English Language Teaching in India

The Shifting Paradigms

About the Author

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His publications include *Poetry of Life* (1997), *Purpose of Life* (1998), *Muse Time* (1998), *The Indian Imagination of Girish Karnad* (2000), *Writing for Mass Media* (2005), *Critical Perspectives on American Literature* (2008), *English and Communication Skills for Students of Science and Engineering* (2009) and *English and Soft Skills* (2010). He has also published over 55 research articles in national and international journals.

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Foreword

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FOREWORD

English Language Teaching in India: The Shifting Paradigms is a collection of interesting and inspiring research papers on the course of English Language Teaching (ELT) in India by Dr. S.P. Dhanavel, a teacher and scholar of over two decades of experience.

Dr. Dhanavel has a rich experience of teaching English at various reputed institutes at various levels. He has taught General English to students of BA, BSc and BCom at Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli, and Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Chennai; Management Communication to students of MBA at Pondicherry University, Puducherry; American, British and Indian English Literature to students of MA at Tripura University; Technical English to students of BE and BTech and Communication Skills to students of MBA and MCA at Anna University, Chennai. He has also published two innovative textbooks, *English and Communication Skills* and *English and Soft Skills*. Such a varied and profound experience has enabled him to look at the rapid changes that have been taking place in the field of ELT and record his authentic responses in the form of this book.

This book encompasses a wide range of interconnected domains of knowledge in English language and literature: language, literature, ELT, technology in language teaching, communication skills, non-verbal communication skills, soft skills and so on. It presents common ideas in an unusual light helping the reader understand what it means to learn and teach English language. Throughout the text, it has been repeatedly emphasized that English teachers should be creative and innovative enough to make use of the commonly available resources for the maximum benefit of both students and teachers. It has also been argued that nothing should be a hindrance to the mastery of English communication and soft skills. Teachers should be able to help their students succeed in achieving proficiency in English. If the recurrent indefatigable spirit of English teachers becomes contagious and spread far and wide among all teachers and students of English, none can be a competitor in the global arena for India with its growing youth population having excellent communication skills.

This book is a welcome addition to the body of scholarship on ELT in India. All those who are concerned with learning and teaching of English will find it as a rich treasure house of knowledge and practical ideas for mastering and imparting English communication and soft skills.

Professor P. Mannar Jawahar
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Preface

This book is a collection of articles and research papers that I wrote over a period of 20 years. These are my creative and practically innovative responses to some of the perennial problems in the rapidly changing field of English Language Teaching (ELT), which I see as not only English Language Learning (ELL) but also communication and soft skills learning today.

Almost all aspects of ELT are covered in this book—vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, grammar, discourse, specific language skills like LSRW with primacy for thinking, use of technology in learning, non-verbal communication skills, literature in the classroom and so on. However, the primary and recurrent concern of this book is to highlight effective motivational strategies for successful learning of English, communication and soft skills.

The insights and efforts of my creative teachers and students have gone into the making of this book. Without my inspiring teachers and perspiring students, I could not have experimented with these ideas in the classroom. I owe my first gratitude to all of them, though I have not named anybody here. I am indebted to a number of conference and seminar organizers who gave me opportunities for presenting these ideas to scholarly communities. I am also beholden to the editors of various journals and editors of conference proceedings, who published and presented most of these papers in their various forms.

At this juncture, I would like to record my gratitude to Prof. P. Mannar Jawahar, Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai, for his constant support and encouragement to excel in my academic pursuit. I am thankful to him for his generous foreword to this book.

I am glad to express my indebtedness to Dr S. Shanmugavel, Registrar, Dr M. Sekar, Dean, and Dr P K Palanisamy, former Chairman, and Dr P Kannan, current Chairman, Faculty of Science and Humanities, all of College of Engineering, Guindy, for their support, guidance and motivation.

My special thanks are due to Dr V. Saraswathi, a magnetic, magnificent and motivational Professor of English, who urged and guided me to realize my potential as a creative English language learner. She published some of my articles in the *Journal of English Language Teaching* (India) and motivated me to publish an article in *The English Teacher* (Thailand). I must record here that my wife and children too received her blessings in abundance.

I would like to mention here the institutions where I have taught and experimented with my ideas. These are Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli; Pondicherry University, Puducherry; Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Chennai; Tripura University, Agartala; and Anna University, Chennai. I am thankful to all my colleagues, both past and present, for their tolerance and acceptance of my commonsensical ideas about and for a meaningful English language education.

It is my pleasure to thank my colleagues at Anna University, Chennai, Dr Premalatha Rajan, Professor, Dr K. Elango, Professor, Mr P. Sadagopan, Associate Professor, Dr T. Shrimathy Venkatalakshmi, Associate Professor, Dr S. Soundiraraj, Associate Professor, Dr Veena Selvam, Assistant Professor, Dr Stars Jasmine, Assistant Professor, and Dr P.R. Sujatha Priyadarshini, Assistant Professor, for their cordial appreciation and the congenial atmosphere for my academic growth. I would also like to thank the non-teaching staff of our department, Mrs Asha Catherine, Mr Ghouse Basha, Mrs P.S. Jayalekshmy, Mr T. Venkatesan and Mr P. Raja Mannar, and our research scholars for the same. My sincere thanks are due to all those who have shaped me to become and be an innovatively practical English language learner and teacher.

This book would not have taken this shape in its present form without the support of the staff at Tata McGraw-Hill. I am deeply indebted to Mr P Arulselvan, Sr Sales Executive, Mr Amit Kumar, Deputy Manager (Sponsoring), and Mr Manohar Lal, Sr Production Manager. I owe my sincere thanks to Mr Yogesh Kumar, who edited the manuscript with passion and dedication. Without the teamwork at Tata McGraw-Hill, this book would have remained mere research papers. I thank the entire team involved with this project for giving me an opportunity to associate myself with Tata McGraw-Hill as an author.

All that I have learnt in these years is that I must be useful to and be worthy of my students, colleagues and the profession of English language and literature teaching. Suggestions and comments for improvement are welcome and may be sent to dhanavelsp@gmail.com.

S P Dhanavel

Contents

Chapter 1 ‖‖‖ Global Influence of English

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand how English has attained its current global status
- Know the characteristics of English that have contributed to its growth
- Explain how English is a language of empowerment
- Understand how globalization has contributed to the growth of English

English is just one of the 6912 languages of the world (Crystal 2009: 58) but it has attained the status of world language primarily because of the British colonialism and imperialism. The global status of English has further been strengthened and sustained by the American neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. Now there is no alternative to English as a global language, though several attempts have been made in this direction. German, French, Spanish and other languages could not replace English. Esperanto, an artificial language invented by L.L. Zamenhof, or Basic English, a simplified form of English, could not supersede English. Thus, English remains the language of national and international communication at all levels throughout the world. In this era of liberalization, privatization and globalization, it has become a more dominant language than ever before.

According to Kachru, around 320–380 million people speak English as a native language, especially in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. Further, about 150–300 million people speak English as a second language. Again 100–1,000 million people use English

as a foreign language around the world (Crystal 2002: 54). Moreover, English is the official language of nearly 75 countries of the world (Crystal 2009:18). In addition, thousands of international organizations and business houses use English for the purpose of internal and external communication. An important question to ask and answer is: What are the special characteristics of English that have contributed to its growth as a unique global language? It appears that an inquiry into the initial letters of the word ENGLISH will provide an interesting answer.

Empowerment

English is not just a language. It is a language of empowerment through education and economy and of enrichment and entertainment. When English started replacing French during the Renaissance, the people of England achieved a power to assert themselves in their own language. When English began to supplant Latin gradually, the people of England were empowered—socially, educationally, economically and politically. When the people thus attained enrichment and received entertainment, they realized a power, which transformed England into a colonial and imperial power and the United States into a superpower. Whoever learnt English also began to share this power.

Novelty

One of the characteristics of English that has made it a language of empowerment, education, economy, enrichment and entertainment is novelty. English is originally derived from the Angles and Saxons, two of the earliest tribes that inhabited England. That is why English in its early stages is called Anglo-Saxon. But it did not remain so. On the contrary, it has grown to become international English. Perhaps the reason for such a growth can be found in its characteristic novelty—its ability to accommodate new words and ideas incessantly and unfalteringly. Moreover, English is the language of networking among people and organizations for purposes of mutual cooperation and development. The advent of the Internet has, in fact, added fillip to the use of English for networking, which in turn has increased the scope for empowerment.

Globalization

Globalization is an economic process that promotes market-driven economy. It has had its impact on the stronger and faster spread of English, even in those countries that stoutly resisted its influence over the years, such as France and Germany. English for its own part has contributed to the process of globalization. Hence, English can very well be called the 'language of globalization'. As Alexei Bayer says, "In the global economy, English is now the king of languages". No

one, therefore, can ignore English, nor globalization, without risking his or her own prospects of growth. If the concept of 'global village' has to have any meaning, the language of communication is bound to be English, at least for now.

Learning

English is a language of learning, living and livelihood. Historically, older languages like Greek, Latin and Sanskrit were considered to be the languages of learning, not only of the letters but also of the sciences. However, the dominance of English in the past four centuries has led to the use of English for the purposes of learning at all levels. Now, English is a major language of instruction and education throughout the world. It is a language of living in the sense that people who know English use it to earn their livelihood. For without communication skills in English, it is almost impossible to get (highly paid) jobs. The people earning low can enhance their earning capacity if they know a smattering of English.

Internet

English is the most widely used language on the Internet, as it has already been used in computers right from the beginning of the new technology. Hence, the 'I' in English can stand for the Internet, which is an unlimited source of information for its users. Along with the Internet came the facility of email and other new media of communication. In fact, David Crystal has discussed the extensive use of English on the Internet in his book, *Language and the Internet*. It is due to his years of meticulous study, a new branch of study called Internet Linguistics has emerged. He also talks about it seriously in his lecture on Internet Linguistics (Crystal 2009: 92–134). Of course, both English and the Internet are used for instruction too. Instruction gives not only information but also knowledge with which today's youth are able to get more income too.

Science and Success

English is the language of science throughout the world. One of the major reasons for the close connection between English and science is that the former can meet the demands of the latter in accurate descriptions of complex concepts and problems. Hence, Robert A. Day avers, "For scientists, English is virtually the only language" (emphasis in the original, p.10). He supports his claim by giving examples of research journals that use English. For instance, previously, the journal *Zentralblatt für Bakteriologie* used German. Now its title remains the same but its language is English. Similarly, *The Journal of Antibiotics*, though published from Tokyo, has English as its medium of communication. There is also an interesting case of the French journal *Annales de l' Institut Pasteur*, which

changed not only its title to 'Research in Immunology' but also its language to English. Moreover, books and all other forms of scientific and technical communication invariably take place in English.

It is generally agreed that those who have got some amount of English education have more chances of success in life than others. Success in education and then in employment often depends upon one's success in English. With success, of course, comes satisfaction, a sense of having achieved one's ambition. Hence, English is perceived as a language of success too.

Honour

We cannot deny the fact that mastery of English brings some prestige for the individual. Arundhati Roy received international recognition largely because of English in which she wrote her debut novel *The God of Small Things* and was, therefore, able to reach a wider readership. It was because of English language, which she chose to write in, that her novel was first considered and then awarded the Booker Prize. At a smaller scale, anyone having some acquaintance with English tends to command respect and immediate attention from others. This social status can be traced to the link between English and its use in mass media, administration, law and education (MALE). It is likely that English is a patriarchal language and so is intimately connected with power, which is both personal and political. The power associated with social status and honour need not necessarily be ethical though.

SUMMARY

Every language has a limit for its reach but English has none. Even if an individual's knowledge of English is limited, there is no limit to reaching out to the world at large. Whatever be the level of mastery over this international language, ENGLISH can be considered to stand for Empowerment, Novelty, Globalization, Learning, Internet, Science and Success and Honour. A user of English does not have to become a Joseph Conrad, who appropriated English as a third language for creative purposes to emerge as one of the greatest masters of English fiction. It is enough for most people to acquire a minimum level of English for a majority of purposes. Understanding the special characteristics of English, as discussed here, is useful for motivation to learn and subsequently for mobility to reach a higher level of life in society.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did English emerge as one of the major languages of the Internet?
2. How has the dominance of English affected other languages of the world?
3. How does a good command of English help today's youth in their career?
4. Why are creative writers whose first language is not English forced to use English for creative purposes?

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Chapter

2 | English Problems and Indian Solutions

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand the linguistic, social, and political problems caused by English in India
- Evaluate the solutions available to the stakeholders
- Know the suggestions for meeting the challenges posed by teaching and learning of English in India

The English language has lived in India ever since the days of the East India Company. The problems of teaching and learning English have, however, continued to pose further challenges. Firstly, it is a colonial legacy. Secondly, it is a post-colonial necessity. Hence, it is both a blessing and a burden.

No doubt English was a foreign language when it touched the shores of India and there was no problem. It then became a ruling language. Then also there was no problem. When it was dressed up in the cloak of the Associate Official Language, there were problems galore. Now we are reaping the harvests and perhaps our future generations will also face the problem. The basic problem is that we do not have a consistent and comprehensive language policy with reference to English. Probably, we cannot have one, given the sociocultural and historico-political climate.

▪▪ What are the Problems?

It is not easy to describe the status of English in India in unequivocal terms. All

figures of a language, including paradox and irony, run amok when we think of English education in India. On the one hand, the State and Central Governments are taking special and vigorous steps to localize the language of instruction, administration and mass media. On the other hand, they are giving recognition to more and more English medium schools and colleges, multinational companies and international communication networks. The learners, parents and employers, including government organizations, prefer English but the politicians and administrators legislate that English should not come in the way of obtaining degrees, including PhD, even in English language and literature. Teachers are appointed to teach English but they entertain or enfeeble the students in their mother tongue. Students of BA and MA in English literature are expected to become teachers of English language but they are deprived of a sound training in English Language Teaching. Of course, there is BEd for school teachers. There is a popular misconception that college and university teachers do not require any training. A Central Institute of English was established to nourish English but was expanded to contain foreign languages for its survival. A minister may decide that English is no longer needed and the English educated administrators will have to implement the policy sincerely. Whatever policies and practices are perpetuated, the worldly wise people will send their wards to the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada and Singapore for education, where they will become well versed in native English. Are these the consequential achievements of our political independence?

These are some of the interesting problems that need illuminating answers. Who will provide us these answers? Of course, teachers, students, school and college administrators, Boards of Studies/Examinations, parents, politicians and all the interested people at large will have to think together as well as shed the double standards about English. Let us not play with English any further. We have celebrated the Sixty-fourth year of our independence. We have entered globalized and liberalized markets the world over. Let us be honest with English, which has willy-nilly become a major symbol of contemporary India. It may be true that only 5% of the population of India uses English. But it is also true that a large number of people want to be English educated for practical necessity. Therefore, it is necessary to take appropriate steps to fulfil the dreams of the aspiring youth from every walk of life.

The Remedy

Let us see what everyone concerned can do. The English teachers need to become sincere and ask themselves how they can improve the English of their students. Among others, they can do so through distance mode certificate and diploma courses offered by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (now EFL University,) Hyderabad, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, and other universities throughout the country. While they keep

learning, the teachers may find some motivation for themselves, which they can surely pass on to their students. They can organize teacher groups and student groups to discuss the problems of language that they encounter.

The students can understand the importance of English in developing their job potential and social prestige. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* and *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* should be used by the students as often as possible (almost everyday). They should develop their reading habits not necessarily in Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Yeats, Eliot and their ilk. Closer home, we have many great novelists and short story writers such as R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Shashi Deshpande and Anjana Appachana. Besides, there are a wide variety of articles on different subjects in newspapers and magazines. The students should attend English classes regularly, do assignments and participate in several activities, which involve listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. Most importantly, they should stop memorizing select answers and start communicating in English. Unless they plunge into English, they cannot pass the test of life, even though they may get through the years one after another without interruptions.

The school/college administration ought to make an effort to appoint teachers who have not only a degree in English but also a good knowledge of the language. The English teachers should regularly enhance their skills. The administration must encourage the teachers to go out to participate in local, national and international academic activities. A library having an extensive collection of books of popular English writers would be of much help to the students as well as the teachers. It is necessary for a group of institutions to organize periodical workshops and training programmes for their teachers. The school/college administration should provide audio-visual aids. If possible, they should allot more hours for teaching English. They have to organize several programmes like debates, group discussions, essay writing, poetry reading, drama, public lectures and so on. In short, the administration should not be resistant to better English education, even if it means some extra effort. Let us inscribe the words of Swami Vivekananda on the corridors of learning everywhere: "No good thing can be done without obstruction. It is only those who persevere to the end that succeed."

The Boards of Studies/Examinations must look into the actual needs and interests of the students while they design the English syllabus. They should be prepared to go in for alternative materials as well as methods of teaching, examination and evaluation. They should undertake monitoring exercise and incorporate the feedback in successive syllabi.

The parents have a very important role to play in the English education of their children. They should help their wards buy the prescribed textbooks and other supplementary materials. They should desist from forcing their children to memorize answers to select questions and should discourage the students from

using guidebooks at home. They ought to take real pride in the real achievement of their children.

It is felt by different sections of the society that the actual pinpricks are our honourable politicians. If the politicians stop politicking with English and adopt a consistent and comprehensive language policy, several damaging problems will be overcome soon. Whether it is a language or an economic policy, honesty is the best policy. Let us remember this adage and rehearse it in our life instead of relaying it for others.

Our psychologists, sociologists, economists, historians and the community of social scientists need to open their eyes to the phenomenon of English Language Learning and Teaching in India. Researchers from various fields need to examine the phenomenon of English language teaching and learning in India in different environments and come out with viable solutions for effective teaching of English.

As we have moved into the 21st century, problems in English Language Teaching too have continued to proliferate but solutions are far from sight. There is an urgent need to understand the conflict between literary and functional English teaching. Now it has become a necessity to impart the language skills to our students. But it will not be successful without a sound knowledge of literature. For instance, functional English programs have not yielded the desired results. What will be the future of English as a vocation and as an avocation in India, time alone can tell. At best we can hope for additions to K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English* and M.K. Naik's *A History of Indian English Literature*. Our creative writers will continue to offer creative solutions. It is for all of us concerned to make the best use of them.

SUMMARY

English is a practical necessity in India and elsewhere. The problems due to this colonial legacy in the postcolonial context have to be understood in proper perspective. Lack of a clear language policy with reference to English has been a major stumbling block. Hence, all the stakeholders, including politicians, administrators, teachers, and students, have to put their heads together for evolving a sound policy and practice in order to have an international medium through English.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is English a blessing and a burden?
2. What are the consequences of an unclear language policy as far as English is concerned?

3. How can English teachers play their role more effectively than at present?
4. What are the responsibilities of the learners to achieve true mastery over English?
5. Why do conflicts arise between different kinds of English teachers and students?

Chapter

3

Impact of Globalization and Information Technology on English Teaching

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Comprehend the process of globalization and its impact on India and English
- Analyse the educational implications of globalization, especially English education
- Appreciate the responsibilities of English teachers in the global economy
- Know about the influence of information technology on English
- Learn about the development of computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

English in India is as old as the East India Company. It rose to prominence with the emergence of the British Raj and got fully institutionalized in the

educational sector in 1857 when the first three universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The position of English remained unaltered until the independence of India in 1947. Then, English became an Associate Official Language while Hindi and other national languages came to be promoted fervently. The national leaders believed that English would gradually be replaced in every sphere of life, including administration, education and mass media. However, the language has continued to weave its spell over the people. There have always been demand for more of English medium schools and colleges. Now that globalization has come to stay, English is drawing attention to itself afresh as a language worth learning for the abundant opportunities it provides for individual growth and development.

■■ Globalization

The concept of 'one world' was merely a utopia until the breathtaking revolutions in modern science and technology, especially in the field of communications. Of course, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world as one family) has been there in India since the times of Upanishads. But the history of human civilizations shows that each one developed independently. Contacts between civilizations were now and then established but they were mostly for imperialistic and aggressive purposes. The Hebraic and Hellenic civilizations were overshadowed by the Roman conquest as the Eastern civilizations were distorted by the Western colonization. After millions of years, the various countries of the world have converged to live in the real and the virtually real 'global village'.

Emergence of the UNO

The disastrous First World War compelled the world leaders to float a global organization, called the League of Nations, in 1920 for a safe and secure world. It, however, became defunct and could not prevent the Second World War. Then was established the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1945 for a peaceful, harmonious and cooperative world. The various organs of the UNO like the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and others have been working worldwide to achieve the aims and objectives of the UNO.

World Trade Organization

An offshoot of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO) has ushered in the economic

liberalization, market economy, stiff competition, quality products and services and so on. These are the salient features of the current globalization process. Most of the countries of the world have literally been forced to join this liberal economic venture after the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) was supplanted by the WTO. Of course, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), popularly known as the World Bank, have largely contributed to the successful establishment of the WTO. The main emphasis has been on opening up of all the markets of the world for free and unrestricted manufacturing and marketing of products and services. Consequently, the protected, nationalized and subsidized economy is being discouraged steadily, even though the state governments are caught between the Scylla of the World Bank and the Charybdis of their vote banks. The sail is not smooth but is expected to bring about changes for a better future.

Globalization of India

Today no country in the world, including India, can afford to isolate itself from the ongoing rapid process of globalization. Economic liberalization in India is over a two decade old phenomenon and a number of multinational companies have come into the country. Privatization of huge public sector undertakings has already taken place and Indian Airlines Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited, Gas Authority of India Limited, etc. are good examples of this process. Disinvestment from many public sector undertakings has been taking place steadily over the years. In due course of time, the university system is to be privatized. For example, the Government of Chhattisgarh has already permitted foreign universities to establish their study centres in the state. People have already begun to realize that resistance is of no use and utter disillusionment with over six decades of Indian Independence seems to be the propelling force behind many of the privatization initiatives.

As the advocates of globalization have pointed out, it is essentially a means of meaningful growth and development. India can enter the markets of other countries and others can have their markets in India as a result of which goods and services of international standards can be made available to the common people. Most of the unhealthy monopolized trade practices can be checked. The unproductive and unfeasible economic sectors will be compelled to arise from their long slumber. The people of all sections now realize that they have to work to earn their bread and not treat the customers nonchalantly.

There are also disadvantages of this globalization, especially for the poorer sections of society whose earning and buying capacity is considerably small. The small-scale industries have to face the challenges from the multinationals. India, the second most populated country in the world, will have to look after the food, shelter, clothing, health, education and employment of the illiterate and unskilled

people. In Professor Amartya Sen's words, "Indian economy has to be people-oriented as against the multinational economy, which is commodity-oriented". As a well-known industrialist from Tamil Nadu, Dr N. Mahalingam has emphasized, "Gandhian economic principles cannot be sacrificed, if the whole of India has to survive" (Mahalingam 1998: 5–6).

Whatever the consequences, India is very much in the thick of globalization. Even some of the sensitive sectors like telecommunications and defence have partially been thrown open to foreign direct investments.

Educational Implications

Globalization is not an easy rite of passage. It is a difficult and often painful process of realizing that one has to put up the very best for survival. Only the fittest can survive in the gruelling world of competing market forces. As the former Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Dr R.A. Mashelkar said while addressing the SNDT Women's University, Mumbai (Mashelkar 1998: 15): "The meaning of globalization, for a country in stark terms is a global competition and in a competitive world one who comes second is not good enough. One has to be at the top to count. The tool that will take a country to a pre-eminent position is knowledge. It gives the country the competitive edge." Clearly then, India cannot be successful in a globalized competitive world if it does not produce qualitative and profitable knowledge. Only capable and committed people, however, can produce knowledge. One Abdul Kalam is not enough for our country. We need several such great visionaries. At least the 'experts' passing out from the educational institutes should be able to understand and achieve the technological vision of Dr Kalam as outlined in *India 2020*.

There are hundreds of institutions in the country that are exclusively meant for research and development and churn out countless numbers of engineers, doctors, technologists, architects, information scientists and other professionals. They are expected to meet not only the scientific workforce requirements of the country but also the knowledge and technology needs. Most of them want to join the multinational companies and/or go abroad. Of course, there are exceptions, but those are in minority and helpless spectators to the pathetic show of self-destruction.

In an article titled 'Globalization: Imperatives for Indian Education Sector', Dr M. Mukhopadyay, a Senior Fellow at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, has discussed the middle class origins and collusions of globalization and argued that education has a 'determining role' in this process. The advantage India has in the globalized context is that its cost of production is less, but the disadvantage is that its quality of production is also low. This problem is applicable to all sectors, including education. He adds: "In the absence of minimum acceptable standards both in school, higher and

professional education, India loses out on quality of manpower." He laments that the Indian scientific manpower does not have the necessary 'knowledge, skills and scientific attitude' (Mukhopadyay 1997: 1). Most experts on education have shared these views in various forums. Then, quality education is the best tool to meet the challenges of globalization.

Politics with English

One of the major reasons for the mediocre quality of education in India is the absence of adequate attention to the medium of instruction. English was replaced by regional languages in some universities and was not given any importance in many others. At the same time, the efforts to produce textbooks and teachers in regional languages did not yield the desired results. However, the change of medium was justified quoting countries like Japan and China but forgetting the different situations in those countries.

In some states, English was withdrawn as a medium of instruction. However, it was brought back to the curriculum due to the persistent demand from the people. It is undeniable that English has been instrumental for some great personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Sir C.V. Raman and Amartya Sen in getting their Nobel Prizes. But for English, they might not have been able to get such recognition for themselves and for India. This kind of lackadaisical attitude towards English has affected higher education in general and English language learning and teaching in particular.

Frequent policy changes have also had an impact on recruitment of teachers, teacher development, material preparation and even the classroom situations. When the students know that they do not have to pass English to obtain their degrees, they do not bother attending classes, buying textbooks, or studying the subject. When the teachers see empty classrooms and indifferent students, demoralization is bound to set in. To rebuild the required educational environment is not an easy task. Once the teachers experience indifference, they may become indifferent themselves. The new recruits who are ill-equipped cannot do justice to their profession and may harm the students' interests. This is a vicious circle. There is an urgent need to break it at the earliest.

Responsibilities of the English Teachers

Whatever policies and practices the State and Central Governments may pursue and whatever the circumstances the teachers may be pushed down to, the English teachers have their responsibilities to the society. The strength of the teachers is that the whole Indian society has an unshakable faith in English to transform the students into better and more qualified citizens. Therefore, the English teachers have no cause to worry about their survival. Globalization has added more value to them than before. It must, however, be remembered that this value is largely

utilitarian. If the teachers deliver the goods, that is, enable the students to acquire adequate proficiency in English, they will continue to exercise this power. Thus, we can safely say that due respect has to be earned by sincere and dedicated service.

Impact of Information Technology

Globalization and information technology are two sides of the same coin. If globalization is the end, then information technology is the means to achieve that end. Today the whole world can be in one's palmtop. As a result, the impact of information technology can be felt everywhere—offices, factories, homes, educational institutions, hospitals, railway stations, airports, bus stations, restaurants, gift corners, grocery shops and so on. Information technology seems to be the master technology at present. Previously, science used to provide the base for technology. Now the roles seem to have been reversed, for no science can advance without the necessary technological base. Even the fine arts cannot flourish without technological props. A.R. Rahman's soulful songs speak volumes for the influence of technology on the common man. "The impact of the microprocessor on society may be as great as that of the automobile or electric light," says the President of the Indian Library Association, Mr P.N. Kaula (1996: 8). In such a technologically driven world, how can English teaching and learning take place successfully without adapting itself to the changing circumstances?

Computer-Assisted Instruction

Teaching aids in education have long been used. Conventional aids like blackboards, chalks, charts, pictures, textbooks, overhead projectors, slides, natural objects, etc. have been and still are being used by teachers to teach a particular subject. The computers, however, can be used by the students themselves without any intermediary. In tune with the paradigm shift in education from the teacher to the learner, the computers can provide individualized instruction to every student according to his or her ability. Most importantly, the students can interact with the computer in different ways—reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The multimedia computer has revolutionized the learning process to a great extent. It has made available virtual classrooms and virtual teachers. Though human teachers are needed, their role is limited in the case of a large number of students who are able to learn on their own with the help of technology. Even complex subjects can be learnt through computer languages and programmes like the modified PASCAL, LOGO (Logic Oriented Graphic Oriented), PILOT (Programming in Logic) and PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operation) and many others are employed to teach all kinds of subjects, including English. The Internet is widely accessible now and if the students know how to use a personal computer, they can easily learn anything. As technological

experiments are endless and rapid, more and more advanced systems are coming up frequently for Computer-Assisted Instruction.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Methods after methods have been designed and developed to teach English around the world in the past several years. None of them, however, seems to have emerged as the supreme method. In this maze of methods, the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) appears to have an edge over all others. The fact is that the computers can accommodate the strong features of many approaches. Srivastava (1994: 11–12) has reported about teaching Hindi to elementary school children in PLATO. There is a central computer to which a number of terminals are attached. The teacher, who is at the central computer, and the students at the terminals communicate constantly and simultaneously. According to Srivastava, CALL seems to be very useful for drill and practice and presentation of new items. An experiment with PLATO for language teaching in the USA has suggested a success rate of as much as 90 per cent improvement in the output of learners (Rao 1984: 448). Computer games also have good potential for language teaching. Rajaraman and Rajaraman (1991: 257–259) have discussed the usefulness of a game called ANAGRAM for improving the word power of children. CALL can be used for the degree level students, if adequate and challenging software materials are prepared.

CALL in India

It is encouraging to learn from an article of G. Damodar (1997: 88–97) entitled 'Microcomputer-Assisted Instruction in English (MIE)' that the experiments with CALL have been carried out in a few institutes like the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), the University of Hyderabad and the Regional College of Engineering (now National Institute of Technology), Warangal. Dr Damodar himself has prepared as many as 26 modules for learning English through computers. These modules cover almost all aspects of English, including letter drafting. Some of them may appear to be more useful to school students. However, they can be used by college students for remedial purposes or just for checking their knowledge of English. Interestingly, these programmes by Dr Damodar are specifically tailored to the needs of the Indian students. It is up to the teachers to use such programmes wherever the infrastructure facilities are available.

Beginning and Training

To begin with, the CALL programmes can be used freely for the students of information technology at the undergraduate level. Gradually, they can be extended to the science students in general. Lack of infrastructure is hardly an issue for these

two categories of students. The English teachers of these institutions will have to be trained to use CALL programmes and should not face any difficulty because computers in general are becoming more and more user-friendly. Teacher training programmes can very well be conducted by private institutions like National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), Aptech, First Computers, and so on. Such a step will be necessary for these times of globalization. Quality with cost-effective training can be given to teachers in this way.

Prospects

Perhaps the general arts colleges will have difficulty in providing the right infra-structure for this purpose. In due course of time, however, most of the educational institutions are likely to be equipped with computers as the State and Central Governments have realized the significance of information technology. The Government of Tamil Nadu, for instance, established an apex institution, called Tamil Nadu Institute of Information Technology (TANITEC), to train a large number of professionals in harnessing the benefits of information technology for the State of Tamil Nadu, though it was merged with Anna University at a later stage. Besides, the Government of Tamil Nadu has an ambitious plan of achieving total computer literacy in another ten years (Aludiapillai 1998: 7). Similarly, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has collaborated with L&T Infocity to build the Hyderabad Information Technology Engineering Consultancy City, known as Hi Tech City.

Hopefully, the State Governments will extend the benefits of information technology to all their educational institutions. Though the Central Government is late in introducing the wonders of technology to the people, three specific schemes have been announced recently:

(a) Vidyarthi Computer Scheme
(b) Shikshak Computer Scheme
(c) School Computer Scheme

It has also established a chain of Indian Institute of Information Technology across the country. The University Grants Commission and other Central agencies have contributed enormously to the colleges and universities to set up computer centres. The future looks bright and the teachers of English have to keep themselves ready for the show.

SUMMARY

If globalization is an economic process, then information technology is a communication process. Both of them have come to affect all aspects of human life throughout the world. Education, including English Language Learning and Teaching, is not an exception. Computers can help improve the standard of English and enable the students of today and the professionals of tomorrow

to live competitively in the globalized world. The teachers of English can use the programmes developed by the leading institutes like the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (now EFL University) and by experts like G. Damodar. While some of the well-established and self-financing professional institutions may be able to establish the infrastructure, the rest will have to depend on the generosity of the State and Central Governments. Some of the Governments in States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have already started taking the necessary steps. The teachers of English will have to realize the new significance the language has gained the world over and help their students achieve good command over English through the multimedia computer in tune with the advances in globalization and technology.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did globalization affect the world at large?
2. What are the educational implications of globalization?
3. What is the need for a consistent language policy?
4. How has information technology influenced the teaching and learning of English?
5. How has CALL become popular in India?

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Chapter 4

Technology-Enabled Language Learning

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Distinguish between first- and second-language learning
- Explain the positive and negative dimensions of technology in language learning
- Recognize the difficulties with methods in language learning
- Appreciate the real value of Internet-based technologies in language learning

Learning, that too continuous learning, is a typical human characteristic. Language learning is all the more a human-specific activity. Learning a second or third language with the help of technology is common today across the globe. A major field of technology in language learning is Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This chapter presents some of the interesting facets of technology-enabled learning of a language, especially learning a second language, synoptically, suggestively and critically.

▨ Technology

Derived from the Greek word *technologia*, technology means a systematic treatment of an art or a craft. This is true in case of the older versions of technology, available before the sixteenth century. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent, more powerful, Electronic Revolution, technology has

moved from a mere craft to large enterprises of mining, huge buildings, long bridges, railroads, airports and recently to miniature entertainment and communication systems like radio, television, camcorder, laptops, iPods, mobile phones and iphones. These forms of technology have made inroads into the process of education in general and language education in particular, though with varying degrees of success.

Human Language

Language, human language, to be precise, is a means of communication among human beings for fulfilling their emotional, social and intellectual needs. Though it is an invented and arbitrary social system, human beings are able to learn and use their native or first language effortlessly. Even education in the first language is not problematic unless there are some other emotional, physical or social constraints.

Second Language (L2) Learning

When it comes to learning a second or foreign language like English, however, innumerable and intimidating problems arise. Even here, if the motivation in the learner is intrinsic and strong and if the environment is conducive to learning, the success rate is very high. Joseph Conrad, the famous British novelist, is a case in point. He was born in Poland with Polish as his first language. He learnt French as his second language for survival as he was working for French ships. Later, he moved to British ships and learnt English again for survival. It is this third language that he chose to use for his creative purpose of writing novels and stories. Such a writer is considered to be a great British novelist by the British people. Closer home, there is R.K. Narayan. His mother tongue is Tamil and his second language is Kannada. But, like Conrad, he also used English for creative expression. He has come to represent a long line of great Indian writers writing in English. It is with learners who have less motivation and inadequate opportunities that the problem of unsuccessful language learning is acute.

Difficulties with Methods

The traditional solutions to the challenges of learning a second language have not met with commendable success. Hence, all kinds of efforts have been made to enable L2 learners acquire a language of communication, education, employment, travel, business and so on. Anything that appears to produce positive results finds a place, sometimes a prominent place, in second language learning. That is how methods after methods, including the more technology-oriented ones, have stepped into the second or foreign language curriculum.

Audio-Lingual Method

Tape recorders, radio, television, video cassette recorder, overhead projector, film projector and many other technological aids have found favour with language educators all over the world. Thus, the audio-lingual method came up with its language lab and drilling practices to reinforce learning. The novelty of these teaching aids and the enthusiasm of some experts could not sustain for long. What started with fanfare ended up in failure. These aids did not provide for the learning of social and communicative proficiency required in L2 learners universally. Even the so-called communicative approaches to language teaching could not meet the real demands of developing communication skills in learners.

Computer and Multimedia

It is at this juncture that the computer with its multimedia applications in both stand-alone and networked environments began to invade the language classrooms. Actually, these technological developments in the communications field have helped bring about a major shift in the educational paradigm from the teacher-centred education to a more learner-centred learning. The individual and personal needs of the learners, depending upon their ability, time and convenience, have gained more attention than those of the educators. These needs could not be met by a single teacher in the conventional classroom with a textbook and the blackboard. Hence, supplementary materials in the form of CDs and DVDs with projectors and computers began to dominate the second language education. The computer and the software industry and not the students and teachers, began to influence the process of learning the second language.

The Internet

The most dramatic version of technology to have captured the imagination of learners is the Internet with its vast resources of learning. The World Wide Web is a vast treasure house of audio, video, textual and interactive material for learning any language in the world and there are thousands of websites offering a variety of services for mastering English with or without payment. Particularly, the global English language has plenty of websites for both teachers and students. A wonderful example of this is the website www.EnglishClub.com, a free site for learning English. Another free and useful website is www.usingenglish.com. The other dimensions of the Internet, such as email, chat, discussion boards, webinars and blogs, are being used as newer forms of communication technology. All these are being made available, in multimedia/communication/language labs in many educational institutions as part of the curriculum, though the success rate of learning a second language in such a manner is yet to be proved conclusively.

Commercial Software

Undoubtedly, the Internet and language learning software packages are promising modes of learning for the students. But there seems to be a kind of coercion from the market forces to incorporate technology into language learning. Before a piece of software is fully exploited for learning, newer versions and totally new forms of software are ready to replace the old ones. Many a time, the computers also need to be replaced or updated to accommodate new software. Therefore, it has become important to analyse the cost benefit of the investment for a fast-changing technology and less flexible teachers and learners. In this context, an experiment at Tamkang University in Taiwan (Wible, et al. 2000) is worth mentioning. A team of linguists and information engineers has designed a program called Intelligent Web-based Interactive Language Learning (IWiLL). This has been created specifically to suit the needs of the Taiwanese students by their teachers. If this kind of need-based technology input is infused into second language learning, technology-enabled language learning will be much more meaningful than what it is today.

GALL and MALL

Another very important aspect of technology in language learning is the students. They have to use the technology at their own pace according to their ability and convenience. This appears possible in two interesting methods: GALL and MALL. GALL is Google-Assisted Language Learning (Chinnery 2008) and MALL is Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (Chinnery 2006). Today, students create email accounts with Google very easily and without any cost. They also have easy access to mobile devices like laptop and cell phones. These devices are profitably used for commercial purposes by private and even government organizations. For instance, information is given to the public via mobile phones about various things. Pulse Polio Programme announcement through cell phones is a case in point. If the government can do this for the public, educational institutions can also surely help the second language learners with a wide variety of language inputs through which the students can learn on their own. In the GALL and MALL technology, the learners plunge into communication directly. They learn the language, gain confidence and grow proficient in the language gradually. For effective use of technology, both the teachers and the learners have to keep an open mind. They have to accept and assimilate technology for a truly technology-enabled language learning to take place.

Anna University Experiments

Some of the experiments done at Anna University, Chennai, in this direction include submission of assignments to the teacher through email, participation of students in a group discussion for Anna FM Radio, use of computers and LCD

projectors in the classrooms for PowerPoint presentations and film shows followed by discussions. Also, the use of laptop for playing audio files for listening tasks, creating group email addresses for the entire class for communication among the learners, including the teacher, and recent creation of blogs for three classes by students. An interesting blog to follow is www.manufacturing2007.blogspot.com. Very recently, some students started sending a word a day to their selected classmates through Short Messaging Service (SMS). A much more technology-enabled language learning can and will take place in the future for there is no limit to technology today.

SUMMARY

The potential of use of technology in language learning is immense. Any technology that helps the learner anywhere is welcome. But teachers and students should be wary of the tall claims made by people with vested interests. Commercially produced software should be used with caution. However, what is useful to successful second language learning like the Internet, web pages, email, blogs and mobile devices should be made use of in tune with the changing high-tech generation of learners.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do we learn our first/native language?
2. Why is the success rate poor in English as second-language learning in India?
3. How could teachers and students use appropriate technology for language learning?
4. What are the consequences of commercializing language learning and teaching?
5. How far have you used different kinds of technology for learning and/or teaching English?

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Chapter
5

The 'Crux' of Teaching English with Technology

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Interpret technology as a tool for and subject of language learning
- Evaluate the effectiveness of using technology as a subject for language learning
- Evolve a method of teaching English using the ABC approach
- Learn how to involve all students in the learning process

English has been taught using so many approaches, methods and techniques for a long time now. The teaching of the language with technology is closely associated with the use of aids like tape recorder, radio, television, film, overhead projector and recently the computer with all its accessories like the LCD projector and the Internet. These teaching aids do have their place in any learning, especially language learning. However, there is another aspect to using technology as content for language teaching in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in most technical institutions, including the National Institute of Technical Teacher Education and Research at Bhopal, Chennai, Chandigarh and Kolkata and the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad. Such an approach within the communicative language teaching (CLT) framework has been practised at Anna

University since 1988. It uses engineering and technology related content for teaching English to engineers and technologists in the first two semesters of the BE/BTech programme.

The meaning of 'Crux': Differing Connotations

A simple question from a student regarding the meaning of the 'crux' prompted the author to think about a model of the two wheeler company, Yamaha Crux. This occasion offered scope for going beyond the use of technology in a laboratory to a real-life situation. What follows then is a brief description of an absorbing classroom activity around the topic of two wheeler companies and their various models in India.

One day a student asked for the meaning of the word 'crux' as is used in the following sentence: 'The crux of the matter is training. Without adequate training, the Indian industry cannot progress.' It occurs in the first volume of *English for Engineers and Technologists*. Of course, the teacher gave a simple synonymous meaning like essence. At the same time, he saw an opportunity for relating the word to the automobile industry, especially two wheelers. He asked the students first to prepare an ABC of motorbikes of all brand names and companies. The students wrote all that they knew on the blackboard one after another. The list became pretty long, as can be seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 *ABC of Motorbikes*

Ambition	Champ	FX 2	Kawasaki
Activa	Champion	Fiero	Kinetic Honda
Adreno	Chetak	Freedom	LML
Bajaj	Classic	GLX	Lambi
Boss	Chroma	Harley Davidson	Libero
Boxer	Crux	Hero Honda	Luna
Bullet	Dio	Hero Puch	Max 100
CBZ	Eliminator	Hoodibaba	McLaren
CD 100	Enfield	Hero Smart	M80
CD Dawn	Eterno	Jaguar	Ninja
Caliber	Enticer	Java	Nova
Centigo	Excel	Joy	Passion
Challenger	Explorer	Karizma	Pep

(*Contd.*)

Pride	Scotia	Sunny	Wind
Pulsar	Silver Plus	Suzuki	XL Super
Rx 100	Sleek	Thunder	Yamaha
Rx 135	Spice	Trendy	YBX
Rajdoot	Spirit	TVS	Yezdi
Rove	Splendor	TVS 50	Zing
Saffire	Sports	Velocity	Zip
Samurai	Street	Vespa	Zoom
Scooty	Style	Victor	

After the students listed as many as over eighty models of motorbikes, the teacher told them to classify the models into different categories according to their companies, which is given in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 *Two Wheeler Companies and Their Models*

Hero Honda	Chroma	RX 135
Ambition	Eliminator	YBX
CBZ	Hoodibaba	**LML**
CD 100	Karizma	Adreno
CD Dawn	Kawasaki	Chetak
Dio	M80	Eterno
Honda Street	Pulsar	Freedom
Joy	Rove	Lambi
Passion (Plus)	Sleek	Vespa
Pride	Spice	Enfield
Splendor (Plus)	Spirit	Bullet
Bajaj	Wind	Rajdoot
Boss	**Yamaha**	Silver Plus
Boxer	Crux	Thunder 350
Caliber	Enticer	**Kinetic Honda**
Challenger	Libero	Activa
Classic	RX 100	Nova

(*Contd.*)

Saffire	Champ	**Others**
Scotia	Excel	Java
Velocity	Fiero	Yezdi
Zing	Pep	Mc Laren
Zoom	Scooty	Harley Davidson
Suzuki	Spire	FX 2
Max 100	Sports	Hero Puch
Samurai	Sunny	Ninja
TVS	Super	Luna
50	Trendy	Jaguar
Centigo	Victor (GLX)	Zip

How the Activities Benefit the Students

These two activities gave the students enough scope and encouragement to write an essay with a minimum of three paragraphs on The Race of Bikes in India. The teacher also asked the students to focus on the competition among these companies to produce and promote new models now, and hold onto the customer base that they had built up over the years. The students wrote very interesting and informative essays, of which some were very good while the others were poor in terms of selection and organization of content and the use of language. Nevertheless, it was a wonderful opportunity for the students to involve themselves in writing an extended piece of discourse. The whole impromptu activity was completed within an hour and came out well to the satisfaction of the students and the teacher.

It is interesting to note that a few common features emerged from the student activities. The students were enthusiastic to come to the board and write the names of the models they knew. If a student spelled a name wrong or gave the wrong identification of a company, other students willingly helped them out. Above all, every one was happy in the class as each one had some matter to write about. Even those who came from regional medium schools were able to write not only about the growth of TVS company products but also about Hero Honda and Bajaj brands, including the recent models like Hoodibaba and Victor GLX.

The whole exercise was successful primarily because the students knew about the motorbike industry and interested in it as the users of two wheelers. The girl students were not an exception as they could equally participate in all activities. The crucial hour of crux became a memorable class for all. The crux of teaching English with technology, then, is not so much using various technological devices like tape recorders, televisions, overhead projectors, computers or

LCD projectors, but initiating student responses to given contexts in all possible communicative ways to develop their communication skills further.

SUMMARY

Teaching English to students of engineering and technology can be made meaningful by a creative use of technology as a subject in the classroom. The real life knowledge of students and their involvement in learning are much more powerful than any technology. An impromptu exercise in the class using students' knowledge of two wheelers has proved that the collective endeavour of the students under the guidance of the teacher is the best form of language learning.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What technological tools do you use in teaching English?
2. Which is your favourite tool? Why?
3. Why are some teachers of English not comfortable with technology?
4. How can a creative teacher of English go beyond the curricular framework to teach English profitably?
5. How will you involve all students in the learning process?

Chapter

6

Quotations for Motivation in the ESL Classroom

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Perceive the role of motivation in language learning
- Understand quotations and their uses in motivation
- Explain the pedagogical implications of quotations for language learning
- Learn to experiment with quotations through everyday use and assignments

Most teachers of English in India would agree that to motivate their students to learn English is a Herculean task. Many students do not buy textbooks and notebooks. Even if they do, they may not bring them to their classes. Some of the students may not even attend classes regularly. Under such circumstances, an English teacher's life is unenviable. Some teachers use their ingenuity and others their authority and somehow manage hour after hour and year after year.

■■■ Importance of Motivation

The first step in tackling the lack of motivation in students is that the teachers

need to understand and appreciate the role and importance of motivation in any learning. In the context of second language learning, William Littlewood (1987: 53) observes:

"In second language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the critical force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres. It is a complex phenomenon and includes many components: the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation and new experience, and so on. These factors play a role in every kind of learning situation."

The teacher has to activate these motivational components in the students. But herein lies the precise problem: How can this be done in every class everyday?

What is a Quotation?

An interesting and useful way of motivating students is the use of a quotation a day in the classroom. What is a quotation and how can it be used then? A quotation is a pithy and profound statement that can be cited by a speaker or a writer to convey his ideas effectively. Jacob M. Braude (1994: 19) comments on quotations as follows:

"Many people sprinkle their everyday conversation with quotations. These familiar sayings answer a special need of orators and statesmen, who search for quotations with which they drive home a point or sum up their speeches. Often the fruit of many years' study is brought together into a single sentence, and nothing adorns a composition or speech better than a fitting quotation. It backs up one's own beliefs. At the same time, it shows that those beliefs have been shared by other minds."

Undoubtedly, quotations have several uses for the learner of a language. It is the responsibility of the teacher to draw the attention of students to the beauty and benefits of quotations. Clearly then both language and content are important in every quotation, especially for use in the ESL classroom.

Quotations on Language

The teacher who has to teach English language through some worthwhile content has no better resource for motivation than catchy quotable quotes. A famous quotation by Joseph Conrad, who adopted English as his third language and became a great story teller in English is: "Give me the right word and the right context, I will move the whole world." Another excellent example of effective quotation is a profound saying by Ludwig Wittgenstein, a pre-eminent philosopher: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." Conrad was a Pole and Wittgenstein was an Austrian but their quotations on the possibilities of

language are greatly useful to motivate the students and thus get them interested in English language.

Daily Quotations

A one-hour long motivation exercise peppered with a couple of quotes shall not suffice. The motivation generated in the students has to be sustained for a long period of time, say a semester or a year but ideally for whole life. That is where a quotation a day comes handy. To begin with, the teacher can give quotations for a few days and influence the students to expect a quotation a day. Then, the teacher can identify a student or a group of students to undertake the task of collecting and writing the quotations on the notice board every day for the whole semester or year.

Pedagogic Uses of Quotations

It is possible that this exercise can become monotonous and mechanical. However, the teacher can bring life to these quotations with his relevant comments on the quotations. In fact, if the teacher has adequate linguistic sensibility, he can use the quotations to teach synonyms, antonyms, sentence structures, pronunciation of words and a host of other aspects of a language. These are not unfounded imaginary claims and can actually be put into practice in a classroom.

Dr Johnson and the Language Teacher

The great Dr Samuel Johnson made use of quotations in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1775) and ushered in a new dimension to dictionary making. He reasoned in his preface to the dictionary thus: "Every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language" (Partington, 1996: 367). Similarly, for a language teacher, every quotation contributes something to the teaching and learning of the target language. Also, in the words of Isaac D' Israeli, the teacher brings "the wisdom of the wise and the experience of ages" to the young students as signposts for their life.

Anna University Experience

The author had been using quotations sporadically to motivate the students for quite a long time. He began employing quotations systematically for the first year second semester students of BE Electrical and Electronics Engineering (CD Batch), College of Engineering, Anna University, Chennai, during December 2002–April 2003. Initially, the teacher gave the quotes for a few days. Thereafter, he assigned the task to a particular student who was also asked to keep a record of the activities, including the comments from the teacher, in a separate notebook. The result has been satisfactory for both the teacher and those taught.

Inspirational Quotations

Here are a few inspirational quotations, which are sure to be useful to the students and to every person for that matter:

1. "Vision is the art of seeing things invisible to others."

—Jonathan Swift

2. "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows."

—Helen Keller

3. "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver a few minutes longer."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

4. "Two simple rules for life: Know Thyself: Take nothing in excess."

—Socrates

5. "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

—Albert Einstein

The teacher can share the writings of these authors with the students and inspire them to set goals for themselves in life and achieve them against all odds.

Compose Your Own Quotations

The teacher can himself/herself compose quotations to inspire the students. We show below how some quotations inspire us to frame our own quotations:

1. "The ultimate aim of life is to get acquainted with truth."
   Framed quotation: "If you are alert to your purpose, you won't alter it."
2. "Honesty once pawned is never redeemed."

—Thomas Middleton

Framed quotation: "If a man does not hesitate to pawn his property, he may pawn his own person."
3. "The only good is knowledge and the only evil is ignorance."
   Framed quotation: "Ignorance is not so much an evil as irresponsibility is."

The framed sentences show a way to the students for their own meaningful play with words.

Assignment for the Students

As only one student was writing the quotations on the board every day, the teacher thought of a plan to get all students actively interested in quotations. Therefore, he gave an assignment on quotations to all students. Each student was asked to collect at least thirty quotations of their choice based on a theme or in an assorted way. The teacher was happy to see topics like leadership, education, wisdom, success, proverbs, ability, imagination, character, life, man and mankind, happiness, habit, religion, humility, self-confidence, women, beauty, love, courage, friendship, knowledge, justice, belief, creativity, death amongst many

others. One student prepared a list of websites, which have resources for quotations, wise sayings, aphorisms and so on, in addition to his thirty quotations.

Here is a selection from the assignments submitted by the students.

1. "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart."   —Mencius
2. "Success does not come to you. You go to it."   —Marwa Collins
3. "Adversity introduces a man to himself."
4. "Do not push the river; it will flow by itself."
5. "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."   —Aristotle
6. "Wisdom is knowledge which has become a part of one's being."
7. "Be your own friend and others will befriend you."
8. "All our knowledge brings us nearer to ignorance."   —T.S. Eliot
9. "A candle loses nothing of its light by lighting another candle."
10. "The greatest risk in life is not taking a risk."   —Sabeer Bhatia
11. "Truly respecting others is the bedrock of motivation."   —Dale Carnegie
12. "The woman cries before the wedding and the man after."
                                                        —A Polish Proverb
13. "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."   —Nelson Mandela
14. "Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome."   —Dr Samuel Johnson
15. "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."   —Albert Einstein

The quotations included here will help both teachers and students. First, the teachers have to realize that these words of wisdom and inspiration have enough potential for exploitation in a classroom. Next, they can implement this strategy as soon as possible. From informal interactions with colleagues, it is learnt that they find it an interesting and practical idea. It is hoped that many others will also adopt this technique to motivate themselves and their students for joyful and meaningful English classes.

SUMMARY

The problem of lack of motivation in the ESL classroom can be overcome, among others, by the use of inspirational quotations on the board every day. The experience at the College of Engineering, Anna University, gave ample scope for motivating the students both intrinsically and extrinsically. The students would surely find the quotations useful in their speaking and writing. They can be intrinsically motivated through some guidance by the teachers coupled with moral values. These moral values and linguistic skills are necessary for their personality development without which none of them can become an efficient professional, let alone leaders and communicators. Consequently, the task of

motivating the students becomes easier for the teacher who can teach the lessons hour after hour and year after year with pleasure and profit.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are your favourite quotations? List at least ten of them.
2. What are the uses of quotations for life?
3. How can English teachers use quotations for teaching English?
4. Why is Dr Johnson remembered today? Give as many reasons as possible.
5. How can learners become authors of their own quotations?

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Chapter

7 ‖ The '5 S' Approach to Vocabulary Development

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Know the common methods of learning English vocabulary
- Understand the five basic elements of a word
- Realize the value of vocabulary in second language learning
- Grasp the significance of word roots and their meanings

Ever since humans started learning languages consciously, they have continued to find newer methods to acquire as large a vocabulary as possible. In foreign and second language learning, such methods have found favour with both teachers and students in tune with the changes in theory and practice of language teaching over the years. Synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, affixation and translation are some of the most common methods for learning more number of words. In this chapter, an attempt is made to outline a practical approach to learning English vocabulary for communication, which may be called the 5S approach as it deals with the five S—sight, sound, source, sense and syntax—of words.

■■ Sight

The *sight of a word* refers to its appearance to the eyes of a learner. In other words, sight may be understood as the shape, structure or form of a word. The letters of the alphabet have different sights. Some of them like 'A', 'I' and 'X' may have their individual meanings: one, pronoun, something unknown, respectively. When two or more than two letters join, they tend to make meanings, of course, in a limited way. But the combination of letters seems to have certain patterns, which can be identified by the students. The teacher can play a positive role in drawing the students' attention to the patterns for easy learning, storing and recalling of words. Take 'sight' for instance. Replace 's' with other letters to get words like 'fight', 'light', 'might', 'night', 'right', 'tight'. Now, replace 's' with two or three letters and you get words like 'alight,' 'blight,' 'flight', 'plight', 'slight', 'aright', 'bright', 'fright', 'delight', 'tonight'. The restrictions in such replacements are obvious. It is clear that a word like 'kight' cannot be made but 'knight' is possible or even 'kite', though it has a different appearance. All these common words, if brought together in terms of sight, are useful to the learners in getting to know the similar structures and their associates.

Sound

The *sound of a word* means the way in which the word is pronounced. In other words, how it is said in speech is its sound. As in the case of sight, sounds too have their individual and collective values. The 24 consonants and the 20 vowels (12 pure and 8 diphthongs) make up the English sounds. These phonemes have their own unique ways of combining with each other. Such combinations can be brought to the students' notice. For example, the word 'sound' has the following phonemic value: /saund/. If 's' is substituted by other sounds, we arrive at words like bound, found, hound, mound, pound, round, wound and ground. If the vowel /au/ is changed to /æ/, sand is derived. The final sound /nd/ may be changed to get other words like south, souse. Thus, it is seen that change in sounds leads to other words. When the sight and sound of words are combined, differences in pairs of words like wound (n) and wound (v) or read (v) and reed (n) can be easily understood. 'Wound' as a noun means injury and it can also be used as verb with the same meaning. However, 'wound' as verb is the past and past participle form of 'wind.' This pair is a case of homograph: the words look alike but sound different. The second pair is a case of homophone: the words sound alike but look differently. In any case, each word has its own meanings.

Source

English is a heterogeneous language in the sense that it gets a majority of its words from other languages of the world. Therefore, when the students learn

a word, it is necessary for them to go to the origin of the word, that is, the etymology of the word. For example, take the word 'source.' It means origin and it has its immediate origin in the Middle English word *sours*, but it has come from the Latin word '*surgere*' meaning 'to spring up' via the old French word *sors*. Most words in English have etymological patterns like this and it is good for the students to learn as many of them as possible. This practice helps students see the connection between source and surge as the latter also has its origin in the Latin word *surgere* with the same root meaning.

Sense

Every word has a sense—a meaning. In most cases, words have many meanings. Whether it is the denotation or the connotation, words are learnt to mean, to communicate ideas and opinions. If the meanings of words are not learnt, then there is no meaning in learning of words. Consider the meaning of 'sense'. There are more than twenty meanings of the word. Most prominent of these are the five main faculties—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Some of the other meanings are awareness, soundness of mind, wisdom, general feeling or general meaning. In this paragraph, 'sense' refers to meaning. All these meanings are derived from the Latin root *sentire*, which means to feel. This kind of sensitivity to words shows that 'sentence' is also from the same root. It is very interesting to look at the following group of words: 'absent', 'assent', 'consent', 'dissent', 'present' and 'resent'. 'Assent' is a synonym for 'consent' and vice versa. Similarly, 'dissent' is an antonym for 'assent' and vice versa. The sense(s) of a word then lead(s) to the root sense of many words, which as a group is easy to learn and remember.

Syntax

Words are rarely used in isolation, for they are almost always used in sentences. Therefore, it is imperative to learn how words combine with one another to convey meanings. Special attention needs to be paid to phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions. Also, which words collocate with each other requires close study. For example, 'put' and 'on' have separate meanings individually. But 'put on' as a phrasal verb has quite a different meaning: to wear. Similarly, 'skin someone alive' does not mean 'remove the skin of someone'. The idiom means to criticize or to rebuke. In the ESL context, phrasal verbs and idioms may be rather problematic but this has to be overcome sooner or later. What is more important is knowledge of how words behave in conjunction with other words in sentences. Take, for instance, the sentence 'The earth revolves around the sun.' To describe the movement of the earth around the sun, 'revolve' is the verb that is commonly used. 'Rotate' or 'circulate' is usually not preferred. Similarly, there are some verbs that take two objects while others take only one

and there are some that do not take any object at all. There are several such restrictions involved in the syntax of words, that is putting words together in order (*syn*—together; *tassern*—to put in order, Greek).

Application of the 5S Approach

The 5S approach to vocabulary development is concerned with the Sight, Sound, Source, Sense and Syntax of words. Invariably, words are examined and learnt in groups in three distinct ways: the root, prefix and suffix. Where a vocabulary activity starts or ends is immaterial. But somewhere some beginning has to be made and once begun, the activity continues for long. The basic point to be noted is that every word is related to every other word in wonderful ways. This lexical interrelation is an abiding source of inspiration and motivation for learners to keep on learning more about words in meaningful ways.

Root Words

Obviously, every word has a root—the route to which the students have to discover. Also known as stem, the root is an independent word without any prefix or suffix. The root of 'root', for example, is the Anglo-Saxon word '*rot*'. Consider the word 'vocabulary', whose Latin root *vocare* means 'to call'. This root is found in a number of words: 'vocal', 'vocalic', 'vocalism', 'vocalist', 'vocalize', 'vocally', 'vocation', 'vocative', 'vociferates', 'vociferous', etc. The same root can also be seen in words like 'avocation', 'convoke', 'convocation', 'convoker', 'evoke', 'evocation', 'evocative', 'invoke', 'invocation', 'invocatory', 'invocate', 'provoke', 'provocation', 'provoker', 'provocative', 'revoke', etc. Thus, the initial sight and sound of the word vocabulary, *voca* with the common root of *vocare*, connect and evoke all other similar words. Though each word has a different meaning in various contexts, any one familiar with the word 'vocation' can see its relation to words like 'avocation', 'evocation', 'invocation', 'provocation', 'revocation' and their various forms. Without this root knowledge, it is difficult for many students to see the relationship between 'vocabulary' and 'convocation'.

Prefix

Fixing a dependent unit to a word at its beginning is called prefixing. A linguistic unit prefixed in this manner is called a prefix. There are many such prefixes in the English language, though some of them are from other languages, especially Latin and Greek. For example, 'pre' is a prefix in the word 'prefix', which means 'fixed before'. Now, take the Greek prefix 'para' for scrutiny. Actually, there are two prefixes with the same spelling. The first prefix has six meanings: (i) alongside, beside such as in parathyroid, (ii) beyond such as in parapsychology, (iii) resembling such as in paramilitary, (iv) auxiliary such as in paramedical,

(v) abnormal such as in paraesthesia and (vi) in chemical compounds like para-xylene. Basically, the root meaning of 'para' in all these cases is 'alongside'. The second meaning of 'para' is protection or defence against the specified thing as in 'parachute' and 'parasol'. These two prefixes are found in a number of words: 'parable', 'parabola', 'paradigm', 'paradise', 'paradox', 'paragon', 'paragraph', 'parallel', 'parameter', 'paranoia', 'paraphrase', 'paraplegia', 'parade', 'paragliding', 'paramedic', 'parasailing', 'paratroops', etc. In some words 'para' need not be a prefix at all: for example, 'paramount' and 'paramour'.

Suffix

Like prefix, suffix is also a dependent unit but it is placed at the end of an independent root word. The '–ing' in 'suffixing' is a suffix. Suffix is a very powerful tool for vocabulary development. Look at some words ending in 'dom': 'boredom', 'dukedom,' 'freedom', 'kingdom', 'officialdom', 'stardom' and 'wisdom'. This suffix refers to a state or rank or an area ruled or a character-istic. It usually forms a noun from verbs, adjectives or other nouns. But there are two words, in which 'dom' does not feature as a suffix. They are 'seldom' and 'random'. While the former is an adverb meaning rarely, the latter is an adjective meaning irregular. The first is derived from *seldem*, an Anglo-Saxon word and the second from a French word *randir*, meaning 'to gallop'. There are a number of suffixes like '–ology' '–ist', '–cide' and '–ance' for which long lists of words can be prepared by the students themselves with the help of their dictionaries.

A Combined Effort

When the roots, prefixes and suffixes of the words are combined through the 5S approach, an interesting and illuminating aspect of vocabulary development appears. For instance, the Latin root *dicere* meaning 'to say' in 'addiction', 'benediction', 'contradiction', 'diction', 'dictionary', 'dictator', 'dictation', 'dictaphone', 'dictum', 'edict', 'indictment', 'interdict', 'prediction', 'predicate', 'predicament', etc. Further, take the prefix 'bene' meaning good and see the word 'benediction', which then means good saying, that is, a blessing. There are many words with 'bene' as a prefix: 'benefaction', 'benefice', 'beneficiary', 'benef-icent,' 'benedict,' etc. Now, let us consider words like 'beneficent', 'deficient', 'efficient', 'munificent', 'proficient', 'insufficient', etc. These words have the suffix '-ent' and the Latin root *facere* in common. Surprisingly, the same root is seen in 'edifice', 'office', 'orifice', etc. In this way, the students can be guided from word to word with pleasure and profit. At any point in this chain of lexical learning, the teacher can draw the attention of the students to how the words are used in sentences.

Advantages of the 5S Approach

This 5S approach to vocabulary development has certain distinct advantages. Both the teachers and the students have to use their dictionaries constantly. As the teacher and the students help one another in locating words, there is a spirit of co-operative learning in a non-threatening environment. The students are able to see the close relation between words in terms of Sight, Sound, Source, Sense and Syntax. This knowledge of the relationships between words facilitates further and faster learning. Above all, words are learnt in meaningful and interesting groups.

SUMMARY

In the context of learning English as foreign and second language, the 5S approach to vocabulary development offers a practical method for acquiring as large a vocabulary of English for communication as possible. As discussed, the 5S's are the Sight, Sound, Source, Sense and Syntax of words. Every word has a shape, a pronunciation, an origin, a meaning and a sentential behaviour. When students learn words from these angles in combination with their roots, prefixes and suffixes, a vast panorama of wonderful lexical connections, both overt and covert, emerges before the learners. As there are limitless possibilities for lexical relationships, there is a wide and meaningful scope for mastering English in a brief period. With this enriched and enduring mastery of English, the students will hopefully become effective communicators in their chosen field of endeavour. The teacher can further help the students by opening up the lexical possibilities and resources through the 5S approach.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

1. What does it mean to know a word?
2. Why do second-language learners struggle to retain the words they learn?
3. How are words connected through their origins?
4. How is knowledge of word formation useful in learning a language?
5. How many words in English do you know?

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Chapter

8

The Basics of English Grammar and Discourse

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand English grammar and discourse through acronyms
- Remember grammatical concepts very easily
- Apply grammatical knowledge appropriately
- Develop the skill of coining acronyms

English Language Teaching, particularly grammar and composition teaching, has been perceived as a dull and drab job by the teachers, and a boring and difficult subject by the students. This perception is based on the teachers' and students' experience over the years. However, it is possible for the teachers to make grammar and composition a fun for themselves and for their learners irrespective of the approach, methods, techniques that were and are in vogue.

There is a difference between the learners of English as the first language and English as a second or foreign language. The difference has mainly to do with grammar. Even though the native speakers of English may not have any formal knowledge of the language, they have little difficulty in communicating with others. This is very much true even for the illiterate population. When the educated English speakers have to communicate in formal contexts, a high level

of grammatical accuracy is expected. As native speakers, the educated English people somehow manage their communication. The problem of English grammar for non-native speakers of English is different but critical in today's context, where the number of non-native speakers is higher than that of the native speakers. Therefore, it is necessary to re-examine the basics of English grammar.

The traditional approach to grammar is the foundation on which all the other techniques have been developed: structural grammar, functional grammar, phrase grammar, transformational generative grammar, case grammar and others. These have contributed to further understanding of grammar in different ways. But no approach believes that there is no need for grammar to communicate properly. Perhaps, the communicative approach to language teaching may have stressed more upon the importance of communication than grammar. In the due course of time, however, it has come to be recognized that accuracy in grammar is essential for effective communication.

Grammar codifies the rules derived from the use of a language in a particular social context. British and foreign grammarians have defined English grammar and some of them depended on Latin for the basic constituents, whose number and characteristics might vary from grammarian to grammarian. Their differences are immaterial for non-native speakers. The basic principles and practices are most important.

Parts of Speech

It is surprising and even shocking to see that a large number of students are unable to distinguish between the various parts of speech in English, even when they reach college and university level. A majority of the students do not have any idea of the parts of speech. Some of them who are familiar with the concept are not able to recall all the eight parts of speech. Even those who can remember all of them have difficulties in identifying whether a word is a noun or an adjective.

Here we present an acronym, VANPAPCI, which can prove to be very helpful to the students in remembering all the eight parts of speech in English. VANPAPCI stands for Verb, Adverb, Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Preposition, Conjunction and Interjection. It may be pronounced as /vænpæpsi/. It can, of course, be treated as a noun but there is no need to derive other parts of speech. All these parts of speech refer to the different kinds of words we have in English. Shifting verb to front position suggests that verb should be given much more attention than what is given now. This acronym can surely be a handy tool for both teachers and learners.

Order

In the usual list of parts of speech, noun occupies the first place and is followed by pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. In

the coined acronym VANPAPCI, however, the order changes as verb tops the list and is followed by adverb, noun, pronoun, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection. However, the order and position of the last three parts of speech remain the same in both lists.

Number

Robert A. Day believes that there are nine parts of speech and claims that all words in English could be put into one of the nine pigeonholes. The ninth part of speech, according to Day, is Article. If it is added to the acronym, VANPAPCI then becomes VANPAPCIA.

Two Groups

Of the nine parts of speech, the words for pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and articles are very limited and so they can be mastered very easily. On the other hand, the words for verb, adverb, noun and adjective are unlimited and ever expanding. However, this group may not pose a big challenge for the learners if they understand that any word can be brought under one or many parts of speech.

Word Formation

An interesting fact about words in English is that one part of speech can be derived from another without much difficulty. For instance, organization (noun), organizer (noun), organizational (adjective), organizationally (adverb) and organize (verb) are all derived from the same Latin root *organum.* Further, the root can lead to other words like 'organ', 'organic', 'organism', and so on.

Markers

There are distinct markers for different parts of speech: for example, '–ion' for noun, '–al' for adjective, '–ly' for adverb and '–ize' for verb. However, there are exceptions and variations. The only way to overcome the difficulties in learning them is to become familiar with them and identify them as and when they are in use.

Sequence of Adjectives

We offer here an acronym for remembering the exact sequence in which multiple adjectives are used in an utterance. It is SASCOMP, which stands for Size, Age, Shape, Colour, Origin, Material and Purpose.

Size refers to adjectives like long, short, big and small. *Age* points to adjectives like young, old and new. *Shape* denotes adjectives like round, square, rectangular, triangular and circular. *Colour* indicates all shades of colours such as green, grey,

blue, black and red. Adjectives of *Origin* may identify the place of birth or make, for example, Indian and Delhi. Adjectives of *Material* suggest the material nature of objects, for instance plastic, silk and gold. Adjectives of *Purpose* refer to the purpose for which a certain thing is used, for example *wall*paper and *bed*room.

There is usually a determiner, may be an article, before SASCOMP and a noun, that is the head word after it. It may be noted that all these seven features—Size, Age, Shape, Colour, Origin, Material and Purpose—need not appear in a single utterance. However, here is a contrived example to illustrate the use of SASCOMP:

A	Short	New	Round	Red	French	Plastic	Drawing	Pencil
Determiner	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material	Purpose	Noun

Some of the normally used utterances are also given below for further illustrations:

(a)

An	Old	Green	Kitchen	Table
	Age	Colour	Purpose	

(b)

A	Small	Round	Plastic	Bowl
	Size	Shape	Material	

(c)

A	New	German	Car	Shampoo
	Age	Origin	Purpose	

(d)

A	Long	White	Silk	Scarf
	Size	Colour	Material	

Increased familiarity with the natural/grammatical sequencing of adjectives is helpful in using them in their proper order almost unconsciously. Until then, it is easier for both native and non-native users of English to exploit the acronym SASCOMP. Further, whenever a doubt arises, it is always easy to check the order of adjectives against the acronym.

SASCOMP is bound to be useful to the teachers of English for helping their students overcome their difficulty in correct sequencing of multiple adjectives in the same utterance.

Discourse

The study of language does not end with grammar. It goes beyond grammar into a larger territory called *discourse*. In fact, discourse analysis is a separate branch of study. It refers to the study of a continuous stretch of language to discover its structure and features, which bind sentences in a sequence. So, anything that is more than a sentence falls within the domain of discourse.

Mainly, there are four modes of discourse, which can be found in the acronym DEAN: Description, Exposition, Argumentation and Narration. Description evokes a strong impression produced by a person, a place, a scene, an action, an object, etc. Exposition informs the reader about a certain topic. Argumentation aims at persuading the reader to accept or reject a viewpoint, an idea, a product, a person, etc. Narration tells a story vividly. All these four forms of discourse may be found in combination in a single text. The dominant mode may be one or the other, depending on the context. In scientific writing, for instance, the dominant mode is usually exposition. In literature, on the other hand, the primary mode is description or narration. In legal texts, argumentation will be pronounced. All these four modes will have to take shape in the form of paragraphs.

A paragraph may be a single sentence, but it is usually a collection of well-knit sentences with a well-wrought structure. First, the paragraph structure may be discussed. For this, the abbreviation TCS comes handy. TCS refers to Topic sentence, Concluding statement and Supporting details. Depending on how a paragraph is developed, ten kinds of paragraphs can be identified. DECCCCADES stands for these ten different kinds of paragraphs: Description, Exemplification, Comparison and Contrast, Cause and Effect, Classification, Choice, Analysis, Definition, Evaluation, and Sequence. All these share certain common characteristics, which can be understood with another acronym VECCU. This refers to Variety, Emphasis, Coherence, Cohesion and Unity.

Extended forms of discourse like essays, articles and features have a common structure. This is the famous IBC: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. In the scientific context, the well-known acronym IMRAD has been helpful to scholars in writing their thesis. It stands for Introduction, Materials and Method, Results and Discussion. In other contexts too, more acronyms need to be developed for easy understanding and better practice.

Importance of Punctuation

Punctuation marks play a vital role in the communication of correct meaning and yet the teaching and learning of punctuation marks is usually treated in a step-motherly fashion. The reason for this is also apparent for all to see. Second language teachers and learners grapple first with vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and grammar and when they finally arrive at punctuation marks, they have little time. Then how do they teach and learn these?

Punctuation is, in fact, the foundation of all effective written communication. It is equivalent to the pauses and gaps in spoken language, which are essential for clarity of expression. Punctuation marks play a significant role in communicating clear meanings in a written text. To understand the importance of punctuation, we have to only look at the title of the recent best-seller on punctuation: *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: A Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynne Truss. In the absence of proper punctuation, the situation reads like the following: the panda goes to a hotel, eats the available dish, shoots the owner of the hotel and

leaves the place. When punctuated properly, the passage comes to mean that the panda is an animal that eats, shoots and leaves. How dangerous it is then not to pay attention to punctuation!

Interestingly, punctuation and punctuality are derived from the same root word in Latin 'punctus', which means 'to point'. To be punctual and to punctuate correctly are sincere and serious actions of personal discipline and individual growth for the teacher and the learner.

We are familiar with punctuation marks and yet have difficulty in recalling them. We may remember a few of them: comma, colon, full stop, question mark, and so on. But if we want to remember all the punctuation marks without difficulty, then we can use the acronym: CCHHAPPESS-DEBBUQQI, which tells us about the 17 punctuation marks that we ought to know:

C – Comma [,]
C – Colon [:]
H – Hyphen [-]
H – Hash [#]
A – Apostrophe [']
P – Period [.]
P – Parenthesis [,   ,] or [(   )]
E – Ellipsis […]
S – Semicolon [;]
S – Slash [/]
D – Dash [–]
E – Exclamation mark [!]
B – Brackets [([ )]
U – Underlining [___]
Q – Question mark [?]
Q – Quotation marks [' '] or [" "]
I – Italics [~]

End Marks

First, let us look at the end marks that are used at the end of the sentences. Period, as it is referred to in American English, is known as full stop in British English. All statements end with a period. Similarly, all questions have a question mark at their close. Likewise, all sentences expressing strong emotions like joy and sorrow end with an exclamation mark. Some examples of end marks are given below:

It is a surprise for me.	(Full stop)
Who wrote **The Glimpses of World History**?	(Question mark)
What a wonderful night!	(Exclamation mark)

All other punctuation marks are discussed here under 'Other Marks'.

Other Punctuation Marks

Comma

Comma is useful in separating a word, phrase, or clause from each other. For example, an adverb like 'however' is usually separated from the main sentence by a comma. Similarly, the distinction between a dependent clause and the main clause is shown by a comma. The comma is used to separate a list of items too. Some examples of use of comma are given below:

Fortunately, Raja is a brave boy.
Raja is a brave boy, though he is very young.
Raja studied History, Geography and English.

Colon

A colon indicates that there follows a list, of course, separated by commas. It also combines two equivalent clauses, mainly independent clauses in a sentence. See the sentences given below:

He bought several things: pen, paper, pencil, notebooks, etc.

Today's children are very smart: they are proficient in their chosen subjects and also computers.

Semicolon

A semicolon is necessary to combine two closely related statements, especially if the second is a direct explanation for the first statement. It is also used to separate items in a series. See the use of semicolon in the following sentences:

You must complete your course; or else you will not be considered for the job interview.

You need to bring all your original certificates; mark sheets, degree certificates, conduct certificate and transfer certificate.

Hyphen

A hyphen breaks, links and explains words. When a word has to be broken, a hyphen is used to indicate the break. When two or more words are put together in compound nouns or adjectives, hyphens are used. To clarify the meaning of certain words, hyphens prove extremely important. Some examples are given below:

Fast-growing company
Sixty-three people
Short-term course

Dash

The function of a dash is different from that of a hyphen. The single dash is used to show a sudden change in thought and the double dash, like parenthesis, emphasizes a part of a sentence. See the sentences given below:

Neem leaf is good for health—no, people don't like its bitter taste.

Dr Manmohan Singh—the Prime Minister of India—was a finance minister earlier.

Parenthesis

American parentheses are the British round brackets. They are used to give additional information in a sentence and sources of information collected, for example

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) is the father of our nation.

"Nothing great can be achieved without opposition." (Swami Vivekananda).

Brackets

Round brackets are very different from square brackets. The chief function of brackets is to indicate the text that does not belong to the original statement. Some examples are given below:

He [Aringar Anna] was a popular leader.

He [Albert Einstein] was a great scientist.

Ellipses

Ellipses of three dots are used to show that something has been omitted in the beginning or middle of the original text. If there are four dots, it means that something is missing at the end, for example

Shakespeare defined man as " … a paragon of animals…."

Slash

Also known as solidus, the forward slash is commonly used to show the possibility of two meanings in sentences and the dividing numbers in lines, for example

The Prime Minister and/or the Chief Minister will address the gathering.

14/07/04, 1/2

Italics/Underlining

Both italics and underlining have similar functions. Underlining is often used in handwritten copies, whereas italics are used in printing. These are used to indicate the titles of books, ships, works of art, etc. For example *Hamlet*, *Titanic*, *Monalisa*. Foreign words are also italicized or underlined, for example *a la* (French) and *sui generic* (Latin).

Apostrophe

An apostrophe is used to indicate possession and contraction. In the former, the meaning is something that belongs to somebody or something else, for example *Ram's pen*. The latter indicates combining two words by omitting letters, for example *haven't* is used for *have not* and *won't* for *will not*.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks, or quotes for short, are of two kinds: single quotes and double quotes. These marks are used to show that the text is quoted or cited from some other written or spoken communication.

"The child is the father of man", wrote Wordsworth.
"Are you listening?" asked the father.

Hash

Strictly speaking, hash is not a punctuation mark, but it is increasingly used before numbers these days, especially in addresses.

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Punctuation marks need not be discussed under grammar, but they are useful for emphasis and clarity. These 17 punctuation marks can be found in the acronym CCHHAPPESS-DEBUQQI, which denotes Comma, Colon, Hyphen, Hash, Apostrophe, Period, Parenthesis, Ellipsis, Semicolon, Slash, Dash, Exclamation mark, Brackets, Underlining, Quotation marks, Question mark and Italics.

In addition to the acronyms for the parts of speech, sequencing of adjectives, discourse and punctuation marks, a few more abbreviations and acronyms are given here for effective teaching and learning of English:

1. GIPP represents the four phrases in English: Gerund, Infinitive, Participal and Prepositional.
2. ID denotes Independent and Dependent clauses.
3. DRICE refers to the five basic sentences: Declarative, Request, Interrogative, Command and Exclamatory.
3. S3C points to the four kinds of declarative sentences: Simple, Compound, Complex and Compound-complex.
4. PIPO refers to four types of things referred to by nouns: Person, Idea, Place and Object.
5. VD-SOP points to the five types of cases: Vocative, Dative, Subjective, Objective and Possessive.
6. PPIRRID represents the seven types of pronouns: Personal, Possessive, Indefinite, Relative, Reflexive, Interrogative and Demonstrative.
7. QQINDDEPP denotes the nine kinds of adjectives: Quantitative, Qualitative, Interrogative, Numeral, Distributive, Demonstrative, Exclamatory, Possessive and Proper.
8. QESASCOMP stands for the order of adjectives in a series: Quantity, Emotion, Size, Age, Shape, Colour, Origin, Material and Purpose.
9. LIT indicates the three kinds of verbs: Linking, Intransitive and Transitive.
10. MHV stands for Main and Helping Verbs.
11. APV denotes Active and Passive Voice.

12. PPF refers to Past, Present and Future tense.

13. DIS stands for Direct and Indirect Speech.

14. IIS marks the three moods: Indicative, Imperative and Subjunctive.

15. MPTD refers to the four kinds of adverbs: Manner, Place, Time and Degree.

16. WENNB represents the five correlative conjunctions: Whether-or, Either-or, Neither-nor, Not only-but also and Both-and.

17. FANBOYS (taken from Robert A. Day's book *Scientific English*) signifies the seven coordinating conjunctions: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet and So.

18. SVOCA stands for the five parts of a sentence: Subject, Verb, Object, Complement and Adjunct.

19. SWCM-MOUND indicates the modal verbs: Shall, Will, Can, May, Must, Ought to, Used to, Need, Dare and if the past forms of the first four, Should, Would, Could and Might are added, all the thirteen modal verbs in English can be seen in this abbreviation. More such acronyms and abbreviations may be coined and used in the classrooms and also in English textbooks.

SUMMARY

To sum up, though knowledge of the English language alone is not a guarantee for its effective use, it must be emphasized that without such knowledge we cannot use English profitably, particularly in a second-language context. Therefore, an attempt has been made to coin a number of acronyms and abbreviations for learning most aspects of English grammar and discourse. All the eight parts of speech can be learnt through VANPAPCI. The sequence of adjectives can be understood through QESASCOMP, which stands for Quantity, Emotion, Size, Age, Shape, Colour, Origin, Material and Purpose. The acronym CCHHAPPESS-DEBUQQI is very useful to know the seventeen punctuation marks: comma, colon, hyphen, hash, apostrophe, period, parenthesis, ellipsis, semicolon, slash, dash, exclamation mark, brackets, underlining, question marks and italics. Thus, it is necessary for the learners of English as a second or foreign language to learn not only English grammar but also English discourse. After all, knowledge gives confidence which in turn can surely enable students to achieve mastery over communication. Only then, effective communication can be achieved at all levels and at all times. This approach is a different approach to English grammar and composition teaching for all, particularly for the less proficient learners of English.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the general problems of learning grammar?
2. How can students get a thorough knowledge of English grammar and discourse?
3. How can students apply their knowledge of grammar in real-life context without fear?
4. How can students become productive users of English?
5. How can teachers be helped to help their students with a good knowledge of grammar of English?

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Chapter
9

The Vowels in Question Words

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Know the difference between the traditional and modern concepts of English vowels
- Realize the importance of traditional vowels in 'Wh' question words
- Understand why 'u' is missing in 'Why'
- Compare the 'wh' in English question words with the first letter in the question words of other languages

"I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew, their names are what and why and when and how and where and who", said Rudyard Kipling, an author who is loved and hated in equal measure for what he wrote and held. It is not that the Nobel laureate did not consider the other question words like 'which', 'whether' and 'if', the last two being indirect question words. In fact, Kipling has an inspirational poem titled "If", though he has used 'if' as a conjunction, which is worth reading, especially at critical moments in the life so as to march ahead without yielding to despair and defeat. It appears, in the context of English Language Learning, that a close look at the vowels in the question words will be very helpful to both teachers and students to understand their form and use them in learning with ease.

Importance of Question Words

Question words are the words that are used to ask open-ended questions. While 'what', 'when', 'where', 'which', and 'who' are information-seeking questions, 'how' and 'why' are questions that demand explanations. Those of the former category are easy to answer but those of the latter are not so. It is these questions, though difficult to answer, that have largely led to advancements in various spheres of knowledge. Like Kipling, great thinkers have used question words to break new grounds in their chosen field. No wonder, contemporary journalists regard the five Ws and the H—what, when, where, who, why and how—as their most powerful weapon for getting information and reporting it as accurately as possible.

Traditional Vowels

If the vowels in a language are its life, the vowels in the question words contribute to the life of the question words. Developments in modern linguistics have shown that there are twenty vowels in English—twelve pure and eight diphthongs—as against the five traditional vowels—a, e, i, o and u. It is the latter that are found in the question words directly. 'What' has 'a', 'when' and 'where' have 'e', 'which' has 'i' and 'how' and 'who' have 'o'. 'Why' or any other question word for that matter, does not have 'u'. Hence, why this 'u' is missing in question words is a question that does not have a specific answer except that it leads to another question: Is 'u' hidden in 'why'?

'U' in Why

Surprisingly, an etymological enquiry into 'why' reveals that 'u' is, in fact, hidden in some forms of the word, for example, *'hwui'*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records two sentences that were written before the year 1300, which read:

1. Sir cayn, Wy haspouu pI broiper slain?
2. Qui smites pou me?

   Both are from a source called *Cursor M* and they can perhaps be rewritten in modern English as follows:

1. Sir Cain, why have you slain your brother?
2. Why do you smite me?

   'Qui' is also a form of 'why' in which 'u' is available but can be traced to its Indo-European root. Whatever the source of the 'why' may be, the word definitely has 'u' in its early forms. How 'u' lost its place in 'why' is another question that may be explored separately.

Monosyllables

We will now look into the monosyllabic structure of the question words. Each question word has only one vowel in it. While 'a', 'i' and 'u' are found in 'what', 'which' and 'why', only, 'e' and 'o' are seen in two words each: 'when' and 'where', 'how' and 'who'. These are simple but basic words, which are required for efficient and effective communication in English. Interestingly, the monosyllabic structure of question words can also be identified in the question words of many other languages, for instance Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Bangla. In addition, every language has a particular letter and sound for the initial position of the question words: 'Wh' in English, 'E' in Tamil and Telugu, 'K' in Hindi and Bangla.

SUMMARY

Since the vowel letters are considered to be life letters in a language, the importance of the question words in everyday communication may be attributed to the presence of the five vowels in the question words. The present study, though limited in its scope, has found that the 'u' is hidden in 'why' in its older forms, though how 'u' lost its place in course of time is yet to be identified. Knowledge of the association between traditional vowels and question words will surely be of great help to both teachers and students of English throughout the world in teaching and learning English.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How are question words important? How are vowels connected with question words?
2. Why is 'u' missing in 'Why'?
3. How has asking simple questions revolutionized the human thought process?

Chapter 10

The Pronunciation of 'X'

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Examine the different ways in which the letter 'x' is pronounced
- Know about the strange cases of 'x'
- Contrast 'x' with 'q'
- Understand the modern uses of 'x'

'X' is the twenty-fourth letter in the English alphabet. Originally, there was no such letter in English but was later borrowed from Greek via Latin as an alternative to 'cs' in the Old English period. More than ten centuries have passed since then, but the words with 'x' at the beginning are very few. Many dictionaries have just a handful of words under the entry 'x'. Even the *Oxford English Dictionary* has no more than seven pages dedicated to 'x'. Though the stock of words, including 'x' in the medial and final position is less, this letter seems to have a larger and wider variety of phonetic values than any other letter in the English Language. It is hoped that the knowledge of these variations will be useful for the teachers and students of English at all levels around the world.

'X' as /eks/ and /iks/

First, this letter 'x' is pronounced as /eks/. This sound is, however, restricted to a few compound words only; for example, x-ray, x-axis, x-chromosome and so on. In the same manner, the letter is used in mathematics to refer to an

unknown variable. Anything unknown is also described as 'x'. Moreover, some words which begin with 'ex' have /eks/ sound value; for instance, 'excellence', 'except', 'excise', etc. Besides, when 'x' is preceded by an 'e' in the medial and final positions of some words, the same value is retained. To illustrate, 'nexus', 'plexus' and 'flexibility' have /eks/ in their middle and index, 'rex' and 'complex' have /eks/ at their end.

Even though some words may begin with 'ex', their phonetic value is not /eks/. Examples for this different value include words like 'exceed', 'excel' and 'except'. /iks/ also occurs in words where the letter 'e' precedes 'x'. Instances for the medial position include words such as 'mixture', 'fixation' and 'betwixt'. Likewise, instances for the final position comprise words like 'appendix', 'phoenix' and 'suffix'.

Further, these phonetic values of 'x' /eks/ and /iks/ change according to the stress upon the individual words. In case of /eks/, the stress may fall on the first syllable as in '`excellent' or the second as in 'ex`hume' or on the third as in 'exhi`bition'. This variation is equally applicable to /iks/, though with some modifications. Unlike /eks/, /iks/ does not appear to carry any stress on the first syllable. It means the /i/ in this case is a weak vowel. Most words which begin with /iks/ take stress on the first syllable only. Examples are 'ex`ceptional', 'ex`pand' and 'ex`tention'. The peculiar problem here is that the letter 'x' is one but is represented by a combination of three sounds. Hence, the three sounds of /iks/ are invariably split into /ik/ and /s/. The /s/ joins the following sound in most phonetic environments. An instance is given here in transcription along with its word: ik`spreʃn/, that is 'expression'. Secondary stress also abides by this split rule. For example, 'extermination' is stated as /ik,stɜːmi'neiʃn/.

'X' as /egz/ and /igz/

Second, there is a pair of sounds similar to that of /eks/ and /iks/. These sounds are also conditioned by the preceding letter 'e' at the beginning of the words and 'i' in the middle. While 'e' can have either /e/ or /i/, /i/ has only /i/. /egz/, for example, appears in words like 'exhibition', 'exemplarity' and 'exultation', though such words are not many. But there are a number of words which start with the sound /igz/. 'Exact', 'exaggerate' and 'examination' can be cited as examples for this sound. Here also the stress pattern affects the sounds. While /egz/ seems to take secondary stress invariably as in 'exi`stential', /igz/ usually carries primary stress in the transcription of the word 'exact', /ig`zækt/. Interestingly, /egz/ and /igz/ do not appear to occur in the medial and final positions to represent the letter 'x.'

'X/ as /ks/ and gz/

Third, 'x' as /ks/ is seen in numerous words in the medial and final positions. This is the most common phonetic value of 'x' in English. Examples for the

medial position are 'axiom', 'maximum', 'galaxy', 'taxation', 'juxtapose' and 'Oxford'. The first five examples are of Latin and Greek origin. 'Oxford' is a true English word, but a combination of 'ox' and 'ford'. Etymologically, Oxford University is a ford of oxen! Similarly, examples for the phonetic value in final position are 'ox', 'relax', 'fix' and 'climax'. As /ks/, this letter does not occur at the beginning of any word. In contrast, /gz/ does not occur anywhere without /e/ or /i/ at the beginning. The only exceptions seem to be three words: 'luxuriate', 'luxuriant' and 'luxurious'. However, /gz/ can be replaced by /ks/ in some speech forms of these words.

'X' as /k/

Fourth, 'x' is represented as /k / in a few words. In luxury, the 'x' is /k /, though it is /ks/ in 'lux' and /gz/ in 'luxurious'. These three words 'lux', 'luxurious' and 'luxury' point to some of the notorious idiosyncrasies of English pronunciation. Perhaps, their Latin and Greek origin may account for the peculiarities in pronunciation. Similarly, 'sex' is spoken as /seks/ but its adjective form 'sexual' carries the phonetic value of /kʃ/. Another interesting example is the word 'anxious' which is spoken as /aŋkʃəs/, but its noun form 'anxiety' is enunciated as /aŋzaiə ti/. The 'x' in 'anxiety' takes the sound of the letter 'z', an uncommon occurrence in the middle position. There are a few words like 'complexion' and 'connection' which have /k/ to represent 'x'. While 'connection' can be written as 'connexion', complexion has remained the same all these years.

'X' as /z/

Fifth, the sound /z/ is quite common in most words that begin with the letter 'x.' According to Ben Jonson, any word in English does not begin with 'x' and it can only be used an abbreviation as in 'X-mas' for 'Christmas' and 'X-ian' for 'Christian'. This is so because all words that begin with 'x' are of Greek origin. There are many proper nouns in this category. For example, Xanthippe was the wife of Socrates, Xavier was the Jesuit missionary who went to China and India for spreading the Gospel of Christ and Xenophanes was a Greek philosopher. Examples of common nouns are 'xenophobia', 'xerox' and 'xylophone'. Except for in 'anxiety', this sound seldom occurs in the middle position. It is also infrequent in the final position, though there are some plural forms in words like 'tableaux' and 'beaux'.

Some Strange Cases

Sixth, there are some strange cases of 'x' in a few proper nouns where it has the phonetic value of /k/, /ʃ/ and /h/. /k/ is seen in 'Xhosa', which means a Bantu language or its speaker. / ʃ / is observed in 'Xingu', the name of a river flowing through the Central Brazil to the Amazon. And /h/ is noticed as in 'Xipe', which

is articulated as /ʃhi:pei/ and refers to the Aztec god of sowing or planting. Such examples are, of course, quite uncommon in English and are in fact words from other languages.

The Silent 'X'

Seventh, 'x' has no representation of sound in a few words. These words too are highly limited in number and are usually borrowed from other languages. Pronounced as /su:/, 'Sioux' is a North American tribe. Likewise, a wine from France called 'Bordeaux' is spoken as /bɔ:dəʊ/. Another example from French is 'faux pas', which is uttered as /ʃfəʊpa:/. It means a mistake in social behaviour. This feature of silence is not unique to 'x' because there are other letters like 'b,' 'e,' 'g,' 'k,' and 'p' which remain silent in the following words: 'comb', 'spoke', 'gnome', 'know' and 'psyche'.

'X' and 'Q'

In his discussion on 'q' in *Comfortable Words*, Bergan Evans said that it was "an unreasonable letter". The fact that 'q' does not have a separate symbol to represent itself in the English sound system irked him greatly. For it has to share /k/ with 'c' and 'k'. Further, there is no correlation between the letter 'q' and the sound /k/. Therefore, he observed: "The only purpose it serves is to remind us that nothing connected with language is reasonable and that the alphabet didn't grow on the basis of our needs (p.213)." However, when 'q' is compared to 'x,' the former seems to fare better in many ways, especially in its phonetic value. Perhaps, Evans would have changed his opinion on 'q' if he had an occasion to comment on 'x.' Not only does 'x' have a wide variety of phonetic values, but it also has lesser number of words. The proportion of difficulty, then naturally, increases. The comparison with 'q' is not an isolated case. Even the letter 'a' which has various sound values like / æ/, /a:/, / ɔ :/ and /ei/ cannot match 'x' in this respect.

Use of 'X'

Despite the complexity of phonetic values, 'x' seems to be finding unique uses in contemporary English. It is very helpful in reducing long words into short words. The most striking example is 'fax', which has been derived by the process of back formation from the noun 'facsimile'. Now 'fax' is used both as a noun and a verb. Such reduction in length helps to save time, energy and money in the fast moving technological world. It was for the same purpose of convenience that 'socks' is written as 'sox' and 'pocks' as 'pox'. While 'pox' has become a distinct word in common usage, 'sox' is confined to the profession of hosiery only. It is the same reduction that is seen in words like 'X-mas' and 'X-ian', though some speakers have started pronouncing them according to their orthography. 'Rx' is

a widely used abbreviation in the medical profession and it means prescription. One can imagine how much of time and energy will be wasted if every doctor writes the word 'prescription' instead of 'Rx' on every piece of paper for each of his patients. Perhaps, 'x' may find many more uses as in 'telex' and 'unix' in the ever growing communications world.

SUMMARY

The 24th letter of the English alphabet, 'x', has a wide variety of pronunciation, thereby causing difficulties for learners. If we know how 'x' is used in initial, medial and final positions in different ways, we can say it properly. It is interesting to note that 'x' is very useful in modern times, specially for doctors, to save time, money and energy.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you know about the peculiarities of the letters of the English alphabet?
2. What challenges did you face in using 'x' and 'q'?
3. How did 'x' achieve a special role in mathematics and science?
4. What are the non-linguistic or symbolic uses of 'x'?

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Chapter 11

Technical Speaking

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand technical communication
- Recognize the value of speaking in technical communication
- Know how to conduct a course on technical communication
- Help evaluate his/her speaking ability

Technical communication includes both speaking and writing, besides listening and reading. However, the literature on technical communication seems to focus more on writing than on speaking. Even if there is a section on speaking, it is usually not given equal importance. This chapter analyses the dichotomy between speaking and writing in technical communication and suggests that giving more importance to writing than speaking has led to a false impression that technical communication is technical writing. Hence, the chapter argues that a corrective course is the need of the hour for teachers of technical communication and professionals. It also outlines some efforts made by a few teachers in the US to impart speaking skills to technical students. Further, it suggests some ways to incorporate these skills meaningfully in the curriculum, the classroom and the examination system in the Indian context.

Communication

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information and ideas through both oral and written medium via any channel with proper feedback

from the receiver to the sender. Naturally then, technical communication should include both oral and written communication. This fact is understood by syllabus designers, teachers and textbook writers of technical communication. That is why, they incorporate some elements of all language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing—in syllabi, while teaching and in the textbooks on technical communication. However, in practice, there seems to be an unwillingness or inability to accommodate both listening and speaking in technical communication with due importance to them. The chief reasons have more to do with conducting examination in listening and speaking than with academic and real life requirements for the students. Hence, technical communication has come to mean technical writing as is evident from a book with this title.

Technical Communication

The communication that is carried on in a work environment is called technical communication. It can also be called professional, business, or workplace communication. It is usually in contrast with academic communication that is found in the classrooms. Importantly, the goals of technical communication are different from those of academic or general communication. In short, technical communication has to achieve a target set for itself in the form of positive and prompt action.

Technical English

English for specific purposes (ESP) in the field of science, engineering and technology is called Technical English. The focus is more on preparing the students for workplace communication, not chiefly for examinations as it happens in general English classes. The goal is clear but the execution is constrained and compromised in the sense that examinations condition how the course is actually implemented in the classes. The question paper pattern determines the nature of technical English taught in the class while it should ideally be the other way round. This is a serious issue that has to be sorted out at the earliest for the benefit of the students, the industry and the country as a whole.

Many technical universities in India have one or two courses on English for the fisrt one or two semesters of their BE/BTech programmes. Some universities like Anna University went ahead to experiment with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and introduced Technical English for the first two semesters in 1988. Over the years, however, it has been noticed that Technical English has not really contributed to the development of communication skills in engineering students. Hence, a separate course on Communication Skills was launched in 2006. At the same time, other universities like Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad, caught on with the idea of communication skills laboratory for all engineering students. The laboratory is again technical in the sense some

components of ESP were maintained in the new course with some additional features for meeting placement needs. Whatever tools are used, ultimately the students have to speak in English.

Course on Technical Speaking in the US

Many US universities have taken serious efforts to introduce a course on Technical Speaking to the students of their undergraduate programmes in science, engineering and technology. For instance, Colorado State University offered a 3-credit course entitled Business and Technical Speaking during 1991–1998. Similarly, Idaho State University came up with a 2-credit course on Applied Technical Speaking for its students of Graphic Arts and Printing Technology. Purdue University also has a course on "Technical Speaking". However, the most interesting attempt in this direction has come from the University of Pittsburg at Johnstown (UPJ).

John Thompson, Stephen Curran, Susan Wieczorek and Michael Ferencak, Professors at UPJ, have jointly undertaken a project called Development and Implementation of a Technical Speaking Course in Mathematics. This project is aimed at developing technical, discipline-specific, verbal communication skills in the students of mathematics. The basic premise of this project is that most students do not use theorems and proofs in their jobs but make presentations almost on a daily basis. Hence, the professors adapted the public speaking course to suit the professional needs of the mathematics students.

The Technical Speaking Course at UPJ covers five kinds of speech in a gradually increased difficulty level from least technical to most technical topics. These are:
  (i)   Autobiographical speech
 (ii)   Commemorative speech
(iii)   Applied problem-solving speech
 (iv)   Persuasive speech
  (v)   Technical speech

Obviously, if the students progress from the personal level to technical level gradually, they will be able to acquire all skills required for verbal communication in both general and technical or business contexts.

An Experiment at Anna University

Breaking away from the traditional path of using a textbook in the class, an attempt was made at Anna University to develop the speaking skills of the students of Part Time First Year BE Civil Engineering Students as part of an MPhil research. Initially, the students were asked to introduce themselves. Then, they were made to watch a few selected clippings from two films of Rajinikanth, the superstar of Tamil filmdom, and a film of Livingston, a Tamil actor and director. After

watching the clippings, the students performed role plays depending on the situations they watched: asking for guidance on the street, conducting a meeting, attending an interview, lodging a complaint with the police, meeting a friend in a restaurant, buying some clothes in a shop, dealing with workers in a work site, etc. Amazingly, the students performed all these roles very well. Finally, the students were asked to introduce their friends in the class. Naturally, more time was required to carry out these activities and also cover the syllabus but a little extra effort brought about great satisfaction to the students, the teacher and the research scholar. If the syllabus and the testing pattern can separately be designed for Technical Speaking, many problems relating to time, administration and logistics can surely be overcome.

Syllabus for Technical Speaking

The foundation for a course on technical speaking has to be presentation and its older form public speaking. Therefore, all elements of presentation and public speaking have to be brought into the syllabus: planning, audience awareness, purpose of the presentation, logical development of ideas with a variety of inputs like anecdotes, humour, evidence, technical details, etc., non-verbal communication and so on. The course components may tentatively be arranged as follows:

I. Presentation: Definition, Purpose, Kinds, Structure, Feedback, Adaptability
II. Listening: Active Listening, Empathetic Listening, Interpretation, Evaluation
III. Introduction: Self, Other, Product, Place
IV. Business Presentations: Sales, Report, Proposal
V. Everyday Interactions: Inquiry, Clarification, Explanation, Social Participation

A section on listening is included here because both the speaker and the listener must understand each other for effective communication. Some more relevant topics and points can surely be included to make the course comprehensive enough.

Evaluation of Technical Speaking

In some of the discussions with academics, it was clearly agreed that speech must be given adequate importance in the curriculum. But the major problem encountered was how to evaluate the students' performance objectively. It was suggested that a listening task with the help of a tape recorder could be done. It was also suggested that a presentation seminar could be organized and tasks like group discussion, role play, debate, etc., could be assigned to students. All these could be done in the classroom. However, a serious problem in the Indian

context and in many other countries is the large number of students and the lack of time to evaluate the students. Even if time is available, how to be fair and objective is the crucial question that is difficult to be satisfactorily answered by the academics and administrators.

A possible solution to this problem is to introduce continuous internal assessment of the conversational tasks carried out in the class. Again, a variety of tasks performed by the students can be evaluated fairly with the help of a checklist mutually agreed upon by the teachers of English. If some more class time is required for English classes due to spoken English assessment, the English fraternity must dutifully convince the administrators to allot one or two more hours in a week to English. They cannot ignore this move because the industries want to hire students who can speak and write reasonably well.

Of course, technology can be of great help to evaluate the spoken performance of students. The 'tests' can be recorded by a digital camera and fed into a computer for automatic evaluation against a set of already agreed parameters. This is quite possible in the present age of high technology for everything on earth. If such a mechanism is not available, it is necessary to develop such software in collaboration with the software industry.

SUMMARY

If the objective of the courses on Technical communication and Technical English is to develop oral communication skills because the industries expect the educational institutions to do so, then the educational administrators must think differently and must be willing to introduce a course on Technical Speaking along the lines of what the four professors at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown have done. Experiments of the kind done at Anna University should be undertaken without hesitation. Like the American professors get institutional support, the Indian teachers must also be blessed with benign and supportive management. The students are eager and willing to speak in English in their academic and professional life. Then, what prevents the teachers giving them what they want? The only impediment that is possible is the non-existent ghost of the Indian examination system. There is no other way to handle this monster than to adopt innovative and fairly acceptable methods of evaluation. Who is the best judge to evaluate the speaking skill of the students, the teacher in the class or the public on the street?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is technical communication biased towards technical writing? Explain.

2. What are the real-life demands of technical professionals?
3. How did the American universities attempt to develop the speaking skills of their students?
4. How can Indian students develop their speaking skills?
5. What are the acceptable ways of evaluating speaking skills?

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Chapter 12

A Perspective on Teaching Reading

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand the need for developing skills in students
- Explore different ways of teaching reading English
- Assess the consequences of surface level teaching of reading skills
- Suggest measures for making students life long readers.

Of all the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, reading remains the most important skill as far as India is concerned. English has continued to maintain its status as a 'library language'. The fact is that most students of higher education are still required to read reference books, textbooks and journals in English for continuing their studies. Therefore, the teachers of English have to be constantly aware of this and perform their task accordingly.

▮▮▮ What is Reading?

Reading is much more than simple recognition of words on the page, though it is the basic step in any act of reading. In etymological terms, to read is to discern and to analyze the matter in hand thoroughly. Educationally, to read is to synthesize the understanding of the matter holistically. Therefore, reading is a complex process of comprehension and evaluation which involves cognitive operations like problem solving and decision-making. Hence, all aspects of reading skill need to be taught to students with utmost care.

Aim of Teaching Reading

The aim of teaching, then, is to make students efficient at mastering their chosen subject of study and thereby becoming experts in their respective fields.

Ground Reality

To teach reading becomes easier if all the students are adequately motivated. Unfortunately, the ground reality, even at the postgraduate level, is disappointing for various reasons, including irrelevant syllabus, self-defeating examination system and the uncertain future for most students who are unemployable. Further, today there are more powerful distractions in the form of *masala* films and television, though the satellite communication system is being used for educational purposes too. Under these circumstances, to teach reading is an unenviable job. The teacher's primary task is to make the students readers, that is, to get them start reading the prescribed textbooks. Only then can he ever hope to produce efficient and effective readers. Therefore, the secret of the teacher's success lies in his ability to motivate the students and involve them in the reading process. The task is not easy as has already been observed but surely an honest attempt must be made.

Two Teaching Situations

Here are two classroom situations of teaching reading, one ineffective and another effective, for illustration and comparison. The text to be taught is R.K. Narayan's "An Astrologer's Day" to the first year students of B.Sc. Mathematics. The text has a brief biographical sketch on the author, a glossary and a list of comprehension questions – the salient features of almost all anthologies of short stories for undergraduate classes.

Teaching Situation A

In the Teaching Situation A (TS A), the teacher starts his lesson with an elaborate lecture on R.K. Narayan as a great novelist and storyteller. He narrates the story of "An Astrologer's Day" in an hour in simple English, using the regional language to add spice to his lecture. The teacher enacts the story with gestures in order to make it even more interesting. Later, he explains the meanings of some difficult words and phrases. Finally, he dictates the answers to all questions listed and also conducts a test to prepare the students for the impending university examination.

Teaching Situation B

Here is Teaching Situation B (TS B). The teacher begins his lesson with an

attempt to assess the students' prior knowledge of R.K. Narayan and his writings. He does this job by asking a series of questions. All the students may not come up with correct answers immediately but this way it becomes possible to arouse the interest of students. The teacher faces many difficulties at the beginning, including utter silence from the students. However, he does not give up and gradually, some of the students start speaking about the Doordarshan's serial, Malgudi Days. Then, a few others vaguely remember having come across R.K. Narayan's short stories like "Engine Trouble" and "Half a Rupee Worth". Some of the students who are proficient in general knowledge or those who are preparing for some competitive examinations say that they remember R.K. Narayan as the author of *The Guide*, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, *Mr Sampath*; as there is a column called Books and Authors in every book on general knowledge. Above all, the teacher brings out the students' knowledge of astrology and we all know that almost every Indian is interested in astrology.

Ensuring that the students are adequately motivated, the teacher tells them to read "An Astrologer's Day" silently. After a few minutes, he asks them to identify the difficult words and phrases. Further, he encourages them to give the explanations for themselves. Next, he urges them to read the comprehension questions and answer them as much as they can after which he makes them read the text all over again in order to answer the unanswered questions. Of course, the teacher helps the students refine their answers which are required for the university examination. But he does not stop his lesson here and he moves farther than the listed questions and asks the students a few questions on his own. For instance, anyone who has read the story is curious to find out why R.K. Narayan mentions only the name of Guru and not others, including the astrologer, in the text. When this question is being explored, the students are slowly led to understand why the astrologer became an astrologer. Naturally, a lively discussion takes place which enables the students to understand the story in a better manner.

Comparative Analysis

Both these situations, TS A and TS B, are prevalent in Indian classrooms but despite the fact that the former is less effective than the latter, TS A is more common. The teacher of TS A has done his job well to his own satisfaction and to that of his students as well as the principal. In fact, the head of the institution is proud of his sincere colleague and students of their achievement. But the most important act of reading R.K. Narayan's short story by the students is conveniently forgotten. TS A is completely teacher-centred and examination-oriented. The teacher concerned does not pause to ask himself whether he is contributing to the development of any language skill in his students. Instead of enabling the students to read the story well, the teacher becomes a barrier in the way of development of any skill in the students, not to speak reading skill. There may be many English teachers who play this obstructive role unwittingly. Similarly, the

students may not be aware of the consequences of their lack of participation in the reading process. Therefore, it is necessary to bring about some awareness of the hazards of such classroom activities.

On the other hand, the teacher of TS B goes through a lot of trouble and makes immense amount of effort in order to make his students achieve the instructional objective of developing reading skills. The teacher exploits the Indian setting of the story to his advantage for motivating the students and involves them very actively in the reading process. They read the story over and over again to identify the difficult words and phrases, to answer the comprehension questions and to participate in the overall discussion, initiated by the teacher. The teacher acts as a guide and helps the students finish their task of reading as well as understand the story. Facilitating all these classroom activities, the teacher contributes to the development of some reading skill and much more in the students. TS B is thoroughly student-centred and instructional objective-oriented where the means is not sacrificed for the sake of the end. A sense of achievement and joy pervades the whole atmosphere of the class in TS B, despite the painful efforts taken by both the teacher and the taught. One might argue that in the present set-up of examination-oriented education, large classes, ill-equipped students and many other problems, even the most sincere of teachers cannot do better than the teacher in TS A. In such a case it may be possible to console oneself by thinking that at least students are being guided enough to pass their examination. However, it has to be remembered that it is the responsibility of English teachers to produce well-equipped students because Indian society badly needs them for social and national development. Like the teacher in TS B, it is essential to impart the necessary skills in students for their life. Nothing can be a hindrance, if the aim and initiatives are clear.

SUMMARY

It is true that reading skills or any other language skills cannot be taught in one hour or in one lesson. A series of language activities have to be carried out and it is important to motivate the students to get involved in the text. Once they do so, the students will not require the help of teachers. Thereafter, the students should be able to read anything with required understanding according to the purpose in hand on their own. As the teacher cannot be a life-long guide, the students can seek the help of a good dictionary and an encyclopaedia or an encyclopaedic dictionary to guide them later in life. Only then can the goal of teaching reading skill, nay other language skills too, would be achieved, since no skill can be taught in isolation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the actual reading skills of an average learner?
2. Why is reading skill important for India as a country?
3. Suggest some methods to make reading meaningful for students.
4. How have your teachers taught you reading skill?
5. What are the qualities of a good reader?

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Chapter

13

An Integrated Approach to Teaching Writing

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Explain three levels of teaching writing
- Experiment with creative teaching of writing
- Explore interesting combinations of words for grasping philosophical ideas
- Enhance the writing skills of students

It is a sad fact that many students who join colleges and universities in India face difficulty in framing grammatically and logically correct sentences in English. This is particularly true in the case of students from regional medium schools in rural areas. The school teachers hold several reasons responsible for this such as indifferent students and the government's inadequate support to school education. The college teachers shirk their responsibility, saying that it is not their job to teach the basics of English. Then, how can the majority of students learn to speak and write in English?

Need for An Integrated Approach

In this context, an integrated approach to teaching writing will help both the

teacher and the taught know what they have to do at each stage of teaching or learning. Writing is a complex process of selecting the right words and organizing them into a meaningful readable material. The degree of its complexity depends upon the purpose, the context, the content, the reader, and so on. Therefore, some amount of prioritization and gradation of writing skills is necessary for teaching writing at different levels.

At the primary level of teaching writing, we need to give priority to learning of simple words, mostly monosyllabic and disyllabic, which will be more spontaneous, as is the case with speech. The learners' writing may be disconnected and loose and may lack variety too. But it is more important to get the students to start putting the words together meaningfully.

By the time the students reach the secondary stage, they already possess some proficiency in writing. At this stage, the writing skills that have been previously acquired have to be reinforced and more skills added. Therefore, complex syntactic processes such as transformation of sentences into various ways like direct and indirect, active and passive, simple, compound, complex, positive, comparative and superlative, etc. can be taught again in appropriate contexts. Here we need to emphasize the semantics, focus, specificity, links within paragraphs, and so on.

The next level is somewhat advanced and, therefore, advanced writing skills have to be taught. Apart from the emphasis on discourse, features like linking words and discursive aspects of writing can be introduced. Moreover, different modes of writing like Description, Exposition, Argumentation and Narration (DEAN) can also be taught.

The prioritization and gradation of writing skills can thus be done from the level of sentence through paragraph to an essay. However, prioritization and gradation of skills without specification of appropriate teaching and learning method will be of no use.

The copybook method is suitable at the lower stage. The teacher makes the students learn the spelling and meaning of words by copying. Next, he/she aids them to put the words together meaningfully: for example, glass + water = a glass of water; Rama + Sita = Rama and Sita; tall + woman = a tall woman. All these examples can further be developed into such sentences as:

I want a glass of water.
Rama and Sita lived in a palace.
Sita is a woman.

To teach appropriate combination of sentences at the middle level, the method of controlled composition can be used. For example, look at the use of 'though' and 'but' to combine the following two sentences:

 (i) Hema is poor.
(ii) She is honest.
      = Though Hema is poor, she is honest.
      = Hema is poor but she is honest.

'Because' can also be used here:

> = Hema is poor because she is honest.

Though the writer's focus is somewhat different in all these cases, it is still possible to understand the writer's attitude to Hema.

Further, sentences have to be used in a larger connected discourse to make a coherent paragraph or a group of paragraphs. Therefore, linking features need to be taught through suitable methods like developing hints, paraphrasing, translation, and so on.

The higher order writing skills are usually reserved for a more advanced level. Free composition, especially exercises in writing argumentative essays, is the best method for this stage, though the teacher may find it difficult to correct all scripts. Defining, classifying, illustrating, sequencing, establishing cause and effect relationship, etc., are the many skills that are introduced during the earlier stages and need to be developed during this stage. Now the students should be able to argue a certain point of view convincingly, describe an object as picturesquely as possible, narrate a story vividly and attempt at expository writing in an interesting manner. Since expository writing is commonly required of most students, different ways of conveying information—logical, chronological, psychological and spatial methods—should be taught to them.

Escaping from teaching responsibilities will never solve the problem of futile education. In the case of English language teaching, especially teaching writing, it is necessary to have an integrated approach as outlined here for achieving the aim of enabling students to write not only correct English but also good English. Prioritization and gradation of writing skills along with selection and appropriation of suitable teaching and learning methods will immensely contribute to the acquisition of writing skills. In line with the three-tier system of education in our country, three levels of writing skills have been suggested.

However, these levels can be condensed into a three-month crash course or a three-year intensive course on writing, depending upon the target group. So the school teacher does not have to complain about the 'indifferent' students and the 'apathetic' government. Similarly, the college teacher need not blame the school teacher and feel helpless. If English teachers have the will power, they can adapt themselves to the needs of students at any stage.

Thoughtful Writing: An Innovative Approach

An innovative approach tried at Anna University, Chennai, with a first-year BE/BTech class comprising mostly of rural and Tamil medium students, however, revealed an interesting finding. Not only could the students write sentences, but they were also able to discover new and profound meanings for themselves.

What We Did in the Class

It all started off with a sentence the teacher saw on the blackboard one day. It read: "Anger manages everything poorly". Seeing this, the teacher thought he could share his own experience of using '*anger*' and '*stranger*' in a sentence but did not give the word or the sentence to the students.

Instead he provided an example of anger and elicited more words associated with this emotion from the students and asked them to use these words in a single sentence. To show them an example of what he meant he gave them two words, '*save*' and '*slave*' as well as a sentence: "If you save enough, you don't have to become a slave."

Then, he asked them to write a sentence of their own using the same words, '*save*' and '*slave*'. Adding another word '*grave*' to the two, the students came up with the following responses:

 (i) Not saving a person from the chain of slavery is a grave mistake.
 (ii) Nothing you save will extend to your grave.
(iii) Have a grave to save a slave.

After a few more trials with different words, the students returned to the original idea of '*anger*'. This time he gave them the word '*stranger*'. The students' sentences were interesting and meaningful. Here are two examples:

 (i) If you resort to anger, you will be considered a stranger.
 (ii) A man's life is peaceful as long as anger remains a stranger to him.

By this time the students found themselves deeply involved in creating their own sentences and selecting words by themselves. Except for a few minor mistakes, all the students did well. Their 'products' were read out in the class for the benefit of others. Some examples of the sentences created by the students are listed below and make for interesting reading:

 (i) It is very tough for a rough man to make friends.
 (ii) Success is made up of 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration.
(iii) If you think past in present, you will not be fast in future.
(iv) If you save rain, it will give gain.
 (v) A good teacher is a good reacher.
(vi) Save trees or be prepared for grave.
(vii) Try to solve as many problems as you can to become a master.
(vii) Save nature to have a better future.
(ix) Hard work is the best investment a man can make.
 (x) Without a good wife, there is no life.
(xi) Small things lead to perfection, but perfection is not a small thing.
(xii) The skill seen in childhood must not be killed.
(xiii) The best remedy for anger is delay.
(xiv) Remember others' help to you but forget others' mistakes.
(xv) We should think about the things that made our thinking better.
(xvi) A cute smile and a sweet behaviour serve as a passport for whatever you require.

Reflection

These meaningful sentences leave no doubt in the mind of the reader that the students could be creative when given the opportunity. Although a few sentences produced by the students are just famous quotations or proverbs, most of them are original. The striking human or ecological insights that the students have brought into their writings are noteworthy. Selecting words and using them in sentences, whether in pairs, groups or even individually, proved to be a good writing and thinking exercise. Both the teacher and the students left the classroom with a great feeling of satisfaction.

SUMMARY

Writing is a basic language skill required for every learner. If the three levels of writing are identified properly and taught carefully to the students, they should be able to become good writers. Given a higher level of training in writing, students would be able to meet with philosophical truths in their own writing as seen from a classroom activity. Such an achievement is possible, if the teachers take a little extra care for the students.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think most students are unable to write simple sentences properly even after nearly 10–12 years of education?
2. How is one level of writing different from the other?
3. How is it possible to develop the writing skills of students in a short duration of three to five years?
4. How do students get in touch with their creative self through writing?
5. What are simple ways in which teachers can be helpful to students to develop their writing skill?

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Chapter

14

English, Communication skills, and Soft skills

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Explore the linkage among English, communication and soft skills
- Understand the importance of soft skills using a short story
- Know about the developments in soft skills at the global level
- Train human resources for the knowledge society

Teachers of English in India have all along been entrusted with the task of teaching English language to students from primary to tertiary level for the purpose of internal as well as international communication. This has become extremely important as English is perceived as a window to the world as well as a link among the various states in the country. Gradually, the focus of English language teaching shifted to the skills involved in using English for communication purposes. With the advent of globalization, the focus has again shifted to soft skills, which include communication skills and English language. In this context, it is imperative to bring about changes in the English curriculum, particularly in the selection of material, which go into the English textbooks. Only then will the teachers be able to perform their tasks in the classroom meaningfully, else they may be considered an anachronism in the era of soft skills.

How to Enhance Soft Skills

Soft skills is an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of skills that today's professionals ought to have if they wish to obtain jobs and retain them. These include communication skills, team work, negotiation skills, leadership skills, presentation skills, problem-solving skills, positive attitude and many more.

Essentially, soft skills are a set of personality traits which are partly inherited and partly acquired, depending upon the individual's familial, social and educational environments. According to Dr Goeran Nieragden of Cologne, there are about twenty important soft skills. He lists them in a table under four different categories:

Interaction	*Self-Management*
Attitude awareness	Compensation strategies
Conflict handling	Decision-making
Co-operation	Learning willingness
Diversity tolerance	Self-assessment
(N)etiquette	Self-discipline
Interlocutor orientation	Self-marketing
Teamwork willingness	Stress resistance

Communication	*Organization*
Delegating skills	Problem solving
Listening skills	Systems thinking
Presentation skills	Troubleshooting

He discusses these skills in his article 'The Soft Skills of Business English', which obviously refers to 'work-related language coaching'. A similar list, though one skill less is given by Sabitha Rao in her interview to Chitra Deepa. To quote Ms Rao: "A soft skill encompasses a cluster of personality traits. A person's ability to communicate, social grace, personal habits, friendliness, attitude, negotiating ability, leadership qualities, initiative, conflict management, innovation, creativity, lateral thinking, decision-making, interpersonal skills, self-control or emotional maturity, time management, assertiveness, team spirit, capacity to work under pressure and stress—all these comprise soft sills." She also recommends Stephen R. Covey's popular book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* to understand all about soft skills.

Most of these ideas are strange to teachers who are fed on a steady diet of literature from various countries and bits of ELT concepts, albeit imitations rather than originals in many cases. If we want to survive by our soft skills and not by our hard skills, we need to pay attention to these new ideas and enable ourselves to rise to the occasion. We can use our knowledge of literature, though not exactly classics or prescribed texts in our literature syllabuses, to train our students in these soft skills.

'The Boy Who Broke the Bank':
A Fine Example of Exhibiting Soft Skills

Ruskin Bond, a well-known author in India and abroad, has written several novels, novellas, essays, poems and more than 500 short stories all devoured by the general public. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1993 and was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1999, besides recognition from other countries. Popular writers like Ruskin Bond and his company should be included in General English.

His short story 'The Boy Who Broke the Bank' is a story that has a potential to be exploited in the classroom for teaching English, communication skills and soft skills. We will now discuss how this story can be used profitably in the classroom by the teacher for the students and society at large.

About the Story

Nathu is a sweeper boy of the Pipalnagar Bank, owned by Seth Govind Ram. He feels bad that the bank manager has not paid him his wages for the month, though twenty days of the next month had passed by. Sitaram, the boy who used to wash clothes for others, happens to listen to the grievances of Nathu and decides to get the sweeper a new job. From here begins the distortion of message, which eventually results in the climax of the bank crash and Nathu unintentionally becomes an instrument for the collapse of the bank. The simple reason is that the bank manager did not care to pay Nathu's wages on time.

Soft Skills From the Story

This is a delightful story to read and has wonderful potential to teach the soft skills to our students. In addition to looking at the language aspects of the story, we can draw the attention of the students to the flow of communication from the boy to the public, resulting in the bank's crash. We can understand how a rumour is generated, though unwittingly and results in the unwarranted collapse. Although, almost all the twenty soft skills can be located in the story, we may focus on one of the most neglected skills— listening. Had the manager decided to give the salary to the sweeper on time, the situation would not have soured to this extent. But he did not do his job. Nor did he pay heed to Nathu's pleas. As a result, a conflict arises between the worker and the intermediate worker. Ultimately, it is the owner who is responsible for this mess. He ought to have visited the bank frequently to check whether things are running smoothly. The public are worried about the money mainly because the owner is not in town and unfortunately he could not be contacted even over the phone. There are many such gaps in communication. Consequently, people fill in the gaps with their own imagination, and this collapse in communication led to the collapse of the bank.

To teach this story in an interesting manner in the class, it would be good for the teacher to have some idea about how communication flows in an organization or in society in general. For this, the teacher can refer to some books on management communication. Any book on this subject will be of some use to the teacher of English. All these soft skills, after all, derive from the management or business context. Such a textbook that can be useful for the teachers of English is *Developing Communication Skills* by Krishna Mohan and Meera Banerji and can be used profitably for teaching communication skills to the students.

■■ A Global Perspective on Soft Skills

Most companies are willing to recruit the graduates who have soft skills along with hard or technical skills because the latter can be acquired in a short time whereas the former take longer time to learn and practice. Most companies prefer to select candidates who have already got these skills and the industries have now begun to request the universities and colleges to include a course on soft skills in the curriculum.

Educational institutions all over the world have responded to the call of the industries in their own way. It was in the US that the idea of soft skills took shape in the early 1980s. Known by various names such as career management skills, core skills, emotional intelligence skills, generic skills, human relationship skills, interpersonal skills, life skills, key skills, people skills, personal skills, portable skills, transferable skills, social skills and workplace skills, soft skills have now spread to most countries of the world, including Britain, Germany, Australia, Canada, Latvia, Nepal and India. These skills are considered so important that Governments have set up commissions, revamped departments of training, reoriented their educational policies and have made every possible effort to inculcate soft skills in their workforce. Such activities have become possible through the combined efforts of the industries and the media. Just as the industries constantly force the governments and the educational institutions to bring about change, the media has also done its bit in terms of strong editorials and awareness articles.

India woke up to the reality of soft skills long ago when the National Policy on Education (1986) recognized that the students coming from the temples of learning were unemployable. Since then, various attempts have been made to incorporate soft skills into the curriculum. It is only with the boom in the IT and ITES sectors that the educational institutions have realized the serious impact of lack of soft skills on the employment prospects of the students. A deemed university has gone so far as to establish a Department of Soft Skills, a UGC Academic Staff College has organized a Refresher Course in Employability Curriculum and a government organization has made massive efforts to train the teachers through private companies. Many more such activities are likely to happen in the future. Given below is the global perspective on soft skills for teachers, especially teachers of English in higher education:

America (USA)

The literature on soft skills in the US dates back to 1982. Kathleen Cotton prepared the first annotated bibliography in 1993. C.A. Conrad compiled another compilation titled "Soft Skills: An Annotated Bibliography" for the Annie Casey Foundation Seattle Conference in 1997. An impressive collection of four useful articles titled "Meeting the Demands: Teaching 'Soft' Skills" is available from the ERIC Digest. Many other articles like these and even books have come

out on the topic almost frequently. Most of these refer to and are based on the reports prepared by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, appointed by the US Department of Labour, usually abbreviated as SCANS. Their first report was published in 1992 and the second in 2000.

According to Cotton, three broad categories of soft skills can be identified in the SCANS report: basic skills, higher order thinking skills and affective skills and traits. Basic skills cover oral communication, reading, writing and basic arithmetic. Higher order thinking skills refer to problem solving, learning skills, creative thinking and decision-making. Affective skills and traits form the largest set of skills: dependability/responsibility, positive attitude to work, conscientiousness, punctuality, efficiency, interpersonal skills, cooperation, working as a team member, self-confidence, positive self-image, adaptability, flexibility, enthusiasm, motivation, self-discipline, self-management, appropriate dress, grooming, honesty, integrity and the ability to work without supervision.

Most studies have suggested that the best way to inculcate soft skills in the students is to introduce these skills in the school and college curriculum. Jacquline Waggoner has taken a step ahead and conducted a research study on how soft skills could be incorporated in a graduate course on Research Methods. She has focused on three major skills: Listening, Teamwork and Responsibility and asks all the professors a very interesting question: "When did it enter a professor's job description to teach students fundamental courtesy, social graces and collegiality while teaching the hard skills of inferential statistics?" Statistics derived on the basis of inferences can be replaced by any other subject in any given situation. It is clear that the job of teaching soft skills rests with all the teachers of every subject at each stage of education. This wide perspective is reflected in most programmes on soft skills throughout the world.

Britain

Like the US Government, the British Government also appointed the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Dearing. The Dearing Report came out in 1997 and suggested several measures to improve the quality of higher education in England, including development of seven major skills in the students which make them more employable. These skills are: problem-solving skills, communication skills, analytical skills, data analysis, critical appraisal, time management and team working. As the committee noted, these skills are required by every graduate and so it strongly recommended the development and inculcation of these skills in students while they are still in college. According to the report, all higher education institutions are obliged to maintain a student progress file which must include Personal Development Planning (PDP), career planning strategy for all students. (In this report and elsewhere, the term 'employability skills' is generally used for soft skills.) Nevertheless, the aim is clear: students should come out of colleges with

certain attributes and skills appreciated by the employers. A specific example of success in this direction is Napier University in Scotland, which has made remarkable strides in making its students more employable.

Germany

Dr Goeran Nieragden of Cologne, Germany, discusses the importance of soft skills in Business English curriculum and suggests useful ways to teach them to students. It is apparent that he is very clear about the global context of this issue when he says:

> "In a business world where a German marketing officer is sent to Japan by her employer, a Finnish telecommunication corporate, in order to negotiate joint ventures for the emerging markets of Eastern Europe, it is certainly good to know about the main differences between British and American English, but what this person is very likely to encounter and use herself, corresponds to neither variety."

Therefore, he argues that teaching of English should aim not only at linguistic competence but also linguistic awareness, cultural awareness and cultural competence. He firmly believes that all these can be achieved mainly through soft skills' training. He goes on to stress that technology per se in the form of CDs and online learning will not help because "70% of any information is communicated not via language but by other systems such as personal appearance and body language". Hence, for him personal and direct interaction between the trainer and the learners is crucial for the effective teaching of soft skills.

Australia

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) have identified a list of skills which make the Australian students more employable. The list includes initiative, communication, teamwork, technology, problem solving, management of self, planning and learning. Each of these skills has a subset of skills. For example, management of self comprises personal vision and goals, self-evaluation and monitoring, self-confidence, responsibility, etc. These skills are different from discipline-specific skills called knowledge or hard skills. Australian universities and colleges are expected to produce balanced and self-reliant graduates, not mere undergraduates and postgraduates.

Canada

Employability Skills 2000+ is a set of skills, procedures and suggestions for improving the employability skills of students in Canada. It was developed by

the members of the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Forum and the Business and Education Forum of Science, Technology and Mathematics. This set of skills is necessary for students to participate in today's dynamic professional world. The fundamental skills included are: communication, information management, numbers, problem solving, team work, project management, personal management, positive attitude and behaviour, responsibility, adaptability, life-long learning and working safely. Each of these skills has several components, for example, communication includes listening, speaking, reading, writing, using information and communication technologies, etc. These skills will be useful in a workplace and also in personal life. Students can easily assess their skills with the help of the Employability Skills Toolkit and then enhance their soft skills further to their benefit.

Eastern and Central Europe—Latvia

Tatjana Volkova and Thomas J. Schmidt argue that education towards soft skills development is essential for higher education in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in Latvia. They explain that the new economy and globalization require soft skills in the professionals in business and management systems. As the social and political order in this region has been historically authoritative and repressive for long, it is imperative to provide soft skills' education to both the teachers and the students. They strongly believe that knowledge economy, knowledge society, knowledge organization, knowledge worker and so on can operate effectively only when there is a workforce with sufficient training in soft skills.

Nepal

Even a small and landlocked country like Nepal is aware of the need for soft skills today. Writing for *The Rising Star* (12 October, 2006), Pradeep Chalise comments: "Most of us have a roster of trusted professionals—our family physician, our attorney and perhaps, even our therapist—to whom we turn when life goes awry, because they have the soft skills needed to keep us satisfied all the time." Particularly, Chalise advocates that the IT professionals are required to develop soft skills so that they can emerge as successful organizational leaders. This is his wish but the reality is different. He also goes on to say: "Most of the colleges in Nepal don't teach IT and engineering graduates how to get along with colleagues, be on teams, communicate well, follow productively or lead successfully." For him the need of the hour is to realize the importance of soft skills and provide for soft skills training in the college curriculum itself.

India

The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 1986) noticed the gap between the

education provided and the job requirements of various industries and hence stated that the students graduating from colleges were unemployable. The situation has not changed much till now, as is repeatedly pointed out by the industry and the National Association of Software Service Companies (NASSCOM). Due to the boom in IT and IT related fields and also due to the stiff competition from China, the educational administrators and other leaders are taking steps to introduce some generic skills which are essential for any job.

Actually, it is the private sector that has showed the way for introducing soft skills in the curriculum. One of the well-known private universities in the country, namely the ICFAI University gave strong impetus to the training of soft skills to its students, particularly MBA graduates. Perhaps, no other institution in the country has made such concerted efforts on soft skills. However, some universities and colleges have been making serious efforts in this direction. For example, Karunya University, a private university in Coimbatore, has established a separate Department of Soft Skills. Also, the Academic Staff College, a University Grants Commission (UGC) sponsored institution, of Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, conducted a Refresher Course for teachers of English on Employability Skills for Students in November 2006. Some of the universities in Andhra Pradesh have introduced a course in soft skills for their students at various stages of the curriculum. These and many other attempts to improve the employability skills of students will go a long way in shaping the future of India.

A pioneering effort in soft skills training for teachers took place in Tamil Nadu in the latter part of 2006. Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu (ELCOT), a Government of Tamil Nadu organization, sponsored a two-day training programme for teachers of English and also other subjects of engineering colleges and then for teachers of Arts and Science Colleges. A specialty of the ELCOT training programme is that the course content was prepared in collaboration with leading employers like Scope International, Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant Technology Solutions and Zansa. The course was conducted on the company premises by the company staff members and helped open the eyes of the teachers to the large gap in education and employment. Hopefully, this gap will be bridged by the teachers in the years to come. Such training programmes, if conducted on a large scale with every teacher of all the subjects, can surely bring about a revolution in the field of education.

Sarvesh Gulati has written a book *Corporate Soft Skills*, which can be profitably used by both teachers and students. Similarly, a concern called Train2Success has brought out nearly 28 video CDs on various topics like *Effective Communication*, *Creative Thinking* and *Interview Skills*. Educational administrators and teachers can exploit these materials in the classroom situation but, if training in soft skills is given to students only to test them, the whole enterprise may fail. The goal should be learning for life, not just for the examination. As far as possible,

all teachers of higher education may be involved in imparting soft skills to all students.

The following table of workers, knowledge workers and their characteristics indicate the paradigm shift in education, especially higher education.

	Workers	*Knowledge Workers*
1.	Past	Present
2.	Manual	Mental, technology driven
3.	Controlled	Guided and motivated
4.	Know-what	Know-how
5.	Public economy	Market economy
6.	Government monopolized	Competitive, entrepreneurial
7.	Production-oriented	Customer-oriented
8.	Single tasking, Routine	Multi-tasking, Challenging
9.	Discipline specific	Generic, employable
10.	Hard skills	Soft skills

This shift has taken place due to various reasons: economic, political, social, technological, ideological and even demographic. Workers in the past worked in protected public economy where they used more of their hands than their brains. They used their discipline-specific knowledge in a limited and well-defined context and usually performed their duties under the supervision of a senior or middle level manager. These workers' jobs were of a routine nature which demanded no imaginative response from them and their hard skills and daily supervision were enough for them. But today the working environment has changed radically and the economy is now controlled by market forces. The workers are always on their toes learning new kinds of skills and performing a wide a variety of tasks in a challenging and fiercely competitive environment. The soft skills acquired by them play a vital role in their jobs and in the life of the company for which they work. The industrial focus is not so much on production as on fulfilling the ever changing customer needs from different parts of the world. Obviously globalization, information and technology have changed the face of workers into knowledge workers. Hence, education, particularly higher education, has to produce knowledge workers with excellent soft skills.

If India has to succeed and sustain itself as a global player in every field, it is imperative that training in soft skills is given to every student from every educational institution, for 75% of the students of technical education and 85% of the students of general education are generally declared unemployable. The students from economically stronger families may attend a finishing school like Kolli Shetty's *3-Edge Solutions*, which charges from Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 45,000 per student for a six-to eight-week training programme. But most students cannot afford this costly training, and hence need soft skills support from the educational institutions. It is a moral obligation that all educational institutions must fulfil.

Resources for Soft Skills

Fortunately, resources for soft skills are aplenty. The Internet is a readily available rich resource for learning and teaching soft skills. Besides, a number of articles, interviews, comments, editorials, news analysis, etc., appear regularly in newspapers and magazines. Further, quite a few popular books dealing with this subject are easily available in the market. Some of the well-known books are: Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull*, Stephen R Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Loren Eiseley's *The Star Fish Thrower*, Sarvesh Gulati's *Corporate Soft Skills*, Burke Hedges's *The Parable of the Pipeline*, Spencer Johnson's *Who Moved My Cheese?*, Shiv Khera's *You Can Win* and Robin Sharma's *The Leadership Guide*. Additionally, autobiographies of great people like Benjamin Franklin and Dr Abdul Kalam are rich resources for learning these skills. Students themselves can read these books, or the teacher can guide the students into discussing them in the class in different forms like seminars and group discussions.

SUMMARY

Soft skills have gained currency today in the marketplace. If our students have to perform well in their interviews and at their workplaces, the teachers of English must reorient themselves to learn and teach soft skills to our students. Continuing with our old syllabus may pose a big problem for us as communication is only a portion of soft skills. In essence, we have to provide a holistic personality development education to our students. Of course, we can use our knowledge of literature and language, with new additions like Ruskin Bond and his short story "The Boy Who Broke the Bank". As the matter of prime importance today is soft skills, we have to understand them and help our students learn these skills with the help of such stories, or any other material for that matter.

Despite all these efforts, the general awareness about soft skills is still quite inadequate. Therefore, the need of the hour is to bring about large-scale awareness of soft skills, which are more important than the hard skills, among the public, the educational administrators, syllabus designers, textbook writers and students at large for the benefit of the country as a whole. There is also a need to develop adequate resources on soft skills and use these profitably. The soft skills cannot be taught overnight, but concerted efforts need to be taken at all levels of education.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are soft skills?
2. How are soft skills different from communication skills?
3. What role can an English teacher play in teaching soft skills?
4. How has 'soft skills' developed across the globe?
5. What is the status of soft skills teaching in India?

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Chapter

15

Thinking as a Communication Skill

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand the connection between thinking and communication skills
- Know how thinking is essential for communication
- Develop thinking skills
- Become an effective communicator

Traditionally, communication skills in general and language skills in particular refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Years of teaching and learning these skills from school level to college and university level show that there is always scope for further improvement in the students. Recently with the boom in the ITES sector, the lack of communication skills in students has been brought to the fore by the companies, as they keep on telling the educational institutions that the students passing out from most universities and colleges in most fields of study, especially engineering and technology, do not have the necessary communication skills when they go to colleges for recruitment. As a result, companies themselves and a number of private institutions have started training students not only in communication skills but also in soft skills. A careful analysis of the situation reveals that students do not get adequate training in thinking in relation

to communication skills, though a few experts have emphasized that language skills are, in fact, thinking skills. This chapter aims at examining thinking as a communication skill and suggests that thinking should be developed in students along with the four traditional communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing for development of effective communication skills.

Communication and Thinking

Joseph A. DeVito (1994) defines *communication* as a process that 'refers to the act, by one or more persons, of sending and receiving messages that are distorted by noise, occur within a context, have some effect and provide some oppor-tunity for feedback'. This may be verbal and non-verbal and the verbal may be oral and written. Oral includes listening and speaking and written comprises reading and writing. However, in all these forms of communication, thinking skill is embedded inextricably. James S. O'Rourke IV and Anubha Singh (2006) have written a book *Management Communication* based on the following two assumptions:

(i) Communication is a skill that can be learned, taught and improved.
(ii) Writing, speaking, listening and other communication behaviours are the end products of a process that begins with critical thinking.

Therefore, for any effective communication to take place some amount of good thinking is vital.

Language and Thinking

The medium of communication for humans is language, although the language may vary from people to people. Whatever language one may use, everyone has to use thinking while communicating. Hence, many scholars have observed the strong connection between language and thinking. John Chaffee (1985) asserts that 'using language is a thinking process' and strongly believes that there is a 'reciprocal and dynamic relationship between language and thinking'. He argues that both reading and writing are thinking processes involving cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Some of the cognitive skills which he finds in reading skills are 'classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, analogy and inferring or deducing conclusions based on supporting reasons'. Two important meta-cognitive skills that he identifies are problem-solving and critical reflection. Moreover, he maintains that these basic skills are 'needed for reading, writing, speaking and academic life in general'. According to Joseph Ponnaih (2007): "Learning a language is a thinking process that allows learners to grow and shape their personalities." He adds that thinking skill is an important component of education in today's world of fast developments in all areas of life. Hence, he

states convincingly that thinking 'affects all forms of communication, including listening, speaking, reading and writing'. If thinking is an essential aspect of all the four language skills, it is necessary to look at language skills individually in relation to thinking in the proper evolutionary order of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

▪▪ What is Listening?

For the most part of human life, listening is used often but it is one of the most neglected skills in the educational process. While making a case for an oral curriculum which will take care of listening and speaking skills, Marilyn H. Buckly unwittingly points to the significant connection between language skills and thinking. She bemoans: "Unfortunately, these teachers were not educated to think that listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the verbal thinking processes by which students come to know geography, history, and most other content areas". She further remarks: "Listening is thinking and the better a teacher develops the students' natural abilities, the better they think." Obviously, it is the job of the teacher to provide for training in listening to students with a focus on listening as a thinking skill.

In an email dialogue on 'Listening, Juggling and Travelling the Philosophical Space', Karin Murris answers Joanna Haynes's question regarding listening in this way: "Listening does require considerable effort; listening costs the listener; and children do not find listening harder than adults." She also claims: "Listening is not just a necessary condition for thinking, but listening is thinking." Haynes and Murris's chief interest is in exploring a philosophy of listening, which can be useful to teachers and students in the production and dissemination of knowledge. Nevertheless, their argument that listening is thinking is worth considering in the context of developing real communication skills among students.

▪▪ What is Speaking?

John Adair (1998) identifies six key principles of effective speaking:
  (i) Clarity
 (ii) Preparedness
(iii) Simplicity
 (iv) Vividness
  (v) Conciseness
 (vi) Naturalness

He explains: "Clarity is the cardinal principle of power or effectiveness in both speech and writing." Further, he asserts: "Clear thinking issues in clear utterance." He also adds that 'the intellectual skills of analysing, synthesizing and valuing' are required for clear speaking. In the same way, a public speaking tutorial on the

Internet categorically states that 'speaking is thinking'. The public speaker has to know his/her specific audience, select the main ideas for his audience, identify what is good and useful for them and examine the subject of speech thoroughly. All these cannot be done without adequate thinking.

▪▪ What is Reading?

If listening and speaking are thinking processes required for all human beings, reading and writing skills are of paramount importance for all educated human beings. Emmet A Bettes (1967) argues that reading is thinking. To quote Beaty's summary of Bettes, "Reading is not verbalism, but a process of arriving at conclusions. Reading is thinking. It is a process of problem-solving, abstracting, generalizing to form concepts, judging, and drawing conclusions." According to Vivian Franz (2004), reading is a process, 'a thinking process'. Further, she adds: "No one will ever read better than he or she who can think." For her, it is not enough to recognize words and pronounce them. Hence, she emphasizes the importance of reading comprehension as a skill for all students and for all subjects. To read means to read words; to read words means to understand the meaning of words. Thus, she stresses the value of extensive vocabulary development through extensive reading, which can be better performed with an understanding that reading is thinking.

For a person to be called literate and educated is to have learnt the skills of reading and writing. Then, word building is essential. When students read and write, they read and write words. Readingpage.com states: "Reading is thinking and reasoning—not merely recall of facts. Classroom instruction that supports students in linking ideas and making connections strengthens their ability to think and reason." While arguing for a new paradigm of reading, Sally Rings (1993) points to the fact that much of the reading process involves thinking. To support her point, she cites E.L. Thorndike's view that 'reading is thinking'. She also resorts to the cognitive view of reading as an interactive, holistic and problem-solving process. Further, she makes use of the concept of strategic reading, formulated by N. Collins and C. Smith. Above all, she relies on Neilson's notion of reading as an 'organic world view'. Thus, Rings proves beyond doubt that thinking has a crucial role in reading.

▪▪ What is Writing?

In the context of literary criticism, Bonnie Marranca (1985) says, "To live fully is to live it as an act of criticism. Writing is thinking and thought is language and to choose words is to imagine worlds. One reason to live is to have the luxury to know writing." Similarly, in his review of Craig Seligman's *Sontag and Kael*, Pradeep Sebastian (2004) quotes from a critic who observed: "Writing is not a

conduit to thinking, writing is thinking." Writing as thinking is the highest form of communication, that too at the creative and critical spheres.

Even at the level of the mundane world, writing is considered to be thinking. According to the mind quest academy, "Thinking and writing are interdependent processes; they depend on each other. We think to write and we write to think." The academy supports its view with a quotation from Donald Murray, a professor of writing at the University of New Hampshire: "Writing is thinking." Andrea Shen (2001) reports that a four-year study undertaken by Nancy Sommers and her colleagues at Harvard University Expository Writing Programme has come out with this conclusion: "Writing is learning, that writing is thinking." Finding that even the so-called good students at schools lack required writing abilities at the college level, the team went on to observe the writing needs of the college students over a four-year period and concluded that effective writing results from clear thinking. In fact, the Write Source training programme guide observes that writing is a life skill and proceeds to add that 'developing writing skills means developing thinking skills'. The students who attend this programme are expected to develop their thinking skills by learning how to choose and develop their own topics, find information, evaluate the quality of sources, think through relevant issues, formulate a thesis, support an argument and draw logical conclusions'. Writing is thus seen as a thinking skill in both creative life and day-to-day life.

Ian J. Quitadamo and Martha J. Kurtz (2007) provide a quite contrasting picture of the relationship between writing and thinking in their research. They argue that writing improves students' ability to think critically. Such a critical thinking skill is the need of the hour in the US. Hence, they have undertaken an experimental study to prove that writing can be used to enhance the critical thinking skills of students. Whether writing is used for developing thinking or thinking for writing, it is clear that writing and thinking are intimately interrelated.

▉▉ Thinking and Communication Skill

The interrelationship between language and thought is an abiding source of interest for philosophers, linguists and scholars of various disciplines. But no conclusive study has come out. Peter Mosenthal (1975) mentions five approaches to this issue:

  (i) Thinking is identical to speaking.
 (ii) Language is different from both speaking and thinking.
(iii) Speaking decides how one thinks.
 (iv) Thinking decides how one speaks.
  (v) A combination of mutual influence between thinking and speaking.

These various approaches indicate that thinking is closely related to language, especially speaking. To develop thinking skills is, then, to develop language and communication skills.

According to the British National Curriculum, the six key skills required for all children are:

 (i) Communication
 (ii) Application of number
(iii) Information technology
(iv) Working with others
 (v) Improving own learning and performance
(vi) Problem-solving

The curriculum also emphasizes thinking skills such as information processing skills, reasoning skills, enquiry skills, creative thinking skills and evaluation skills. What is important to note is the interconnection among various skills, particularly among language, thinking and communication skills, as observed by Carol Miller.

■■■ Thinking as the Primary Communication Skill

If listening, speaking, reading and writing are thinking processes, it is obvious that thinking is the most important skill that every student must develop in order to become an effective communicator. Sadly, however, it is not recognized by language teachers. It is high time that steps were taken to include thinking skills as part of the language curriculum right from school to college. According to an article on 'Direct Teaching of Thinking', Barry Beyer believes that thinking skills can be taught directly in the class. The skills he taught include classifying, comparing, evaluating, hypothesizing, sequencing, summarizing, decision-making and problem-solving. In the case of the US, educators and administrators are convinced about the need for including thinking skills in the school and college curriculum and they have been doing a good job. On the other hand, in the UK, opponents of thinking skills in the curriculum are more powerful than the supporters. Hence, the progress in this direction is slow in the UK. However, Higgins and Baumfield (1998) have offered a powerful defence of teaching general thinking skills, which every educator should consider. In the case of India, there is no question of a debate on the subject. Language teachers, not only of English but also of all Indian languages, are obliged to teach thinking skills, both creative and critical, to the teeming millions of youth in the country. If thinking is taught, then all other skills can easily be learnt. Hence, thinking is the primary communication skill today.

■■ Thinking Skills

The discussion of thinking as a communication skill has touched upon various thinking skills such as classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, analogy, inferring or deducing meanings, drawing conclusions, problem solving, critical reflection, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, abstracting, generalizing to form concepts, judgment, hypothesizing, sequencing, summarizing, decision-making, working with others and improving own learning.

Benjamin Bloom has classified these into a taxonomy of educational objectives under six heads: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The British National Curriculum has also identified five major thinking skills: information processing, reasoning, enquiry, creative thinking and evaluation. Each of these skills is further spelled out in detail. The first, information processing skill, refers to finding relevant information, sorting, classifying and sequencing information, comparing and contrasting information and identifying and analysing relationships. The second, reasoning, comprises skills like giving reasons for opinions and actions, inferring, making deductions, making informed judgments and decisions and using precise language to reason. The third enquiry covers skills like asking questions, defining questions for enquiry, planning research, predicting outcomes, anticipating consequences and drawing conclusions. The fourth, creative thinking, comprises the skills of generating ideas, developing ideas, hypothesizing, applying imagination and seeking innovative alternatives. The last, evaluation, includes the skills of developing evaluation criteria, applying evaluation and judging the value of information and ideas.

John Butterworth and Geoff Thwaites (2006) have discussed most thinking skills under two broad categories in their book *Thinking Skills*. The first category is called critical thinking and it includes skills like logical reasoning (argument), inference, explanation, evaluation, analysis and synthesis. The second category refers to problem solving skills which encompass such skills as selecting information, processing data, identifying problems, finding solutions, recognizing patterns, choice and decision and using imagination. This book is meant as a textbook for teaching thinking skills at the higher education level. It is possible to include all these skills in the language curriculum at college and university stages to impart thinking skills to the students.

Thus, Bloom's taxonomy, the National Curriculum thinking skills and Butterworth and Thwaites's textbook point to the fact that the general and specific thinking skills are related in more than one way to the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, it is not surprising to consider thinking a communication skill of natural and immediate importance.

██ ██ ▉ The Hand of Communication Skills

To understand the importance of all communication skills, particularly that of thinking, the hand with its five fingers may be imagined. If the little finger is listening, if the ring finger is speaking, if the middle finger is reading and if the pointing finger is writing, then the thumb is thinking. All the four fingers can be effectively used only when the thumb is present. If there is no thumb, the four fingers are useless. In the same way, all the four language skills which are generally taught to the students are useless without the thumb of thinking skill. Incidentally, thumb in its upward position represents victory non-verbally. Without the thumb, students do not get victory in their life. Similarly, without thinking, students do not acquire adequate proficiency in communication skills. Consequently, it is imperative to develop thinking as a communication skill in students, if they have to become successful in their chosen life.

SUMMARY

To conclude, communication skills in general and the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in particular, are essentially thinking skills, including cognitive and metacognitive skills. A sample review of literature reveals that listening is thinking, speaking is thinking, reading is thinking and writing is thinking. It can safely be assumed that any attempt to develop communication skills without developing thinking skills is bound to meet with failure. It may be argued that developing communication skills can develop thinking skills. However, decades of teaching language skills in isolation have proved that students do not acquire true communication skills not only in India but also in the US and the UK. The latter countries woke up to this reality long ago and they have successfully implemented a programme on critical skills for their students. It is of utmost importance to include and inculcate thinking skills for Indian students, if India has to compete in the international scenario in every walk of life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is thinking related to communication?
2. How can we think without language?
3. How are all language skills thinking skills?
4. What are the best ways to become best communicators?
5. How are educational objectives connected with thinking?

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Chapter

16

Teaching Non-Verbal Communication skills

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand the non-verbal communication skills
- Teach non-verbal communication skills to students
- Know how to evaluate the proficiency of non-verbal communication skills
- Prepare resources for teaching non-verbal communication skills

It is appreciated globally today that communication skills are indispensable for all professionals, particularly, managers, engineers and technologists (Riemer and Jansen 2003). Every employer advertises job vacancies, specifying required technical qualifications. In addition, the employer also mentions 'good/excellent communication skills' along with the eligibility criteria. Generally, communication skills refer to proficiency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the addition of soft skills to eligibility criteria

has opened up a new set of skills, including non-verbal communication skills. Hence, non-verbal communication skills have gained importance and attention in the globalized context (Jiu-liang 2007). M.M.T. Hassan (2007) has discussed this problem with reference to teachers' non-verbal behaviour in the Pakistani context. However, the English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals in India are yet to wake up to the reality of teaching and testing these skills in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. With a brief review and discussion of the importance of non-verbal communication skills, this chapter suggests ways and means to teach and test these skills in the Indian ESL classroom.

Background

Charles Darwin is well known for his book *The Origin of Species* in which he expounded the theory of evolution. But his book *Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, published in 1872, is not so well known to the world, particularly ELT professionals. Exactly a hundred years later, Albert Mehrabian, an American anthropologist, came out with his seminal volume *Non-Verbal Communication* in 1972. These two studies have contributed to a rich understanding of non-verbal communication in human life, but have hardly attracted the attention of ELT professionals whose focus has until recently been on communicative competence, which includes four types of competencies, as outlined by M Canale and Michael Swain (1980): (a) grammatical, (b) discourse, (c) strategic and (d) sociolinguistic. More specifically, Alistair Pennycrook (1985) published an article on 'Actions Speak Louder than Words: Paralanguage, Communication and Education'. Even then, it is rare to find a significant full-fledged study of non-verbal communication (NVC) in the ESL context, though communication and NVC always go together. In fact, it has come to be well-recognized that NVC plays more than 90 per cent of role in any communication in any given context. How language teachers missed this primary mode of communication in their teaching is very strange to communication professionals and language learners today.

Reasons for Lack of Interest in NVC

Donna Fujimoto (2003) explains some possible reasons for lack of adequate interest in NVC. She observes: "Perhaps non-verbal communication has not received much attention because so much of our non-verbal behaviour is unconscious and it is [probably] assumed that non-verbal behaviours will be picked up naturally by learners as they become more fluent." Fujimoto's observation is relevant to any language learning context. In an L2 or L3 context where language is learnt consciously, NVC should have been given priority. Unfortunately, NVC

has largely escaped the attention of ELT professionals. Even after becoming fluent in L2 or L3, NVC remains a stumbling block for most students. Therefore, she argues that NVC should be incorporated in the ESL curriculum. Similarly, Tammy S. Gregersen examines the pedagogical implications of NVC and offers three useful ways to implement teaching of NVC in the classroom: use of video, drama and role play and interviews. All these three techniques can easily be used in the class with some extra effort from the teacher. Linda Quinn Allan (1999) offers a succinct review of NVC in the context of learning a foreign language. She reiterates that teachers should be trained in NVC to help their students acquire a foreign language successfully.

■■■ Amazing Facts

Fascinating statistical details are available for the significance of NVC. Studies by G Bateson and Daniel Goleman claim that 90 per cent of communication takes place non-verbally (Fujimoto 2003, Riemer and Jansen 2003). Another study records that about 82 per cent of communication is carried on through the non-verbal medium (Riemer and Jansen 2003). Yet another study lowers the percentage to 65 (Lewis 2005). In all, these different studies show that nearly three fourth of communication is conducted not via the spoken or written word but through the non-verbal system unique to each language. Mehrabian's statistical account is even more startling. He attributes 55 per cent of communication to visual elements like gestures, postures and physical movements. He ascribes 38 per cent of communication to vocal elements, such as intonation, pitch and volume. And finally, he allots only 7 per cent to verbal elements which comprise words, both spoken and written (Sen 2007). These startling accounts are enough to persuade any sensible ELT professional to change the focus of teaching from communication skills to non-verbal communication skills.

■■■ Communication

Communication means the process of sending and receiving information between the sender and the receiver through a medium and a channel with a message in the environment of noise with some feedback (DeVito 1994). The sender and the receiver, in the context of human communication, are human beings who use various parts of their body for the purpose of communication. The mechanical communications systems like radio, TV, telegraph, the Internet, mobile, pager, walkie-talkie, etc., are extensions of the human body and, in some cases, the human mind.

All five senses besides the sixth sense are crucial for effective communication to take place. For the major four communication skills of listening, speaking,

reading and writing cannot be carried out without the effective functioning of the sense organs. Effective listening requires perfect ears, effective speaking lips, mouth, tongue, larynx and the like, effective reading good eyesight and effective writing flexible fingers. The four skills cannot be operated well, if the sixth sense called thinking is inadequate. Even illiterate people are able to communicate effectively through listening and speaking with good use of their intelligence and body language.

People with difficulties in seeing, hearing, speaking, or writing are compensated in some way to manage their communication perfectly. In the educational context, especially teaching of English at the school, college and university levels, most normal students are unable to communicate well not only in English but also in their mother tongue for reasons not related to teaching of English or regional languages but to communicative behaviour inherited from home, society, school, college and university.

What is needed then is to go beyond the realm of teaching a particular language which is a tool that one should be able to pick up in a short time but to cultivate proper and effective communicative behaviour in the students. Obviously, one of the highlights of this task is to focus on sensitizing students to use all parts of the body which are necessary for good communication. To achieve this goal any language or any text could be found useful. It depends upon the teacher to extend his communicative resources to reach out to the students.

Then what can the ELT professionals do? First, they have to understand their own NVC and, second, they have to help their students develop their NVC for effective teaching and learning of any second or foreign language. Toward this end, the various forms and functions of NVC are discussed. Thereafter, a few suggestions are given to observe the NVC in real life situations and in the classroom. Next, efforts are made to provide tips for teaching and testing NVC in the class and perhaps in the university examinations.

Forms of NVC

NVC is a field of interesting study for scholars in communication research, social psychology, anthropology, etc. It encompasses several areas, each with a distinct name and nature of its own. Leena Sen (2007) mentions and discusses six of them in detail:

(a) Kinesics
(b) Occulesics
(c) Paralinguistics
(d) Proxemics
(e) Artifactics
(f) Chronemics
(g) Tactilics

While Steve Darn mentions 'olfactics', Simon Capper (2000) discusses breathing also as a form of powerful NVC.

Kinesics refers to all movements of the body, head, hand, trunk and legs. These movements are known as posture, carriage, nods, gestures, etc. They have several communicative functions: they convey both positive and negative responses like agreement, disagreement, doubt, fear, anger, nervousness, anxiety, etc. A confident or diffident communicator will exhibit certain traits through these non-verbal channels.

Occulesics points to the movements of the eyes. It is believed that of all sense organs eyes cannot lie. The eyes are usually expressive, whether open or closed or half open, winking or blinking, gazing or staring. That is why eye contact is emphasized in communication. If the eye contact is lost, there is the possibility of no communication at all. Good rapport with the audience is well built through strategic eye contacts with all present before the speaker. The six emotions of fear, disgust, anger, sadness, surprise and happiness (FDASSH) can usually be identified with the help of eyes. Hence, it is said, 'Eyes are windows to the soul.' The well-known proverb 'Face is the index of the mind' also emphasizes the whole of face, particularly the eyes.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Paralinguistics deals with all elements of voice other than words. That is why, it is also known as vocalics. It denotes pitch, tone, volume, tempo, rhythm, modulation, accent, stress, pause and other qualities associated with the production of speech sounds. These are distinct from words uttered or written, for some of these features are captured in writing through certain punctuation marks. Actually people have their individual paralinguistic identities which, well exploited, can add to developing a great personality out of an ordinary person. These features are given due attention in theatrical arts for actors and actresses.

Proxemics is defined as the scientific study of space used by people around them and between people. It accentuates the territorial sense that humans have. If the distance is more, the relationship is less. If the distance is close, the relationship is also likely to be strong. The proverb 'out of sight, out of mind', stresses the need for people to be in close proximity. Too much closeness can also be a nuisance. This is emphasized by another proverb, 'familiarity breeds contempt'. Probably, this may also explain why 'distance lends enchantment to the view'.

Artifactics is an umbrella term covering several features: appearance, clothing, style, personal objects like pens, cell phones, and briefcases. It may also include certain brands of objects a person uses, for example, perfume, motorbike and car. Shakespeare said, 'For apparel often proclaims the man'. External appearance may not be exactly important. But this gives the first impression to any body. Talent or stuff alone is not enough today to succeed in life. Hence, artifactics needs attention from the communicators.

Chronemics is the study of how people use time to live their life, both personal and professional. Punctuality is a valuable trait for everybody. But this is not exactly true in all cultures. The Western culture pays minute attention to time. On the contrary, the Eastern culture does not think of time seriously because the concept of time here is cyclical. So, there is no sense of urgency, deadline or appointed time. In the global era today, both cultures have to understand each other to communicate well. It is relevant to note the proverb, 'time and tide wait for none'. Another proverb, 'the early bird catches the worm' also points to the effective use of time.

Also known as haptics, tactilics refers to the touch behaviour of people. In family and close social circles touching one another may be permitted. Here too there may be some restrictions – who can touch whom and where and for how long. A mother and child can hug and embrace each other for a long time. But in social and professional situations, handshakes or pats on the shoulder are common, of course with some constraints. When these unwritten and conventional rules are broken, communication breaks down with serious consequences.

Using the nose some people can communicate effectively or ineffectively. This area falls under the head of olfactics. Good body odour or deodorant is conducive for communication. But bad smell from the mouth and body can cause serious problems in communication. People will not accept such foul-mouthed and foul-bodied persons. Hence, the deodorant and toothpaste industries are making unimaginable profits. What has to be done is to find the root causes of bad smells and remove them. Temporary solutions may not be good in the long run.

All these areas of kinesics, occulesics, paralinguistics, proxemics, artifactics, chronemics, tactilics and olfactics have to be brought into the ESL classroom with relevant input specific to the culture of English as it is used in different countries of the world. Only then teaching and learning of English will be very effective in the global village today.

Functions of NVC

Various forms of NVC are discussed in all literature on human communication precisely because they have certain very important functions in the daily life of human beings. In fact, humans started their life with communication mainly through some primitive sounds and signs which are in use even today. Hargie, Dickson and Tourish (2005) identify eight distinct functions of NVC. As emblems, NVC replaces language. Second, it complements language with demonstrative gestures. Third, it contradicts what the speaker says. Fourth, it conveys emotions and interpersonal attitudes. Fifth, it reveals the personal, social and cultural identity of speakers. Sixth, it plays a vital role in establishing or ending an interpersonal relationship. Seventh, it regulates conversation in the sense it gives clues for taking turns or keeping silent. And lastly, it contextualizes

the whole interaction; formal or informal or semiformal situations are made explicit with the help of NVC.

◼◼ NVC in Virtual Environment

The significance of NVC, especially of facial expression, in collaborative virtual environments (CVEs) is well understood by researchers in the field. In direct human communication, aspects of NVC are noticed and responded to appropriately. With the phenomenal growth of virtual reality, it has become imperative to encode emotions along with textual messages to ensure effective communication. M. Fabri, D.J. Moore and D.J. Hobbs observe that NVC is 'vital for building trusting, productive relationships that go beyond the purely factual and task-oriented communication'. They also reveal that NVC is no less significant in mental processes like decision-making and problem-solving. Hence, they undertook an experimental study to design and develop expressive agents for the six most widely known emotions—fear, disgust, anger, sadness, surprise and happiness (FDASSH)—as discussed by P. Ekman, W.V. Friesen and P. Ellsworth in their book *Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings*. They report positive results, notwithstanding problematic variables like subjectivity, context and ambiguity.

◼◼ Observations in Life

In order to teach NVC effectively, ELT professionals or teachers in general need to open up their eyes and observe the various forms of NVC in real life situations: at home, on the street, in the market, in offices, in social gatherings, etc. Some people are more effective as communicators than some others, irrespective of the language they use. Here are a few questions to ponder. Why do bus conductors, vendors, auctioneers, lawyers, politicians, preachers, teachers, etc., usually shout loudly with all kinds of gesticulations, particularly with their hands, showing directions and objects? Why do children cry, laugh and play sometimes violently? Why are horns, conchs, trumpets, drums, bells, etc., sounded at a high pitch with high volume? Why is a singer accompanied by several instrumentalists playing different instruments? Why are banners, billboards, cut-outs and larger than life real objects employed in everyday advertisements? Why are signs, signals, symbols, etc. designed and deployed extensively in religion, politics, science, business, etc? These questions, among others, will surely raise the awareness of teachers and thereby of students about NVC.

■■ Observations in Classroom

It is interesting to observe the non-verbal behaviour of both teachers and students in the classroom and the campus. Some are eager, some are enthusiastic, some are jubilant, some are interactive, some are receptive, some are attentive, some are well-disposed, some are diligent, some are neat and clean, some are purposeful, etc. The positive list is endless. Some drag their feet, some drum their benches, some play with their press type pens, some are unshaven and unkempt, some shirts and blouses are not buttoned properly, some have illegible handwriting, some have low voice, some do not contact the eyes of others, etc. Again the negative list is endless. If the teachers are aware of these endless possibilities, they will not depend on words alone to instruct the students. First, they will exhibit most positive NVC themselves and build excellent rapport with the learners. Next, they will enable the learners to understand, accept and practice NVC carefully, consciously and joyfully for productive education in English.

■■ NVC in the Syllabus and Textbook

The teachers may understand NVC, but how do they bring it to the syllabus and the textbook? Once they are conscious of the need for NVC, they can talk about it with their colleagues, discuss it in seminars and conferences and draw the attention of the educational administrators, including members of the board of studies in English. Everything may not succeed at the very first attempt. Hence, repeated attempts have to be made to see that NVC is part of the syllabus as a unit, if not as a separate course. Once it is found on the syllabus, the textbook writers will be compelled to include NVC in their textbooks. Initially, some books by foreign authors may be used. In course of time, local authors will incorporate NVC in their books for their own survival. Actually, the general public is interested in books like Allan Pease's *Body Language* and G.I. Nierenberg and H.C. Calero's *How to Read a Person Like a Book*. Then what can prevent academic bodies to accommodate NVC in the syllabus and in the textbook?

■■ Teaching NVC in the Classroom

Research reveals that the teachers' non-verbal behaviour in the class has a direct impact on the students (Hassan 2007). Therefore, best teaching of non-verbal communication skills can start with an examination of the non-verbal behaviour of the teacher by the students in the class. For this purpose, a checklist of the following kind can be used:

1. Is the teacher's appearance pleasant?
2. Is the teacher's voice audible to all the students?

3. Is the teacher's voice neutralized, i.e., clear and intelligible to all the students?
4. Does the teacher give pauses and silent moments in the conversation?
5. Does the teacher employ a variety of tones to emphasize and clarify different points and emotions that go with them?
6. Is the teacher well dressed?
7. Does the teacher care for his hair?
8. Are the teacher's eyes expressive and suggestive?
9. Does the teacher have eye contact with all students?
10. Does the teacher go near every student and have good interaction with all students?
11. Does the teacher use the board, overhead projector, or LCD projector neatly and effectively?
12. Does the teacher take care of his body odour?
13. Does the teacher shake hands with or pat students frequently?
14. Is the teacher always cheerful and enthusiastic?
15. Does the teacher have a smile and respond to smiles from students?
16. Does the teacher move around the whole class?
17. Does the teacher use his hands to indicate size, length, height, or depth, etc?
18. Does the teacher carry his body straight, without stooping or bending sideways unusually?
19. Does the teacher use time effectively, i.e., being punctual and not stretching the class?
20. Does the teacher listen to any noise made by students, i.e., drumming, humming, etc.?

A few more points can be added to this checklist and it can be refined. A similar but improved checklist can also be used to examine the non-verbal skills of students. These checklists can suitably be used in any context to assess the non-verbal behaviour of both teachers and students thereby paving the way for improving their non-verbal communication skills.

Resources for Teaching NVC

Movie is a good resource for teaching NVC in the class. The movie may be in any language or it can even be a silent movie. Animation pictures can also be used effectively in the class. For example, Toni Long (1998) explains how he used *Date with an Angel* in a class for teaching the non-verbal skills of eye gazing, facial expression, spontaneous communication, kinesics and physical appearance. Clippings displaying these aspects were shown to the students, followed by a discussion of how effectively the characters Jim, his father and the Angel employed these skills. Long adds that other non-verbal skills can also be taught

using the same film. In this context, it may be mentioned that the famous film *Pygmalion*, which, in fact, deals with learning sophisticated English, can very well be exploited in the class for several hours. Screening some TV shows in the class can also help the students. In all these cases, students should be made aware of how the whole human body is actively involved in any communication.

Literature is often used in teaching verbal communication skills. It can also offer great scope for NVC skills, if understood and applied well. In fact, great literature is never pure words. It moves beyond words to images, i.e. pictorial representation of all actions and silences of humankind. To give an example from R K Narayan's short story, "An Astrologer's Day," consider the flame from lighting a match and the face of the client being revealed momentarily through the flicker of light. What an enormous power of non-verbal communication is conveyed through this flame! This moment of non-verbal revelation saves the astrologer from being killed by the client. Similarly, another example can be had from O Henry's famous short story "After Twenty Years." When the cop is waiting to meet his friend at an appointed place after twenty years, he finds through the flicker of a light from a match stick that his friend is the most wanted person by the police. Hence, he goes back to send another cop to arrest his friend so that he can save himself from the embarrassment of arresting his own friend when they are meeting after such a long time. Poetry, drama, novel and all other forms of literature have rich potential for teaching NVC skills in the class. If literary texts are used in this way in the classroom, students' NVC skills can surely be developed.

The Centre for Nonverbal Studies Press has an online dictionary of all signs of the world with interpretations in alphabetical order. The dictionary has been compiled based on research studies in various disciplines with relevant sources. It is a free website maintained by Dr David B. Givens, the director of the Centre for Non-verbal Studies, a private and non-profit research centre located in Spokane, Washington. This dictionary can be of great help to both teachers and students.

▪▪ Testing of NVC Skills

Teaching of NVC skills may be carried out in the class. However, how to test these skills may be a serious problem for both administrators and teachers. It is here the role of the creative teacher comes in to prepare a model question paper and possibly a question bank also. Every university has a question paper pattern, which has to be followed for the course on NVC skills. For example, Anna University has 10 objective type short questions in Part A, each carrying two marks and five descriptive type either or essay questions in Part B, each carrying 16 marks. The short questions can then be on various terms used in NVC. Question types which can be included here are: match the following, fill the blanks, sentence completion, true or false, definition of terms, odd one

out, etc. In Part B several case studies illustrating various non-verbal behaviours can be given. The students can be asked to analyse the situations and bring out the significance of different non-verbal behaviours for the effectiveness of communication. In fact, these types of questions are found in courses on business communication. To extend them further to a full-fledged course on NVC should not pose any problems at all. In course of time, teaching and testing NVC will become a routine job for all teachers and students too.

SUMMARY

To conclude, the significance of non-verbal communication skills has come to be realized now in the global village where education is largely employment-oriented. There may be several reasons for the lack of interest in NVC but the amazing facts from Charles Darwin, Albert Mehrabian and others necessitate teaching the various forms and functions of NVC today. Real-life observations support the need for including NVC in the syllabus and the textbook, preferably as a separate course for every graduate. A checklist on NVC is very useful in assessing and understanding teachers' NVC. A plenty of resources is available in the form of movies, short stories and other genres. Testing of NVC skills is easy to handle with a little imagination from administrators and teachers. Overall, both teachers and students will be benefited from the teaching of non-verbal communication skills in the Indian ESL classroom. If human beings do not communicate by words alone as revealed by several studies, teaching of communication skills in English or any language for that matter must focus primarily on non-verbal communications. Only then the real soft skills required for the global market can be provided to the students.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is human language always body language?
2. How do different parts of the body help in effective communication?
3. Why is it necessary to teach non-verbal communication skills?
4. How can we bring non-verbal communication skills into the syllabus for teaching and testing?
5. What do you know about your own non-verbal communication?

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Chapter

17

The Proverbial Teaching of English

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Know the enormous potential of proverbs for teaching English
- Use proverbs for teaching soft skills
- Modify proverbs to suit any topic, especially learning and teaching English
- Shift from a noun-based teaching of English to a verb-based teaching of English

Everything you write or say should pass through three gates:
Is this kind? Is this necessary? Is this true?

—An Arabian proverb

According to *The New Book of Knowledge*, 'A proverb is a traditional saying that sums up a situation, passes judgment on a past matter, or recommends a course of action for the future.' It may convey a fact as in the case of 'honesty is the best policy' or it may use a metaphorical expression like "don't cry over spilt milk." It has a specific structure—contains a topic and a comment on it. Even when the proverb is very short like that of 'money talks', the structure is very clear. The topic is money and 'talks' indicates what money does. The proverb may have an alternative within it, for example, 'sink or swim'. It may give an equation like 'small is beautiful'. It may embody a contrast, for example in 'a

good beginning makes a good ending.' It may even have a wonderful parallelism as in 'waste not, want not'. Some of the proverbs have a beautiful rhyme and rhythm in them, for example 'many a mickle makes a muckle'. These proverbs and many others have come down to us from folklore and olden literature. They are an essential fibre of our culture. Though each culture may have different proverbs, there is a key principle among them, which is to guide humanity in the right path with the best wisdom of mankind.

■■■ Proverbs in English Classes

As we grow up in life, we just happen to learn a number of proverbs in our own mother tongue. As second language learners, we are also exposed to a variety of proverbs in different contexts. Moral stories are usually summed up in the form a proverb. For example, the story of the tortoise and the hare ends with 'slow and steady wins the race'. Similarly, the story of the crow getting water from the bottom of a pot ends with 'where there is a will, there is a way'. In the case of the Bible, an entire book is available in the form of Proverbs. Most of *the Jataka Tales* and *the Panchatantra Tales* highlight the age old wisdom of these proverbs. As we learn English, we are given an exercise in expanding a proverb into a paragraph or an essay. Some of the proverbs used for this purpose are 'Honesty is the best policy', 'Look before you leap', and 'United we stand, divided we fall'. Generally, we have enjoyed these activities as children. Those of us who enjoy learning proverbs are really good at using English. Therefore, a conscious attempt has been made in this chapter to emphasize use of proverbs extensively in the English classroom for the purpose of learning and teaching English. The title of this chapter, The Pro-verbial Teaching of English, indicates that a verb-based teaching of English would be more fruitful than a noun-based teaching of English that is currently in vogue.

Daily Proverbs on the Board: An Activity

One of the activities we did in our classroom to teach through proverbs was to write a quotation on the board every day. It so happened that some days we had some proverbs on the board. One day, we had the proverb "birds of the same feather flock together". On seeing this, I turned it into 'punctuation and punctuality go together'. Then it occurred to me that we could use a number of proverbs and convert them to suit the context of learning and teaching English. In course of time, the students were able to come up with interesting examples. Some of them are given below:

S. No.	Proverbs	Changed form
1.	No pain, no gain.	No vocabulary, no communication.
2.	Good fences make good neighbours.	Good words make good sentences.
3.	Calm before storm.	Past tense before present tense.
4.	A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.	A word in the mind is worth two in the dictionary.

In addition to this, we also expanded the converted proverbs into small paragraphs. For example, the proverb 'Rome was not built in day' was changed to 'Vocabulary is not built in a day'. The expansion of the modified proverb is presented below:

Rome was the capital of the ancient Roman Empire. It was not built in a day. History tells us about Taj Mahal built by Shah Jahan and how many years he took to build such a monument of love for his queen. Similarly, our country is being built since 1947. Today, we have many dams, industries, nuclear reactors, power projects, missiles, space programmes, schools and colleges, hospitals of high quality, and so on. All these have taken several years to come to exist. Thousands of hectares of land came under cultivation, but not in a day. Our green revolution or our white revolution was not achieved in a day. Nagasaki and Hiroshima were ruined by atom bombs but these Japanese cities rose again. A lot of funds, many years, people's energy and determination made it possible. Thus, we see that nothing can be achieved in a day. We have to work hard for many years to build anything. This is true even for character building. And it is very much applicable to language learning, especially, vocabulary building. Hence, it is appropriate to say that vocabulary is not built in a day.

Grammar Through Proverbs

A close look at the proverbs reveals that almost the entire grammar of English can be taught through them. Examples for different kinds of sentences can be given to the students from proverbs: Statements, Imperatives, Interrogatives and Exclamations. Any number of examples can be cited for statements, such as 'two heads are better than one' and 'actions speak louder than words'. For imperatives, we may have proverbs like 'look before you leap' and 'waste not, want not. Similarly, for simple, compound and complex sentences we may have several proverbs. Most proverbs are simple sentences and some are compound like 'a candle lights others and consumes itself'. However, there are many complex sentences in proverbs like 'faults are thick where love is thin'. For basic sentence structures too, we may have a few examples like 'time flies', 'knowledge is power' and 'practice makes a perfect man'. Various tense forms, active voice and passive voice, gerund, infinitive, prepositions, conjunctions and the like can easily be spotted in proverbs and brought to the notice of students.

A special case like comparative adjectives can meaningfully be taught through proverbs. We have already mentioned the proverb, 'actions speak louder than

words'. We have many others such as 'prevention is better than cure', 'truth is stranger than fiction', and 'the pen is mightier than the sword'.

Another interesting proverb is 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away'. It can very well be used for teaching the articles in English—'a', 'an' and 'the'. The students will appreciate the value of a good example for these three articles in single sentence.

It is well known that proverbs can support any view. Sometimes we have glaring contradictions and both appear to be true. For instance, 'two heads are better than one' and 'too many cooks spoil the broth' are opposed to each other. These two proverbs can well be used while teaching small group communication in the context of group discussion or meetings. Instead of us telling the advantages and disadvantages of group communication, we may ask the students to come up with these proverbs. If they have any difficulty, we may give some clues to help them. It is not that we have to confine ourselves to English proverbs. In fact, we can encourage students to make use of proverbs from their own mother tongue and further ask them to translate the same into English. Thus, the activity of learning English will be very meaningful.

Primacy of Verbs

Most grammar books and textbooks of English tend to give importance to nouns and adjectives rather than verbs and adverbs. This may be one of the strong reasons for the poor mastery of English by our students who learn English for over 12 years. It is high time that we understood the significance of verbs and adverbs in the learning process and adopted a pro-verbial teaching of English. We know well that verbs are action words and they indicate the time of the action. Hence, they are closely related to tense in English. For instance, the classic sentence 'Rama killed Ravana' will not have much meaning without 'kill' in the past form 'killed'. As a proverb says, 'variety is the spice of life'. In communication, various shades of meaning are conveyed mainly through verbs and the adverbs that go with them.

Proverbs and Soft Skills

Every soft skill could be better introduced through some proverbs. The ten most important soft skills are: Listening, Emotional intelligence, Teamwork, Learning, Assertiveness, Adaptability, Interview, Problem-Solving, Non-verbal Communication and Written Communication. We can have a proverb for each of these skills and the students can discuss them in the class with reference to each skill and the story that goes with it. For instance, the proverb 'union is strength' is very much meaningful for teaching team skills. For another instance, the proverb 'listening requires more intelligence than speaking' tells us about how difficult it

is for us to listen without taking voluntary mental effort. In order to understand the importance of non-verbal communication, we have many proverbs. Here is a sample: 'Face is the index of the mind.' Another proverb, 'appearances are deceptive' is very significant from a philosophical point of view as well.

SUMMARY

Interest of the teacher and the students is the limit to exploiting proverbs for teaching English and communication skills. After all, 'where there is a will, there is a way'. As J.N. Hook observes in *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 'The language' of a proverb is 'picturesque and simple'. This simple and pictorial communication is very effective with all people, irrespective of their educational or social background. We can effectively use proverbs in our learning and teaching of English.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the general uses of proverbs?
2. How are proverbs useful in language teaching?
3. How can proverbs be used to teach soft skills?
4. How are proverbs powerful and attractive?
5. Why is it necessary to learn more about verbs than nouns of a language?

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Chapter

18

An Indian Experiment in English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Understand the practice of English for Specific Purposes and Communicative Language Teaching
- Evaluate English for Specific Purposes and Communicative Language Teaching in the context of globalization
- Meet the industry demands from educational institutions
- Suggest measures for accommodating literature in the language classroom

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) reached India through the British Council in the 1980s. Along with ESP came Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to English Language Teaching (ELT). The British Council scholars of both Britain and India were able to muster enough support for the idea of ESP and CLT. They persuaded Anna University authorities to undertake the Key English Language Teaching (KELT) project in 1988. As a part of the KELT project, three

professors from the Department of English, Anna University, went to Thames Valley University (formerly Ealing Coillege of Higher Education), London, for a one-year MA programme. On their return, the staff of the Department of English produced materials for teaching of English to engineers and technologists. The staff also were fortunate to have the guidance of expert professors from Thames Valley University, especially, Ms Pauline Barr, Ms Susan Axbey and Mr Richard Hornsey. The project was novel and the idea of ESP was novel. There was an air of confidence and new direction in the field of ELT in Chennai. The pioneering work resulted in the publication of two volumes of a classic textbook, *English for Engineers and Technologists*. While Anna University took the lead to introduce ESP and CLT into the curriculum, other universities remained spectators for long. Even today, some universities continue to cling on to the same old traditional set of materials and methodology for ELT.

The developments at Anna University promised a bright future for the young professionals who came to engineering and technology as far as English language was concerned. The literary texts with explicit focus on grammar teaching and the essay type questions went out of use. The teachers started using the interactive approach to teaching English wherein learners had the most important role to play. Initially, the course on English was carried out somewhat satisfactorily. The class size was rather small. Even when there were large classes, they were divided into two groups. The workload for the teachers was considerably less. With the passage of time, the old staff members who were part of the material production started to retire or leave the university. The number of old staff members got reduced but the number of students in each branch of engineering began to double, treble, or even quadruple. Large class became the order of the day. Large classroom remains a big challenge for teachers of English. The textbook became outdated. However, the textbook was revised twice once in two volumes in 2002 and again in a combined edition in 2006. Revising the book alone was not a solution. Employers began to voice their opinion on the kind of skills expected of engineering graduates. In response to this, a one-semester new course on communication skills laboratory was introduced. Theory or lab-oriented courses, English and communication skills could not escape the rigid pattern of the examination system of Anna University. Further, a peculiar challenge is the large number of first generation learners of English. Thus, the entire enterprise of ELT in India, as seen in the case of Anna University, is an enigma even to insiders.

Against this backdrop, it is a useful idea to examine the syllabus and textbook which have been followed by Anna University over the years. After an examination of the current status, a suitable solution is also suggested.

A casual look at the syllabus of Technical English I and Technical English II followed by Anna University, Chennai, reveals that the syllabus is designed

based on certain principles or characteristics of English for Specific Purposes. According to (Sharma 1991), the key features of ESP are:

1. Words derived from Greek and Latin Language
2. Absence of Contracted forms
3. Impersonal passive leading to lack of emotion and feeling
4. Compound nouns and adjectives
5. Various parts of speech with different technical meanings
6. Irregular plural as derived from the parent languages
7. Neutral present
8. Conditional clause
9. Absence of question tags and exclamations
10. Words with well-defined technical meanings
11. Impersonal style
12. Use of symbols and abbreviations

In some form or the other, all these characteristics have entered the textbook *English for Engineers and Technologists*, authored by the Department of English (formerly Department of Humanities and Social Sciences).

One of the chief characteristics of ESP is its reliance on content and area-specific vocabulary (Trimble 1985). Thus, an entire ESP course is aimed at using words relating to the special branch of study chosen by the students. For example, an electrical engineering student is expected to have a wide range of words from this field. In the case of Anna University, it offers engineering and technology programmes in civil engineering, geo-informatics, agriculture and irrigation engineering, mechanical engineering, automobile engineering, aeronautical engineering, manufacturing engineering, production engineering, industrial engineering, printing technology, materials science, electrical engineering, electronics, instrumentation engineering, biomedical engineering, computer science, information technology, industrial biotechnology, ceramic technology, leather technology, chemical engineering, food and pharmaceutical engineering, apparel and fashion technology, rubber and plastic technology, and so on. It is naturally impossible to include the vocabulary of all these subjects in two courses on Technical English. However, the attempt was made to cover eight topics: Resources, Energy and Computers, Transport in Technical English I for the first semester and Technology, Communication, Environment and Industry in Technical English II for the second semester. There are three subdivisions under each topic. For example, resources include water, gold and silver and human resources.

The main topics and sub-topics do not cover the entire range of engineering and technology subjects. In fact, some of the texts included are of general nature. The reason is that topics have to be general enough for all branches of students to understand and also for teachers of English who might not have adequate knowledge of specific subject areas.

The textbook has a number of tasks both oral and written. Matching words and their meanings, sometimes opposites also, filling in the blanks with suitable answers, choosing correct answers from given options, writing paragraphs, mostly comparing one point with another (for example, wind power with pedal power), letter writing and report writing, are some of the tasks for written communication. Similarly, there are a few activities for oral communication: pair work, group work, oral reporting, role plays, etc.

A key feature of Technical English is use of passive voice. Hence, ample practice is given for students to write sentences and passages in passive voice. Students also have exercises to transform sentences from active to passive voice. This kind of excessive practice leads to overuse of passive voice resulting in awkward sentences. But today, even in science and technical writing active voice is considered to be better than passive voice. When we write a sentence in passive voice on the computer, our word processing software indicates the sentence in red mark and suggests a suitable sentence in active voice. Thus, active voice has become a common use among the general public and also the technical professionals.

Compound nouns and compound adjectives are considered to be a feature of technical English. For example, power source and time-consuming process are compound noun and compound adjective, respectively. Interestingly such compounds are often found in everyday writings in newspapers. For example, passenger information system and time-delaying tactic are seen in everyday usage.

Use of abbreviations and symbols is again a characteristic of Technical English. Of course, some of them like 'btu' and 'μ' may be very technical but then there are a quite few of them which have entered the common man's life. For example, NASA and ISRO are included in the course. But these abbreviations have become so common that even the common man knows about these abbreviations today, particularly after the launch of Chandrayan I. What is happening is perhaps the technical world has entered the common man's life so easily and irreversibly. Then, why do we have to continue to perpetrate the arbitrary distinction between general and technical English?

These may be necessary for the purpose of English for Specific Purposes. But the harsh reality of the employment scenario is totally different and requires generic skills or transferable skills from students. These generic skills, also known as soft skills, include among others communication skills in English. Then to continue with ESP as we do today actually does not meet the expectations of employers. Therefore, we have to go back to a variety of ESP which focused chiefly on the purpose of using English for employment (Hutchinson and Waters 1991). If we do, then the current practice of communication skills practice laboratory in the third year of engineering and technology in undergraduate courses could

be dispensed with. It must be remembered that increasing the number of years alone for teaching and learning English cannot ensure the desirable outcome of effective communication skills in engineers and technologists. In fact, a professional approach to teaching communication skills which is time specific and target oriented should be thought of and implemented at the earliest.

English for employment then requires certain features of communication which were strictly avoided in ESP, i.e., Technical English. For example, direct personal face to face communication involves not so much register specific vocabulary as much as vocabulary which is common in social communication. Obviously, question tags, exclamations, colloquial language, contracted forms, different kinds of tense forms, etc. need to be included in English for employment. In addition to a focus on plain English or language that is understood by common man, politeness strategies are very important for a smooth interaction among people of all walks of life, including professional life. In this context, the well-known essay 'On Saying Please' by A.G. Gardiner comes to mind immediately. Stephen Leacock's short story 'My Financial Career' is noteworthy for the kind of behavioural pattern exhibited by the customer and the bank manager. Ruskin Bond's short story 'The Boy who Broke the Bank' is a classic lesson in listening skill. And many more of these types of texts are ever relevant and useful.

Therefore, ESP in India has to take a different route altogether now with topics beyond a specific branch of study to pave the way for a course on English for Employment. *English and Communication Skills for Students of Science and Engineering* (Dhanavel 2009) is a useful textbook in this regard. In addition to the commonly known communication skills of LSRW, this book also covers Thinking (T) as a communication skill. Hence, each major topic has five sub-topics devoted to TLSRW, respectively. Further, special care has been taken to bring in employability skills, notably in the unit on 'Re-Engineering Employment'. The ten major topics are E-world, Natural Resources, Infrastructure Development, Technology and Society, Travel and Tourism, Human Dreams and Dynamics, Natural Disasters, Quality of Life, Re-Engineering Employment and Space Exploration.

These general as well as specific topics are bound to create interest in the students and motivate them to learn English for employment in a much better way. As is famously said, language is a loaded weapon. If we load bullets into the language, it will fire bullets only. If we load humanistic values into language, it will fire good relations among people, which is essential for effective communication in English or any other language for that matter. These humanistic values were part of the traditional syllabus for General English programmes. Owing to the widespread influence of ESP and CLT around the world, language has come to be taught in isolation from values and the living context of the society and culture. Therefore, it is high time that English professionals went back to value-

based, if not completely literature-based, language teaching. In fact, employers all over the world want to have employees with values like honesty, integrity, punctuality, sincerity, tenacity, loyalty and what not. ESP and CLT have glaringly failed to deliver the goods. Hence, we need to move in new directions with good lessons from both the traditional and communicative approaches to language learning.

The experiment with ESP, such as at Anna University, therefore, has a limited success. To expand the scope of ESP to the domain of employment is the need of the hour. In this direction, some efforts like introducing a course on communication skills have been taken. However, for students to acquire communication skills and perform well in jobs and life, English for Employment looks an attractive and useful option in the context of globalization, which has increased the importance of global engineers today. To quote Widdowson (1984), Caliban 'refuses to be confined by the ESP prescribed for him'. The author re-enacts Caliban's refusal now.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the characteristics of English for Specific Purposes?
2. How is ESP integrated into a Communicative Language Teaching framework?
3. How far has ESP been successful?
4. What are the expectations from the employers about the skills of graduating students?
5. How can literature be used profitably for teaching employability and survival skills?

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Chapter

19

A Deconstructive Reading of John Milton's 'On His Blindness'

This chapter will enable the reader to

- Trace the roots of 'deconstruction'
- Analyse 'deconstruction' morphologically
- Explain 'deconstructive reading' strategies
- Apply deconstruction to a poem for teaching language

There is no method except to be intelligent.

—(Eliot 1960: 11)

There is no method except to be yourself.

—(Bloom 1987: 167)

Of late, a number of scholars have devoted themselves to the task of practicing literary theory in the classroom. Collections of essays and special issues of journals are published (Atkins and Douglas 1985; Henrickson and Morgan 1990; Nelson 1986; Newton 1992; Murfin 1989; Selden 1989; among others) and apparently this has become an immediate necessity owing to the proliferation

of theories. The puzzled students and teachers find a little comfort in some sets of specific and manageable principles and procedures or model readings without having to face the theoretical complexities of such a spectacular growth. In such a situation, an attempt is made here at reading John Milton's canonical poem 'On His Blindness' in the light of deconstruction and showing how this very familiar poem leads the reader to an indeterminate position.

Jacques Derrida was not the first one to use the term *deconstruction*, though it has become synonymous with him. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Vol. 3, p. 106) records that one Mr McCarthy used this word in 1882 in his *Nineteenth Century*: 'A reform, the beginnings of which must be a work of deconstruction'. It is derived from the French verb '*deconstruire*', meaning 'to undo the construction of, to take to pieces'. Perhaps, this sense of 'taking to pieces' may have led to the general association of Derrida's deconstruction with destruction alone.

When the quotation from the OED is carefully examined, it becomes obvious that the "work of deconstruction" is not simply and solely for the sake of destruction. On the contrary, it is only a means to 'reform'. Even if Derrida and his followers do not always explicitly state such a 'reformation', it is implicit that they are aiming towards a radical change in our way of thinking.

A free morphological analysis of the word *deconstruction* may be useful here to clarify the term and to show the interrelation between 'destruction' and 'construction' in 'deconstruction'.

1.

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                    deconstruction
                   /              \
            deconstruct            ion
            /         \
          de          construct
                      /        \
                    con         struct (struere)
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2.

```
              deconstruction
             /             \
           de            construction
                         /           \
                    construct         ion
                    /        \
                  con         struct (struere)
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3.
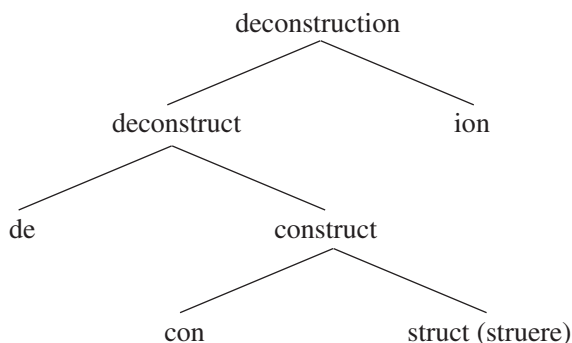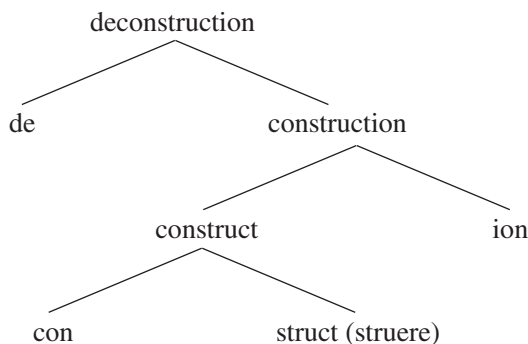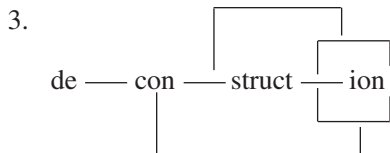
Diagram 3 above shows that 'deconstruction' comprises both 'destruction' and 'construction' allowing room for the explanation that there is no destruction without construction and vice versa. These two seemingly incompatible operations are interwoven and fused together suggesting their coexistence. Diagrams 1 and 2 reveal the etymology of the verb *struere* meaning 'to build'. In this process, building may involve all other allied requirements of building in a centrifugal and incessant manner.

The function of the prefix '–de' here may be considered to stress the centrifugal and incessant operations. The prefix '–de' has three semantic functions: (i) relating, (ii) reversing and (iii) intensifying. The relating '–de' refers to 'down', 'away', 'apart', 'aside', 'of', and 'from' in such words as 'destruction' and 'decrease'. The reversing '–de' indicates a reversal of process as in 'demote', 'denationalize', 'demount', and 'denaturalize'. The intensifying '–de' adds emphasis to the root as in 'delimit', 'depict', 'deprave' and 'depurate'. To limit the function of '–de' to one or the other would mean to go against the very spirit of 'free play' that characterizes all deconstructive processes.

Deconstruction, it is often supposed, is not easy to define. But it does not mean that it is totally beyond definition. Otherwise, deconstruction could not have found a place in the discourse of human sciences. Pointing out the difficulties posed by deconstruction and the need to define it, Christopher Norris (1989: 19) provides a very useful description of Derrida's strategies:

> "…the dismantling of conceptual oppositions, the taking apart of hierarchical systems of thought which can then be re-inscribed within a different order of textual signification. Or again, deconstruction is the vigilant seeking out of those aporia, blindness or moments of self-contradiction where a text voluntarily betrays the tension between rhetoric and logic, between what it manifestly means to say and what is nonetheless constrained to mean. To deconstruct a piece of writing is therefore to operate a kind of strategic reversal, seizing on those precisely unprepared details (casual metaphors, footnotes, incidental turns of argument) which are always and necessarily, passed over by interpreters of a more orthodox persuasion. For it is here, in the margins of the text – the margins, that is, as defined by a powerful normative consensus – that deconstruction discovers those same unsettling forces at work."

Norris's comprehensive description may not be a substitute for Derrida's actual play. It can, however, be a supplement that can eventually become indispensable and serve the purpose of introducing Derrida to the beginners.

In addition to the clarification and description of deconstruction, the defence of Paul de Man may also be noted at this juncture. Emphasizing the economy of deconstruction, de Man (1979: xi) recalls his encounter with Derrida in his Preface to *Allegories of Reading:*

"No other word states so economically the impossibility to evaluate positively or negatively the inescapable evaluation it implies – something is lost when the same process is described by a purely negative term as when Nietzsche speaks of destruction (*Zentruummerung*) of conceptual constructs or Pascal of demolition (démolition) of a conviction that is itself destruction. I consciously came across deconstruction for the first time in the writings of Derrida, which means it is associated with a power of inventive rigour to which I lay no claim but which I certainly do not wish to erase. Deconstruction, as was early predictable, has been much misrepresented, dismissed as nameless academic game or denounced as a terrorist weapon and I have all the fewer illusion about the possibility of continuing these aberrations since such an expectation would go against the drift of my own readings."

Thus, de Man recognizes the importance of deconstruction and at the same time expresses his misgivings about the mixed and hostile responses to deconstruction.

In her essay 'Teaching Deconstructively', Barbara Johnson (1985: 140–148) has identified and discussed some of the deconstructive reading strategies in a very simple and straightforward fashion. Her chief aim here is to show the conversion of deconstructive strategies into classroom procedures 'for an open-discussion format in a literature seminar' and for helping the 'students to respond to what is there before them on the page' with the intention of teaching 'them how to work out the logic of reading on their own rather than passively deferring to the authority of superior learning' (p. 41). Towards this end, she has enumerated seven points, though these cannot be said to be exhaustive in any way:

  (i) Ambiguous words
 (ii) Undecidable syntax
(iii) Incompatibilities between what a text says and what it does
(iv) Incompatibilities between the literal and the figurative
 (v) Incompatibilities between assertions that are explicitly foregrounded and illustrative examples or less explicitly asserted supporting material
(vi) Obscurity
(vii) Fictional self-interpretation

For the present purpose of reading Milton's poem, the first two strategies may be elaborated now.

First, ambiguous words could mean multiplicity of meanings. Specifically, they could refer to Freud's 'primal words' and Harold Bloom's 'antithetical

words'. For example, Derrida's reading of Plato's *Phaedrus* focuses on the Greek word *pharmakon*, which means both remedy and poison. One of the very familiar words, 'host' has two meanings, which are quite opposite to each other—entertainer and enemy. These two diametrically opposite meanings are equally important in any reading of the Wordsworthian phrase 'a host of golden daffodils'. The fact is that Nature in Wordsworth's poems is not only a source of comfort but also of distress. But traditional readings have tended to project the poet chiefly as an unreserved and joyous physiolator.

Second, an uncertain syntax subjects itself to an indeterminate position, as exemplified by Paul de Man (1989:339–341) in his reading of Yeats's rhetorical question in 'Among School Children'. The rhetorical nature of the question is disturbed by the grammar of the interrogative structure of the line: "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" Obviously, Yeats uses this harmless literary device to stress that the dancer and the dance are inseparable. But de Man makes further use of this notion to show the perennial war between the rhetoric of discourse and the logic of grammar.

Milton's poem is well known. However, for the sake of close reading, it is reproduced here for convenience:

> *When I consider how my light is spent,*
> > *Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,*
> > *And that one Talent which is death to hide,*
> > *Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent*
> *To serve therewith my Maker and present*
> > *My true account, least he returning chide,*
> > *Doth God exact day-labour light deny'd,*
> > *I fondly ask; But Patience, to prevent*
> *That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need*
> > *Either man's work or his own gifts, who best*
> > *Bear his mild yoak, they serve him best, his State*
> > *Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed*
> *And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:*
> > *They also serve who stand and waite*

—(Milton 1950: 85)

The fact that Milton wrote this poem when he intensely felt the loss of his eyesight is beyond dispute. But there are different opinions about the exact date of composition and the time when he went blind. As an ordinary mortal, the poet raises his doubts about God's justice, but as a pious Puritan, he accepts his lot. For E.M.W. Tillyard (1946:141) the poem is about Milton's 'despair' … 'overcome' and for Macon Cheek (1970:127), it is 'a summing-up and account taking'. However, when looked at from a deconstructive angle, the poem enacts its own critique and reveals its ambivalent nature.

There are a number of variations of this poem (see, for instance, Davis and Davis, 1967:109; Hughes, 1955:110; Milton, 1954:551; Milton, 1945:223; Palgrave, 1977: 76). These variations are not only concerned with the title "On His Blindness" by which it is popularly known, though not given by Milton himself, but also with punctuation, capitalization and spelling. When carefully attended to, these changes point towards the properties of 'writing' with a 'difference'.

Most of the editors like Palgrave have chosen to retain ON HIS BLINDNESS. Bernard and Elizabeth Davis have preferred to change the capital 'H' to small 'h'. Some of them have not given the poem any title. But they identify the sonnet by the Roman numeral XIX. All these changes in the title evoke the usually irrelevant question, whose blindness is talked about in the poem? It may appear obvious that the poem is about Milton's blindness. However, the capital 'H' in 'His', which conventionally refers to God arouses a great deal of suspicion. It is important to note that both "His" and "his" are used in the poem frequently. It should also be observed that the editorial use of small "h" may be an attempt to fix the blindness once for all in Milton but the poem as a linguistic entity, susceptible to its own weaknesses, tends to evade such attempts.

This subversion is convoluted further when the adverb 'fondly' is paid close attention. Usually, 'fondly' is substituted by foolishly and said that Milton shows his humility. To proceed from a deconstructive angle, the 'fool' in 'foolishly' is a jester. A 'fool' like the one in *King Lear* is a professional fool in the royal court who makes the mad king understand life through his intelligent and meaningful discourse. The 'foolish' poet Milton, who asks an intelligent question about God's justice, is, in fact, throwing the question of blindness to explosively ambiguous meanings, including the blindness of the poet, : God, justice, the world, the poem, language, the reader, and so on. Interestingly, in the blindness of Milton the man we are able to locate Milton the poet.

That this problem gains additional force can be seen from the very first line of the poem: "When I consider how light is spent." Why does Milton use active voice in the subordinate clause and passive voice in the object: "How my light is spent?" Does he suggest that somebody else spent his light, that is, his eyesight? Could that somebody be God? If so, what kind of God is HE/he? Perhaps the last question may lead the poet and the reader to come to terms with the notion of 'God' that functions as an authoritative source of fixed meaning.

To conclude, these are some of the troubling questions which, when raised in the classroom, will certainly provide an opportunity for a healthy discussion on Milton's poem 'On His Blindness' in which the students could participate and come up with their own views. When these problems are discussed, the students will be enabled to think in the Derridian way and also see the 'truth' of Derrida (1988:114): "Language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is 'deconstruction'?
2. What are the limitations of 'deconstruction'?
3. How is lexical and grammatical knowledge useful for a deconstructive reading?
4. How is a deconstructive reading of a poem relevant to the English classroom?
5. What are the uses of literary theory for English language teaching?

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