can also label the different objects in the class. One must ensure that every child gets enough opportunities to engage with the print. The importance of environment is also focused in NCF, 2005 as, 'Input-rich communicational environments are a prerequisite for language learning, whether first or second. Inputs include textbooks, learner-chosen texts, and class libraries, allowing for a variety of genres: print; parallel books and materials in more than one language; media support; and "authentic" materials' (p.39).

- **No focus on errors**
  Nothing damages the students' desire to express themselves in the second language than extensive focus on errors. Unfortunately, this 'error-focus' is considered as the essence

of our Indian education system. We are so concerned with telling students about their errors that many a times we do not let our students experiment with the language. Unless and until students themselves try to frame hypothesis about language structure, it is difficult for them to understand the basics of language. Students must be allowed to commit errors in the process of learning. Errors must be seen as an attempt towards language learning. Excessive focus on errors can destroy students' desire to write and share (Calkins, 1986).

■ **Freedom of expression**

Language is a medium of expressing one's thoughts, views and ideas. However, it is also true that our classrooms offer extremely limited space to students to use language in a functional way. We hardly provide any real opportunities of engaging with the language and whatever opportunities we provide are distorted by our exclusive focus on errors. If we want our students to become fluent users of the English language, then we need to take-off the pressures, fears and anxieties related with language use and encourage students to interact freely with the language in writing or speaking.

■ **Communication in class**

If we want our students to learn the language, then it is essential that English must become the medium of communication in the class. The teacher must talk to students in English and students must also be encouraged to speak in English. Acceptance must be given to attempts of the students, even if, those are not grammatically perfect. The problem is whenever students attempt to communicate in English, we tend to focus more on the structure of the language, than the message he/she wishes to convey. These repeated mistakes by teachers finally force students to avoid interaction in the class. Students do not want to be pointed for their errors and finally decide to withdraw and stay safe.

■ **Meaningful feedback**

It is extremely important for a teacher to provide meaningful feedback to her students. In our traditional system, we only evaluate students by marking them or putting red marks on students' work. This mode of correction never tells students what their strengths are and how they should overcome their weaknesses. We only communicate to students 'this is wrong' or 'that is wrong' but not 'what is their strength'. Nancie Atwell (1987) considers 'meaningful response' as one of the important factors for developing students as writers. Kumar (1996) has also advocated use of meaningful feedback for students. He remarks, 'Apart from correcting the child's mistakes or putting an approval sign, the teacher must write something expressing her response to the child's writing'. (p.62). Such kind of meaningful response by the teacher will undoubtedly encourage the students to read and write more.

Making provisions of the above mentioned conditions can make a classroom environment appropriate for language learning in a functional way. Language becomes meaningful when students use it for communication and expression. We must understand that one cannot learn anything if one's mind is loaded with tension, fear and anxiety of being 'wrong'. It is only students' engagement with the language in active form which can enable them to learn and master English language. So, as teachers, we need to create such a classroom environment for our students that it offers opportunities, encourages risk-taking, provides scope for errors and accepts hypothesis.

References

Atwell, Nancie. (1987). *In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Calkins, Lucy M. (1986). *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Cambourne, B. (1984). Language, Learning and Literacy. In A. Butler & J. Turbill (Eds.). *Towards a Reading Writing Classroom* (pp.5-10). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kumar, Krishna. (1996). *The Child's Language and the Teacher*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.

National Curriculum Framework. (2005). New Delhi: NCERT

Position Paper National Focus Group on Teaching of English. (2006). New Delhi: NCERT.

Employers' Expectations and MBA Students' Spoken English Skills
Exploring the Divide

Roseliz Francis

roselizfrancis@gmail.com

Roseliz Francis is a Research and Teaching Assistant at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. She is pursuing her PhD in ELT. Her areas of interest include Business English, Language Pathology and Educational Technology.

1. Introduction

There is a requirement for qualified and capable business professionals who can sustain India's economic growth. This is perhaps the reason that the number of students seeking admission to the MBA (Masters in Business Administration) has escalated over the years. According to a report by MBAuniverse.com, the number of MBA seats in India has grown four fold, from 94,704 in 2006-07 to 35, 2571 in 2011-12. While there is no dearth in the number of management graduates in the market, employers claim that only a small percentage is actually employable. A survey of 2,264 MBA graduates carried out by MeritTrac, an Indian Assessment and Testing Company in 2012 showed that only 21% were employable. Graddol observes that 'a part of the unemployment problem emanates from the mismatch between the skill requirements of the market and the skill base of the job seekers'(Graddol, 2009, p.106).

In a multi-lingual country like India, English has evolved to become the language of the workplace. MBA graduates are expected to possess excellent communication skills in English. It is taken for granted that they are fluent in English because the MBA selection criteria include examination of their linguistic skills in English. Since English is the medium of instruction in Indian business schools and management institutes, it is thought to contribute to the development of their English language skills.

2. Participants

Fifty (50) MBA graduates from various Indian business schools/management institutes who had been working for more than a year were chosen for the study. They were all working in organizations located in Delhi and Gurgaon, India. The sample consisted of 23 females and 27 males. English is the second language for all the participants.

3. Procedure

Interviews with the respondents were recorded which were analyzed to determine their proficiency in Spoken English. These interviews were evaluated by the experts based on a five point scales adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) handbook.

4. Evaluation of Spoken English Skills

According to the evaluation by the experts more than half the respondents (54%) have *Above Average* Spoken English skills. However, about 30% have been rated as having *Average* Spoken English skills. Though many respondents appear to be quite fluent in English, they make errors, which are discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Vocabulary

Table 1 depicts some of the errors in vocabulary made by the participants.

Table 1
Errors in Vocabulary

Incorrect Vocabulary	Correct Vocabulary
Schooling and *colleging*	Schooling and college studies
'I get so engrossed in my *thinkings…*'	I get so engrossed in my thoughts…
our clients need to *shed off* money for us.'	our clients need to shell out money for us.'
'Then you have to *manipulate yourself…*'	Then you have to adapt yourself…
'My training *was longed for 8 months*.'	My training was prolonged for 8 months.
'Men, when they get angry, just *start blasting on you*.'	'Men, when they get angry, they vent it out by shouting...'
'Somebody would have done MBA and would have *entered bank*.'	Somebody would have done MBA and would have joined a bank.

Several respondents used 'very much' instead of 'really' and 'much' in sentences like 'I am *very much* interested…' and 'We felt *very much* disappointed after getting a response like that'. It was also seen that some respondents introduced themselves in a manner which showed strong mother-tongue influence, for example '*Myself* Arvind Kumar Singh'.

4.2 Pronunciation

The respondents displayed many errors in their pronunciation. This again reflects a strong influence of their mother tongue. Some of the errors are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2
Pronunciation errors

Word	Respondent's pronunciation	Received Pronunciation
Elite	/ela☐t/	/ əl'i:t/
Project	/prə☐☐kt/	/pr☐́d☐☐kt/
Entrance exam	/☐́nträns☐gzæm/	/☐́ntrəns☐gzæm/
Opportunities	/ ☐p☐:r☐ʊnitiz/	/☐̀pərtúnətiz/
Here	/ h☐́r/	/h☐́r/
Decisions	/ d☐:z☐☐ənz/	/dəs☐́☐ənz/
Skills	/ ski:lz/	/sk☐́lz/
Specially	/ spe☐☐☐ali:/	/sp☐☐əli:/
Reason	/ ri:☐☐n/	/ rízən/
Friends	/frændz/	/fr☐́ndz/
Realized	/ríl☐☐zd/	/ríl☐̀jzd/
Career	/ kær☐ar/	/ kər☐́r/

A common tendency to pronounce 'Opportunity' as / ☐p☐:r☐ʊniti/ was noted. Several participants used /☐/ instead of /z/. Many mispronounced words with the vowel /ə/.

4.3 Prepositions

In their Spoken English the participants showed errors in the use of prepositions. Table 3 shows errors in the insertion of unnecessary prepositions in Spoken English. Table 4 displays the wrong use of prepositions in speech.

Table 3
Insertion of unnecessary prepositions in speech

Insertion of Preposition	
Incorrect	**Correct**
'…I joined *with* Standard Chartered…'	…I joined Standard Chartered…
'I *report in to* the group manager.'	I report to the group manager.
'I directly *joined into* my MBA program	I directly joined *the* MBA program
'*confiding over things*'	confiding things
'Even after *joining for the job…*'	…even after joining the job
'…*mingling up* with people'	…mingling with people…

Table 4
Wrong use of prepositions in speech

Wrong use of a Preposition	
Incorrect	**Correct**
'My parents were not very *keen in* my following that.'	My parents were not very keen about my following that.
'I was not *very much keen with* software jobs.'	I was not very keen about software jobs.
'I want t*o become Head of the Department to* one of the organizations.'	I want to become the Head of the Department in one of the organizations.
'…makes me get *involved into* various sectors.'	…makes me get involved in various sectors.
'Recession *is on its peak.*'	Recession is at its peak

4.4 Tenses

Some of the participants made use of wrong tenses in their speech. Table 5 displays some instances when they made such errors.

Table 5
Errors in the use of Tenses in speech

Incorrect	Correct
'I *done* my primary education…'	I did my primary education…
'At our time *we didn't had that.*'	At our time we didn't have that.

4.5 Articles

In their Spoken English the participants showed omission of articles as well as addition of unnecessary articles in their sentences. The examples of omission of articles are given in Table 6 below. Table 7 shows the unnecessary addition of articles while Table 8 displays the wrong use of articles in speech.

Table 6
Omission of articles in Speech

Omission of articles	
Incorrect	**Correct**
'…meet the top *guys at job.*'	…meet the top guys at the job.
- '*As professional*	As a professional…
' …you get *worried all time.*	…you get worried all the time.
' After that I *didn't get job*.	After that I didn't get a job
'Here I *got job*'	Here I got a job
'My father *got job here…*'	My father got a job here
'…from other *parts of country*	…from others parts of the country.
'…*such large pool* of knowledge.'	…such a large pool of knowledge.
'Some of the senior most *people in organization* are women'	Some of the senior most people in the organization are women

Table 7
Addition of unnecessary articles in Speech

Addition of articles	
Incorrect	**Correct**
'…that way it has been *the challenging* for me the role…'	…that way the role has been challenging for me
'*You are the one* of the persons…'	you are one of the persons…
'…while I was *doing the B.Com…*'	While I was doing B.Com
'men *and a women* both do hard work'	men and women both do hard work
'*Its a helpful a lot*'	It is very helpful.
'*The more the senior* they are the more humble…'	The more senior they are the more humble…

Table 8
Insertion of wrong article in Speech

Insertion of Wrong Article	
Incorrect	**Correct**
'Education always *plays the important role* in your life.'	Education always plays an important role in your life.

4.6 Subject-Verb Agreement

Table 9 displays errors in their speech which show a disagreement between the subject and the corresponding verb.

Table 9
Errors in subject-verb agreement

Incorrect	Correct
'Lot of politeness *are* expected from the clients.'	Lot of politeness is expected from the clients.
' So many *difference* are there…'	So many differences are there…
' *Women brings* a lot substance to the workplace.'	Women bring a lot substance to the workplace.

Incorrect	Correct
'…so PR activity also _differ_ from industry to industry.'	…so PR activity also differs from industry to industry.
'…there_is_ a few changes.'	…there are a few changes.
'I don't think emotions helps anywhere in the organization.'	I don't think emotions help anywhere in the organization.
'As far as _studies is_ related…'	As far as studies are related…
'Projects and all _was_ done…'	Projects weredone…

4.7 Word Order

A few respondents used words in a confusing and sometimes meaningless manner. Table 10 shows some examples of wrong word order.

Table 10
Wrong word order used in speech

Incorrect	Correct
' …your work of style…'	your style of work
' that is the creativity more I feel…'	I feel this is real creativity…
'…everything keeping in mind we used to do the advertisements.'	We used to do the advertisements keeping all this in mind…

4.8 Collocation

The participants used some deviant collocations such as the following.
1. '…humanly feasible…' instead of 'humanly possible.'
2. 'Many take a back step…' instead of 'many take a back seat…'

4.9 Repetitions

Some respondents showed a tendency to use certain words repeatedly during the conversation, even though these words served no purpose to the discourse. They would also use words such as 'like', 'thing', 'fine', and 'umm...'as fillers when they failed to find the appropriate words. Some examples are given below.

1. Basically:
   a. '_Basically,_ of course in these days smart work is essential to manipulate things according to your requirements _basically…_'
   b. You get a lot of freedom _basically…_ there is…when you…_basically_ the main purpose of our job is dealing with clients.

2. And all:
   a. 'Companies coming for interviews _and all…_'
   b. 'I gave my MBA entrance exams _and all._'
   c. '…to get into job _and all._'
   d. ' His classes, though he was very good_ and all…_'
   e. 'That is a flaw in my education which I did in Gulf _and all.'_

3. Probably:
   a. 'We _probably_ could take a lot of decisions at our end to_probably_, you know, counter that act.
   b. '…which _probably_ has actually been shelved and we _probably_are recruiting…'

4. You know:
   a. He used to give us, _you know,_ how to write letters and how to, _you know_, do communication.

4.10 Use of 'to'

I can _explain you_…	I can explain it to you…
How _to , you know, do communication_,	How to communicate
I need to _listen them_ very patiently.	I need to listen to them very patiently.
…which I _have accustomed now_.	…which I am accustomed to now.
She has to _listen all that_.	She has to listen to all that.
If there is an action, you'd _definitely react it_.	If there is an action, you'd definitely react to it.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to show that there is much room for improvement in the Spoken English skills of MBA graduates since some of them from the best Indian B- schools have been found to make several grammatical and syntactical errors. Business schools do not think it necessary to focus on the grammar and vocabulary, as they expect students to have that mastery over the language. Besides this, the packed schedule of the MBA leaves no room for developing their language skills. The respondents reiterated these facts in their interviews as well. Their inability to communicate effectively will also impact the smooth functioning of the organization. Proactive measures need to be taken to develop the Business English skills of these graduates otherwise it will hamper their professional growth.

References

Graddol, D. (2009) *English next.* India: The British Council.

MeritTrac-MBAUniverse.com (2012). *Only 21% of MBAs employable in 2011-12.* (Report). Retrieved on September 27, 2012 from http://www.mbauniverse.com

Forthcoming Events

48th Annual International IAFETL Conference and Exhibition 2014, Harrogate, UK
2 - 5 April 2014, www.iatefl.org

6th N.E.A.R. Language Education Conference
Date: May 24th (Saturday), 2014
Call for papers due: February 16th (Sunday)
Organization: North-East Asian Regional Language Education Conference
Location: University of Niigata Prefecture, Niigata

The 2nd Task-Based Language Teaching in Asia Conference
May 17th (Saturday) - May 18th (Sunday), 2014
Call for papers due: January 31st (Friday)
Organization: Task Based Learning Special Interest Group, Japan Association for Language Teaching
Location: Kinki University, Osaka

1st Tri-ELE International Conference on English Language Education
June 20th (Friday) - June 21st (Saturday), 2014
Call for papers due: February 28th (Friday)
Organization: Tri-Institutes for English Language Education
Location: The Ambassador Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand

JALT 2014
40th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition
Theme: Conversations Across Borders

Tsukuba International Congress Center, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan
21st - 24th November 2014
Presentation proposals close :11 February 2014
Link: http://jalt.org/conference
TESOL 2015 - 49th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit
Date: 2015-03-25, **Deadline**: 2014-06-01
Venue: Ontario / Canada
Website: http://www.tesol.org

Who's who in FORTELL

Patron:	Prof. R.K.Agnihotri
Advisors:	Prof. R.W. Desai
	Prof. Rajiva Verma

Executive Committee

President:	Dr. A.L. Khanna
Vice President:	Dr. C. Nisha Singh
Secretary:	Ms. Rachna Sethi
Treasurer:	Mr. Barun Kr. Mishra
Joint Secretaries:	Dr. Kusum Sharma
	Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava
	Ms. Zahra Ramish Rizvi
	Ms. Manu Gulati
Executive Members:	Dr. Vijay K. Sharma
	Dr. Vasant K. Sharma
	Mr. B.L. Singhal
	Dr. Tasneem Shahnaz
	Ms. Ruchi Kaushik
	Ms. Tulika Prasad
	Ms. Mona Sinha
Seminar/workshop	Dr. Mukti Sanyal
coordinators:	Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava
	Ms. Manu Gulati
Website:	Ms. Gitanjali Chawla

Conference on
Interrogating English Studies in India

The Department of English, Bharati College, University of Delhi is pleased to announce its collaboration with FORTELL for a forthcoming two-day Conference on **Interrogating English Studies in India on 5-6 February 2014**.

The details of the Conference can be seen here: http://englishconferencebharaticollege.blogspot.in/

Many important debates took place during the late 80s and 90s on the challenges faced by the discipline of English Studies in India. This Conference is aimed at reassessing our disciplinary and pedagogic goals and challenges in contemporary times.

Papers are invited for the following sub themes:

- English Literary Studies in India: Objectives and Review
- English and/or Literature?
- Changing Social Profile of Students: Pedagogic Strategies
- Reviewing Syllabi: Is the whole greater than the sum of the parts?
- Disciplinary goals and boundaries and/or interdisciplinary?
- Challenges and Opportunities of Digitalization for English Studies
- Multilingual Literary Archives: Bridging the English-Bhasha Divide?
- Pre-theory, theory or post-theory?

Papers may also be accepted on related themes that may add value to the Conference.

An abstract of no more than 250 words may be sent along with a brief bio-note to **conf.eng.bc@gmail.com** by 10th January 2014. Travel and accommodation expenses will be borne only for select invited speakers.

Call for papers
for **FORTELL**, ISSN no. 2229-6557, July 2014, issue no. 29

Special issue on
'Disability and Pedagogy'

The need for pedagogical alternatives and innovations in relation with disabled students in Indian classrooms is a long standing one. When it comes to language teaching, the current models of pedagogy fall drastically short in coping with the challenges that students with varying disabilities face. Also, with the trend of mixed classrooms to integrate the disabled with the other students, the task of a teacher is two-fold- addressing shortcomings in the system for a disabled pupil and integrating the latter with the rest of the class. This issue of FORTELL seeks to identify and raise crucial challenges in language teaching to the disabled suffering from hearing impairment, visually challenged to dyslexics and intellectually challenged.

The papers could address themes including but not limited to the following areas:

- Challenges in ESL teaching to the disabled
- Assessing curriculum on sensitivity towards disability and the disabled
- Innovations and alternative pedagogical methods to address lacunae viz a viz disabled in present teaching models
- Pedagogy and the discourse of inclusion and human rights of the disabled
- Role of tools and technology
- Problems regarding infrastructure
- Research issues

The Guest Editors for the issue will be Nisha Singh and Manjari Chaturvedi.

The last date for receiving contributions for this issue is April 30, 2013.

Along with articles on the above mentioned theme, general articles are invited as well.

Note for the Contributors:

Fortell Journal is published twice a year i.e. January and July by FORTELL, New Delhi. Copyright for the individual contribution rests with the author. However, Fortell Journal should be acknowledged as the original source of publication in a subsequent publication. Fortell retains the right to republish any of the contributions in its future publications or to make it available in electronic form for the benefit of its members.

Guidelines for submission

Soft copies of articles/research papers (not exceeding 2000 words), reports, book reviews, (300-350 words) and letters to the editor (100-150 words) should be sent along with a photograph and a brief bio note in about 25-30 words to Dr. A.L. Khanna, Coordinating Editor at amrit.l.khanna@gmail.com. The contributors should clearly indicate their name, email ID and phone number. Contributions should conform to the sixth edition of the APA style sheet in format, citations and bibliography. **Contributors should give a declaration that the paper is original and does not violate the copyright law and it has not been published elsewhere before.** Please look up the website www.fortell.org for Guidelines for submission of the manuscript. Contributions from the members of FORTELL are solicited.

An *Interview* with
GJV Prasad,

Professor at Centre for English Studies, Jawahar Lal Nehru University

Rachna Sethi

rachnasethi7@yahoo.com

Rachna Sethi is Assistant Professor of English at Rajdhani College, University of Delhi.

…Prasad, discusses life and literature at …Nehru University, where he is Professor of …His major research interests are Contemporary …dian English Literature, Dalit Writings, …Literature, and Translation Theory and he …ed extensively in these areas. He is also a …ist and translator. His novel A Clean Breast …listed for the Commonwealth Prize for best …rom the Eurasia region in 1994. He is …t editor of JSL, the Journal of the School of …Literature & Culture Studies, JNU, and Vice …n of the Indian Association for Commonwealth …and Language Studies. In this interview he …thoughts about interdisciplinary approaches in …cation with focus on English studies.

…ethi**(RS)**: Interdisciplinarity seems to be … of the new directions that academia …towards in India. Yet there seems to …clarity in defining the term itself. It …nfused with multidisciplinarity and …linarity. How does one differentiate …ese terms?

…ad**(GJV):** I agree there is lot of …about the term interdisciplinarity. …conceptualised as a university that …er interdisciplinarity. When we began, … was not that advanced and physical …of departments helped. One should of …e the orientation to want to converse … disciplines for interdisciplinarity …d physical nearness aids dialogue …sciplines. I would often run into other …olars, historians and sociologists like …ingh, Anil Bhatti, Kalgare and Kedar …n. Meetings and discussions with social …nd scholars from other languages over …d interdisciplinarity at JNU.

…talking of 'inter' and not 'trans', that …es talking to each other and working with each other. That is how I have co-guided Ph.D. scholars with historians; in interdisciplinary research projects one felt that the student needed inputs and methodologies of other disciplines. In transdisciplinarity you do not feel the need to learn the discipline of each field. Multidisciplinary depends on your training, if you are actually trained or inclined to train in two or more disciplines. A colleague of mine studied English with me, followed it by study of history and now teaches in the Political Science department, I would call him a truly multidisciplinary person. Otherwise we have people from different fields coming together in collaborations, providing opportunities for different disciplines to converse and create a new discursive space.

RS: The physical proximity between departments seems to be a thing of the past with the growth of JNU. Perhaps for your younger colleagues informal discussions over tea have been replaced by formal networks of exchanges. How do you see the change in dynamics reflect on interdisciplinarity?

GJV: The change in atmosphere means that today

we need networks to encourage interdisciplinarity. Apart from research projects, certain programmes on campus like the North East India Studies programme and sector for education require expertise from different departments.

Also one notices an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary push not just in JNU but across the country by policy makers. The ministry has picked up these terms and there may be more funding and opportunities for younger colleagues in interdisciplinary areas. Today there is no funding in universities for humanities but some for social sciences and that is also the reason for more collaborative seminars and research projects.

RS: Interdisciplinarity is often viewed as being central to reading and understanding of literature. What is the direction that English Studies has taken in India in view of changing academic needs of crossing disciplinary boundaries?

GJV: English departments, along with perhaps history and sociology to some extent, are unique in understanding the fuzziness of boundaries. English departments in India could have gone in two possible directions. One way would have been to specialise in language teaching, to teach English as a language that will be useful to participate in the wider affairs of the world and as a link language across India. However this has not been very successful as language teaching is often looked down upon in universities. A hierarchy prioritising literature over language exists in university spaces.

The second direction that English departments could have taken was to explore the 'Englishnes', to see our departments as simply literary studies departments but again this did not happen. For a very long time we remained very 'English' and never became literature departments, and then we moved away from being English departments to becoming cultural studies departments. This is the manner in which most literature departments have reinvented themselves. We seem to have skipped the literary studies phase and fast forwarded to cultural studies phase and boundaries automatically became fuzzy.

In cultural studies you are dealing with everything from history, political science, linguistics, translation studies to films. Interestingly Indian languages, which had been neglected in English departments, were co-opted in this cultural studies phase. Study of popular and cultural forms brought in study of Indian languages and literature and you could now study Hindi or Tamil literature in an English department without raising eyebrows being raised. Indian literature has gained entry into English departments because of the need to re-present Indian culture, to analyse India and to create a critical discourse on India.

RS: So cultural studies has not only dismantled the study of British literary canon but also blurred disciplinary boundaries in English departments.

GJV: The fuzziness of borders between disciplines is now part of the turf of English departments. Interdisciplinarity earlier meant that you should be totally conversant with methodologies of other disciplines but that is no longer demanded. It has its own pros and cons. It is good in the sense that it has made English departments exciting places to be in and bad because humility and admittance of lack of knowledge about other disciplines has been replaced by brashness. One needs to question the training of students in other disciplines when we don't even train people any longer in close reading of texts.

RS: Teaching of literature has always involved drawing from disciplines of history, philosophy, sociology and psychology even before we widely started using the term interdisciplinarity. Do you think there is a shift in thrust from traditional pedagogy to the current scenario?

GJV: The difference between then and now is being able to speak of other disciplines with a sense of ease, sometimes even contemptuously. We were actually trained by historians and history just didn't come into the literature class. When we attended history and philosophy classes we had a sense that these were aligned disciplines but different disciplines nonetheless. Literary studies always had interdisciplinarity, now I think there is a feeling that you don't need to learn history from historians, psychology from psychologists, philosophy from philosophers, as if the literary scholar is all in one.

RS: So instead of improving on skills one is drawing from multiple disciplines without being trained in them. Don't you feel that the biggest drawback of interdisciplinarity is lack of grounding in any discipline while trying to be 'a jack of all trades'?

GJV: Yes, that is a problem. When you hear and read people with firm grounding in the discipline, a literary scholar who knows his text well, you value his merit as an intellectual and critic. I don't want to sound old fashioned because I love this excitement and enjoy the kind of research young scholars can today undertake. However we need to be conscious and cautious of learning from other disciplines and not pick up ideas without being aware of where they come from.

RS: Interdisciplinarity then shouldn't lead to a superficial research that lacks substance and depth.

GJV: Absolutely, also since our work is part of literature department, our reading of literature should be central to what we do, otherwise it is just a peg to hang other things. Otherwise the same kind of work can possibly be done in a history or a sociology department.

RS: So we make literature central to our project in English department and then use tools of other disciplines. But how do we ensure that these tools are used for synthesis of ideas, for advancement of knowledge? What methodology should the teacher employ to equip students in interdisciplinary work?

GJV: Let me push it further, today I have a tool kit rather than methodologies that I provide my students with. The tools may come from different disciplines, drawing from what I have learnt from these streams over the years. I fail in my responsibility as a teacher if I don't train my students in understanding the functions and impacts of tools and how they are to be used for analysis of texts. They should be able to decide the appropriate tool for the unpacking or decoding of a text. Research methodology is about putting together of a tool kit. As I said earlier, it doesn't mean you lose humility and pretend or think that you know all, but instead you learn and evolve and have respect for different tools that you have gained. In that sense it doesn't matter if you are not trained in different disciplines so long as you are familiar with different tools, know their origins and various uses.

RS: Has JNU administration been supportive of partnership among different departments for research proposals based on interdisciplinary approach? Please give examples of such joint ventures undertaken at the Centre for English Studies.

GJV: JNU has always been supportive in having co-supervisors not only from other departments but also from other universities in India or even abroad. We are open to being in the liminal space between disciplines and encourage crossing of boundaries.

I can give you examples of PhD research of Ramya Sreenivasan and Nilanjana Mukherjee. Both had projects that were heavily history oriented, had co-supervisors from history departments and their theses have been appreciated by people from both history and literature departments. I have also supervised work where students have worked on other Indian languages like Tamil and Bengali and that work has been admired by people from the respective language departments, and that has been a test for me. Interdisciplinarity provides opportunities to young scholars to undertake exciting research.

RS: Thank you Sir for sharing your views on the area of interdisciplinarity. I am sure your insights will be thought provoking for our readers.

Language Games and Activities

Ruchi Kaushik

Here is a stand-alone language learning activity related to the theme of **Healthy Lifestyle.** The activity is designed for students at the proficiency level indicated. Some variations of the same activity are provided later so that the teacher can modify it and pitch it at a different level in a heterogeneous class that comprises students with varying learning abilities.

Play the Nutritionist, prescribe a plan!

Level: Beginner, lower intermediate

Time required: 30 min

Objectives: To provide students with common vocabulary related to healthy living and to encourage them to speak English freely by formulating questions and answers in a specific situation.

Materials: Chalk and blackboard

Preparation: As a preliminary to this task, ask students how they would define a healthy lifestyle and what, in their opinion, is its significance. To make your discussion interesting, you may use pictures or show short visual clips related to healthy/unhealthy lifestyles.

Procedure:

1. Elicit nouns, adjectives, verbs or phrases/idioms that students can come up with on healthy living and add your own. Make a box, titled My Healthy Living Manual, as shown below, as you write some of them on

ruchikaushik01@gmail.com

Ruchi Kaushik is Associate Professor of English at Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Materials Development in ESP.

the board. Encourage students to fill in their manual and write at least three more in each column along with a friend.

My Healthy Living Manual

	Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Phrases/idioms
1.	Fitness	strong	jogging	Health is wealth
2.	Alertness	energetic	exercising	An apple a day keeps the doctor away
3.				
4.				
5.				

2. Now ask students to role play a situation where one student becomes a patient and the other a nutritionist. Each pair carries out a short conversation where the patient mentions a health problem and the nutritionist advises healthy eating habits and lifestyle. Let it be a lot of fun as the nutritionist prescribes a healthy plan to the patient. Students may be allowed to use words from the healthy living manual they designed. A sample conversation along with a prescribed diet is provided below:

Conversation

Patient: Hello Ms. Sethi! I am 20 years old and have recently gained a lot of weight. I feel week and lazy all the time.

Nutritionist: Hello Namita! Let us get your weight and blood pressure checked first.

Do you recall when you gained weight? How much was your weight before that?

Patient: Yes, I put on weight about a year back. I used to be 50 kilos earlier.

Nutritionist: You are 63 kilos now. Have you consulted a doctor before?

Patient: No.

Nutritionist: Well, do not worry. I am prescribing some tests. Please get them done this week. Meanwhile, you will have to lose weight if you wish to feel strong and energetic. Remember, health is wealth!

Patient: How soon will I be fit and agile again?

Nutritionist: Very soon provided you follow the healthy plan that I am recommending to you. You will be required to eat nutritious food and exercise regularly. Come back to me with the reports.

Patient: Thank you.

Nutritionist: You are welcome.

Prescribed Health Plan to be followed for a week

Food	Exercise
Eat small meals at short intervals; eat green leafy vegetables and a lot of fruits; avoid heavy and oily food. Say no to sweets and cold drinks.	Walk briskly for half an hour twice a day; climb stairs instead of using a lift; do mild physical activity throughout the day
Attitude	**Food for thought**
Avoid negative thoughts. You will soon regain health and vigour!	To have a healthy body and a healthy mind is to have the world's two biggest assets!

There can be several versions of this activity based on slightly different variations of the same theme depending on which particular skill needs to be enhanced and at which level.

Variation 1

If the skill focus is on developing analytical, critical thinking and writing skills of the students, the following activity may work.

Level: intermediate

Time required: 40 min

Objective: To develop students' analytical, critical thinking and writing skills

Material:

a. Different pictures depicting health and fitness of body and mind. For e.g. a sportsperson, a dancer, a farmer etc.

b. Advertisements in newspapers and magazines of weight reduction and management clinics, products etc. and pictures of slim people.

Procedure:

1. Show students different pictures of healthy and fit people and ask them to give one word/phrase they associate with each of these persons. For instance, if the picture is of a dancer, then the answer could be grace, flexibility, rhythm etc.

2. Now show them pictures of slim people and ask students if they associate slimness and beauty with overall health wellness. Why/why not or to what extent?

3. Show them advertisements of slimming centres and slimming products. Ask students to discuss with their friends and

specify whether they find the ads convincing. What reasons do they think attribute to their popularity?

4. Finally ask students to write a mail to a friend advising her to join/not join a slimming centre in her locality citing reasons to support their view.
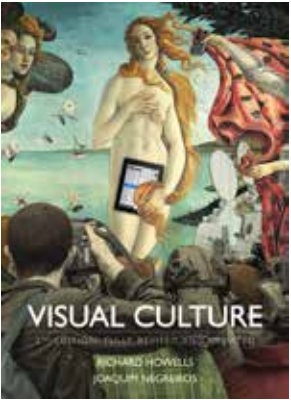
Variation 2

If the skill focus is on enhancing critical thinking and creative-writing skills in students, the following variation of the activity may be attempted.

Level: Upper intermediate, advanced

Time required: 30 min

Objective: To develop students' critical thinking and creative writing skills

Material: Any anecdote/short article on stress/anger related health problems and another on the benefits of meditation

Procedure:

1. Let the students read the anecdote/article on stress or anger. Break them in pairs to discuss how modern lifestyle causes stress/anger and in what ways can it be overcome.

2. Share some responses in class.

3. Now make students read the short piece on meditation. Again ask students how they would define mediation (is it praying; deep breathing; self-introspection etc) and do they perceive it as an effective stress-buster/anger management technique but this time round encourage them to offer their viewpoints in the form of a debate/discussion by giving them topics such as **Meditation is only a temporary state of happiness and satisfaction** or **Meditational practices have no scientific basis.**

4. Ask students to describe the ill-effects of stress/anger using humour. Encourage them to present their ideas creatively through a comic strip/anecdote/interesting dialogue etc.

5. Have volunteers present their work to the class.

Politics of Visuals in decoding *Visual Culture*
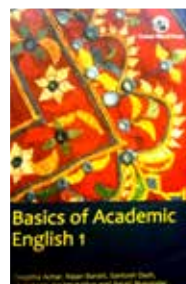
Gorvika

Gorvika is Assistant Professor in Rajdhani College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include dramatic studies, literary theory and gender studies.

Our world is full of images, pictures and visuals. We see them daily, on roads, in museums, on TV, in films etc. Have we ever thought what do they mean? How they are affecting us? Are they as innocent as they look? Is there any politics behind them? Are they conditioning us in certain ways or affecting our thought process? This book sets you thinking by engaging with such questions. The revised, updated, expanded, second edition of this book, like its predecessor aims at visual literacy which tries to decode the hidden meanings behind the images and how they get transmitted in our culture and consciousness. It is a book which analyses the visuals by using the theories of different disciplines. The whole book revolves around the 'reality' around us and its representation through visual art.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section, named 'Theory' uses six theoretical approaches to visual analysis in the chapters titled 'Iconology', 'Form', 'Art History', 'Ideology', 'Semiotics' and 'Hermeneutics'. The first chapter is about symbolism in the image, the second focusses on the form of the visual art; the third historicizes the individual art form and emphasizes on Art history; the fourth discusses the ideology of the artist; the fifth uses the Structuralist and Post-Structuralist theories and reveals the world of signs and symbols; and the sixth one delves into the discourse of cultural studies and the relation between images and our culture.

The second section of the book explores the relation between different art forms and reality. While the first section of the book deals with the art forms theoretically, the second section is about applying these using the historical and contemporary art forms. This section titled 'Media' includes chapters on fine art, photography,

film, television and new media. These chapters interrogate the authenticity of art and its relation with reality.

The book widens the critical thinking of the reader as it draws on interventions of philosophers like Kant, Barthes, Bentham, Althusser, Baudrillard, Delueze, Benjamin and Foucault. It discusses the historical and contemporary debates in different areas of art forms using the arguments and perspectives of different scholars without giving conclusive summations. Moreover the

interesting examples cover wide ranging topics like CD cover of Beatles' *Abbey Road,* Che Guevara in popular culture and criticism of elitism in fine arts.

Visual Culture would be a useful book for students with interdisciplinary interests as it transgresses the boundaries of disciplines in dealing with politics of visuals from different streams like literature, linguistics, cultural studies, history, sociology, gender studies, religious studies, anthropology, philosophy and psychology.

Basics of Academic English

A.L.Khanna

Basics of Academic English, 1 and 2

By Deeptha Achar, Rajan Barett, Santosh Dash, Charul Jain, Sachin Ketkar and Aarati Mujumdar.

Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi 2012, 2013

Price: Rs 70, Rs 85, pages:96,120

The set of *Basics of Academic English, 1 and 2* are textbooks written for the Foundation Course in English under the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) introduced for undergraduate students of arts, commerce and science in Gujarat. This set of books is skills-based meant for students of semester 3 and 4, and they aim to build on the knowledge acquired in semesters 1 and 2 through *English for Academic Purposes*, Books 1-2 (published by University Granthnirman Board,Gujarat,2011)

The aim of this set of books is to develop the communication skills required in academic situations through practice exercises and activities done by students from diverse backgrounds. The set shows a distinct shift from the traditional practice of treating the learners as passive recipients to active participants. Most of the themes, contexts and sample texts in the books are drawn from everyday life which help students to adapt, consolidate and actively make use of what they learn on their own from outside the classroom.

The basic assumption on which these books are based is the fact that students have a high degree of motivation to learn and are exposed to English in their day to day living in the world around

them. Another assumption guiding these materials is that they cater to students who may have low motivation and inadequate control on English grammar and pronunciation but have the ability to communicate in English. The emphasis therefore in these books is to help students to understand the meaning of what they listen to and read and express what they mean while speaking and writing.

The books aim at developing the following five abilities in the students in semesters 3-4: to read and understand a range of written texts, especially those central to academic studies; to use varied strategies for reading that are appropriate for given purposes and discourse types; to listen and understand spoken English as encountered in classrooms, seminars and public lectures, informal and formal social settings and TV or web-based programmes; to express one's ideas clearly to specific audiences in class discussions, seminars, social interactions, etc.; to express ideas in writing in varied forms, especially in academic assignments and examination responses.

The books are carefully designed building on the prior knowledge of the students and the existing practices of teaching. Each unit is preceded by the unit outline, preview and objectives. The tasks are centred around situations that students are likely to encounter in their day to day life and gradually lead towards building the objectives of the course.

The units included in Book 1 are: Reading skills, Approaching writing and Academic writing. Each unit includes interesting and authentic tasks aimed at building the specific sub-skills. Book 2 includes: Approaches to writing, Revising the written draft and Language through literature. Both the books are accompanied by the detailed syllabus, model paper and detailed structure of marks for each semester.

The books are fairly comprehensive in building academic proficiency specifically in the skills of reading and writing.

amrit.l.khanna@ gmail.com

A.L.Khanna retired as Associate Professor from Department of English, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi.

English Language Education in South Asia: From Policy to Pedagogy

Reviewed By Shreesh Chaudhary

Farrel, Lesley, Singh, Udaya Narayana & Giri, Ram Ashish (Eds., 2011)
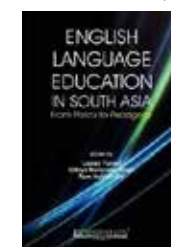
English Language Education in South Asia: From Policy to Pedagogy–

With a Foreword by Braj B Kachru, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press/Foundation Books, Pp. 291+xx, Price: Not stated

Except sporadically, India has never been one "political" country. During various periods of its history, India has indicated, with some variations, different land masses called *Aryavarta, Jambudwiip, Bharatwarsh, Hindustan, India,* etc. For some years now, this land mass, comprising all countries from Afghanistan to Burma and Tibet to Sri Lanka, has been called South Asia (SA). All of these countries have a shared history of problems.

One of the shared problems is the problem of English language education (ELE), which has come to signify almost the only language education worth having. No other sector of education in recent years in this sub-continent has attracted greater investment. A volume on issues related to ELE in SA, perhaps the first of its kind, is, therefore, most welcome. As Kachru says in his foreword, "The editors of this volume have admirably taken yet another step by crossing the borders of divided South Asian states by providing the resource for a comparative understanding of South Asian English", (p.x), and, will, hopefully facilitate "a serious exchange of ideas' (p.xi). The book is, therefore, a valuable contribution to scholarship on this region.

The volume has 18 chapters divided into three sections, "Policy", "Pedagogy" and "Politics of Pedagogy", covering all countries of SA, except Maldives.

In all of these countries, ELE began under, but in spite of, the British Colonial Rule. ELE has progressed due solely to the learner's motivation, and in spite of the lack of resources and adequate and properly trained teachers, in spite of large classes, no or relatively limited exposure to English, and confusions surrounding if and how much English to teach at primary, secondary and

tertiary levels of education. Besides, in all of these countries, ELE has had to, and as in Afghanistan now, is continuing to, contend with local language education (LLE). Policies vary from "No ELE", as in Sri Lanka in the 1960s, to "ELE+LLE(s)", as in India and some other countries. These confusions and policy struggles have by no means been resolved anywhere, not yet.

At one extreme has been Sri Lanka (Bianco, Pp. 36-60) with only one official language almost in the entire primary and secondary education, a not too distant consequence of which has been the long and bloody struggle between ethnic groups in the country. In Afghanistan (Thinsan, Pp. 103-119) today, demand for English is as high as anywhere else, yet it is being learnt in spite of the Taliban, at the risk of learner's life (P.111). On the other end has been India, overloading even children under ten with several languages and teaching none satisfactorily. All the other countries occupy other points varying from early start and liberal attitude to ELE to delayed and a "necessary evil" attitude, as in Pakistan (Rahman, Pp.221-232) Similarly, pedagogical practices and policies have also differed.

Thanks to V K Gokak, Tulsi Ram, Braj Kachru, Tariq Rahman and others before and since them, for some time we have known in some detail about the policies and problems of ELE in SA. Some recent works[1] have given historical background to ELE in India. But we have had hardly enough information about specific nature of the problem in these countries.

Bianco's (Pp.36-60) description of the development of language conflict, and, therefore, of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is well-documented. At the heart of this conflict lay the inflexibility of political masters in Sri Lanka. Had they heeded the warning of the saner voices, recent history of Sri Lanka would have been so incredibly different. Colvin de Silva, then leader of opposition in the Sei Lankan Parliament, had wisely cautioned, "One language means two countries, two languages mean one country". But it is in the nature of governments leading their nations to doom that they would not reconsider their position. Closing the debate on Official Language Act, 1956 in the Parliament, Prime Minister Bandarnaike proudly announced, "Sinhala

scc@iitm.ac.in

Shreesh Choudhary is Professor of Linguistics at the Department of Humanities and Social sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai. He has published extensively in the areas of Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Natural Language Processing. His recently completed monograph on language contact titled **Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India** has been published by Cambridge University Press, India.

only in 24 hours". Luckily, India was led by wiser people at a crucial point of time in its history.

Articles on ELE in Afghanistan (Thinsan, Pp.103-122), Bangladesh (Chowdhury & Farooqui, 147-159), Bhutan (Giri, Pp.89-102), and Nepal (Awasthi, 73-88) are informative and insightful. Some of these countries, such as Bhutan, for instance, have taken a progressive attitude to ELE in spite of its orthodox history and geographical isolation. In some places, such as in Afghanistan, fundamentalist forces have offered violent objection to ELE, but popular wisdom has found ways to get across and invest time and resources in ELE. A refreshingly different piece in the volume is one on the teachers associations' role in and contribution to ELE in SA (Khanna, 160-69).

Sailaja's piece (Pp.61-72) on education commissions in India is comprehensive and finds

the common thread and theme through their reports, even when spread over a relatively long period of time. The subject certainly deserves a more detailed treatment. .

Many other pieces are short on research and long on theory. Following the popular superstition, beginning of ELE in India is attributed to Macaulay (Giri, P.2) whereas a number of recent works have shown that ELE in India began in spite of the British[1]. But, on the whole, the book is a valuable contribution to the literature on ELE in SA.

---

[i]See, for instance, Chaudhary, Shreesh (2009) *Foreigners & Foreign Languages in India: A Sociolinguistic History,* New Delhi : Cambridge University Press

[ii]Op Cit

Developing Speaking Skills
Chetna Bhola

Rainbow School, Janak Puri in collaboration with FORTELL conducted a workshop on 'Developing Speaking Skills' on December 14, 2013. The resource person for the workshop was Ms.Falguni Chakravarty, a Cambridge ESOL CELTA trainer who has published many course books for ESOL and KET examinations of Cambridge University and also provides in-service teacher training to primary and secondary school teachers.

Ms. Falguni Chakraborty started the workshop with an icebreaker activity that set the tone for the day. She explained the basics of developing speaking skills for students and demonstrated a wide range of classroom activities such as tongue

twisters, grammar chants and word stress through syllables. She explained how these activities can help the students in improving their reading skills. She also laid stress on giving students umpteen opportunities to speak and practice the language through prompts. She emphasised that peer learning can help students to overcome their inhibitions. She opined that the students should be allowed to speak and not be corrected while they are speaking, and later their mistakes can be individually corrected. This approach is likely to help the child to overcome hesitation and develop fluency over a period of time. She explained that teaching students to break words into syllables at elementary stage helps them to improve reading and spellings.

She reiterated that drills, grammar chants and recitation are important for students. These exercises develop the interest of students towards language. She explained the role of structured conversation practice for students to teach them to speak within the given time frame. She introduced interesting board games based on grammar to teachers and all participant teachers enjoyed and appreciated these games. She encouraged the teachers to develop new games for their classrooms and give opportunities to children to freely express their views. Everyone including the teachers, the Principal and the Chairman found the workshop stimulating and expressed the desire for more such workshops to develop and enhance language skills of students.

chetnabhola31@gmail.com

Chetna Bhola is a primary school teacher. She has worked as an ISA co-ordinator, ISA project (British Council), has given children talk shows on radio and is associated with SCERT for framing English Bridge Curriculum for class 4.

ELT Workshop
Zahra Ramish Rizvi

An English language teaching workshop on ELT methodologies with a special focus on CCE was organized on October 26, 2013 at Tulips International School by FORTELL. The invite was sent to about 10 nearby schools and 20 teachers teaching classes I-V attended the workshop. The resource person was Ms. Payal Khatri, a certified CELTA Trainer from University of Cambridge and Jolly Phonics, U.K. She has been teaching and training since the last nine years and works in the ELT panel of Macmillan.

It was a two hour 'hands-on workshop', which included a number of activities that teachers can use in their class rooms with special focus on

handling large classes. Activities like 'Running Dictation', 'Silly Stories', Imaginative Stories' (based on grammar topics like prepositions) and TPR (total physical response) were taken up.

Teachers attending the workshop were convinced that these activities, especially TPR would be useful in the class. TPR activities would help students to enhance their control over language for better communication skills. It is important for children to learn to interact and work in groups in view of interdisciplinary assessments.

Another activity that was appreciated by the teachers was 'Running Dictation', an activity in which a text was pasted on the wall or display board. It requires the students to be divided into groups of 4-5. One child from each group is designated as the 'writer', the others take turns to go to the pasted written material, read a line

zahra_ramish@yahoo.co.in

Zahra Ramish Rizvi is Principal, Tulips International Senior Secondary School, Delhi. She is the hosting coordinator for AFS India, Delhi Chapter.

and get back to the 'writer' to dictate it. Once the passage is over all students take their seats and the teacher reads out the passage or displays it on the smart board and students check their mistakes.

Talk on Literary Translation

Manjari Chaturvedi

A talk on 'Literary Translation' for the students of the Applied Language Course, **'**Translation and Interpreting' was organized under the Lecture Series of Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, in collaboration with FORTELL on September 26, 2013. Ms. Kalyanee Rajan, co-author of *Foundational Concepts of Translation*

The workshop was a learning experience for the teachers attending it. They were all of the view that such activities should be taken up regularly to be effective.

and Assistant Professor of English at SRCC, University of Delhi, addressed various facets involved in the act of translating a text.

Ms. Mona Sinha from the department of English, MAC established the context for study of translation theory and practice in the current curriculum. The talk covered a wide range of topics: multilingualism, types and theories of translation, problems of equivalence, the role of the translator and the different types of translations. Emphasis was laid on understanding cultural and literary barricades that translation involves. The students experienced practical hiccups while attempting translation of Bollywood songs and Shakespeare's sonnets, underscoring the nuances of practicing translation. Teachers, who are teaching the course in college, shared the common errors made by students and their own experience of attempting translation. The event emphasized the need to sensitize the students towards multilingualism as it exists today, both at home and abroad impinging on both personal and professional facets of our life.

By breaking the monotony of a theoretical and text-book bound approach to the area, the talk brought translations into the domain of everyday life. It was much appreciated and found helpful by the students and faculty of the Department of English for bringing ease and lucidity to the course.

manjari.c.1@gmail.com

Manjari Chaturvedi is Assistant Professor at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi.

What can RELO do for you?

The Regional English Language Office (RELO) was established in 2005 to support the effective teaching of English language skills in India. RELO supports English Language Teachers and Students through educational and cultural exchange programs.

- ❍ **English Language Fellow**
- ❍ **English Language Specialist**
- ❍ **E-Teacher Scholarship**
- ❍ **The English Access Microscholarship**

Check http://americanenglish.state.gov/ for more information about these programs.

- ❍ Provide professional development opportunities through E-Teacher Scholarship Program (3-10 week online courses) from universities in the US. RELO is currently offering scholarships for NINE different courses for practicing ELT professionals. Check http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/reloindia2.html for more details about the program.
- ❍ Bring ELT Specialists from the US for the purpose of conducting workshops; work on ELT projects in collaboration with local ELT institutions.
- ❍ Offer ELT materials and online resources :
  - ✎ English Teaching Forum – a quarterly journal for ELT professionals http://americanenglish.state.gov/english-teaching-forum
  - ✎ Teacher training webinars and resources are available at the Shaping the Way We Teach Ning http://shapingenglish.ning.com
  - ✎ American English, a website for teachers and learners of English americanenglish.state.gov

Contact us at

Regional English Language Office

Regional English Language Office
24 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110001
E-mail: reloindia@gmail.com
http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/reloindia2.html
http://www.facebook.com/relo.india