The English Classroom

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CONTENT

About *'The English Classroom'*

'*The English Classroom*' is a peer-reviewed bi-annual journal published with the purpose of disseminating research studies and the findings to the wider English Language Teaching (ELT) community. The current issue of the journal includes 12 papers which are mostly research-based, experimental and theoretical along with one obituary note.

The collection of papers is about the challenges of teaching and learning English in complex environments in Indian contexts. A common concern of all the contributors is to put the individual at the centre of their arguments and examine the issues from their own perspective on continuing professional development, it's relevance and impact.

The contributors occupy a variety of social positions as academics, teachers, scholars, trainers, researchers and policy makers. They inhabit a series of areas and represent very diverse horizons of thought. They have presented their views to augment our understanding of a wide variety of facets in English language Teaching. The ideas presented here are vital in the sense that the contributors go to the root of the questions they are exploring in diverse elements in ELT.

In the first paper '**Impact of Environmental Factors Upon the Acquisition of L_2 by First Generation Women Learners**,' Dr S Gandhimathi, M Sakthi Radha and N Sudhavani provides a board study on first generation women learners to find out the impact of psychological type and environmental factors upon the acquisition of L2 and assessing criteria of the success or failure of a particular teaching or learning method.

The second paper '**Teaching and Testing Speaking in ESL Contexts: Issues and Challenges in Indian Tertiary Classrooms**,' by Poorvadevi D and Dr Nandhini R outline the current situation of language classroom, problem areas and testing speaking of English and analyse issues that are present in a language training programme and provide an experimental model for interactional session for learners at the tertiary level with required process of assessment practices.

The third paper '**Measuring Lexical-Richness of B.Ed. Participants at EFLU, Hyderabad: An Exploratory Study**,' by Jayanta Kumar Das deals with a study exploring the lexical-richness in the written language samples of B.Ed. participants and records the findings to suggest appropriate measures to determine learners' language proficiency.

Next paper entitled '**Learning Vocabulary-Idioms and Phrases using Pictionary and Google Classroom—A Flipped Classroom Methodology**,' by Dr R Naganathan, Dr C GangaLakshmi focuses on students' learning corporate words to fine-tune their language using Pictionary game with Google Classroom using an edutainment learning style in a flipped classroom methodology.

The following paper '**A Study on How to Reduce Informality in Report Writing through Intervention**,' by - Monal Dewle explores the possibility of reducing informality in the report writing through an explicit intervention course and making students understand the nuances of formal writing.

The sixth paper '**Towards Acquiring Craft Knowledge for Effective Language Teaching at the Tertiary Level**,' by Uzma S Raheel examines scope for use of craft knowledge and suggests the strategies required for developing professional craft knowledge for empowering self and the learners.

In the next paper '**A Study on the Effect of Cooperative Learning and Peer Learning on a Heterogeneous Group of ELL in a Listening Class**,' **Dr Lourdes Joavani J** asserts that cooperative and peer learning strategies found to be effective in improving listening skills in a heterogeneous group of engineering students.

The subsequent paper titled '**The Success Saga of Positive and Effective Learning Experience in the Flipped Classroom**,' by M Sarpparaje and Dr K Rathiga, is a report of small survey of the possibility of flipped classroom. They claim it effectiveness in enhancing more class time for discussions and contributing to better performance of engineering students.

The paper '**Language Learning Situation: Within Classroom and in the Family and Society**,' by D Praveen Sam and S Keerthy, assert that teaching of

English in classroom practice remains confined to classroom as a part of the timetable and syllabus and explores various situations of learning English as a language providing ample opportunity to use at the tertiary level.

The next paper '**Do Bazaar Guides Develop English of the Learners?**' Ravindra B Tasildar examines the limitations of bazaar guides in English language learning and finds the use of such materials by students as one of the major issues of English Language Teaching in India and explores the possibility to raise the awareness of the users in developing English language.

The following paper '**Digitizing English Language Teaching and Learning**,' by Dr S Latha Venkateswari explores the potential of digital resources as a support for language instruction focusing on application of free web tools to teach English language and analyses how digital tools revolutionize the method of teaching and learning.

The last paper titled '**Use of English Language for Comprehending the Technical Concepts by the Engineering Students in South Tamilnadu – A Case Study**,' Dr K Rathiga and Dr K Sasirekha, analyze the present scenario of English proficiency and use of English Language for comprehending the technical concepts and suggest use of technology learning style of students in engineering colleges.

The range of perspectives that these papers encompass underpin the principles of the journal. The readers are encouraged to consider the arguments made in the journal from their own experience and assess the impacts of learning English as a Second Language in Indian contexts. It is hoped that readers will find the issue of the journal thought-provoking, stimulating and continue the debate as raised in the papers.

Regional Institute of English, South India very much welcomes your responses to the issue.

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Impact of Environmental Factors upon the Acquisition of L2 by First Generation Women Learners

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to find out the impact of psychological type and environmental factors upon the acquisition of L2 by first generation women learners. It appears from the regular classroom observations that the learners at the university level have differences in learning based on their innate attributes: introvert or extrovert. The present study involves 930 target learners doing first year of their engineering courses from the select four districts in Tamil Nadu, India. It is found that there is an impact of the mood or attitude and the environment, from which the target learners come from, upon their language learning. This aspect must be taken into account while evaluating the success or failure of a particular teaching or learning method.

Keywords

Second Language (L2), women learners, psychological, introvert, extrovert, environmental

Teaching and Testing Speaking in ESL Contexts: Issues and Challenges in Indian Tertiary Classrooms

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Abstract

Effective communication has far reaching consequences in the professional development and social networking of an individual. There is a marked difference in using one's native language as opposed to a second or foreign language. Teaching language for communication is a process that keeps evolving and the teachers, students and other stakeholders need to keep abreast of these changes. Effective language production for communicative use combines both linguistic and communicative ability of the individual. Thus, language teaching and testing for communicative purposes, with particular emphasis to speaking, must keep in mind the linguistic, functional and communicative enrichment of learner.

This paper analyses the current situation in the language classroom of most colleges in India and highlights the problem areas in teaching/ learning as well as testing speaking of English as a second language in Indian sub contexts. This paper analyses some of the issues that are present in a language training programme by approaching it from three perspectives: student, teacher and training undertaken. Every training programme culminates with an assessment. What are the key factors that are to be considered while designing a test? An experimental model for teaching speaking has been included in this article to provide an idea of how interactional session can be set up in ESL classrooms for learners at the tertiary level. Language testing is an area that is still unexplored and there needs to be awareness of what

entails a valid and reliable test. This paper hopes to provide a small introduction to assessment and how assessment practices can be implemented seamlessly into training programmes.

Key words

ELT, ESL, teaching speaking, assessment, India, tertiary level (colleges)

Measuring Lexical-Richness of B.Ed. Participants at EFLU, Hyderabad: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The present study has explored the lexical-richness in the written language samples of B.Ed. participants studying at The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. To this end, the study has measured the lexical proficiency of these participants through such indices as lexical diversity, lexical density, concrete-abstract word ratio, and word-type frequency. The written language samples of the participants have been used as the data for analysis. Based on their scores on the proficiency test, six systematically chosen participants were divided into two groups of three in each: above average group (participants having scores above average on the proficiency test) and below average group (participants having scores below average on the proficiency test). The findings of the study suggest that the below average group has high lexical diversity, lexical density and concrete-abstract word ratio than the above average group and thus defying lexical diversity, lexical density and concrete-abstract word ratio as appropriate measures to determine learners' language proficiency. Also, the findings indicate that the above average group has high word-type frequency than the below average group and thus suggesting that word-type frequency may be used as a measure to tab one's language proficiency.

Key words

lexical-proficiency, lexical-richness, lexical-diversity, lexical-density, word-type

Learning Vocabulary-Idioms and Phrases using Pictionary and Google Classroom - A Flipped Classroom Methodology

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Abstract

Corporate English, the need of the hour demands good business vocabulary, Idioms and Phrasal verbs (V-IP) from the students at the time of placement in engineering colleges. Hence it is highly important for the pre-final year engineering students to be tuned with this V-IP. The objective of the study is to motivate the students to learn without forced environment but with edutainment. Owing to this Pictionary, a picture game is used in Google Classroom, a common platform, among the students to learn V-IP. Further, this study empirically proves that the usage of the tool among the experimental group has shown a significant result, in contrast with the control group which is addressed using direct method. The focus of this paper is to let the students learn corporate words to fine-tune their language using Pictionary game with Google Classroom as well as to have an edutainment learning style in a flipped classroom methodology.

Key words

Pictionary, Google Classroom, Edutainment, Flipped classroom, Vocabulary

A Study on How to Reduce Informality in Report Writing through Intervention

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Abstract

The present paper investigates whether informality in the report writing can be reduced through explicit intervention. An intervention course was conducted on 23 students (F= 10; M=13) of an engineering college of Hyderabad. It was done in three stages: pre-test, intervention and post-test. The findings of the pre and post-test comparative analysis showed a decrease in informality in general from the pre-test to the post-test. The mixed analysis (qualitative and quantitative) of the intervention stage showed that students grasped the functions of the specific elements: Latinate verbs, specific words and negative prefix that were taught to them during the intervention sessions regarding how to avoid using phrasal verbs, general verbs and informal words. This suggests that the students were able to understand the nuances of formal writing and explicit teaching helped them to write reports better.

Key words

Informality, report writing, phrasal verbs, Latinate verbs, specific verbs and negative prefix

Towards Acquiring Craft Knowledge for Effective Language Teaching at the Tertiary Level

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Abstract

English has been taught as a second language at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels of education in a multilingual context in India. The objectives have been the development of the four basic skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and communicative competence. The teachers of English at these levels are invariably trained. Then personnel in the teaching of English will have had training at the pre-service level or trained in some professional development programs at the in-service level. They may, even without knowledge of the paradigm shifts, with the teaching competence and skills acquired during these development programs transact the prescribed content to their best. However, the learners at these levels it cannot be said, to have acquired the level of competence required of them. To pursue their tertiary level of education they are expected to be competent enough to comprehend the language of literature and other subjects too in English. Further, they need to acquire the ability to understand the language of transaction which is invariably English.

The teacher at the tertiary level finds it difficult to teach English and the reasons are many. The curriculum in English is not need based; instead it is literature focused. Hence the teacher of English has found it convenient to use the lecture method without giving opportunities for the learners to work with the language for effective learning so as to get the purpose of learning the language at the said level realized. This calls for finding the reasons for the lack of required competence of the learners. One of the reasons may be the absence of a need based curriculum. Another may be the lack of what is called the professional craft knowledge required of the teacher at this level whose subject competence is of a high level. Teaching

can be effective when and only when the teacher has both subject competence and teaching competence. The teaching competence required is referred to as the professional craft knowledge. How can a language teacher equip him/herself with this knowledge?

This paper attempts to define what craft knowledge is, what constitutes craft knowledge and suggests the strategies required for developing in the teacher to use professional craft knowledge to enable him/her to make teaching effective and thus empower one self and the learners as well by realizing the objectives of teaching English language at the tertiary level too.

Key words

competence, craft knowledge, tertiary level, objectives, skills and ability.

A Study on the Effect of Cooperative Learning and Peer Learning on a Heterogeneous Group of ELL in a Listening Class

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Abstract

One of the major hurdles of teaching English in an Indian classroom is facing a heterogeneous classroom of students with different learning styles, aptitudes, motivation levels, educational backgrounds based on schooling and mediums of instruction, linguistic competencies and differences. In such a context, a Vygotskian perspective of peer learning and various theoretical perspectives by thinkers on cooperative learning becomes quite relevant as such strategies are more effective for a large heterogeneous group of learners with mixed abilities. Therefore, the focus of this study is to investigate the impact of cooperative learning and peer learning as effective teaching strategies that can be employed in an English Language Classroom to improve listening skills. A standard preliminary listening test (pre-test) was administered to a group of 64 students. This was followed by various listening activities based on cooperative and peer tutoring techniques spread over ten sessions of 30 minutes duration each. Finally, a post test was administered to evaluate if learning had taken place. The results reveal that cooperative and peer learning strategies can be used effectively to improve listening skills in a heterogeneous group as it is indicated by the marked increase in the scores of the students.

Key words

Cooperative learning, heterogeneous, listening skills.

The Success Saga of Positive and Effective Learning Experience in the Flipped Classroom

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Abstract

Our students have grown up in the digital age. The digitalization has enabled the Instructors to capitalize on the students' aptitude for technology and use that to enrich their learning experience. Technology allows instructors to readily and easily bring their voice, experience, and guidance to students beyond the confines of lecture hours. Moving basic content delivery out of the regular working hours is a key component of the flipped classroom. It permits students to take up the responsibility of understanding the concepts themselves through technology during their own comfortable time zone outside the class that makes them better engaging during regular classes. Interest in flipped classrooms has proliferated at all levels in the educational domain in the past few years (Hung, 2017). The present paper highlights the pilot study that was conducted among 60 freshmen Computer Science Engineering students in a Flipped Classroom approach at Mepco Schlenk Engineering College, Sivakasi. The Follow-up questionnaire was formulated to examine the ensuing effects of flipped learning on Technical English I course:

1. What are the effects of the flipped learning approach on engineering students' achievements in an ELT classroom?

2. How do Mepco Schlenk Engineering college students perceive learning English in a flipped learning approach?

3. How does the flipped approach affect students' engagement in the learning process? Students' response revealed that they did relatively more earnest preparations before class, were actively involved in classroom learning activities and specifically, they preferred/liked FC

Approach more than traditional method. The teacher/researcher was also found to have more class time for leading discussions and delivering quizzes rather than repeating rote didactics. Consequently, the increased teaching and learning activities contributed to a better performance among the flipped classroom batch.

Keywords

Do Bazaar Guides Develop English of the Learners?

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Abstract

The use of bazaar guides or *Kunjis* by learners of English is one of the major issues of English Language Teaching (ELT) in India. This is also not only one of the chief concerns of experts in the field like Quirk (1963), Loomba (1992), and Seshadri (1997), to name a few, but also of almost every committee on the teaching of English in India such as the University Grants Commission's Zonal Workshop, Mysore (1976), Curriculum Development Centre (1989) and Curriculum Development Committee (2001). There has been a lot of discussion over the use of bazaar guides by the learners. This paper aims to raise the awareness of the users regarding the role of bazaar guides in developing English language.

Key Words

ELT, Teaching of Tenses, Textbooks, Bazaar guides, Reference books

Digitizing English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

English language teaching is undergoing a sea change thanks to the advent of technology. Language teachers across the globe find ways to teach English effectively to the "Digital Natives" – the young learners who are always in the clutch of technology. Grabbing the attention of the "Netizens" towards learning the second language is a big task to English teachers. But application of free web tools like Google classroom, Padlet, Kahoot, and Nearpod to teach English language can create interest among youngsters to learn English. Moreover, these tools break the constraints of time and pave the way for fun filled learning. This paper analyses how digital tools revolutionize the method of teaching and learning.

Key words

Digital Natives, Netizens, Digital tools, L2 learners, Audio files, Portable Document Format (PDF), Google classroom, Padlet, Nearpod and Kahoot.

Language Learning Situation: Within Classroom and in the Family and Society

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Abstract

When it comes to teaching of the English language, students are taught this language within the classroom most of the times. However, this language is not a formally taught subject in spite of being a part of the timetable and syllabus like other subjects such as mathematics or social science. Moreover, English language is still understood by most of the teachers and students as a foreign language. This is a myth according to the recent developments in the context of English language teaching. This article reviews various learning situations apart from the classroom and analyses them based on the outcome of a survey and also, interprets English language as a language which is disowned by the English. The discussion put forward in the paper is based on the data generated by administering a questionnaire to the students at the tertiary level.

Keywords

within and without classroom; learning situations; disowned by English.

Use of English Language for Comprehending the Technical Concepts by the Engineering Students in South Tamilnadu – A Case Study

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Abstract

English is the language of science and technology in technical universities in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu and it has been incorporated for the entire course of engineering studies.Students admitted in these technical educational institutions are expected to be proficient in English. However, the influence of mother tongue is prominent. Each general impression received in L2 is sometimes understood and registered in L1. In the professional colleges, English serves as the carrier of knowledge of higher cognitive level. With pertinent teaching experience in premier technical institutions, authors of this paper focus and illustrate in detail the use of English Language for comprehending the technical concepts by the Engineering students in south Tamilnadu studying at Mepco Schlenk Engineering College, Sivakasi. LSRW skills are usually integrated with the language learning skills. The role of LSRW in comprehending technical concept is observed through random sampling process. The analysis of the response on listening, speaking, reading and writing of technical concepts in English proves that students have more inclination towards L1 rather than L2. Findings of this research attempts to increase the interest of the students' keenness to learn English language. Teachers from all discipline should adapt suitable methodology to inculcate L2 skills. Irrespective of several factors, the technology learning style of students is to be channelized in engineering colleges.

Key words

English in Engineering Colleges, LSRW skills, peer learning, technology using English, learning style

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Call for Papers
Volume 21, Number 1, June. 2019

The Regional Institute of English, South India, Bengaluru has been publishing *'The English Classroom'*, a bi-annual journal (**ISSN 2250 - 2831**) for more than 20 years now. We have published scholarly articles on a range of topics in English Language Education over the years.

Majority of the subscribers to our journal include practising teachers, teacher educators and research scholars. The journal has helped us in reaching out to them, disseminating knowledge in the field and impacting their classroom practices and professional learning.

In this regard, articles are invited on your area of interest in ELT to our next issue, Volume 21, No.1 to be published in June. 2019.

Kindly send your article on or before **April 30, 2019** by email to:

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About the Journal:

RIESI, Bengaluru, is one of the most important centres for English Language Teaching and Teacher Training and the institute has acquired a reputation for academic excellence in the regional, national and international arena, over the years.

The English Classroom reflects its expanding interest in the field of ELT and it is published in June and December of every year.

Aim:

The aim of this Journal is to provide a forum for teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators and research scholars in the field to share their classroom experience and research findings.

Peer Review Policy:

'The English Classroom' is a peer reviewed journal. The articles submitted to the journal are subjected to blind review by experts in the field.

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